' Navneet Kaur Rana, MP from Amravati Lok Sabha constituency, Maharashtra, wears a protective mask as she arrives in Parliament on Wednesday, March 5, 2020 India reports 29 cases so far. Fifteen Italian tourists, including the wife of an infected Italian, and eight Indians have tested positive for on March 4, taking the number of cases to 29 in the country. Two cases with a high viral load were . A Paytm employee tested positive in Gurgaon. The company said in a statement that the person had travel history to Italy. The Health Ministry also confirmed the case which came to light in the evening. The Union Health Ministry has set up control room to tackle coronavirus-related queries. If you have fever, cough and difficulty in breathing, call your State helpline number or Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Indias 24X7 control room number +91-11-23978046, a press release said. For any health related query people can email at ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the updates: NEW DELHI 8.35 P.M. Paytm employee in Gurgaon tests positive for COVID-19 A Paytm employee in Gurgaon has tested positive for novel coronavirus, the company said in a statement on Wednesday. It said the employee had recently returned from a vacation in Italy, one of the worst-hit countries from coronavirus. Paytm has advised all its employees to work from home for the next couple of days while the Gurgaon unit gets sanitised, according to the statement. NEW DELHI 8.05 P.M. CBSE to allow students to carry masks, hand sanitiser during boards exams Students appearing for class 10 and 12 board examination will be allowed to carry masks and hand sanitiser in the exam centre in view of coronavirus scare, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced on Wednesday. Face masks and sanitisers may be carried by students in the examination centre, CBSE Secretary Anurag Tripathi said. Class 10 and 12 board examinations began on February 15. WASHINGTON 8.00 P.M. IMF members pledge all available resources against COVID-19 The 189 members of the International Monetary Fund pledged on Wednesday to bring all available resources to bear to help countries combat the impact of the new coronavirus epidemic. Following an unusual conference call of the IMFs governing body, the members said they were united in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19. We have called upon the IMF to use all its available financing instruments to help member countries in need, the statement said. We are determined to provide the necessary support to mitigate the impact, especially on the most vulnerable people and countries. Also read PUNJAB 7.50 P.M. 70,000 people screened for COVID-19 in Punjab, all negative: Health Minister As many as 70,000 people have been screened for the deadly coronavirus in Punjab so far, Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu informed the state assembly on Wednesday. Their test reports have been found negative, he said during the Zero Hour. The Health Minister further informed the House that medical teams have been deputed at the Amritsar and Mohali airports for screening of passengers. Besides, medical teams have also been deputed at the Attari-Wagah border and the Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur. NEW DELHI 7.20 P.M. Rashtrapati Bhavan not to hold traditional Holi gatherings \'\'With alertness and safeguards, we all can help contain the outbreak of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. In a precautionary measure, the Rashtrapati Bhavan will not hold the traditional Holi gatherings,\'\' tweeted the Rashtrapati Bhavan. ITALY 7.15 P.M. Italy to shut down schools across the country Italy is closing all schools and universities from Thursday until mid-March to help curb the spread of the novel coronavirus, Ansa and other Italian news agencies cited government sources as saying. The measure was one of several being considered by the government at a meeting on Wednesday to combat COVID-19, which has killed 79 people in Italy and infected more than 2,500, the most in Europe. HYDERABAD 6.50 P.M. Four family members of Hyderabad\'s first COVID-19 patient test negative Four family members of the first COVID-19 positive patient from Hyderabad tested negative for COVID-19. In another case, two more samples were sent to Pune for clarity. "Two more samples were sent to the National Institute of Virology Pune to get clarity. Results would be known by Thursday evening," said Telangana Health Minister Eatala Rajender. The Minister added that private hospitals now which have capacity are allowed to provide treatment for COVID-19 from today. Earlier, isolation, treatment for COVID was allowed only Gandhi Hospital, Hyderabad. Now, private hospitals can admit, treat, and send samples to Gandhi Hospital for tests. NEW DELHI 6.40 P.M. HRD Ministry advisory to States, CBSE Union HRD Ministry directs Chief Secretaries of States and CBSE to spread awareness among students on basic protective measures against coronavirus. SAUDI ARABIA 6.30 P.M. Saudis suspend Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca Saudi Arabia has suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina over coronavirus fears, the Interior Ministry said. (Umrah is the year-round pilgrimage taken to Mecca, while Hajj is taken during the prescribed period in a year.) Saudi has decided to suspend umrah temporarily for citizens and residents in the kingdom, the Ministry said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The decision comes after Saudi Arabia last week suspended visas for the pilgrimage and barred citizens from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council from entering two of Islam\'s holiest cities. AFP ETHIOPIA 6.10 P.M. African airlines face $40 million hit in 2020 from coronavirus Coronavirus disruption could cost African airlines $40 million in revenue this year, a global industry body said on Wednesday, a potentially devastating hit to often struggling airlines counting on lucrative Chinese routes to fund expansion. The global hit to the aviation industry is projected to be $29 billion this year - a 4.7% industry-wide drop in revenue per passenger kilometre, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has said. The blow to African airlines could be as much as $40 million, IATA\'s special envoy to Africa, Raphael Kuuchi, said at an aviation conference in Addis Ababa. IRAN 6.05 P.M. Iran rejects U.S. virus aid offer amid \'vicious\' sanctions Iran\'s President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday dismissed a US offer to help the Islamic republic fight its coronavirus outbreak, charging that vicious American sanctions are depriving the country of medicine. Iran has scrambled to halt the rapid spread of the virus that has claimed 92 lives out of 2,922 confirmed infections in the past two weeks. Those who have deprived the people of even medicine and food through sanctions, who have done the most vicious things... they appear with a mask of sympathy and say that we want to help the nation of Iran, Mr. Rouhani said, in a clear reference to the United States. U.S. President Donald Trump had said Saturday he was ready to aid Iran with the virus outbreak if the Islamic republic asked for assistance. JAMMU AND KASHMIR 6.00 P.M. Two passengers with travel history to Italy, South Korea quarantined at Jammu hospital Two passengers with a travel history to Italy and South Korea have been shifted to the quarantine ward at a government medical college hospital in Jammu, officials said on Wednesday. Jammu and Kashmir has been put on alert to deal with any threat emerging due to coronavirus, even though no positive case has been found in the Union Territory so far, officials said. The tests of the two persons have been sent to Delhi and symptomatic passengers have been instructed for home quarantine, they said. WEST BENGAL 4.40 PM COVID-19 being hyped to divert attention from Delhi riots: Mamata Banerjee West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday alleged that a section of the media was playing up the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) to deflect public attention from the Delhi riots. Addressing a rally at Buniyaadpur in Dakshin Dinajpur district of north Bengal the Trinamool Congress chairperson accused the media of playing up the outbreak of COVID-19. 4.10 PM A number of international sports events have been cancelled, postponed or shifted to other cities due to the new virus outbreak. KARNATAKA 3.50 PM Karnataka appeals to shun coronavirus rumours Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister B. Sriramulu on Wednesday appealed to consider only official information and shun rumours on Coronavirus. I request that you consider only official information, without heeding any rumours that are spreading across various social networking sites, tweeted Sriramulu. He said the state Health and Family Welfare department has taken all possible measures to prevent the spread of infection. So far, 40,207 passengers have been inspected at the Bengaluru airport. Blood tests were performed on 251 people and 238 were negative. The report of the remaining 13 people is yet to come, he said. Explaining the 24-year-old city-based techies case, who tested positive for Coronavirus in Hyderabad, Mr. Sriramulu said his residence and office in Bengaluru were cleaned on Tuesday from the infection. And 25 of his office colleagues were contacted, and one was hospitalized in a preoperative manner, and a blood sample was sent for testing, he added. DELHI 3.45 PM 17 Indians abroad infected with coronavirus Seventeen Indians have been infected with coronavirus abroad, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Wednesday. Responding to a question in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said 16 cases were reported from Japan on the cruise ship and one from the UAE. He further said that the government evacuated a total of 766 persons -- 723 Indian nationals and 43 foreigners -- from China. Similarly, 119 Indians have been brought back to India from the cruise ship in Japan, Mr. Muraleedharan said. RAJASTHAN 3.00 PM \'215 people came in contact with COVID-19 affected Italian tourists\' Rajasthan Health Minister Raghu Sharma said at least 215 people came in contact with the COVID-19-affected group of Italian tourists. Mr. Sharma informed the Assembly that swab samples of 93 people have been taken. A total of 51 suspected patients have been tested negative whereas reports of 41 others are still pending. As many as 53 people in Jhunjhunu, 14 each in Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 44 in Bikaner, six in Udaipur and 76 people in Jaipur came in contact with the group. The 15 Italian tourists who were tested positive for COVID-19 had reached Delhi, via Jaipur and Agra. The tourists entered Rajasthan via road from Delhi. He said that though there is no prescribed medication or vaccine to treat the disease, the suspected patients in the state are being given swine flu medication as a precautionary measure. Purchase orders have been given for 50,000 personal protective equipment kits and 5 lakh each of N95 and triple layer masks to deal with the problem, the minister said. 2.35 PM Helpline numbers The Union Health Ministry has set up control room to tackle coronavirus-related queries If you have fever, cough and difficulty in breathing, call your State helpline number or Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Indias 24\*7 control room number +91-11-23978046, a press release said. For any health related query people can email at ncov2019@gmail.com Ministry of Health #StayHome #StaySafe @MoHFW\_INDIA Some simple hygienic practices can help in protecting against . Please share this information for wider awareness. Please also note our 24\*7 Control Room Helpline number. 549 442 people are talking about this DELHI 2.20 PM Let\'s fight coronavirus together: Kejriwal As fresh cases are being reported, people in the national capital are scrambling to buy face masks. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the government has enough N95 masks in stock and will check if such masks are sold at higher price in black market. N95 masks are recommended for blocking viruses. Mr. Kejriwal also asked Delhiites to avoid public spaces and wash hands often. The public needs to be aware and come together to fight coronavirus like Delhi fought Dengue last year, he said. Mr. Kejriwal announced that he will not be celebrating Holi on account of the the violence in Delhi and also due to the virus threat. - Jaideep Deo Bhanj DELHI 1.30 PM Trying to get Indians back from Iran: Harsh Vardhan Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has said that all international passengers will be screened for coronavirus symptoms. "We are trying to get Indians back from Iran. We are working on strategy," Dr. Vardhan said. If the Iranian government lent its support, a testing facility could be set up there as well. "This will help bring back Indian citizens from Iran after a thorough screening," he said. An estimated 1,200 Indians, mostly students and pilgrims, are in Iran currently. Iran has so far reported over 2,000 coronavirus cases and 77 deaths. DELHI 1 P.M. India reports 28 cases so far Fourteen Italian tourists and one Indian driver have tested positive for COVID-19. They were part of the same group as the Italian man who was tested positive for COVID-19 in Rajasthan. Six family members of Delhi man who was found to have contracted COVID-19, have been tested positive. They hail from Agra. All the Italian tourists were at Chhawala ITBP medical camp currently. The Principal Secretary to PMO will also be holding a review meeting on Wednesday to oversee the COVID-19 preparedness. The official confirmed cases in India as of today stands at 28. It includes 17 from Jaipur, 6 in Agra, 3 in Kerala and one each in Telangana and Delhi. Three patients from Kerala have recovered from the illness. ODISHA Odisha govt advisory to keep coronavirus at bay The Odisha government has in its list of dos and donts asked people to avoid hugging, shaking hands while greeting and keep their workplace clean to ward off coronavirus infection. The state government issued the workplace advisory based on the containment plan prepared by the Health Ministry to tackle the COVID-19 disease. Asking the employers to ensure workplace cleanliness, it mentioned, Surfaces (desks and tables) and objects (telephone, keyboards) need to be regularly wiped with disinfectant containing 70 per cent alcohol. Soaps or sanitizing hand rub should be provided near wash basins and water supply should be ensured as frequent hand washing kills the virus and prevents spread of Covid-19, it said. Posters should be displayed promoting respiratory hygiene, and tissue papers or masks should be made available to the employees. The staff should be advised home isolation whenever they develop flu like symptoms, it said. TELANGANA Two samples from Hyderabad sent to NIV Pune for further tests Out of 47 samples collected from people in Telangana, viral load was found to be high in two cases. Their samples are sent to National Institute of Virology, Pune for further testing. 45 have tested negative. Among the two, whose samples have been sent for further tests, one was a hospital staff treating the COVID-19 patient. The other person is said to have travelled to Italy recently. Modi not to take part in Holi milan Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said he has decided not to participate in any Holi milan programme as experts have advised to reduce mass gatherings to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Experts across the world have advised to reduce mass gatherings to avoid the spread of COVID19 Novel Coronavirus. Hence this year, I have decided not to participate in any Holi milan programme, the PM tweeted. This year, Holi is on March 10. Watch COVID-19: Dos and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Here\'s a video on how we can protect ourselves and others, a list of dos and dont\'s released by the Health Ministry. COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry UTTAR PRADESH 109 of 137 samples test negative in Uttar Pradesh Of the 137 samples sent for testing for in Uttar Pradesh, 109 have found to be negative while six samples that tested positive have been sent for confirmation, the government said. The results of 22 cases were still awaited, said the State Control Room, Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme Vector Borne Disease Division Directorate of Health Services. VISAKHAPATNAM Malaysia returned father-daughter duo admitted to hospital in Vizag on coronavirus suspicion Officials from the Medical and Health Department hospitalised a person and his daughter, who came from Malaysia, for observation, after the duo were found having coronavirus symptoms. KAKINADA Techie with suspected COVID-19 put in Isolation Ward in Kakinada Govt. Hospital in A.P. A 35-year-old Hyderabad-based Software Engineer suspected to have been infected with coronavirus has been admitted to the Isolation Ward at the Government General Hospital (GGH) here in East Godavari district in the early hours of Wednesday. BENGALURU One Intel employee in Bengaluru potentially exposed to coronavirus, under quarantine Tech giant Intel has said one of its employees in Bengaluru has potentially been exposed to and is currently under quarantine. The company also said it has implemented precautionary measures like travel restrictions, increased frequency of office sanitisation, and work-from-home provisions in India. HYDERABAD Hyderabad COVID-19 patient questioned on contacts In his 24 years, perhaps Monday was the first time that this Hyderabad man was persistently asked by someone to give minute-by-minute details of who all he met, places he had been to, how much time he spent with them from the moment he stepped into Telangana. CHINA China reports fall in cases, South Korea death toll hits 32 China on March 4 reported 38 more deaths from the but a fall in fresh cases for a third consecutive day. The death toll nationwide is now 2,981, the National Health Commission said, with more than 80,200 people infected in total. COVID-19 has higher death rate than influenza: WHO chief Contrary to the general notion that has lower death rate compared with influenza (commonly called as seasonal flu), COVID-19 has globally caused more than three times the number of deaths in reported cases than influenza.,The patient is a middle-aged man with a recent travel history to Iran, say official sources. Samples of two women from Hyderabad which were sent to the National Instiute of Virology (NIV), Pune, have tested negative for . Telangana Health Minister Etela Rajender said they did not send any more samples to the NIV for tests. India and the EU decided to reschedule Prime Minister Narendra Modis visit to Brussels in view of the advice by health authorities in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, MEA Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said. Iran and Italy have the worlds highest death tolls due to coronavirus outside of China. , Health workers disinfect a traditional shopping centre to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in northern Tehran, Iran, Friday, March, 6, 2020. A man from Delhi with a travel history to Thailand and Malaysia has tested positive for COVID19, taking the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in India to 31, health ministry officials said on Friday. The global march of the from the WHO for governments to pull out all the stops to slow the epidemic, as it drained colour from Holi festivities, closed Bethlehems Nativity Church and blocked Italians from visiting elderly relatives in nursing homes. The U.N. health agency urged all countries to push this virus back, a call to action reinforced by figures showing about 17 times as many new infections outside China as in it. The virus has infected nearly 98,000 people and killed over 3,300. In India, from Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana. States such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh have also kept some people under quarantine. Here are the updates: BHUTAN Bhutan bars tourists after first coronavirus case Bhutan said on Friday it would bar arriving tourists for two weeks after confirming its first case of the , a tourist who spent several weeks in neighbouring India. The tiny Himalayan kingdom, which is heavily reliant on high-end tourism for foreign exchange, said a 79-year-old American who entered by air from India on March 2 had tested positive for the virus. The government will impose two weeks\' restriction on all incoming tourists with immediate effect, Bhutan\'s Health Ministry said in a statement. This is to enable rigorous monitoring, source assessment of infection, and mitigate the situation. The government also announced the closure of several schools and the postponement of international conferences and seminars for two weeks. The Ministry said the patient, who had entered India on Feb. 21, had been put in quarantine in hospital in the capital, Thimpu. LOK SABHA 29,607 people under observation as on March 5: Harsh Vardhan A total of 29,607 people are under observation of Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network for novel coronavirus , Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan informed the Lok Sabha on Friday. He also said 654 people were brought from Wuhan in China on February 1 and 2, and kept in quarantine at Army Camp in Haryanas Manesar and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Camp at Chhawla in Delhi for 14 days. These evacuees were tested twice and reported negative for and were discharged on February 17 and 18, Vardhan told the House, responding to a query raised by Rahul Gandhi along with two other MPs. On February 27, a total of 112 people, which included 76 Indians and 36 foreign nationals, were evacuated from Wuhan and kept in mandatory 14-day quarantine at the Army Camp in Manesar, the Union Health Minister said. Besides, 124 people, which included 119 Indians and five foreign nationals, have been evacuated from Japan and kept in mandatory 14-day quarantine at the ITBP camp in Chhawla). All these 236 passengers have been tested and reported negative for COVID-19, Mr. Vardhan said. PUNJAB Retreat event at Attari-Wagah border to be conducted without spectator, says BSF People will not be allowed to attend the popular daily retreat ceremony between India and Pakistan at the Attari-Wagah border in Punjab in view of , the BSF said on Friday. The precautionary measure will be effective from Saturday. The Border Security Force (BSF) will continue performing the ceremonial duty of lowering the flag and other drills, a spokesperson of the border guarding force said. As per government guidelines, congregations are to be avoided. Hence visitors and spectators to the ceremony will not be entertained. The ceremony will be conducted without spectators, he said. NEW DELHI Family members of man who tested positive for coronavirus home quarantined Seven family members of a man who tested positive for after his visit to Thailand have been quarantined at their residence in west Delhi, a health official said on Friday. The 25-year-old man, who also travelled to Malaysia, has tested positive for COVID-19, taking the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the national capital to three. The family of the patient comprising his wife, parents, brother, sister-in-law and their two kids has been home quarantined. Their samples have been taken for testing, the Delhi government health official said. The office of the patient, who has been shifted to the Safdarjung Hopsital for treatment, is in Gurgaon but he operated from his residence. NEW DELHI Govt exempts employees from marking biometric attendance All central government employees were on Friday exempted from marking attendance through Aadhaar-based biometric system as a preventive measure to check the spread of the , according to a Personnel Ministry order. Instead, they will be marking their attendance manually in the attendance register. It is learnt that the most common method of transmission of the virus seems to be through infected surfaces. Therefore, it is desirable to avoid touching surfaces, which might be infected due to human touch, the order said. It said all the ministries have been asked to exempt their employees to mark attendance through the Aadhaar-based biometric attendance system till March 31. However, all employees are required to mark their attendance in the attendance register (as done prior to launch of the biometric system), during this period, the order issued to all central government departments said. Though only a small number of novel coronavirus cases have been reported in the country, it is a must to take all possible preventive measures to stop its spread, the personnel ministry said. The total number of coronavirus cases in the country is 31, according to Health Ministry officials. TAMIL NADU Tamil Nadu to establish quarantine facilities for persons suspected to have COVID-19 Tamil Nadu is planning to establish full-fledged quarantine facilities for persons suspected to have disease (COVID-19) on the outskirts of Chennai and Madurai, Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar said. We presently have 300 beds in isolation wards across the State, and can increase these if needed. Now, the Chief Minister has allotted special funds to set up separate quarantine wards in the outer areas of Chennai and Madurai. These facilities are to quarantine persons whom we suspect to have coronavirus disease during screenings, on an emergency basis. We are working on establishing these facilities simultaneously, he told reporters on Friday. The Health and Family Welfare Department of Tamil Nadu government has set up a 24-hour control room to enable general public make coronavirus-related queries. People can contact the health helpline 104 and also the following numbers - 044-29510400, 29510500, 9444340496 and 8754448477. AUSTRALIA Australia will spend one billion dollars to fight the spread of the novel coronavirus, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced as the cases of the deadly infection in the country touched 61 on Friday. Mr. Morrison said the federal government will go 50-50 with the states to meet the public health cost of the coronavirus treatment. In an official statement on Friday, Mr. Morrison said 1 billion Australian dollars will be immediately available with more funds to be released from the Federal Government coffers as necessary. Mr. Morrison said measures to respond to the outbreak would cost at least 1 billion Australian dollars and that it would be spread between federal, state and the territory governments. - PTI PUNJAB 13 Iranian tourists quarantined at Amritsar hotel A 13-member group of tourists from Iran have been quarantined at a hotel in Amritsar and have been asked to not go out till their medical examination is completed, an official said. They reached Amritsar on Thursday night. They have been quarantined at their hotel rooms, Amritsar Civil Surgeon Prabhdeep Kaur told PTI over phone. We are conducting a proper medical examination, she said adding that they have been asked to not leave the hotel till their medical examination gets over as a precautionary measure.. Health ministry advises against mass gathering The Health Ministry has on Friday advised that mass gathering should be avoided and postponed till the spread of COVID-19 is contained. It added that to create awareness a day-long national level training on OVID-19 has been organized by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and WHO. It is being attended by 280 health officials from all states, & hospitals of railways, defence, and paramilitary forces. It was also virtually attended by 1000 nodes across the country. VISAKHAPATNAM COVID-19 cases test negative All five patients, who were kept at the Isolation Ward of Government Hospital for Chest and Communicable Diseases (GHCCD), in Visakhapatnam, have tested negative for COVID-19. Similarly, the two cases from East Godavari district and one each from Vijayawada and Kakinada have reported negative, according to the State Nodal Officer for COVID-19, Dr. K. Rambabu, here on Friday. The test reports of three suspected cases from Srikakulam district and one from Ongole are awaited, the release added. ANDHRA PRADESH No positive coronavirus cases in AP, says govt No positive cases of the novel coronavirus have been reported in Andhra Pradesh, the state Medical and Health Department said on Friday. Of the 24 samples that were sent for examination, 20 tested negative while result of the remaining four was awaited, it said in a bulletin. We have strengthened the surveillance for containment, control and prevention of COVID-19. Till date 361 passengers from COVID19-affected countries have been identified and placed under surveillance, Special Chief Secretary (Health) K S Jawahar Reddy said. Of the 361, 130 people are under home isolation and 218 people completed the 28 days observation period. Another 13 passengers are in hospital admission and are stable, according to the Special Chief Secretary. The state government constituted as a nine-member high-level committee, headed by the Special Chief Secretary, to take decisions on procurement and logistic issues relating to containment and surveillance of COVID-19. The government also notified the district Collectors as nodal officers for taking measures to contain the deadly virus outbreak in the respective districts. -- PTI PUDUCHERRY Puducherry issues advisory on COVID-19 The Puducherry Health Department on Friday issued an advisory on COVID-19 and urged the people to avoid venturing in large crowd like festivals or social events to avoid getting infected from the virus. In a press release, Dr. S. Mohankumar, Director (Health) said that some cases had been identified in India. In its health advisory, the Department has asked people to exercise caution; like handwashing with soap; covering nose and mouth while coughing and sneezing using tissue or handkerchief. People who have travelled abroad and those who have come into contact with people suffering from COVID-19 should avoid public appearance and stay indoors under home quarantine for 14 days. People with cold or flu-like symptoms should avoid also public events. NEW DELHI One new case, total case rises to 31. One more person from the national capital has tested positive for COVID-19, taking the total cases in the country to 31. The patient has recently travelled to Thailand and Malaysia. The patient is stable and being monitored, a statement released by the Union Health Ministry said. PUNJAB 13 Iranian tourists quarantined at Amritsar hotel A 13-member group of tourists from Iran have been quarantined at a hotel in Amritsar and have been asked to not go out till their medical examination is completed, an official said. They reached Amritsar on Thursday night, the official added. They have been quarantined at their hotel rooms, Amritsar Civil Surgeon Prabhdeep Kaur told PTI over phone. We are conducting a proper medical examination, she said adding that they have been asked to not leave the hotel till their medical examination gets over as a precautionary measure. If any of them are found symptomatic (for coronavirus), then samples will be taken, she pointed out. CHENNAI, TAMIL NADU All passengers arriving at Chennai airport screened Passengers arrive at the Chennai international airport wear masks in the wake of coronavirus disease on March 6, 2020. Since early Thursday, nearly 10,000-12,000 passengers from different destinations have been screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. According to officials of Airports Authority of India (AAI), they received directions to screen all passengers. There are about 50 international movements on a daily basis. We have been screening all passengers in a systematic way, an official said. Officials said, the screening of passengers from the 12 countries including China, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Nepal and Indonesia and those arriving from other remaining countries are done separately in two different parts of the terminal. The passengers from the 12 countries are checked as soon as they step out of the aircraft and reach the aero bridge. Whereas, those arriving from other countries are screened just before they reach the immigration area. All passengers have to fill up the self declaration form indicating if they have any illness, another official said. Sources said, owing to this, the amount of time passengers have to wait to clear immigration may take longer than usual. We have been monitoring the situation everyday and we are trying to do everything possible to ensure the process gets done smoothly and is not very time consuming, sources said. They added that there is likely to be a dip in the number of people who have travelled from Chennai airport in the last two months and also in the number of aircraft movements as well. We are estimating the numbers and should know the exact figure in the next few days, he said. CHINA China\'s Hubei, excluding Wuhan, reports no new cases China\'s central province of Hubei, excluding the provincial capital Wuhan, reported zero new cases of coronavirus over 24 hours for the first time during the outbreak, as authorities continued to contain imported infections in other parts of the country. Wuhan, the epicentre of the epidemic, reported 126 new confirmed cases on Thursday but there were no new infections in the province apart from those, the National Health Commission said on Friday. Elsewhere in China, schools in provinces reporting no new cases for a number of days, started to set their opening dates in a sign of the country returning to normal. Qinghai, a northwestern province in China that had reported no new infections for 29 days as of March 5, said it would stagger the start date of different school days from March 11 to March 20, according to a notice posted on an official website on Friday. Separately, the southerwestern province of Guizhou, which reported no new infections for 18 days, had said at the end of February that schools would start from March 16. Outside of Hubei, there were 17 new confirmed cases, bringing the total new infections in mainland China to 143 on Thursday, up from 139 cases a day earlier. Of the 17 new cases, 16 were imported from outside of China 11 in Gansu, four in Beijing and one in Shanghai. BHUTAN Bhutan confirms first COVID-19 case The isolated Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan has reported its first case of the COVID-19 after a US tourist tested positive, the Prime Minister said on Friday. The tiny, land-locked country, famous for measuring Gross National Happiness has emerged as a popular tourist destination in recent years. But the government immediately shut borders to foreign visitors for two weeks in an effort to limit the impact of a disease that has wreaked havoc in more developed countries around the world. The 76-year-old man arrived in Bhutan from India on March 2, and was admitted to hospital on March 5 with a fever, where he tested positive for COVID-19, the office of Prime Minister Lotay Tshering said in a Facebook post. The post added that there would be two weeks restriction on all incoming tourists with immediate effect. TAMIL NADU 5 under hospital quarantine in TN Three nasal and throat swabs, besides blood samples, which were sent for testing to the King Institute of Preventive Medicine, have returned negative for COVID-19. The Health department has lifted samples from two more persons, officials said. With this, a total of 54 samples have returned negative for COVID-19. According to the bulletin issued by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine on Thursday, five persons are under hospital quarantine and 1,243 are under home quarantine. YOUTUBE ON COVID-19 YouTube demonetising videos on coronavirus: Report At a time when the world is reeling under the threat of coronavirus, Google-owned YouTube has reportedly started demonetising videos about the deadly virus and creators are not too happy about it. For todays video, I wont be directly commenting on the recent health-related news because A, I am not a health care professional, and B, I dont need my video demonetised, said Linus Sebastian, host of Linus Tech Tips, according to a report in The Verge on Wednesday. The popular video-sharing platform has demonetised videos about sensitive subjects in the past as well. UDUPI, KARNATAKA 75-year-old in hospital with COVID-19 symptoms Sudheer Chandra Sooda, District Health and Family Welfare Officer, said on Thursday that a 75-year-old man from a village in Udupi district, who had shown symptoms of COVID-19, had been admitted to the District Government Hospital on Wednesday [March 4] night. Addressing presspersons here, Mr. Sooda said that the man and his wife had gone on a 10-day visit to Israel and returned on March 3. The man suffered from cold and cough, and showed symptoms of COVID-19. Soon he was shifted from his house to the isolation ward at the District Government Hospital here. His throat swabs, taken on Thursday, had been sent to the lab in Bengaluru to check for COVID-19. The report is expected in a couple of days. If the person tested negative, he will be discharged and sent home. But if the person tested positive, then he will be given treatment at the hospital. After his admission at the District Government Hospital, the condition of the person was improving, he said. HYDERABAD COVID-19 panic subsided: Jayesh Ranjan Telangana IT and Industries Secretary Jayesh Ranjan on Thursday evening said a sense of panic and fear that prevailed in Mindspace, an IT hub of Hyderabad, ever since Wednesday after a woman employee of one of the firms there was suspected to have COVID-19 (coronavirus), has subsided. Things are looking up... definitely under control, the senior official said, adding he had a detailed meeting with representatives of over 100 IT companies in which it was decided not to slacken the effort towards ensuring that it is business as usual. CHINA Chinas coronavirus death toll touches 3,042; confirmed cases rise to 80,552 People walk through an \'EM Auto Sanitising Gate\', amid concerns over the spread of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, outside a shopping centre in Bangkok on March 6, 2020. The death toll in Chinas novel coronavirus outbreak has touched 3,042 with 30 new fatalities while the confirmed cases have risen to 80,552 amid signs that the dreaded COVID-19 was stabilising, including in the epicentre Hubei province. Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) said that it received reports of 143 new confirmed cases of coronavirus infection and 30 deaths on Thursday on the Chinese mainland. Among the deaths, 29 were in Hubei Province and one in Hainan Province, NHC said in its daily update of the COVID-19 on Friday. Meanwhile, 102 new suspected cases were reported taking the 482, it said. The overall confirmed cases on the mainland so far totalled to 80,552 by the end of Thursday. This included 3,042 people who had died of the disease 23,784 patients still being treated and 53,726 patients discharged after recovery, the NHC said. Also on Thursday, 16 imported cases (those coming from abroad) of novel coronavirus infection were reported on the mainland, including 11 in Gansu Province, four in Beijing and one in Shanghai. By the end of Thursday, 36 imported cases had been reported, said the commission. JAPAN Virus forces Japan to cancel ceremony to mark tsunami Japan is cancelling an annual ceremony marking the anniversary of a deadly tsunami and nuclear disaster as the country steps up efforts to curb the new coronavirus, officials said on Friday. For the past eight years, the prime minister, lawmakers, and family members who lost loved ones in the disaster have attended the nationally televised ceremony. The move comes a day after Tokyo and Beijing confirmed a state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping has been postponed, and Tokyo said the country will quarantine people coming from China and South Korea for two weeks on arrival. "We had been exploring ways to hold the commemoration ceremony up to the last minute, for example by downsizing the event," top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga told reporters on Friday. "However, given the current situation, now is the time that we should do everything we can to prevent the spread of the infection, and we genuinely regret to report that today\'s cabinet meeting decided to give up on holding the commemoration ceremony." More than 18,500 people were killed or left missing after the massive tsunami triggered by a 9.0-magnitude underwater quake on March 11, 2011. -- AFP ADB ON GLOBAL ECONOMY Coronavirus could cut global growth by 0.1% to 0.4%, ADB says The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said on Friday the coronavirus outbreak is set to trim economic growth in developing Asia and around the world this year. More than 3,200 people worldwide have died from the respiratory illness that can lead to pneumonia, hurting financial markets and damaging economies. The outbreak could slash global gross domestic product by 0.1 to 0.4%, with financial losses forecast to reach between $77 billion and $347 billion, the Manila-based lender said. Economic growth in China and developing Asia, excluding China, could be trimmed by 0.3 to 1.7% and 0.2 to 0.5%, respectively, the ADB said in an analysis that outlined best- and worst-case scenarios. BETHLEHEM Bethlehem\'s storied Nativity Church closes amid virus fears Palestinian officials on Thursday closed the storied Church of the Nativity in the biblical city of Bethlehem indefinitely over fears of the new coronavirus, weeks ahead of the busy Easter holiday season. The announcement by the Palestinian tourism ministry threatened to devastate the vital tourism industry in the town where Jesus is believed to have been born. The spread of the virus across the Middle East has already disrupted worship at other major holy sites. Iran, the epicenter of the virus in the region, announced that it would set up checkpoints to limit travel between major cities and urged citizens to reduce their use of paper money to help slow the outbreak, which has killed at least 107 people in the country. - AP SOCIAL MEDIA ADVISORY Twitter broadens ban on dehumanising comments As coronavirus fears continued to mount, Twitter expanded its ban on dehumanising language to include disease. A rule barring such hate speech targeting religious groups now applies to language that dehumanises on the basis of age, disability, or disease, the Twitter safety team said in an online post. Our primary focus is on addressing the risks of offline harm, and research shows that dehumanising language increases that risk, it said. Twitter will delete tweets already posted that break the rules, relying on users to report offending comments. AUSTRALIA Australia closes first school after pupil contracts COVID-19 Australia ordered its first school closure on Friday after a 16-year-old pupil tested positive for the COVID-19, as the country\'s Prime Minister warned the public bill for treating infected patients could top A$1 billion ($661 million). Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he has written to Australia\'s state governments to create a A$1 billion fund to treat COVID-19 patients, though he cautioned more money may be needed. CHINA Pregnant women scared to give birth in virus-hit China Scared of the deadly new coronavirus that has swept China, pregnant women and new mothers are giving birth alone, keeping their newborns inside and switching to pricier private hospitals to avoid the risk of infection. One new mother, surnamed Xie, told AFP she gave birth to her baby girl in Wuhan earlier this month alone, because nobody from her family was allowed to come with her to the hospital in the quarantined city where the outbreak emerged in December. With roads blocked, she had been unable to attend pre-natal checks and was afraid to go to hospitals for fear of cross-infection. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA US announces $8bn COVID-19 funding, testing underway on cruise ship on Thursday as health workers boarded a cruise ship held off the coast of San Francisco to test sick passengers and crew. The Senate gave sweeping bipartisan support to the funding a day after the House passed the bill, so that it could be quickly sent to the White House for President Donald Trump\'s signature. The American people are looking for leadership, they want assurance their government is up to the task of protecting the health and safety, said Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy. UNITED KINGDOM COVID-19 First death in Britain confirmed Britain is moving into the second of four phases in its plan to tackle the spread of England\'s Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty said on Thursday, as the . Britain has so far registered 115 cases of the coronavirus known as COVID-19, which started in China, but has held off from introducing measures to restrict movement or cancel large gatherings for fear of hurting the economy., Medical staff uses a thermal screening device on passengers of MV Mahabahu River Cruise in the wake of COVID-19, in Jorhat, Saturday, March 7, 2020. Three more in India test positive; total number of cases rises to 34. In India, till March 7, 2020, the number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 has risen to 34, three more from Friday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a review meeting on Saturday and asked the health ministry to immediately identify sufficient locations for quarantine and also for critical care provisioning in case the disease spreads. More than 100,300 people have been infected globally by , according to a Reuters tally based on statements from health ministries and government officials. Mainland China has seen more than 3,000 deaths, but the novel coronavirus is now spreading faster elsewhere. COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% The World Health Organization (WHO) said every country should make containing the epidemic its top priority, pointing to Iran\'s national action plan to combat one of the worst outbreaks after a slow start. Here are the updates: INDIA Three more in India test positive, total rises to 34 Three more cases have been found to be positive, taking the total in India to 34. Two cases have been reported from Ladakh with travel history to Iran while one case has come in from Tamil Nadu with travel history to Oman. All the cases are stable, noted a release issued by the Union Health Ministry on Saturday. The Ministry has added that in the case of the two American nationals found positive in Bhutan with travel history to various places in India, more than 150 of their contacts have been put under surveillance. VATICAN Pope Francis to deliver Sundays prayer by livestream Pope Francis has cancelled his main public appearances to avoid crowds gathering to see him and will stream them on the internet from inside the Vatican because of the Coronavirus outbreak in Italy. The Vatican said that on Sunday he would not address crowds from a window overlooking St. Peter\'s Square and would not hold his general audience there either on Wednesday. They will be held without general public participation from inside the Vatican. The 83-year-old pope cancelled a Lent retreat for the first time in his papacy, but the Vatican has said he is suffering only from a cold that is without symptoms related to other pathologies. - Reuters SAUDI ARABIA Saudi Arabia reopens area around sacred Kaaba Saudi Arabia reopened on Saturday the area around the sacred Kaaba in Meccas Grand Mosque, Islams holiest site, reversing one of a series of measures introduced to combat the coronavirus outbreak. Saudi authorities this week suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage, during which worshippers circle the Kaaba seven times, and also announced the temporary closure of the area around the cube structure. But King Salman has allowed for the opening of the Mataf (where people circle the Kaaba) for non-umrah performers starting on Saturday at dawn, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. Hundreds of Muslims were seen rotating around the Kaaba, but the area between two hills that pilgrims must go between seven times to complete umrah remained closed. Barricades blocked access to the Kaaba, draped in a gold-embroidered black cloth, while men in green uniforms cleaned the white-tiled floor. Authorities had emptied the Grand Mosque for sterilisation on Thursday. The unprecedented suspension of the umrah has raised uncertainty over the annual hajj pilgrimage, scheduled for the end of July. Authorities have said prayers will be allowed at the Prophets Mosque in Medina and in Meccas Grand Mosque while the umrah is suspended, apart from during nighttime cleaning and sterilisation. - AFP NEW DELHI PM holds review meet, asks officials to ensure sufficient quarantine, critical care facilities Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the coronavirus situation in the country at a meeting with officials on Saturday and directed them to identify locations for sufficient quarantine facilities and make provisions for critical care in case the disease spreads further. At the meeting with all Ministries and Departments concerned, he said that in view of expert opinion, people should be advised to avoid mass gatherings as much as possible and made aware of the dos and donts. ASSAM Assam on high alert after U.S. tourist tests positive for COVID-19 in Bhutan Assam on Saturday went on a sanitising and quarantining overdrive along the route taken by a U.S. tourist during his tour of the State before leaving for Bhutan where he tested positive for COVID-19 on March 5. The tourist had begun his India tour on February 21 and had gone on a seven-day cruise on the Brahmaputra River three days later. He stayed at a five-star hotel in Guwahati and a resort in eastern Assams Jorhat town beyond the Kaziranga National Park. UTTAR PRADESH UP Governor cancels annual Holi Milan programme In view of coronavirus, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel has cancelled the March 9 Holi Milan programme as a preventive measure, the Raj Bhawan said on Saturday. Earlier, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had decided to stay away from Holi Milan programmes and had appealed to people to refrain from attending social functions in view of coronavirus. Coronavirus is an infectious virus and its infection spreads from one person to another. Therefore, protection is more important than treatment, he had said in a tweet. It is my appeal to all the people of the state to refrain from attending social functions and take good care of themselves and their families with full responsibility, the Chief Minister had said. - PTI IRAN Flight brings swabs of Indians from Iran A flight from Tehran on Saturday brought to the national capital swab samples of Indians in Iran who are suspected of having , an airport official said. The flight, operated by Mahan Air, returned with many Iranian nationals at around 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, an official at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here said. The flight landed at around 5:30 a.m. PUNJAB Two tested positive in Punjab Samples of two persons who had returned to Punjab from Italy have been tested positive for COVID-19 in a preliminary report, according to a senior government official. Both have been admitted at Government Medical College and Hospital in Amritsar. So far, samples of two persons who came from Italy had been admitted in GMCH Amritsar after they tested positive in preliminary report of AIIMS, Delhi. The final reports were awaited from NIV, Pune, where the samples had been sent, Anurag Agarwal, principal secretary (Health) told The Hindu. These patients were hospitalised and kept in the isolation ward as they were found to be symptomatic on their arrival, a few days ago at Sri Guru Ram Das Jee International Airport in Amritsar. Confirmation report of both patients is still awaited, which we are expecting in a day or two, he said. IRAN Iranian MP dies from coronavirus: state media An Iranian lawmaker has died from coronavirus, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday, in an another sign the disease is spreading within State institutions. A firefighter disinfects a traditional shopping center to help prevent the spread of the new coronavirus in northern Tehran, Iran. File Photo. The MP who died on Friday is Fatemeh Rahbar, a conservative lawmaker from Tehran, Tasnim said. It did not say if she was included in the country\'s official toll of 124 deaths from the virus, given on Friday. On March 2, Tasnim reported the death of Mohammad Mirmohammadi, a member of the Expediency Council, intended to resolve disputes between parliament and the Guardian Council, a governmental body that vets electoral candidates among other duties. Iran\'s deputy health minister, Iraj Harirchi, and another member of parliament, Mahmoud Sadeghi, have also said they have contracted the virus. - Reuters KERALA Kuwait imposes travel ban; Air India cancels flight Passengers heading for Kuwait from Calicut International Airport at Karipur were sent back home on Saturday morning when Kuwait imposed a travel ban on seven countries, including India, because of COVID-19 scare. Air India Express cancelled its flight to Kuwait, which was to carry 170 passengers from Karipur. When Air India could alert some passengers about the cancellation before they left their home, the others had to be sent back from the airport. Confusion and uncertainties prevailed at the airport as many passengers were caught unawares. -- Abdul Latheef Naha JAMMU AND KASHMIR, INDIA Srinagar mayor calls for cancellation of Khelo India winter games Amid the COVID-19 scare, Srinagar Mayor Junaid Mattu has called for cancellation of Khelo Indias first winter games chapter, which starts in Jammu and Kashmirs Gulmarg town on Saturday. Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has reached Kashmir to inaugurate the event, which would continue till Wednesday. Around 800-900 sportspersons will be taking part in different events at the ski-resort in north Kashmirs Baramulla district. In view of the #COVID2019 situation, I personally believe the Khelo India sports event in Gulmarg should be cancelled, Mr. Mattu tweeted on Friday evening. I have conveyed this to the administration as well as the Lieutenant Governor of J&K, Sh. G. C. Murmu. Precautions are vital. PDP president Mehbooba Muftis daughter, Iltija Mufti, has also criticised the administration for allowing the sports event. At a time when Coronovirus (sic) has caused a global health crisis & EU - India summit deferred, J&K admin is organising a massive sports event in Gulmarg. Why should Kashmiris bear a staggering cost for showcasing normalcy? Ms. Iltija, who uses her mothers verified Twitter handle, said. NEW DELHI Stay away from rumours regarding COVID-19, says Modi Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked people to stay away from rumours regarding COVID-19 and emphasised on the need to follow the advice of doctors in this regard. He also asked people to avoid handshakes and start greeting others with namaste once again. Mr. Modi was interacting with owners of Jan Aushadhi Kendras and beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojna (PMBJP) through video conference. I appeal to my fellow countrymen to stay away from rumours regarding coronavirus, Mr. Modi said. We need to follow the advice of doctors in this regard, he said. People should avoid handshakes and start greeting others with namaste once again, the Prime Minister added. Talking about the impact of the PMBJP initiative, he said every month, over one crore families are getting benefits of cheap medicines from these Jan Aushadhi Kendras. Over 6,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country have helped people save between Rs 2,000-2,500 crore, he added. RAJASTHAN, INDIA Barring Italian couple, all suspected COVID-19 cases show negative test results Barring those of an Italian couple, all the samples collected from suspected COVID-19 cases in Rajasthan have tested negative, an official said. The total number of samples tested so far is 282. Of those, 280 have tested negative and two positive (of the Italian couple), Additional Chief Secretary, Medical and Health, Rohit Kumar Singh said. He said no sample was pending as of now. The couple is admitted to the SMS hospital in Jaipur. Mr. Singh said the department was put on alert and all measures were taken to handle the situation. After the confirmation of COVID-19 in the elderly Italian couple, who was part of a group of tourists that visited Jhunjhunu, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Jaipur from February 21 to 28, samples of those who came in contact with them were taken. These samples tested negative at the laboratory of SMS Medical College. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Indian among 15 new COVID-19 cases in UAE An Indian national is among 15 new cases of the deadly coronavirus in the UAE, taking the total number of confirmed infections in the country to 45, health officials have said. The Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP) said in a statement that 13 out of 15 new cases in the UAE recently arrived from abroad. They were diagnosed through early monitoring and reporting systems implemented in the country and are three Emiratis, two individuals from Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia and Iran as well as a person each from Thailand, Morocco, China and India, the statement said. The UAE announces recovery of two cases of COVID-19 and reported a 15 cases of different nationalities have tested positive for the virus, taking to 45 the total infections in the country, the MoHAP tweeted. Five individuals in close contact with COVID-19 patients have also been screened, placed under health quarantine and subjected to preventive measures to curb the spread of the virus in the country, the statement added. All cases are being monitored round-the clock, are in a stable condition and are receiving all necessary health care required, the statement said. FLORIDA, USA 2 dead in Miami who tested COVID-19 positive Florida health officials say two people who tested positive for the new coronavirus have died. The Florida Department of Health said that the two patients who died were in their 70s and had travelled overseas. One of them was a man with underlying health issues in Santa Rosa County, in Floridas Panhandle, according to the statement. It said the second death was that of an elderly person in the Fort Myers area. Florida also raised on Friday the number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19, the new virus strain, from four to seven. Officials had previously announced five Florida residents who had been travelling in China have also been quarantined elsewhere after testing positive for the virus. Florida authorities are announcing both people who have tested positive for the virus in the state as well as Florida residents who have tested positive elsewhere, and who may be part of other state tallies. JAMMU AND KASHMIR, INDIA Two suspected coronavirus patients suffering from high viral load J&K administration has ordered closure of schools in Jammu and Samba after reports of two patients suffering of "high viral load" cases. J&K government spokesman Rohit Kansal said that all primary schools in Jammu and Samba districts have been ordered to be closed immediately till March 31. The reports of tests of these patients are yet to confirm if they have contracted novel Coronavirus or anything else. "There is high probability of them testing positive (for COVID-19)," an official said. -- Peerzada Ashiq KOLKATA, INDIA COVID 19 : Visva Bharati postpones Vasanta Utsav Visva-Bharati has decided to postpone Vasanta Utsav (Celebration of Spring) a century long tradition at the university set up by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. After several hours of meeting on the university\'s executive council on Friday evening, the authorities at Santiniketan announced the decision to postpone the festival which is held on the occasion of Holi. The authorities said that they were left with no option after a letter from Ministry of Human Resource Development which has advised the universities not to have large gatherings on the campus. The authorities cited a letter by University Grants Commission secretary Rajnish Jain. "We were keen on organising the festival this year. The State government was also willing to extend all its cooperation. The crowd this year was expected to about five lakhs. But this year Vasanta Utsav is not happening," Sushovan Banerjee, the president\'s nominee to the University the executive council said. INDIA Finally, India shares two SARS-CoV-2 genome sequences India has finally shared two whole genome sequence data of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) with the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID). The two sequences were shared by the Pune-based National Institute of Virology. This news comes after The Hindu reported on March 4 that India has not shared any genome sequence data with the GISAID. We shared the two sequences with GISAID on March 5 evening, said Priya Abraham, Director of NIV. We had shared the sequences with GenBank about two weeks ago. CHINA China reports 28 virus deaths, rise in new cases outside epicentre China on Saturday reported 28 new deaths from the coronavirus outbreak, bringing the nationwide toll to 3,070. There were 99 fresh cases of infection, according to the National Health Commission, with a rise in new cases outside the virus epicentre of Hubei province for a third consecutive day. There were 25 new cases reported outside the central province, which remains under lockdown in a bid to control the spread of the virus. ITALY Death toll nears 200 in Italy The death toll from an outbreak of coronavirus in Italy has risen by 49 to 197, the Civil Protection Agency said, the largest daily increase in fatalities since the contagion was uncovered two weeks ago. Italy is currently reporting more deaths per day from the virus than any other country in the world and the government this week ordered the closure of schools, universities, cinemas and theatres around the country to try to stem the infections. The cumulative number of cases in the country, which has been the hardest hit in Europe by the epidemic, totalled 4,636 compared with 3,858 on Thursday. TAMIL NADU TN to establish quarantine facilities for persons suspected to have COVID-19 Tamil Nadu is planning to establish full-fledged quarantine facilities for persons suspected to have on the outskirts of Chennai and Madurai, Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar said. We presently have 300 beds in isolation wards across the State, and can increase these if needed. Now, the Chief Minister has allotted special funds to set up separate quarantine wards in the outer areas of Chennai and Madurai. These facilities are to quarantine persons whom we suspect to have coronavirus disease during screenings, on an emergency basis. We are working on establishing these facilities simultaneously, he told reporters on Friday. ANDHRA PRADESH Govt. goes the whole hog to tackle coronavirus in State The government has decided to spend 60 crore on maintenance of special wards in Vijayawada and Anantapur to treat coronavirus patients. The government has also decided to earmark 200 crore to meet exigencies, if any. These apart, a call centre will be set up to disseminate information on the COVID-19 suspected cases. There are no positive cases so far in the State. EUROPEAN UNION EU seeks united front to tackle medical shortages from virus Fearing a possible shortage in masks and protective equipment to fight the new coronavirus, top European Union officials are urging members to put solidarity above national interests as the virus spreads quickly across the continent. Speaking Friday after an urgent meeting in Brussels of health ministers from the 27-country bloc, crisis management commissioner Janez Lenarcic said EU nations are entitled to restrict exports of medical equipment but warned that such decisions could compromise the EUs ability to manage the growing COVID-19 virus crisis. While Italy is the hardest-hit country in Europe, with 197 deaths and over 4,600 cases, more than 6,470 infections have been recorded across the bloc. The epidemic has been spreading at a quicker pace over the past two weeks, leading the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) to raise the risk of coronavirus infection from moderate to high. Preparedness has to be enhanced still further because simply it is more probable that what we have now in Italy will happen elsewhere in Europe, Lenarcic said. SOUTH KOREA S.Korea confirms 174 new coronavirus cases, total to 6,767 South Korea\'s new confirmed coronavirus cases on Saturday rose by 174 from late Friday, taking the national tally to 6,767, the Korea Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (KCDC) said. The death toll remained unchanged at 44 from late Friday, the KCDC added. The number of the contagious disease has spiked in South Korea since mid-February when a 61-year-old woman known as Patient 31 tested positive after attending religious services at a branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus in the southeastern city of Daegu. The coronavirus, which emerged in China, has spread to more than 90 countries, infecting more than 100,000 people and killing over 3,400 people globally. UNITED NATIONS Coronavirus: UN asks 9 countries to delay peacekeeper rotations The United Nations has asked nine countries, including China, South Korea and France, to delay by three months the rotations of their UN peacekeeping forces due to the coronavirus outbreak. The request was made on Friday to the countries to maintain operational strength and execute their mandated tasks, diplomatic sources at the UN said. The nine countries also include Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal, India, Italy and Germany all of which have experienced significant outbreaks of the COVID-19 virus. The UN peacekeeping missions, known as the Blue Helmets, are under constant reassessment in relation to the rotations of the soldiers and police, who are deployed to the mission by their home countries. The UN wants to keep the deployed troops healthy while maintaining the continuity of the operations. The Blue Helmets have around 100,000 people in peacekeeping operations in 15 countries. USA Overall risk to the American public from COVID-19 remains low: Trump US President Donald Trump has said the overall risk to the American public from deadly COVID-19 remains low. "I think at this point, the overall risk to the American public does remain low," Mr. Trump told reporters on Friday after he visited Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) headquarters in Atlanta. According to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus tracker at least 299 cases of COVID-19 have been detected in the US and 14 people have died due to it. The total number of cases globally stands at 101,88 with 3,460 deaths, as per the data compiled by the university. India has reported 31 cases of COVID-19, the university said. COVID-19 OUTBREAK Coronavirus infects 100,000-plus worldwide Twenty-one people aboard a cruise ship that was barred from docking in San Francisco have tested positive for coronavirus, U.S. officials said on Friday, adding to the more than 100,000 cases of the fast-spreading illness across the world. Vice President Mike Pence, recently appointed as the U.S. government\'s point man on the outbreak, said the cruise ship Grand Princess will be brought to an unspecified non-commercial port where all 2,400 some passengers and 1,100 crew members will now be tested. Those that need to be quarantined, will be quarantined. Those that require additional medical attention will receive it, Pence told reporters at the White House. OUTBREAK IN CRUISE SHIP 21 people test positive for virus aboard cruise ship off San Francisco Twenty-one people have tested positive for COVID-19 aboard a cruise ship denied entry to San Francisco Bay this week after a number of passengers and crew developed flu-like symptoms on the vessel, which was linked to previously confirmed COVID-19 infections. U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, announcing results of the tests during a White House briefing, also said the cruise ship Grand Princess will be brought to an unspecified non-commercial port where all passengers and crew, about 3,500 people, will be tested for COVID-19. Diagnostic test kits were flown by an Air National Guard helicopter on Thursday to the cruise ship, where medical staff took samples from 46 passengers and crew to determine if they have contracted the respiratory virus. ON N95 MASK Want N95 mask? Get doctors prescription In a new mandate to curb unnecessary demand, the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration on Friday said that chemists cannot sell N95 masks without a doctors prescription. The FDA also warned that serious action would be taken against those who are found selling masks at high prices or hoarding them. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and N95 masks are being sold at very high prices in medical shops.The State has received many complaints about the same. It has also been found that many are making bulk purchases and hording PPE kits and N95 masks, FDA commissioner Arun Unhale stated in his circular, adding that it is now compulsory to sell the kits and masks only on doctors prescription., A nurse shows medical equipment at Villa Nueva hospital where patients who might be infected with the new coronavirus, COVID-19, will be cared for, in Villa Nueva municipality, south of Guatemala City, on March 7, 2020 In India, the total number of COVID-19 cases has increased to 39. , with 3,500 dead across 95 nations and territories. In India, , with five persons in Kerala being admitted to Pathanamthitta General Hospital with fever on Sunday. China\'s new confirmed case count of the coronavirus cases fell by roughly one half, according to official data, as the disease continues to subside in its country of origin. South Korea on Sunday reported 93 new COVID-19 cases from late Saturday, for a total of 7,134 in the country, Yonhap news agency reported, citing health officials. COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% Here are the latest updates: SINGAPORE A dozen new cases of coronavirus have been reported in Singapore, taking the total number of people infected by the deadly virus in the country to 150, the Health Ministry here said on Sunday. Out of the 12 new cases reported, nine are in critical condition in the intensive care units of hospitals. The latest infections bring Singapores total number of COVID-19 cases to 150 BANGLADESH Bangladesh on Sunday confirmed its first three cases of coronavirus in the country, said the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). The affected people are aged between 20 and 35 and two of them returned from Italy recently, IEDCR Director Meerjady Sabrina told reporters. - Reuters Sharad Pawar urges Jaishankar to help Indians stranded in Iran NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday urged External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to see that the Indians stranded in Iran in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak there get medical help and general assistance. Iran is among the countries grappling with the outbreak of coronavirus, In the wake of the alarming Covid-19 issue, I voiced my concerns to Dr. S. Jaishankar ji, Union Minister of External Affairs regarding more than 40 Indian citizens stranded at Qom city in Iran. They are distressed and in urgent need of medical help and general assistance, Mr. Pawar tweeted. The virus has spread to all of Irans 31 provinces with 6,566 confirmed cases. Iran has closed schools and universities until early April, as well as suspended major cultural and sporting events and reduced working hours across the country to slow the contagion. -PTI BEIJING, CHINA Beijing International Film Festival postponed The 10th Beijing International Film Festival (BJIFF) has been postponed until further notice in view of the coronavirus epidemic, the festivals organising committee announced on Sunday. The movie gala was scheduled to take place between April 19-26. The annual festival has been deferred in consideration of the safety and health of all the guests, participants and the public, as well as to coordinate with the overall epidemic prevention work in the city. We apologise for the inconvenience caused by the postponement of the event and we will announce the possible date of the festival as soon as possible, the statement read. - PTI SOUTH AFRICA South Africas coronavirus toll hits three The wife of South Africas first patient tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday becoming the third confirmed case in the country, the health authority said. All three of South Africas confirmed cases were in a group of 10 people who had travelled to Italy, the health minister said in a statement. Italy has seen the most deaths from the COVID-19 disease of any country outside China, where the outbreak that has now killed more than 3,500 people and infected over 105,000 worldwide began in December. Authorities said they had successfully traced all the individuals who went to Italy, although one of the group was not in South Africa. The test results of the other six group members were expected within 48 hours. South Africa reported its first case on Thursday. On Sunday the health ministry reported that the patient was now upbeat and jovial, and asymptomatic. NEW DELHI, INDIA Healthy people need not wear masks, says Delhi CM Kejriwal Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that healthy people in the Capital need not wear a mask to protect themselves from . People tended to constantly adjust their masks and touch their face, thereby of infection in case they had already touched contaminated things. Frequent washing of hands with soap and water was the best . Masks and hand sanitisers only give a false sense of security. There is no substitute for frequent handwashing, he said. NEW DELHI, INDIA AIIMS asked to designate part of new emergency wing for setting up isolation beds Augmenting facilities to deal with novel coronavirus, the Union Health Ministry has asked the AIIMS administration to designate a part of the new emergency wing of its Jai Prakash Narayan Apex Trauma Centre for setting up of isolation beds for suspected COVID-19 patients. This isolation facility will have a capacity to hold about 20 patients at a given point of time and once confirmed to be positive, the patient concerned will be transferred to NCI Jajhar for treatment, official sources said. A separate entry gate has been delineated which will receive patients from the ambulance bay. Based on the history and severity, patients will be triaged as Red, Yellow or Green case. Besides, the Ministry has asked the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in Jhajjar to augment its isolation bed capacity to 125 from the existing 25. Also, the Jawaharlal Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Pondicherry has been asked to keep aside 13 beds for isolating patients while six other AIIMS have been directed to keep an isolation bed capacity between 12-15 for coronavirus patients, which can be scaled up to 30 if need arises, the official said. TAMIL NADU, INDIA Coronavirus: 18 Indians among those stranded in cruise ship in Egypt Eighteen Indians, all from Tamil Nadu, are stranded in cruise ship A Sara that remains anchored in the Nile, near the city of Luxor in Egypt, for the fifth day after 33 passengers and 12 crew members were tested positive for COVID-19. A passenger from Coimbatore, speaking to The Hindu over phone, said that they, most of them aged above 50, were in a state of panic as they were yet to hear from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Embassy in Egypt about evacuation efforts. Of the 18 Tamilians, one passenger, an engineer from Chennai, was shifted to a hospital in the port city of Alexandria on Saturday after he developed symptoms of COVID-19. TAMIL NADU, INDIA Baseless rumours being spread linking broiler chicken with infection, says T.N. Minister Baseless rumours were being spread in Tamil Nadu linking broiler chicken and COVID-19, Minister for Animal Husbandry Udumalai K. Radhakrishnan said on Sunday. The Minister participated in a programme (kaalkol vizha) ahead of foundation stone laying for the Tiruppur Medical College Hospital to be held soon. Speaking to mediapersons after the event, Mr. Radhakrishnan urged the public to not believe the rumours regarding broiler chicken, as the Department of Health and Family Welfare had clarified that consumption of chicken did not cause COVID-19. The Minister noted that Amma Mobile Medical Ambulance services offered by the Animal Husbandry Department visited the residences of farmers to provide vaccination for foot-and-mouth disease for cattle. Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami would lay the foundation stone for the Tiruppur Medical College Hospital on March 15, Mr. Radhakrishnan said. MLAs from the district, Collector K. Vijayakarthikeyan, Deputy Commissioner of Police V. Badri Narayanan, Tiruppur Government Hospital Dean Valli Sathyamoorthy and other officials were present at the event, a release said. ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA Arunachal Pradesh bans entry of foreigners The Arunachal Pradesh government has decided to temporarily suspend issuing Protected Area Permits (PAPs) to foreigners to check the spread of coronavirus, officials said on Sunday. Foreigners require PAPs to enter the state that shares a border with China. Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar directed all PAP issuing authorities to suspend the issue of permits till further orders, they said. It is learnt that Covid-19 positive cases have been detected in India and the numbers have been increasing. It is also learnt that the spread of the coronavirus in India is primarily from visitors who had history of travelling abroad recently or through tourists who have visited India, the government order said. In order to prevent the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19) in Arunachal Pradesh, it has been decided to temporarily suspend issuing Protected Area Permit (PAP)..., it added. The move comes days after Sikkim announced similar curbs on visit of foreigners. MALDIVES Maldives confirms first two coronavirus cases The Maldives has curbed movement on several resort islands, authorities said on Sunday, after the country reported its first two cases of coronavirus. The two infected people, who are both staff at the Kuredu Island Resort, tested positive late on Saturday. They are believed to have caught the disease from an Italian tourist who has returned to Italy and tested positive there. There are more than 1,400 people on the island, split equally between guests and staff, according to the tourism ministry. Officials at the Kuredu Island Resort were not immediately reachable for comment. KERALA, INDIA Five more people from Kerala test positive Five persons from Ranni in Pathanamthitta have been admitted to Pathanamthitta General Hospital with fever and symptoms of COVID-19 infection. With this, the total number of COVID-19 positive cases rises to 39. NEW YORK, USA New York declares state of emergency Two more people succumbed to COVID-19 in Washington state, officials said on Saturday, bringing the nationwide toll to 19, while the number of confirmed cases in New York jumped by 21 overnight and a cruise ship with infected passengers remained stranded outside San Francisco. More than half of all U.S. states have reported cases of COVID-19, which originated in China last year and causes the sometimes deadly respiratory illness COVID-19. As the outbreak takes root, daily life has become increasingly disrupted, with concerts and conferences canceled and universities telling students to stay home and take classes online. Organizers of the Conservative Political Action Conference, a high-profile annual gathering that took place in Maryland last month, said on Saturday one of their attendees had tested positive for the virus after exposure prior to the event. The person had no interactions with President Donald Trump or Vice President Mike Pence, who were in attendance, the American Conservative Union said in a statement. WASHINGTON, USA Officials confirm first COVID-19 case in Washington A man in his 50s tested positive for COVID-19 the first presumptively confirmed case in Washington and another person who travelled through the city has also tested positive in Maryland, officials said. District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser said Saturday the man in the initial case started exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 in late February. He was admitted to a Washington hospital on Thursday and appeared to have no history of international travel and no close contacts to any other confirmed cases across the U.S., Bowser said. "With his test yielding presumptive positive, D.C. Health has started its investigation in keeping with CDC guidelines, Bowser said. The investigation includes tracing the mans movements, though the mayor declined to say where in Washington the man lived. Virginia recorded its first case Saturday when a U.S. Marine stationed at Fort Belvoir was found to have the virus. ITALY Italy closes cinemas, theatres, museums nationwide in virus lockdown: govt Italy has closed museums, theatres, cinemas and other entertainment venues nationwide to fight the spread of the coronavirus, said a decree signed on Sunday by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. On top of the forced quarantine of 15 million people in vast areas of northern Italy until April 3, the government has also closed schools, nightclubs and casinos throughout the country, according to the text of the decree published on the government website. With more than 230 fatalities, Italy has recorded the most deaths from the COVID-19 disease of any country outside China, where the outbreak began in December. ARGENTINA Argentina announces first COVID-19 death in Latin America A 64-year-old man died in Argentina as a result of the new coronavirus, the first such death in Latin America, health authorities announced. The Ministry of Health said the patient lived in Buenos Aires and had been confirmed with COVID-19 after coming down with a cough, fever and sore throat following a recent trip to Europe. The patient, who suffered kidney failure, had a history of diabetes, hypertension and bronchitis before being infected with the virus, a statement said. He had been in intensive care since being admitted to a public hospital Wednesday. Officials said the man was not one of the eight confirmed COVID-19 cases previously reported for Argentina, but his case was confirmed by tests Saturday. Research is underway to determine who the patient had been in contact with, authorities said. Elsewhere in the region, officials in Peru announced five new cases of COVID-19 infection Saturday, raising the countrys total to six. Paraguay reported its first case, and Chile said it now had seven confirmed cases, up from five. Costa Ricas Health Ministry confirmed four new cases of coronavirus, in addition to that of a case involving an American woman announced Friday. Her husband was among the new cases. Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia also have reported confirmed cases of the new coronavirus. SOUTH KOREA South Korea coronavirus cases increases to 7,134 South Korea on Sunday reported 93 new coronavirus cases from late Saturday, for a total of 7,134 in the country, Yonhap news agency reported, citing health officials. The increase in cases was lower than the same period a day before, though health officials have warned that numbers could fluctuate as more tests are processed CHINA China reports 27 new virus deaths, lowest rise in cases since January China on Sunday reported its lowest number of since January, with nearly all the 44 new cases in the outbreak epicentre Wuhan. There were 27 new deaths from the virus, all in Wuhan and the lowest in more than a month, bringing the nationwide toll to 3,097, according to the National Health Commission. ITALY Italy poised to lock down Lombardy after COVID-19 jump Italy is set to impose a virtual lockdown on its wealthiest and most populous region, which includes the financial capital Milan, as part of tough new measures to try to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. The new rules include telling people not to enter or leave Lombardy, which is home to some 10 million people, as well as 11 provinces in four of Italy\'s 19 other regions, according to a draft decree seen by Reuters. All museums, gyms, cultural centres, ski resorts and swimming pools will be shut in the targeted areas, according to the decree, which was due to come into force from Sunday but was delayed after local politicians asked for more time to review the restrictions. The head of the civil protection agency said on Saturday the decree would be presented later in the day, after data showed the number of COVID-19 infections jumped by more than 1,200 in the past 24 hours. SOCIAL MEDIA ADVISORY Facebook says it will ban ads for medical face masks Facebook is temporarily banning advertisements for medical face masks as part of an effort to prevent use of its platform to exploit peoples concerns about the new coronavirus. The ban covers advertisements on the social media platform as well as commercial listings on Facebook Marketplace, the company said. Facebook said it would begin to enforce the ban over the next few days. Our teams are monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely and will make necessary updates to our policies if we see people trying to exploit this public health emergency, Rob Leathern, Facebooks director of product management, said in a statement issued. Facebook noted that it previously announced a ban on ads that make claims about the health benefits of a particular product or guaranteed that a product will prevent someone from contracting the disease. Some public health officials have urged people to stop buying masks. U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome M. Adams noted in a tweet on February 29 that masks arent effective in protecting the general public but if healthcare providers cant get them to care for sick patients, it puts them and our communities at risk! In a separate development, Amtrak announced that it was cancelling its nonstop Acela passenger train service between Washington, D.C., and New York City through late May because of a sharp drop in demand. That service will be cancelled starting Tuesday and through May 28, Amtrak said. The cancellation does not affect Amtraks other high-speed Acela service connecting Washington, New York and Boston, which runs several times per day with limited stops. USA U.S. Marine in DC-area contracts virus, says Pentagon A U.S. Marine in the Washington D.C.-area who recently returned from travel overseas has tested positive for the COVID-19, the Pentagon said on Saturday, in what would be the third confirmed case of a U.S. servicemember contracting the virus. The other two U.S. troops are in Italy and South Korea. A U.S Marine assigned to Fort Belvoir, VA, tested positive today for COVID-19 and is currently being treated at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said in a statement posted on Twitter. The Marine recently returned from overseas where he was on official business. (Defence Secretary Mark) Esper and the White House have been briefed. SINGAPORE Singapore reports 8 more COVID-19 cases, including one in PMs ward Singapore has recorded eight new cases of COVID-19, including one in Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loongs constituency, taking the total number of people infected by the deadly virus in the city-state to 138. The cases reported on Saturday also include the patrons at a private dinner at an armed forces club and one case was linked to a church. On Saturday evening, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said one of the new COVID-19 cases is from his constituency of Teck Ghees Zone J. He called on members of the zone to cooperate with the Health Ministry if they are approached and to share information fully in order to reduce the risk of transmission. Effective Saturday, a 14-day suspension was imposed on all activities and classes attended by the confirmed cases at the affected community clubs and residents committees. Giving update on Saturday, the Health Ministry announced precautionary measures at seven community clubs and eight residents committees, after it was found that some patients had attended dinner at the army officer club SAFRA Jurong, reported local television network Channel News Asia. TAMIL NADU, INDIA One person in Tamil Nadu tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 One of the samples sent for testing in Tamil Nadu has come back as positive for SARS-CoV-2 (). The patient, a 45-year-old male from Kancheepuram district, has a history of travelling to Muscat, Oman. He has been admitted to the isolation ward at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, in Chennai. Confirming this, top State health officials said he has been advised home quarantine since he landed and reported some symptoms. His samples were sent for testing and the results were received on March 7. HEALTH MINISTRY, INDIA Coronavirus How is India containing COVID-19? On March 8, Indias Health Ministry said the total number of the highly contagious cases in the country had . In December 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) had declared an outbreak of the febrile respiratory illness of unknown etiology from Wuhan, Hubei Province of China. The outbreak was involving the sale of seafood and live animals. Later , it has now spread to more than 90 countries apart from China, there are 101,923 confirmed cases and 3,486 deaths from 94 countries, areas and territories (as on March 7, 10:00 CET). the outbreak as a . TELANGANA Private hospitals play safe on isolation wards advisory There was mixed response to the State governments advisory to private hospitals on the measures to be taken for treatment of COVID-19 suspect cases and setting up of isolation wards, special counters and training of doctors and para-medical staff to prevent its transmission. Majority of the private hospital doctors said they are ready to provide treatment to COVID-19 suspect cases if the patients visit their hospitals and after suspecting the virus they would immediately refer the cases to Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad or to the district headquarters hospital for treatment at an isolation ward. We cannot open special isolation wards in our own hospitals and provide treatment to the patients suffering COVID-19, said a senior IMA leader of Karimnagar district. TELANGANA Gandhi Hospital to provide WiFi for COVID suspects suspects who are admitted in isolation wards of Gandhi Hospital would be provided with WiFi Internet. Telangana Health Minister Eatala Rajender said that the service is provided as people holding jobs too are admitted there. To remove apprehensions among people, the Health Minister met the index (first) COVID patient from Hyderabad by visiting the COVID ICU on Friday night. Completely covered in Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), he stood beside a glass window facing the patient and spoke to him over phone. Thereafter, he met suspects of the infection at the isolation ward located in seventh floor of the hospitals main building., A medic wearing a facemask talks on her phone in the premises of Kasturba Hospital, where a special ward is set up for providing treatment to novel coronavirus patients, in Mumbai, Thursday, March 5, 2020. Kerala Health Minister K.K. Shailaja said the State had been put on high alert in the wake of the new cases. As many as 45 confirmed cases of have been reported across India, after six people were tested positive for the virus in Kerala and two fresh cases in Karnataka and Punjab. Kerala Health Minister K.K. Shailaja said the State had been put on high alert in the wake of the new cases. Explained: Meanwhile, China, the epicentre of the virus, has reported 22 new deaths from the deadly coronavirus, the lowest number of fatalities in more than a month, taking the death toll to 3,119. COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% Here are the latest updates: MAHARASHTRA Pune couple tests positive for COVID-19 The novel (COVID-19) made its way to Maharashtra with two Pune residents with travel history to Dubai testing positive on Monday. State health officials said that the husband and wife had returned to India on March 1 but reported to the hospital on Monday after developing mild symptoms. Their samples were immediately sent for testing and both were positive for COVID-19, said Dr Archana Patil of Directorate of Health Services (DHS), Maharashtra. We are now in the process of tracing the contacts of both the patients, said Dr Patil adding that they have been admitted to the isolation facility at Naidu Hospital and are being closely monitored. As on Monday, nearly 5255 samples have been tested for the new virus from across the country. In Maharashtra, more than 16,500 travellers have been screened at the airports. A press statement issued by the State health department said that Punes divisional commissioner Dr Deepak Mhaisekar has advised people to avoid large gatherings and enjoy the Holi festivities with close family members at home. Jyoti Shelar Passengers from the U.S., France and Spain to be segregated at all airports Passengers from 15 countries, including the US, France and Spain, will also be segregated from other passengers till the conveyer belt areas at airports, according to the AAI. Passengers arriving from China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Iran, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Hongkong, Vietnam, Nepal and Indonesia are already being segregated from other arriving passengers at the airports. An Airports Authority of India (AAI) spokesperson said passengers from the US, France and Spain would also be segregated. AAI Chairman Arvind Singh along with officials from the health ministry and aviation regulator DGCA, among others, reviewed arrangements made at all international airports to control the spread of coronavirus. Airports advised to include pax frm US, France and Spain to the list of nations (now 15) from where arriving pax needs segregatn as per @MoHFW\_INDIA, the AAI said in a tweet. On Sunday, an official release said that in view of rising cases from France, the US, Spain, there would be dedicated aerobridges for passengers from these countries in addition to the 12 countries. Screening of passengers coming from all parts of the world is being carried out at 30 airports. - PTI Sri Lanka suspends Buddhist pilgrimage tours to India Sri Lanka on Monday suspended Buddhist pilgrimage tours to India in view of the coronavirus outbreak, saying these trips are mostly undertaken by elderly people who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. A majority who go on these trips are elderly people who would be vulnerable to the threat from Coronavirus, Dr. Anil Jasinghe, the Director General of Health Services said. The religious tour, popularly known as Dambadiva Vandana, involves trips to Buddhist shrines in Bodhgaya, Varanasi and Sarnath in India and Lumbini in Nepal. The Sri Lankan governments move is part of a host of precautionary measures following the virus outbreak which include, the Sri Lankan Airlines suspending flights to China and Saudi Arabia indefinitely and all passengers coming from South Korea, Iran and Italy being sent to quarantine centres in the Eastern province. While the virus has not claimed any life in Sri Lanka, it has warned against adverse affects on the tourism and export sectors. There has only been one reported case of COVID-19 in the island nation. A female Chinese tourist was discharged from hospital late last month after she recovered from the infection. - PTI First COVID-19 case in Karnataka, Punjab Karnataka has reported its first COVID-19 case in Bengaluru. An IT professional who returned from US tests positive, says Minister K Sudhakar. An official in Punjab said that "Man who returned from Italy confirmed positive for coronavirus in Punjab, first case in State." Mizorams international borders to be sealed Mizorams borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh will be sealed and the entry of foreigners banned to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the State, a top official said on Monday. Mizoram shares a 510km border with Myanmar and a 318km border with Bangladesh. State chief secretary Lalnunmawia Chuaungo said in a meeting convened by Chief Minister Zoramthanga on Monday, it was decided that the borders with the two countries will be sealed to prevent the spread of coronavirus. All who came in contact with infected people quarantined: Kejriwal As the fourth case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said the Centre and the Delhi government are working in close coordination to check the spread of the disease and all those who came in contact with the infected people have been quarantined. After a review meeting with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on the preparedness for COVID-19, the chief minister told reporters here that people arriving from foreign countries are being screened at airports. A campaign will be run to make people aware about preventive measures to contain the spread of the disease, Kejriwal said. The meeting was also attended by Lt Governor Anil Baijal, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain, municipal mayors and officials of the Delhi government. We have successfully been able to contain the spread of COVID-19 because both the governments are working in a coordinated manner. People are also very alert and are cooperating with us to a large extent, the chief minister said. The number of COVID-19 cases in India rose to 43 on Monday with four people, one each from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kerala, testing positive, Health Ministry officials said on Monday The Chief Minister said that most of the COVID-19 cases have so far been from those who have travelled back from other countries. All the people who came in contact with the infected people have been identified and quarantined, which has contained the outbreak of the virus, Mr. Kejriwal said. Airport authorities have been directed to conduct thermal screening of the passengers and those from Delhi are also being monitored consistently for 14 days for any symptoms, he also said. All DTC, cluster buses and Delhi Metro trains to be disinfected daily The Delhi government launched a drive to disinfect all DTC and cluster buses, and Metro trains on a regular basis in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak. According to the government, it has also started displaying the advisories in ISBTs, bus depots, Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and cluster buses to inform the commuters about the symptoms, mode of transmission of COVID-19 and Dos and Donts for the disease. A 24x7 control room has also been set up at DGHS headquarters to deal with every query. Delhi has so far reported four cases of coronavirus. The government is taking precautionary measures at several levels, and especially in public transport system. To deal with this situation, all the buses and metros are being cleaned with disinfectants, the government said in a statement. Govt asks CAPFs to prepare over 5,400-bedded quarantine facilities pan-India The government has directed the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) to prepare quarantine facilities with a bed capacity to admit over 5,400 people to deal with cases of coronavirus across the country, officials said on March 9. These forces, comprising the Central Reserve Police Force, the Border Security Force, the Central Industrial Security Force, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the Sashastra Seema Bal and the National Security Guard, have also been asked to create 75 isolation wards as part of preparations to combat possible large-scale outbreak of the virus. Officials told PTI that the Union Home Ministry has asked these forces to create a total of 5,440-bed capacity at 37 locations in the country. 75 isolation wards are also to be created at these locations by these forces, they said. The aim is to build capacity. These forces have also been asked to earmark and depute their respective teams of doctors, paramedics and sanitation officials who will man these quarantine facilities, a senior Home Ministry officer said. Airport to scan passengers at domestic terminal too In view of fresh cases of coronavirus in Kerala, the Cochin International Airport Limited on Monday decided to extend the screening of passengers from the international terminal to the domestic one as well. The screening had started at the airport for international passengers on March 3. As new cases were emerging, CIAL decided to extend the universal screening to domestic passengers. New health counters were added to both international and domestic arrival areas, a CIAL statement said. On an average, the airport handles arrival of 15,000 passengers every day, it said. Meanwhile, the number of COVID-19 cases in Kerala has risen to six, with a three-year old child returning to the state from Italy and testing positive for the infection, officials said. Foreign tourists entry to Lakshadweep stopped, says MP As part of precautionary measures against the coronavirus in Lakshadweep, the administration has decided to stop entry of foreign tourists to the islands, Mohammed Faizal, MP, said on Monday. He told PTI that no restrictions have been imposed on the entry of domestic tourists to the island. However, entry would be allowed only after they are properly screened at passenger reporting centres at Kochi, Kozhikode and Agatti, he said. Indias smallest Union Territory, Lakshadweep, is an archipelago consisting of 36 islands with an area of 32 sq km. All islands are 220 to 440 km from the coastal city of Kochi in Kerala. AI Express to offer free rescheduling of tickets Air India Express on March 9 said passengers can reschedule their tickets free of cost for all bookings made between March 12-31, in the wake of . In view of the uncertain travel situation due to COVID-19, free date change will be permitted up to three days prior to the flight departure, for all new bookings effected between March 12, 2020 to March 31, 2020, for travel up to April 30, 2020, the airline said in a statement. Cancellations charge would be applicable. Iran death toll rises to 237 Iran on March 9 reported 43 new deaths from in the past 24 hours, bringing the overall toll to 237 dead. Confirmed cases in Germany top 1,000 The number of COVID-19 cases in Germany has passed 1,000, official data from the Robert Koch Institute disease control centre showed on March 9. There are now a total of 1,112 confirmed cases in Europe\'s biggest economy, with the region of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) reporting 484 infections the highest number among Germany\'s 16 states. In a bid to slow contagion, Health Minister Jens Spahn has called for gatherings of more than 1,000 people to be scrapped across Germany, which could affect many events including Bundesliga football matches. NEW DELHI 2.30 PM Govt prepared to deal with coronavirus, Health Ministry sending directives to states: Vardhan Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday said the government is prepared to deal with novel coronavirus and his ministry is sending directives, including guidelines, to states in all the languages on ways to contain it. We are sending detailed guidelines to all states on ways to contain coronavirus. Have asked states to strengthen laboratories and manpower to effectively deal with coronavirus and form early rapid action teams, Mr. Vardhan told reporters adding, that the government is prepared to deal with the infection. The Health Minister chaired a review and coordination meeting with Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, mayors of the Municipal Corporations of Delhi and senior officials of various departments. We cant take it easy or be over confident. We have to be ready, monitor regularly and ensure robust contact tracing," Mr. Vardhan added. He urged people to avoid mass gatherings and explained: "Mask is not for all. Only those unwell need to use it." Mr. Vardhan stressed on coordinated action between all concerned departments and agencies for activities such as contact tracing, community surveillance, hospital management, identification of isolation wards, ensuring adequate personal protection equipment and masks and risk communication for mass awareness. - PTI Telcos using caller tune to spread awareness The government has ordered all telecom firms to make a 30-second audio clip on as a caller tune of mobile phone users to create awareness among masses an order that state-owned BSNL and Reliance Jio have fully complied with while other telcos are yet to follow. Top sources said on a request from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) ordered superseding of the phone ringing tone that one hears on dialling a number, with the 30-second information clip. The only exception to not hearing the message is when a user has subscribed to a particular tune, they said. KERALA Govt. warns of action against those hiding travel history The Health Department has warned that it will not hesitate to take legal action against persons who do not divulge their history of travel to or contact with nations from where COVID-19 has been reported and later turn out to have contracted the potentially lethal virus. Health Minister K.K. Shylaja Health Minister K.K. Shylaja said the Health Departments priority now was to provide the best of care to the COVID-19 patients. But those keeping their travel history a secret just to avoid personal inconvenience, were committing a crime to society and would definitely invite further action, she said. The family that returned from Italy had endangered the entire State by their irresponsible behaviour. 43 cases of COVID-19 in India, says Health Ministry Four new cases of COVID-19 have tested positive in a India taking the total number of cases to 43 on Monday. Four new cases of COVID-19 have been reported since Sunday. One case each has been reported from Kerala, Delhi, UP and Jammu. 40 are active cases of COVID-19 in the country, said an official release from the Union Health Ministry. Coronavirus Can masks protect you? Volume 90% The Health Ministry has appealed to the people to kindly observe the Dos and Donts, coughing etiquettes, hand-washing and avoid large gatherings. QATAR Qatar bans entry of people from India Qatar has temporarily banned entry of people coming from India and 13 other countries in the wake of coronavirus outbreak. The temporary ban would also be applicable on people coming from Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria and Thailand. This decision comes as a preventive measure due to the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide, Qatar government said in a statement dated March 8. Flagship carrier Qatar Airways has also stopped flights from India, sources said. Four new cases reported Three new cases of coronavirus have been reported in the country, taking the number of cases to 42, Union Health Ministry officials said on Monday. One new case each has been reported from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, the officials said, adding that no deaths have been reported yet. KARNATAKA Passenger leaves the hospital against medical advice A patient who was of the Government Wenlock Hospital on Sunday night, reportedly left the hospital against medical advice on the early hours of Monday. The person hailing from the city had arrived at the Mangaluru International Airport from Dubai on Sunday evening. He was found to be having a fever during the medical screening at the airport. An ambulance was sent from the city to bring him to the isolation ward of the hospital for tests related to . Before the staff could come, the passenger reportedly left the hospital. More details are awaited. KARNATAKA Karnataka warns action against pharmacies selling drugs that claim to prevent COVID-19 As more people are getting increasingly anxious about COVID-19, many medical stores in the city are using this opportunity to sell medicines claiming they would help prevent getting infected. A medical shop in Bengaluru selling medicines that claim to prevent COVID-19. Tanu Kulkarni When The Hindu visited some medical shops, the shopkeepers were selling these medicines claiming that they are safe and will ensure people do not get affected by COVID-19. One of the shops even had a separate rack labelled Prevention of corona. While some of these medicines come in the form of pills that do not have labels, some stores are also selling Arsenic Alb 30 P and made tall claims that it would ensure that people who consume it would be safe from the virus. TELANGANA In breach of protocol, COVID-19 samples fetched from VIPs home in Telangana Amid intense efforts by Health officials to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the State, a hush-hush task was taken up last Wednesday. Samples from two young family members of a Telangana political leader were collected from their home, in what is a clear violation of protocol. The duo in question had travelled to Dubai in February. Sources said at least three persons were sent in a vehicle on Wednesday to collect the sample from the suspected patients house on the city outskirts. Officials in the know heaved a sigh of relief when the samples collected from them tested negative the following day. PAKISTAN Another coronavirus patient identified in Pakistan; total cases rise to 7 A 50-year-old man has been tested positive for the deadly coronavirus in Pakistan, taking the total number of the COVID-19 infections in the country to seven. The new case was found in Karachi on Sunday. This is the seventh case in Pakistan though one has already recovered and discharged, while another one is ready to be discharged, Zafar Mirza, the special assistant to the prime minister on National Health Services, said on his official Twitter handle on Sunday. Sensex nosedives over 1,500 points on global equity rout, sinking oil prices Equity benchmark Sensex plummeted over 1,500 points in opening session on Monday led by deepening rout in global markets amid rapidly-spreading coronavirus and . Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures plunged nearly 30% to $32.11 per barrel after top exporter Saudi Arabia launched a price war in response to a failure by leading producers to strike a deal to support energy markets. Continuing its downward spiral, the 30-share index was plunged 1515.01 points, or 4.03 %, to 36,061.61. The NSE Nifty too cracked 417.05 points, or 3.80%, to 10,572.40. KERALA Police turn back foreign tourists from Attukal Pongala locality In a bid to forestall further COVID-19 infections, the Kerala police on Monday turned back some foreign tourists from the Attukal Pongala festival area. Thousands of women have assembled within a six-km square radius of the famed temple to participate in the festival. Many have been sleeping rough since Sunday to secure an open ground to offer the sacrament, a mix of rice and jaggery cooked on open hearths. Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran told newspersons that the tourists were holidaying at Kovalam and the spectacle had attracted them. The government had instructed hoteliers to counsel foreigners against visiting congested places, given the global outbreak. The government has sent back law enforcers, including women officers, who it had requisitioned from Pathanamthitta to help police the festival. All set for pongala: Devotees get ready to light pongala fire in Thiruvananthapuram. The virus had resurfaced in the district last week when a arrived from Italy and established contact with their friends, neighbours and relatives. Mr. Surendran said the government ran a certain amount of risk by allowing the festivities to go ahead. But, a decision to cancel the festival would have upended months of planning. JAMMU AND KASHMIR First confirmed coronavirus case in J-K A 63-year-old woman tested positive for coronavirus in Jammu, making her the first confirmed case in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Monday. The woman, who had a travel history to Iran, was among two patients who were declared high viral load cases by the administration on the weekend. They are undergoing treatment at the isolation ward of the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital and are in a stable condition, the officials said. The test report of the woman patient is positive, while the report of the other patient is still awaited, a Health Department official said. - PTI KERALA Three-year-old tests positive in Kochi A three-year-old child, who arrived at Kochi on March 7 from Italy via Dubai and was immediately taken to the isolation ward of Ernakulam Medical College, has tested positive for COVID-19. A woman with a child walks past a notice board outside the Special Isolation Ward set up to provide treatment to novel coronavirus patients outside Government Medical College in Ernakulam on February 5, 2020. Samples collected from the childs parents have now been sent to NIV, Alappuzha, for testing. The Cochin International Airport Ltd had introduced universal screening since March 3 and the child, with high fever, was taken straightway in a special ambulance of the health department to the isolation ward. The child\'s parents are also admitted there, said district administration officials. ANDHRA PRADESH TTD to get thermal guns for screening devotees The widespread scare of seems to have no impact on the rush to Tirumala, the abode of Lord Sri Venkateswara. The average number of devotees remains at 75,000 per day touching close to 1 lakh during weekends. The rush is expected to increase in the ensuing holidays. A majority of pilgrims visiting Tirumala belongs to Tamil Nadu. In view of , the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has advised devotees against visiting the Venkateswara temple not to come for darsan if they have even slightest symptoms of cold, sore throat or fever., Sand artist Manas Sahoo creates a sand sculpture with a message \'Avoid Color Avoid Corona\' during Holi celebration, at a beach, in Puri, Monday, March 9, 2020. The Government of India has directed the Central Armed Police Forces to prepare quarantine facilities with a bed capacity to admit over 5,400 people Fourteen fresh cases of have been reported on Tuesday, taking the total number of cases to 61. The number of confirmed cases in India stood at 47 on March 9. Explained: COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% Here are the latest updates: WEDNESDAY 12.10 AM J&K administration orders closure of all Anganwadi centres across Kashmir The Jammu and Kashmir administration has ordered closure of all Anganwadi centers across Kashmir till further orders. All cinema halls in Jammu have been ordered to close, as a preventive measure from the threat of COVID-19 outbreak. 8.25 PM Two more test positive in Kerala Two more people tested positive for coronavirus in Kerala on Tuesday, taking the total infected cases in the state to 14, Health Minister K.K. Shailaja said. They are the parents of the 3-year old child who tested positive in Kochi on Monday on return of the family from Italy she told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram. Their condition was stable, she added. Earlier, six fresh coronavirus cases were confirmed in the State on Tuesday. They are friends and relatives of Italy-returned couple and their son who had on Saturday tested positive for the virus along with two other kin staying with them at their home in Pathanamthitta district. 7.35 P.M. Four held in Kerala for posting fake news on coronavirus Four people have been arrested in Kerala in connection with fake social media campaigns on coronavirus, police said on Tuesday. Two people were arrested in Thrissur district and others in Alappuzha and Wayanad districts, a police press release said. 7.25 PM 51 samples test negative in Gujarat; 2.2k screened The samples of 51 people tested for novel coronavirus in Gujarat have returned negative, while the report of one person was awaited, a senior health official said on Tuesday. No person in Gujarat has so far tested positive for the novel coronavirus, which broke out in Wuhan in China in December and has since spread worldwide. The samples of 51 of 52 people tested for coronavirus have returned negative. One persons report is awaited. So far, we have screened 2,231 travellers who arrived at the airports in Ahmedabad and Surat. Another 1,024 people are under observation in their homes, said Commissioner of Health Jai Prakash Shivahare. He said samples were currently being tested in two laboratories in BJ Medical College in Ahmedabad and MP Shah Medical College in Surat. We have planned to start such testing labs at Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot once we get approval from the Centre. Till now, we have trained over 2,400 medical officers and 14,000 para medical staff on steps to be taken in case of an outbreak, Shivahare said. The state has kept 572 beds and 204 ventilators to tackle any emergency situation, the health commissioner added 6.50 PM Three more test positive in Pune Three more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Maharashtra on Tuesday, and all three had come in contact with a man and a woman who had tested positive a day earlier, the State government said. It took the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra to five, said a press release issued by the State health department. Samples of a man and a woman from Pune who had been to Dubai recently tested positive on Monday evening. On Tuesday, their daughter and the driver of the cab in which the family had travelled from the Mumbai airport to Pune, also tested positive, Pune district collector Naval Kishore Ram informed. Further, another person who had travelled by the same flight as them also tested positive, the State health department said on Tuesday evening in a release. The condition of all these patients was stable, the release added, appealing people not to panic. 6.15 PM Coronavirus: Dubai-returned Nashik woman, mother quarantined A 23-year-old woman and her 54- year-old mother were admitted in an isolation ward in the district civil hospital in Nashik in Maharashtra on Tuesday for suspected exposure to COVID-19, health officials said. The woman had gone to Dubai on February 27 and returned to Nashik on March 3 and was quarantined after she complained of throat pain, cold and cough, while her mother was admitted as the two were together at home over the past one week, a doctor said. Their samples have been sent for testing to National Institute of Virology in Pune and reports are expected by Wednesday, he added. Meanwhile, in a move to tackle the virus threat, the Nashik district administration directed the International Vipassana Academy to stop meditation sessions at its facility in Igatpuri. The facility at Igatpuri, some 45 kilometres from here and 136 kilometres from Mumbai, gets several foreign visitors everyday, an official said. In another development, a 69-year-old man, quarantined as a precautionary measure on March 8, was discharged on Monday after his sample tested negative. 6.00 PM Norwegian Air cancels 3,000 flights from March to June Low-cost airline Norwegian Air Shuttle said it would cancel "approximately 3,000 flights" mid-March to mid-June representing 15 percent of the airline\'s capacity for the period as the COVID-19 outbreak hits travel. "The past week, Norwegian has experienced reduced demand on future bookings. The company will cancel about 3,000 flights to meet the change in demand. The cancellations represent approximately 15% of the total capacity for the period mid-March to mid-June," the company said in a statement, adding that the cancellations would affect the airline\'s entire network. 5.25 PM British Airways cancels flights to Italy British Airways said it has cancelled its flights to Italy on Tuesday after the country implemented a lockdown to control the deadly COVID-19 epidemic. Asked by AFP to confirm reports that it had axed all of its Italy flights for Tuesday, a BA spokeswoman replied: "Yes, today we have." BA added in a statement that it had "contacted all customers who are due to travel today". The company, which is owned by London-listed International Airlines Group, said passengers could rebook flights scheduled up to April 4. The Italian government has imposed unprecedented nationwide restrictions on its 60 million people as it desperately attempts to halt the progress of the fatal COVID-19 disease. 5.20 PM Chinas Xi says virus basically curbed at epicentre Chinese President Xi Jinping declared on Tuesday that the spread of the deadly COVID-19 epidemic has been basically curbed at its epicentre in Hubei province and its capital Wuhan. Mr. Xi said initial success has been made in stabilising the situation and turning the tide in Hubei and Wuhan, the official Xinhua news agency reported after the Chinese leader paid his first visit to the city since the crisis erupted in January. 4.45 PM Iran reports 54 new deaths, highest one-day toll Iran on Tuesday reported 54 deaths from the COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, the highest single-day toll since the start of the outbreak in the country. The new deaths bring the number of those killed by the virus in the Islamic republic to 291, the health ministry\'s spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said in a televised conference. He added that 881 new cases had been confirmed, bringing the total infection tally to 8,042. 4.15 PM Crisis-hit Paris Opera cancels shows over virus Crisis-hit Paris Opera has been forced to cancel a ballet, opera and a concert because of COVID-19 outbreak. The institution has been haemorrhaging money after being hit by a month-and-a-half-long strike over pension reforms that saw the curtain come down on 85 performances. Its management pulled George Balanchines Ballet on Monday night after the French government banned public gatherings of more than 1,000 people to slow the spread of COVID-19. But it said a performance of Massenets opera Manon starring the South African soprano Pretty Yende will go ahead behind closed doors so it can be filmed on its Opera Bastille stage. A Mahler concert next Wednesday has also been shelved. Paris Opera, which has lost 16.4 million euros in ticket sales alone because of the strike, said it will decide Wednesday the fate of the rest of its programme, including its flagship production of Wagners Ring Cycle, which is due to start next month. 3.30 PM Theatres in Kerala to be shut down till March 31 After Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan requested earlier today that all movie theaters be shut down in the state till March 31, keeping in mind the larger public good, the producers and distributors in the industry have decided to honour his request. The producers and distributors will hold a review on March 16, and will decide whether any change has to be made depending on the situation at that point. 3.20 PM Manipur closes both international gates at border town Moreh The legalised border trade with Myanmar came to a grinding halt from Tuesday as the Manipur government closed both the international gates I and II at Moreh, Manipurs border town. An order issued by H. Gyan Prakash, the special secretary (Home), Manipur, says that the preventive measure was taken to check possible outbreak and transmission of . Crossing the international gates by all sections of people through these gates is prohibited. The order says that all district authorities and security forces have been instructed to close down all entry points. 2.30 P.M. Interactive: Tracking COVID-19 in India An outbreak that has spread to several nations, COVID-19 began in Wuhan city of China. While thousands have been affected by the disease in China itself, the virus reached Iran, Italy, South Korea, India, the U.S., U.K. and many other countries rapidly. In India, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Kerala on January 30, 2020. Subsequently two more positive cases were reported from the State. At a time when all the three patients were declared recovered, a fresh case was reported from Delhi. 1.50 PM Six fresh cases in Kerala Six new cases of COVID-19 has been reported in Kerala, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said. The State has reported 12 positive cases now. Mr. Vijayan has asked all organisations, individuals to take proactive measures for containment of virus. Better to avoid festivals, darshan at Sabarimala, he said. The State has heightened vigil in view of COVID-19 spread. All public functions stands cancelled till March 31. Classes up to VII standard have been called off. Meanwhile, Transport Commissioner has issued an order putting on hold driving and learners tests till March 13. Enforcement in Kollam, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts in this period will be restricted to patrol. It also asks private and govt bus crew to take all precautions against the infection. 1.40 P.M. PAKISTAN COVID-19 cases in Pakistan rises to 16 Pakistan witnessed a sudden increase in coronavirus cases as the number of patients rose to 16, officials said on Tuesday. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr Zafar Mirza confirmed that nine new cases were identified in Karachi, capital of Sindh province. He tweeted that all these cases are contacts of an already confirmed case and authorities were testing more people who were in contact with the infected people. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah asked all hospitals to share the record of patients with the symptoms of pneumonia to further investigate them. According to officials, five of the new patients came to Karachi from Syria via Doha while three persons came from London via Dubai during the past week. Thirteen of the total 16 victims belong to Sindh, according to Meeran Yousuf, the media coordinator to the Sindh health minister. Authorities were trying to track down all their contacts for further testing in order to contain spread of the virus. - PTI 12.50 PM Three more test positive for COVID-19 in Bengaluru A day after Karnataka reported the first COVID-19 case, another three persons have tested positive for the disease on Tuesday taking the total positive cases to four in the State. It is suspected that the new positive cases are the 40-year-old techie\'s close contacts - his wife, child and the colleague, who had traveled with him to the US and who are under quarantine. 12:20 PM First COVID-19 death recorded in Canada Canada has recorded its first death from COVID-19, health officials in the westernmost province of British Columbia announced on March 9. The victim, a man living at an elderly care facility, "was infected with COVID-19 (and) passed away last night," the province\'s health officer Bonnie Henry told reporters. Officials have not released the victim\'s age. 12.15 P.M. Serie A, all sport in Italy halted Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced the suspension until April 3 of all sporting events in the country, including the top-flight Serie A football league, as Italy grapples with the coronavirus crisis. The final Serie A game before government announcement saw Sassuolo beat Brescia 3-0 behind closed doors in Reggio Emilia on Monday. After scoring his opening goal Sassuolo striker Francesco Caputo held up a handwritten message on piece of paper, urging fans: Everything will be fine. Stay at home. A few hours later the Prime Minister used similar words as he announced a countrywide lockdown. I am going to sign a decree that can be summarised as follows: I stay at home, Mr. Conte announced in a dramatic evening television address. 11:00 AM Tamil Nadu Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. C. Vijayabaskar tweeted that eight samples tested for COVID-19 were negative. The Health ministry had put under surveillance eight persons, including the family members and the taxi driver who had been in contact with a COVID-19 positive patient who arrived from Oman. They were under home quarantine. Dr C Vijayabaskar @Vijayabaskarofl :Let me share a good news,8 samples that were in process for is tested NEGATIVE. This includes 7 samples of close contacts of the Pt @ .This confirms there are NO new cases of in TN.Stringent screening continues. 3,741 994 people are talking about this 10:20 AM IAF aircraft brings back 58 Indians from coronavirus-hit Iran A military transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) brought back 58 Indians from coronavirus-hit Iran on Tuesday, officials said. The aircraft, a C-17 Globemaster, was sent to Tehran on Monday evening. Also read Explained: About 2,000 Indians are living in Iran, a country that has witnessed increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases in the last few days. Dr. S. Jaishankar @DrSJaishankar First batch of 58 Indian pilgrims being brought back from . IAF C-17 taken off from Tehran and expected to land soon in Hindon. 15K 2,964 people are talking about this The IAF aircraft has landed. Mission completed. On to the next, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar tweeted. In an earlier tweet, he said, First batch of 58 Indian pilgrims being brought back from Iran. IAF C-17 taken off from Tehran and expected to land soon in Hindon. Italy orders nationwide lockdown as new cases surge The whole of Italy will be placed under lockdown until next month, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced on March 9, in an unprecedented and unexpected new attempt to beat in . Conte told reporters that measures introduced just two days ago in after a jump in deaths tied to the highly infectious disease, and said the entire nation had to make sacrifices to stop its spread. Gujarat Congress postpones March 12 Gandhi Sandesh Yatra The Gujarat Congress on Monday said it had postponed the 386-kilometre Gandhi Sandesh Yatra aimed at highlighting the current situation of the country through a symbolic Dandi March. In view of the increasing , the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee has decided to postpone the Gandhi Sandesh Yatra starting from Sabarmati Ashram on March 12, Congress partys Gujarat in-charge Rajiv Satav tweeted. South Korea reports 35 new cases, total at 7,513 South Korea reported 35 new cases on Tuesday, bringing total infections in Asia\'s biggest coronavirus outbreak outside mainland China to 7,513. The death toll rose by three to 54, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The numbers are expected to be updated later on Tuesday. Israel orders 14-day self-quarantine for anyone entering country Israel will impose a two-week quarantine on all travellers entering the country, said Monday, toughening already significant travel restrictions. After a day of difficult discussions, we have taken a decision: all those coming to Israel from abroad will be placed in isolation for 14 days, Mr. Netanyahu said in a video broadcast on his Twitter account. A war room approach is needed, says virologist Jacob John The country needs a war room where a designated group of persons think only about COVID-19, design strategies for the next week and the next month, renowned virologist Jacob John said. Dr. John, retired professor of virology from Christian Medical College, Vellore, is of the view that the situation, both in India and worldwide, is grim, and that the country was merely reacting to what was happening. Airfares nosedive as COVID-19 fears scare off passengers With hundreds of passengers cancelling their travel plans owing to COVID-19, the airfares for domestic travel have nosedived across metro cities in the country. Now, a flight to Bengaluru will cost a passenger only 1,000. Similarly, the fare to Delhi is now around 3,000-3,500 and to Hyderabad around 1,200-1,500. Prepare quarantine facilities, CAPFs told The Government of India has directed the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) to prepare quarantine facilities with a bed capacity to admit over 5,400 people to deal with across the country, officials said on Monday. CSIR lab working on discovering drug to combat COVID-19 Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Director-General Shekhar C. Mande said in Mysuru on Monday that the Hyderabad-based Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), one of the CSIR labs, has started work on synthesising chemical formulations for the manufacture of drug for COVID-19. COVID-19 outbreak could help agri exports: Agriculture Ministry analysis In the wake of the , the Centre has identified 21 agricultural products, including honey, potatoes, grapes, soya beans and groundnuts, in which Indian exports could benefit from trade restrictions against Chinese goods. The total value of Chinas global exports of these products amounted to $5488.6 million in 2018. India exported $4,445.9 million worth of these commodities in the same period and could now have a chance to grab part of Chinas market share. Punjab, Karnataka, Jammu, Maharashtra report first COVID-19 cases The made its way to Maharashtra with two Pune residents with travel history to Dubai testing positive on Monday. Maharshtra State health officials said that the husband and wife had returned to India on March 1 but reported to the hospital on Monday after developing mild symptoms., Visitors outside COVID-19 ward, opened inside the campus of Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases, in Bengaluru on March 10, 2020. COVID-19 is now a pandemic, says WHO; India suspends visas till April 15 as the number of cases in the country rises to 60. The World Health Organisation has declared the worldwide outbreak of the . WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the spread of COVID-19 had reached the level of a pandemic, noting there are now more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries and 4,291 deaths. Dr. Tedros said: We have rung the alarm bell loud and clear. , except a few categories such as diplomatic and employment, till April 15 to prevent the spread of coronavirus as 10 new cases were reported taking the total number of patients in the country to 60. However, as per state health officials, the number of confirmed cases maybe up to 65. The government also strongly advised Indians to avoid all non-essential travel abroad. Explained: COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% Here are the latest updates: It\'s a pandemic, says WHO Expressing increasing alarm about mounting infections, the World Health Organisation declared on March 11 that the global coronavirus crisis is now a pandemic. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who heads the U.N. agency, said the WHO is deeply concerned by the alarming levels of spread and severity of the outbreak. He also expressed concern about the alarming levels of inaction. "We have, therefore, made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic, he said at a briefing in Geneva. All countries can still change the course of this pandemic. If countries detect, test, treat, isolate, trace and mobilize their people in the response, Dr. Tedros said. Karnataka mans death not confirmed as due to COVID-19, say officials The 76-year-old man who showed symptoms of COVID-19 after his return from Saudi Arabia died on Tuesday. However, the authorities, in an emergency press conference, clarified that it was not a confirmed case of COVID-19, as the medical investigation report was still awaited. It is not a confirmed case of COVID-19 death. The patient was admitted to a private hospital in Kalaburagi on Monday after he developed acute respiratory illness, along with cough, cold and fever. The hospital informed our health department which immediately quarantined the patient in the same hospital, Deputy Commissioner B. Sharat said. The throat swab was collected and sent to National Institute of Virology, Bengaluru on the same day and quarantined around 30 people, including his family members, who were in his close contact, at their respective houses. Meanwhile, the patient was shifted to another private hospital in Hyderabad against medical advice on the same day. Since the respiratory illness was at the advanced stage, the family members lost hope and got the patient discharged from there also. The patient died on his way back to Kalaburagi on Wednesday night. We are awaiting the throat swab culture report without which we cannot conclusively say that it is a COVID-19 death. District Health and Family Welfare Officer M.A. Jabbar said that the throat swab culture report of the patient was expected on Thursday. Consulates are in touch with Indian nationals in Iran, says Jaishankar External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that Indian consulates are in touch with nationals in Iran where the is severe and are making efforts to bring them back. Making a statement in the Rajya Sabha he said the government brought back Indian nationals in Wuhan and from a cruise ship in Japan. The government\'s focus has since shifted to Iran. There are 6,000 Indian nationals in various provinces of Iran. As the government started receiving information, direct flights between India and Iran were suspended temporarily from February 25. Our consulates in Iran reached out to Indian nationals and asked them to observe necessary precautions, said Mr. Jaishankar. Iran says virus kills 63 more, death toll climbs to 354 Iran said Wednesday that the new coronavirus killed 63 more people, raising the death toll to 354 amid over 9,000 cases in the Islamic Republic. Across the Mideast, the vast majority of the 9,000 people who have contracted the virus and the COVID-19 illness it causes are in hard-hit Iran. It has one of the worlds worst death tolls outside of China, the epicenter of the outbreak. Outside the Islamic Republic, only Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon have recorded deaths from the virus in the Mideast. The government is focusing on bringing back Indians stranded in coronavirus-hit Italy and Iran after screening them, EAM S. Jaishankar says. The Gujarat government rejects suggestion of the opposition to close malls, and other places of public gathering to stop coronavirus spread in the state. The Delhi government decides to call a one-day special Assembly session on the NRC-NPR issue and the coronavirus situation in the national capital on March 13, official says. Music festivals Coachella and Stagecoach are officially postponed due to coronavirus epidemic. India seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar hinted that the countrys players might limit using saliva to shine the white ball during the first ODI against South Africa on Thursday as a precautionary measure against the coronavirus outbreak. An Air India pilots grouping has urged civil aviation regulator DGCA to exempt pilots from the mandatory pre and post-flight alcohol tests, amid coronavirus scare. Sri Lanka announces its first coronavirus case, a 52-year-old tour guide who had come in contact with a group of Italian tourists. All educational institutions, stadiums, and sports clubs in Srinagar will be closed from Thursday till further orders amid coronavirus scare, city administration says. The Travancore Devaswom Board has appealed to Ayyappa devotees not to visit the holy hillock during the period as part of the governmental efforts to check the spread of the virus. ROME Italy announces 25 bn euros package to fight coronavirus Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said that Rome was allocating 25 billion euros (USD 28.3 billion) to fight the novel coronavirus outbreak that has killed 631 people in Italy. We have allocated an emergency sum of 25 billion euros, Conte told reporters during a break in a meeting on the governments response to the rapidly escalating health crisis. The entire sum will not all be used immediately, Conte added. Economy Minister Roberto Gualtieri said Italy will immediately use half of these resources and keep the other half in reserve. Italy unveiled a 7.5-billion-euro emergency response package last Thursday that officials later said would likely have to be increase to match the rapid rise in new infections and deaths. A top economy minister had said on Tuesday that the package could reach 10 billion euros. Italy, whose faltering economy is the third largest in the eurozone, needs special EU permission to spend more than allowed under the blocs strict budget rules for its 27 member states. EU leaders had said they would accept Italys request when it still stood at 7.5 billion euros. Heat is not a deterrent for transmission: Your COVID-19 queries answered The Hindu had invited readers to send in queries related to COVID-19. Here are answers to selected questions. India not to allow cruise ships with travel history to coronavirus-hit nations till Mar 31 India prohibited entry of any international cruise ship, crew or passenger with a travel history to coronavirus-hit countries post February 1, 2020 to its major ports till March 31. To prevent the spread of the deadly virus, the Ministry of Shipping said it will allow only such international cruise ships to call on its major ports that had intimated their call to the ports by January 1, 2020. Only those international cruise ships which had planned and intimated their call to an Indian Port not later than 1st January, 2020 will be allowed to call on such port. Any international cruise ship or any member of its crew or any passenger therein having a travel history of visiting any of the Covid-19 affected countries... since 1st Feb, 2020; will not be permitted to enter any Indian port till 31st March, 2020, the Ministry of Shipping said. The government said international cruise ships will be allowed only at ports having thermal screening facilities for passengers and crew members. If any passenger/crew member of cruise ships show symptoms of coronavirus, disembarking will not be permitted, it added. MELBOURNE Formula One team staff tested for virus at Australian GP Three Formula One team staff members have been isolated at the Australian Grand Prix while tests are conducted for the new coronavirus, officials said, casting a shadow over the opening race of the year. Two were from the Haas F1 team and one from McLaren. Two personnel were showing some symptoms so they got themselves checked out and have put themselves into self-isolation, as they should, while they await results, a Haas official told AFP. A McLaren official added: We can confirm that one team member has self-isolated in the hotel as a precaution, in line with our policy, after showing symptoms similar to coronavirus. We expect to receive the results overnight. The team is operating as per our normal schedule. LADAKH Ladakh UT shuts all colleges, university till March 31 The Ladakh administration has closed all colleges and the university in the union territory from Wednesday until March 31 as a precautionary measure in consideration of the coronavirus outbreak. JAMMU Cinema halls in entire Jammu region to be shut till March 31 The Jammu and Kashmir administration has ordered closure of primary schools and aganwadi centres in five districts of Jammu and cinema halls across the region till March 31. CHENNAI Chennai Metro is planning to put out awareness announcements No fans allowed in India Open The India Open Super 500 tournament, a crucial event for the Tokyo Olympic qualification, will be held without any spectators due to the global novel coronavirus outbreak, Badminton Association of India (BAI) said. The USD 400,000 tournament was under threat in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, which has claimed over 4000 lives and infected more than 100,000 people globally. However, BAI and the Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Wednesday issued a joint statement, making it clear that the event will go ahead as originally planned adding that precautionary measures will be taken for the smooth conduct of the tournament. The YONEX-SUNRISE India Open 2020 to be staged in New Delhi from 24-29 March will go ahead as planned, the statement said. Virus outbreak in China may affect Indian industries: Goyal The shutdown of factories in China due to the coronavirus outbreak may affect Indian industries like pharmaceutical, electronics and automobile which import components and raw materials from the neighbouring country, Parliament was informed. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the outbreak has led to restrictions on movement of people and business activities in many provinces of China, in order to control the spread of the virus. The closure of factories in China may affect Indian industries, which import components, intermediaries and raw materials from China like the pharmaceutical, electronics and automobile industries, Mr. Goyal said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. He said the government is engaged with Export Promotion Councils and trade bodies on assessing and addressing potential disruptions in their supply chains. The government is also in talks with the councils and trade bodies with missions abroad to secure and transport inventories available with the existing suppliers and find alternative sources of supply, he added. CAMBODIA River cruise boat quarantined in Cambodia Scores of passengers and crew aboard a river cruise boat are being held under quarantine in eastern Cambodia after a British passenger tested positive for the coronavirus. The vessel belonging to Viking River Cruises is under police guard as it remains moored on the Mekong River outside the town of Kampong Cham. Bureau of Immigration issues advisory to international passengers on travel, visa restrictions The Bureau of Immigration (BoI) has asked all incoming international passengers returning to the country to and follow required dos and donts as detailed by the Union Government. Further, all passengers having travel history to China, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Japan, Italy, Thailand, Singapore, Iran, Malaysia, France, Spain and Germany are advised to undergo self-imposed quarantine for a period of 14 days from the date of their arrival. The BoI, in a detailed advisory related to , said if such passengers are working in some organisations or institutions, their respective employers are advised to facilitate work from home during this period. KERALA Kerala govt releases route map of journey of Pathanamthitta family The Kerala government has released a map of the route taken by the three-member family which returned to the state from COVID-19 hit Italy, on February 29, with an aim to track all those who had come in contact with them. The text in Malayalam reads: "This is the map covering the route taken by the family tested positive for COVID-19. If you were at the above mentioned place at the mentioned date and time, please contact 9188297118, 9188294118. SEOUL Virus cluster around Seoul call centre raises alarm A virus cluster connected to a call centre in one of the busiest areas of Seoul has raised alarms that thought to have been waning has gained a foothold in the more populated capital region. More than half of South Koreas 51 million people live in the Seoul metropolitan area. So far, 93 people have tested positive among the call centres employees and their families, Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon said Wednesday in a briefing broadcast over YouTube. The number could grow as tests are being done on people who worked on other floors of the Korea Building in Seouls Guro district. While most of the infected workers live in Seoul, some of them commuted from nearby cities such as Incheon and Bucheon, raising concern about a broader spread through public transit. GOA Goa man who travelled to Italy kept under watch A 27-year-old man from Goa, who travelled to Italy and Finland last month and came in contact with a patient, has been kept at an isolation ward of a state-run hospital in Panaji after he complained of cough and fever, Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said on Wednesday. The man, a native of Vasco town in South Goa, was working on a ship and returned to the coastal state two days back, Rane said. He had come in contact with a coronavirus patient mid-February while he was working on a ship, the minister said in a statement. JAIPUR 85-year-old man tests positive in Jaipur An 85-year-old man, who returned from Dubai to Jaipur on February 28, was sent to the isolation ward in Sawai Man Singh Government Hospital here after he was tested positive for . His confirmatory test with fresh samples was done on Tuesday night after his initial test turned out to be positive. The octogenarian resident of Adarsh Nagar locality in the city, who was suffering from fever, cough and breathing problems since he arrived here, was earlier taken to two private hospitals, which referred him to SMS Hospital for diagnosis. KOCHI 42 passengers from Italy quarantined in Kochi hospitals In the wake of being widely reported, nine out of the 42 people who arrived from Italy on Wednesday morning have been referred to the Government Medical College, Ernakulam, while the remaining 33 people have been isolated at the Aluva district hospital. All were passengers of the Qatar Airways which came from Italy to Kochi via Doha. People with travel history to Italy, South Korea need negative COVID-19 certificate to enter India In addition to visa restrictions, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has stated that will now have to submit certificate of having tested negative for by the health authorities from laboratories at designated labs in their countries. This measure came into effect from March 10 and is a temporary measure until cases of COVID-19 subsides. Latest sample of COVID-19 patient from Chennai, Telangana tests negative The latest test result of a 45-year-old man, who returned from Muscat and tested positive for COVID-19, has returned negative, top officials of the Health Department said. The patient, who is undergoing treatment at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH), was asymptomatic and fine, officials said. The 24-year-old index (first) COVID-19 case from Telangana would be discharged in four days if he tests negative in the second consecutive test. The youngster who was admitted to Gandhi Hospital with viral pneumonia on March 1, tested negative for coronavirus infection for the first time on Sunday. UK UK health minister tests positive for coronavirus Britain\'s Conservative MP Nadine Dorries. File British MP Nadine Dorries, a minister in the health department, has tested , she said in a statement on Tuesday. I can confirm I have tested positive for coronavirus... and have been self-isolating at home, said the Conservative MP. Health officials are now trying to trace where she contracted the virus and who she has been in contact with, she added. Turkey announces first coronavirus case Turkey announced Wednesday its first case, a man who had recently travelled to Europe and is in good health. The test of a patient suspected of carrying the coronavirus returned positive, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said in a television broadcast. He added that the man was likely to have contracted COVID-19 while travelling in Europe, but declined to say which country or where in Turkey the patient had been hospitalised. Coronavirus Can masks protect you? Volume 90% 168 die in Italy, highest single-day toll Italy recorded 168 deaths on Tuesday from COVID-19, its highest single-day toll to date, pushing the number of fatalities outside China to more than 1,000. Overall in Italy, 631 people have died from the disease and 10,149 have been infected in just over two weeks. ANDHRA PRADESH Door-to-door survey to begin today The State government will conduct a two-day door-to-door survey starting Wednesday to identify the persons who had recently been to novel coronavirus (COVID-19) affected countries. The ground level survey is to reach out to the persons who have not undergone 28-day mandatory observation and isolation and check any possibility of the spread of the virus. How is India dealing with coronavirus? Volume 90% MUMBAI Airport gets more doctors, thermometers to screen all arriving passengers With all international passengers arriving into the country being screened for COVID-19 and the resultant queues over the long weekend, Mumbai airport has added 90 doctors and infrared thermometers. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), meanwhile, has pulled up airlines for not ensuring enough self-declaration forms are available on board, leading to crowds at the terminals. KOZHIKODE 147 under observation As many as 147 people are under observation for suspected COVID-19 infection in Kozhikode district on Tuesday. Also read: District Medical Officer V. Jayasree said in a release that 61 of them were newly added. Seven persons are under observation in the isolation ward attached to the Government Medical College Hospital and eight at the Government General Hospital, Kozhikode. Also read: Ten body fluid samples of suspected patients had been sent for lab tests. Mental health counselling was given to two persons. BENGALURU All four patients in city are stable The condition of all the four persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 in Bengaluru is stable. They are currently admitted in the State-run Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases (RGICD) and responding well to treatment. Also read: A day after Karnataka reported the first confirmed COVID-19 case, three more persons tested positive in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Visas suspended The Central government has in a release issued late on Tuesday night noted that all regular Visas (including e-Visas) which have been granted to nationals of France, Germany and Spain on or before March 11, 2020 and where these foreigners have not yet entered India stand suspended. Also read: Visas of all foreigners already in India remain valid and they may contact the nearest FRRO/FRO through e-FRRO module for extension/conversion etc of their visa or grant of any consular service, if they choose to do so. A notification to this effect is being issued by the Bureau of Immigration (BOI), it added., A commuter wears a mask in a bid to stay way from infections during his travel in a crowded Mumbai local train on Thursday. Vibhav Birwatkar The man, who recently returned from Saudi Arabia, died on Tuesday. Health authorities in Karnataka on March 12 reported the countrys first fatality from the with the death of a 76-year-old man. Tests results of the man, who died on March 10, confirmed COVID-19, State health officials said. COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% The Union Health Ministry said the number of coronavirus patients in the country has crossed 70 with fresh cases being reported from Maharashtra, Delhi, Ladakh, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh as well as one foreign national. The rise in numbers came a day after the . Stating that India is still seeing local transmission, the Health Ministry said: We have to remember that while there is no need for panic we are dealing with an evolving situation. Currently we have 1,500 contacts of the 74 positive cases currently being monitored, Joint Secretary, Union Health Ministry Lav Agarwal told reporters at a press conference on March 12. Explained We have been related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, and . Here are the latest updates: KARNATAKA 10.45 PM Indias first COVID-19 death confirmed in Karnataka Health authorities in Karnataka on March 12 reported the countrys first fatality from the with the death of a 76-year-old man. Tests results of the man, who died on March 10, confirmed COVID-19, State health officials said. The on February 29. According to reports, he fell ill soon after his return and was admitted to a private hospital and later shifted to the Gulbarga Institute of Medical Sciences. His throat swab was sent for testing to check for COVID-19 infection. He was shifted to CARE hospital in Hyderabad in the interim and died enroute as he was being brought back to Kalaburagi. MUMBAI 9.40 PM 14 cases in Maharashtra Three more cases of coronavirus were confirmed in Maharashtra with one each from Mumbai, Thane and Pune, State Health Minister Rajesh Tope said. It took the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the state to 14. The new coronavirus patient in Mumbai was a 65-year- old man who had returned from Dubai and his condition was somewhat critical, Mr. Tope told reporters. The patient in Thane had traveled to France, he said. Earlier in the day, test of one person in Pune had come out positive. There are now nine confirmed coronavirus patients in Pune, three in Mumbai, one in Thane and another in Nagpur. SAO PAULO 7.50 PM Brazil\'s Bolsonaro being tested for coronavirus: newspaper Brazil\'s far-right President Jair Bolsonaro is being monitored and tested for coronavirus, Brazilian newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo reported on Thursday, without citing sources. Reuters was not able to confirm the information. Mr. Bolsonaro returned this week from a visit to the United States where he met with Donald Trump. MAHARASHTRA 7.45 PM Constable hospitalised for suspected coronavirus infection A police constable was admitted to isolation ward of the district hospital in Jalna city of Maharashtra on Thursday for suspected exposure to the coronavirus, a senior official said. His swab samples have been sent to the National Institute of Virology in Pune, civil surgeon M K Rathod said. The policeman, who was posted in Mumbai and had come in contact with security personnel from Israel there, complained of cough and fever after returning here two days ago, Dr Rathod said. We are in the process of putting his family and others he came in contact with in Jalna under quarantine, he added. NEW YORK 7.25 PM Wall Street market plunges The sell-off bludgeoning financial markets around the world got even worse Thursday as the economic pain caused by the coronavirus became more painfully clear. Worries are rising that the White House and other authorities around the world cant or wont do whats needed to help soon. After the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed in a bear market for the first time in more than a decade, President Donald Trump said late Wednesday he would restrict travel to Europe in hopes of containing the virus. Its the latest hit for an airline industry already battered by frightened travellers cancelling plans, and market losses accelerated around the world as Trump spoke while giving few details about a big stimulus program that could help. The S&P 500 dropped about 7% within the first few minutes of Thursdays trading, steep enough to trigger an automatic halt to trading on the New York Stock Exchange. The index is set to join the Dow in entering a bear market after losing more than 20% from its record set last month, and one of the greatest eras in Wall Streets history is crumbling. The damage was worldwide and eye-popping. European stocks tumbled 8%, even after the European Central Bank pledged to buy more bonds and offer more help for the economy. In Thailand and the Philippines, stocks fell so fast that trading was temporarily halted. Japans Nikkei 225 sank to its lowest close in four years. PUNE 7.10 PM One more tests positive One more person has tested positive for the coronavirus here, taking the number of confirmed patients of the disease in the city to nine, a senior official said on Thursday. District collector Naval Kishore Ram said a person who had travel history to the United States has tested positive. With this, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra has reached 12. Apart from nine confirmed patients in Pune, two persons have tested positive for the virus in Mumbai and one in Nagpur. NEW DELHI 6.35 PM Schools, colleges, cinema halls shut in Delhi till March 31 The Delhi government on Thursday declared coronavirus an epidemic and announced that all schools, colleges and cinema halls in the national capital will remain shut till March 31. The decision was taken at a high-level meeting at Raj Niwas, attended by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, LG Anil Baijal and top government officials, to review the preparedness to contain the disease. The city government has declared coronavirus an epidemic, Mr. Kejriwal said. He said disinfecting all public places, including government and private offices and shopping malls has been made compulsory. The national capital has so far recorded six cases of COVID-19. The number of COVID-19 patients in the country has risen to 75. As a related measure, the Rashtrapati Bhavan will remain closed for exploratory tour visits from March 13 till further notice. In addition, the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum Complex and the Change of Guard ceremony will also not be open to public till further notice. NEW DELHI 6.25 PM Defence ministry sets up 7 more quarantine facilities The Ministry of Defence has set up seven more quarantine facilities for COVID-19 patients, especially for Indian citizens being brought to back from coronavirus-hit countries, an official said on Thursday. The facilities have been set up at Jaisalmer, Suratgadh, Jhansi, Jodhpur, Deolali, Kolkata and Chennai. We are expecting more civilians to be brought back to India. We are ready with our facilities, Army spokesperson Colonel Aman Anand said. The Army is already operating a quarantine facility in Manesar while the one in Hindon, near Ghaziabad, is being operated by the air force. MOSCOW 5.45 PM Russian-European Mars mission postponed until 2022 A joint Russian-European mission to Mars was postponed on Thursday due to technical difficulties and the global coronavirus epidemic, the Russian space agency said. We have made a difficult but well-weighed decision to postpone the launch to 2022, said Roscosmos director general Dmitry Rogozin. The mission has been repeatedly postponed and was most recently scheduled for this year. NEW DELHI 5.35 PM Rashtrapti Bhavan closes all public tour visits from Friday The Rashtrapati Bhavan has closed all public tour visits from Friday as a precautionary measure against the spread of coronavirus, official spokesman said on Thursday. A brief statement released by the spokesman said the presidential house will remain closed for exploratory tour visit from Friday till further orders. Moreover, the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum Complex (RBMC) and the Change of Guard ceremony will not be open to public till further notice, the spokesman said. GENEVA 5.25 PM COVID-19 is a controllable pandemic, says WHO The new coronavirus outbreak is a controllable pandemic if countries step up measures to tackle it, the head of the World Health Organisation said on Thursday. WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus acknowledged on Wednesday that the global outbreak of the new coronavirus could now be considered a pandemic a disease actively spreading globally. But he told diplomats in Geneva that describing the outbreak as a pandemic should not mean that countries give up the fight to stop it spreading further. This is a controllable pandemic, he said, according to a statement of his remarks. We are deeply concerned that some countries are not approaching this threat with the level of political commitment needed to control it. The idea that countries should shift from containment to mitigation is wrong and dangerous, he stressed. More than 4,500 people have died, according to an AFP tally, while the WHO said some 125,000 cases had been reported from 118 countries and territories. To save lives we must reduce transmission, Tedros insisted. That means finding and isolating as many cases as possible and quarantining their closest contacts, he said, urging states to test every suspected case of COVID-19 in a bid to slow transmission. BRUSSELS 5.15 PM EU disapproves of U.S. travel ban, taken unilaterally and without consultation The European Union said on Thursday it disapproved of the U.S. decision to improve a unilateral travel ban on European countries, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Council President Charles Michel said in a statement. The European Union disapproves of the fact that the U.S. decision to improve a travel ban was taken unilaterally and without consultation, the statement said, adding that the EU is taking strong measures to limit the spread of the virus. NEW DELHI 5.05 PM Don\'t panic, yes to precautions: Modi Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the government is fully vigilant about the situation due to coronavirus and urged people to say no to panic and yes to precautions". Across ministries and states, multiple steps have been pro-actively taken to ensure safety of all, he said on Twitter. These steps are wide-ranging, from suspension of visas to augmenting healthcare capacities, he said. Say no to panic, say yes to precautions. No minister of the central government will travel abroad in the upcoming days. I urge our countrymen to also avoid non-essential travel, Mr. Modi said. We can break the chain of spread and ensure safety of all by avoiding large gatherings, he said. The government is fully vigilant about the situation due to COVID-19, he added. BENGALURU 5.00 PM Another positive case in Karnataka Another person tested positive for COVID-19 in the State on Thursday taking the total number of confirmed cases to five. The patient is reported to have returned from Greece. The patient has been admitted and isolated in a hospital and is stable. All primary contacts have been traced and are asymptomatic. Home quarantine has been advised and being followed-up for all the contacts, the release said. NELLORE 4.50 PM First case in Andhra Pradesh A man who returned to Nellore last week from Italy has tested positive for COVID-19, making it the first such case in Andhra Pradesh. Five of his close contacts have been quarantined and are under observation. The patient is stable and his vitals are normal, the State Health Department has said. With this the total number of cases in the country stands at 74. NEW DELHI 3.30 P.M. The Health Ministry officials gave a press conference on coronavirus, in New Delhi. Health Ministry says that 1,500 people are under surveillance for the 73 positive cases reported in the country. COVID-19 is an evolving situation. India does not have any community transmission which is a positive situation for the country, says Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Union Home Ministry had invoked Disaster Management Act to give more power to Health Secretary to enhance the preparedness and containment of COVID-19. The Central Govt will undertake three more evacuation from Iran and bring back 130-150 Indians, says Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal, MoHFW. There are adequate COVID-19 testing facilitates across the country, an official says. Though flu is not common in summer, no study or evidence that suggest high temperature kills coronavirus, Health Ministry official says adding that it may take more than two years to come up with a vaccine. NEW DELHI 3 P.M. Health Minister urges Lok Sabha members to raise awareness about coronavirus Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday sought cooperation from Lok Sabha members to deal with the coronavirus outbreak and asked them to increase awareness about it in their respective constituencies. The minister said some members have expressed apprehensions about screening lapses at airports. He said it was not the case that people screened at airports have not got affected by this virus as symptoms may appear after some days. He said steps are being taken to track people who are affected. About 35,000 people are engaged in community surveillance, he said, adding the ministry is constantly in touch with States on the matter and also holding meetings. He said detailed tracing system is in place for people who are found positive. There should be no misconception that there is a lapse in screening, he said, adding initially on January 17, screening was started at seven airports but now it is happening at 30 airports. Currently 51 labs and 56 collections centres are working...so there are about 100 coordination centres, the minister said, adding India has sent a team including scientist and lab equipment to Iran. Customs clearance is going on as these equipments weigh in tonnes, he informed. NEW DELHI 2.45 P.M. Boxers returning from Jordan will be asked to stay home-quarantined, have all health clearances: BFI The Indian boxing team, returning from the Asian Olympic Qualifiers in Jordan, will be home-quarantined in view of the COVID-19 threat even though all the members have got the necessary health clearances, the national federation said on Thursday. A total of 13 boxers and almost an equal number of coaching staff arrive back on Thursday after clinching an unprecedented nine Olympic slots in the qualifiers which concluded on Wednesday in Amman. They will be asked to quarantine themselves at their homes or hostel rooms for a few days. They have, however, been given the necessary health clearances by the Jordanian Olympic association, Boxing Federation of Indias Executive Director R.K. Sacheti said. The boxers were training in Italy, one of the worst-affected by the coronavirus pandemic, till February 26. They reached Amman from Assisi on February 27 and were found all clear after undergoing the mandatory screening for symptoms. Jordan has so far recorded only one positive case. PTI MAHARASHTRA 2.15 PM Three arrested for administrating fake coronavirus vaccines Three women were arrested for allegedly administrating fake coronavirus vaccines to villagers in Maharashtras Jalna district, police said. The police on Wednesday arrested Beed residents Radha Ramnath Saamse, Seema Krishna Andhale and Sangeeta Rajendra Avhad, who allegedly posed as doctors and healthcare workers, an official said. The trio met villagers of Pipalgoan in Ambad tehsil, informed them about a vaccine that could protect them from coronavirus and administered it to gullible locals, he said. Some villagers informed Dr. Mahadev Munde, a medical officer at a rural health centre, about this, after which a complaint was lodged, the official said. Fake vaccines and bottles, which were seized from the accused, have been sent to the state health department, he said, adding that a case of cheating has been registered against the trio. LADAKH 2.00 PM Man who went to Iran on pilgrimage tests positive in Ladakh One person with travel history to Iran tested positive for coronavirus in Ladakh on Thursday, taking the total number of cases in the union territory to three, a senior government official said. His family members have been moved to the isolation centre at Heart Foundation Hospital here, they said. The man was part of a group that had gone to Iran on a pilgrimage. PERTH 1.30 PM Stimulus package Australia on Thursday put forward a USD 11.4 billion stimulus package meant to stave off a recession due to the impact of the virus outbreak on its economy. The package includes cash payments for small businesses and welfare recipients to counter the impact of the disease, which has infected more than 126,000 people worldwide. Australia has recorded 127 cases of the virus and three deaths. NEW DELHI 1.20 PM Asian Development Bank (ADB) asks staff at Manila office to work from home after visitor tests positive for COVID-19. PUNE 12.30 PM Action against those who reveal the patient\'s identity Authorities in Pune have warned of penal action against those who reveal the identity of patients testing positive for coronavirus on social media platforms. Taking cognisance of a complaint from a relative of a Pune-based patient, who tested positive for COVID-19, divisional commissioner Deepak Mhaisekar said police have been asked to monitor social media posts and take appropriate action in such matters. NEW DELHI 12.15 PM The Ministry of Health, in its latest bulletin said the number of COVID-19 positive cases in India has risen to 73 with fresh cases reported in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Ladakh. The Ministry also said 10,57,506 passengers have been screened at airports. NEW DELHI 12.10 PM The number of international passengers arriving at the countrys airports has reduced to around 62,000 per day from 70,000 in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri said in Lok Sabha. He said the count might further come down to around 40,000 following the travel advisory issued on Wednesday. CHANDIGARH 11.40 AM Haryana govt declares COVID-19 an epidemic The Haryana government on Thursday declared the contagious coronavirus infection an epidemic. COVID-19 declared epidemic in Haryana, Health minister Anil Vij said in a tweet. According to the state Health Department, 44 samples of suspected cases were sent for tests till Wednesday. Out of these, 38 were found negative for coronavirus while reports of six people were awaited. NEW DELHI 11.30 AM SC refuses urgent hearing on plea to postpone IPL-2020 The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to accord urgent hearing on a plea seeking postponement of Indian Premier League (IPL)-2020 amid the scare. This is not a matter which cannot await till re-opening of the court. You can mention it before the regular court on March 16, the bench told advocate Mohan Babu Agarwal, who has filed the petition. AUSTRALIA 10.30 AM Spectator at India-Australia Womens T20 WC final diagnosed with COVID-19: MCG A spectator who attended the between India and Australia here on March 8 has tested positive for novel coronavirus, the Melbourne Cricket Ground said on Wednesday but insisted that the risk of him infecting others was low. The final was won by Australia by 85 runs for a fifth world title. ...a person who attended the ICC Womens T20 World Cup Final at the MCG on Sunday March 8 has now been diagnosed with COVID-19, the Melbourne Cricket Ground management said in a statement. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has advised of the patrons diagnosis and has classified it as a low-risk of spreading COVID-19 to surrounding members of the public and staff. The patron sat on Level 2 of the Northern Stand at the MCG in section N42, it added. The DHHS has recommended that those seated in N42 should continue to go about their normal routine, with an increased focus on hygiene measures, and should any flu-like symptoms emerge to consult with a medical professional. - PTI KERALA 10 AM GPS-based tracking of all those quarantined in Kerala Kerala\'s Pathanamthitta district administration has introduced a new system supported with GPS for tracking all those who have been quarantined at their homes in different parts of the district as part of the ongoing intensive COVID-19 prevention drive. Two teams comprising 30 members each will observe the 733 persons under home quarantine in the district, collecting information about them and providing treatment directions to them. Both the teams are stationed at the Collectorate conference hall and will ensure that none of those who have been quarantined stray out of their homes. JAPAN 10 AM Tokyo governor says cancelling Olympics \'unthinkable\' Cancelling the 2020 Olympics is unthinkable although the classification of the coronavirus as a pandemic will likely have some impact on the Games, the Tokyo city governor said on Thursday. It can\'t be said that the announcement of a pandemic would have no impact... But I think cancellation is unthinkable, Yuriko Koike told reporters. Doubts are increasingly being raised over whether the Olympics can be held as scheduled from July 24 to August 9. Here is a list of global due to coronavirus outbreak. ITALY 9.45 AM Italy shuts stores across country to fight virus Italy on Wednesday shut all stores except for pharmacies and food shops in a desperate bid to halt the spread of a coronavirus that has killed 827 in the the country in just over two weeks. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced the latest wave of restrictions in a dramatic appeal to the nation that came with the country of 60 million battling its biggest crisis in generations. KARNATAKA 9.30 AM Mental health counselling for quarantined persons Living under quarantine with fears of a possible COVID-19 infection can be traumatic and the State Health Department has started offering counselling to those in hospitals and isolated in homes. District mental health counsellors are following up through telephonic counselling apart from regular follow up by surveillance teams, said Jawaid Akhtar, Additional Chief Secretary (Medical Education and Health and Family Welfare). USA 9.20 AM NBA suspends season until further notice, over coronavirus The National Basketball Association(NBA) has suspended its season until further notice after a Utah Jazz player tested positive Wednesday for the , a move that came only hours after the majority of the leagues owners were leaning toward playing games without fans in arenas. Now there will be no games at all, at least for the time being. A person with knowledge of the situation said the Jazz player who tested positive was center Rudy Gobert. The person spoke to on condition of anonymity because neither the league nor the team confirmed the presumptive positive test. Here is a list of global due to coronavirus outbreak. CHINA 9.15 AM Chinas coronavirus epicentre sees single-digit cases for first time China had eight new coronavirus infections in Hubei province, the first time the epicentre of the epidemic recorded a daily tally in single-digits, as more businesses reopened with local authorities cautiously easing strict containment measures. The capital of Hubei, Wuhan, reported on Wednesday, the National Health Commission said on Thursday. The domestic spread of the disease has slowed markedly in the past seven days, a result of weeks of strict measures imposed to control the movement of people and traffic, including the virtual lockdown of Wuhan, a city of 11 million people. USA 9 AM U.S. stock futures tumble as Trumps virus response disappoints U.S. stock index futures tumbled on Thursday and were close to hitting their daily down limit after S&P 500 futures fell as much as 4.7% to 2,610 points, near the daily downlimit of 2,601 points. The market is not applauding the president\'s address, said Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial in Newark. INDIA 8.30 AM State/UT wise list of COVID confirmed cases. (Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. Last updated on March 11, 2020 at 05:30 p.m.) INDIA 8.15 AM BOI advisory on travel, visa curbs The Bureau of Immigration (BOI) has asked all international passengers returning to the country to self-monitor their health and follow the required dos and donts as detailed by the Centre. Further, all passengers having travel history to China, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Japan, Italy, Thailand, Singapore, Iran, Malaysia, France, Spain, and Germany are advised to undergo self-imposed quarantine for 14 days from the date of their arrival. 8.10 AM ITALY Juventus defender Daniele Rugani tests positive Juventus and Italy defender Daniele Rugani told fans \'don\'t worry, I\'m fine\' on Wednesday after becoming the first Serie A footballer to test positive for the new coronavirus. The 25-year-old is currently asymptomatic, the Italian champions said, but the Turin-based club are currently activating all the isolation procedures required by law, including those who have had contact with him. I want to reassure all those who are worried about me, I\'m fine, Rugani later said on Instagram. At this moment, however, I feel even more duty to thank all the doctors and nurses who are struggling in hospitals to cope with this crisis." I invite everyone to respect the rules, because this virus makes no distinctions! Let\'s do it for ourselves, for our loved ones and for those around us, he wrote. Rugani is the first top-flight footballer to fall victim to the virus which has killed 827 in Italy, the second most stricken country in the world after China, and infected 12,000 people, including several Serie C players. - AFP 8.05 AM USA Tom Hanks, wife test positive for coronavirus Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson have both tested positive for , the U.S. actor said Wednesday. Hanks (63), said he and Ms. Wilson came down with a fever while in Australia, where he is reportedly filming a new movie about the life of Elvis Presley. 8 AM USA U.S. suspends travel from Europe for 30 days U.S. President Donald Trump said he is suspending all travel between the U.S. and Europe for 30 days beginning March 13 as he seeks to combat the . Trump made the announcement in an Oval Office address to the nation, blaming the European Union for not acting quickly enough to address the foreign virus and saying U.S. clusters were seeded by European travellers. "We made a lifesaving move with early action on China, Trump said. Now we must take the same action with Europe. Trump said the restrictions wont apply to the United Kingdom and the U.S. would monitor the situation to determine if travel could be reopened earlier. 8.00 AM CHINA Chinas coronavirus epicentre sees single-digit cases for first time China had eight new coronavirus infections in Hubei province, the first time the epicentre of the epidemic recorded a daily tally in single-digits, as more businesses reopened with local authorities cautiously easing strict containment measures. The capital of Hubei, Wuhan, reported all of the new cases on Wednesday, the National Health Commission said on Thursday. The domestic spread of the disease has slowed markedly in the past seven days, a result of weeks of strict measures imposed to control the movement of people and traffic, including the virtual lockdown of Wuhan, a city of 11 million people. 7.50 AM INDIA Air India announces temporary suspension of services to Rome, Milan, Seoul National carrier Air India on Wednesday night announced temporary suspension of its flight services to Rome, Milan and Seoul. While services to Rome (Italy) are being discontinued from March 15 to March 25, flight operations to Milan (Italy) and Seoul in South Korea will remain suspended between March 14 and March 28, an airline official said. Scientists get ready to test rival COVID-19 pandemic vaccines in animals Monkeys, mice and ferrets are helping scientists to fight because animal models can reveal how infections develop and aid efforts to develop drugs and vaccines, the prestigious scientific journal Nature has reported in its latest issue (12 March). It is notable that the ferret work is led by India-born Professor S.S. Vasan at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIRO), Australias national science agency. His Dangerous Pathogens team is the first in the world to establish the ferret model for . Tech tools for working from home during the coronavirus epidemic Many organisations and businesses are asking their employees to work from home as the continues to surge globally. Last week, Amazon, Google, Microsoft and Facebook advised their employees in some locations to work from home to reduce risks from COVID-19 outbreak. Cognizant closed its office in Hyderabad, and has asked its employees to work from home. The shift to working at home option is not confined to large global corporations. PayTM, Zoho and many start-ups are asking their workers to work from home., A KSRTC driver wears a protective mask use a hand sanitiser to prevent contracting coronavirus at Ernakulam. File Delhi reports Indias second COVID-19 death. A 68-year-old woman in Delhi became the countrys second victim of coronavirus as several States went into battle mode to contain the spread of COVID-19, shutting down schools, theatres and colleges, and many public events, including the IPL, were postponed. The number of positive cases crossed 80. The number includes the woman and a 76-year-old man from Karnataka who besides 17 foreign nationals, Health Ministry officials said. Cases of the infection have been reported from at least 11 States and territories, including Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala, where three patients were discharged last month after they recovered. Addressing reporters, officials said coronavirus a pandemic that has infected 1,31,500 people in 116 countries and territories and killed more than 4,900 is not a health emergency and there is no need to panic. COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% We have been related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, and . Here are the latest updates: DELHI 10.25 PM Delhi reports Indias second COVID-19 death Sixty-year-old woman who tested positive for coronavirus infection dies in Delhi, Health Ministry and Delhi government officials said. The woman came in contact with her son, the fifth case of coronavirus in the national capital, with a history travel history to Switzerland and Italy between February 5 and 22. Her death was caused due to co-morbidity (diabetes and hypertension), the officials said, adding she had tested positive for COVID-19. The woman was admitted in Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, officials said. NEW DELHI 10 PM Masks, sanitisers declared essential commodities Masks and hand sanitisers have been declared as essential commodities due to shortage in the wake of the . On March 13, the Centre notified an order under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to declare 2 ply and 3 ply surgical masks, N95 masks and hand sanitisers as essential commodities till June 30, 2020. It has also issued an advisory under the Legal Metrology Act, so that States can ensure these items are not sold for more than the Maximum Retail Price (MRP). GENEVA 9.50 PM Europe now epicentre of COVID-19 pandemic: WHO The World Health Organisation has warned that Europe is now the epicentre for the global coronavirus pandemic and reporting more daily cases than China did at the height of its outbreak. Europe has now become the epicentre of the pandemic, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a virtual press conference, describing the more than 5,000 deaths worldwide as a tragic milestone. AFP WASHINGTON 9.40 PM Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro tests negative for coronavirus, son tells Fox News Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has tested negative for the coronavirus, his son told Fox News following media reports that his father, who recently met with U.S. President Donald Trump, had tested positive. U.S. President Donald Trump shakes hands with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro before attending a working dinner at the Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, U.S., on March 7, 2020. The test is negative, Eduardo Bolsonaro told Fox News Channel in an interview. Mr. Jair Bolsonaros Facebook page also said the President has tested negative. Fox News had previously reported that an initial test had come back positive. CHENNAI 8.35 PM Kindergarten classes in TN to be closed till Mar 31 Kindergarten classes in all schools across Tamil Nadu will remain closed from March 16 to March 31, 2020 as a precaution against the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). For seven districts - Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Theni, Coimbatore, Tiruppur and The Nilgrils - bordering Kerala where more number of COVID-19 cases have been reported, the kindergarten and classes 1 to 5 will be closed. An order issued by the Commissioner of School Education on Friday said that the closure applied to all types of schools. The decision follows a high-level meeting chaired by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to discuss the efforts taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on Friday. The Chief Educational Officers of all the districts have been asked to issue necessary instructions to all schools in their jurisdiction to ensure that the decision has been implemented. In addition, based on the advisory issued by Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, CEOs of all the districts have been asked to create awareness among students who will be attending schools on preventive interventions like frequent handwash, using handkerchief to cover mouth while coughing or sneezing and staying away from school when sick. The CEOs have been asked to send reports on the efforts taken. Neighbouring States like Kerala and Karnataka have already declared holidays for schools. CHENNAI 8.20 PM CSK training suspended Chennai Super Kings practice sessions will stand suspended from Saturday in view of the novel coronavirus pandemic, it was announced in Chennai on Friday. The three-time IPL champions had commenced training from March 2 at the M A Chidambaram Stadium with captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Suresh Raina and Ambati Rayudu getting down to work. Chennai Super Kings practice sessions at M A Chidambaram stadium stands suspended from March 14, considering the present COVID-19 situation, Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) secretary R S Ramasaamy said in a press release. Earlier in the day, the BCCI announced the decision to suspend IPL 2020 till April 15 as a precautionary measure. The 38-year old Dhoni has been training with the CSK players and the practice sessions have been drawing thousands of fans each day. The talismanic CSK skipper has been the star attraction during the teams practice with fans expressing their love for the veteran. He indulged in some big hitting, much to the delight of the fans. The others who took part in the teams net sessions were Murali Vijay, Harbhajan Singh, who linked up with the squad a couple of days ago, Kedar Jadhav, new recruit Piyush Chawla, Karn Sharma, K M Asif and local players R Sai Kishore and N Jagadeesan among others NEW DELHI 8.15 PM Masks, hand santizers declared essential commodities The government on Friday declared masks, including N95, and hand sanitizers as essential commodities in the wake of the coronavirus scare leading to shortages and black marketing of these items. These items will remain under essential commodities segment till June-end, a move aimed at ensuring availability at reasonable prices and cracking down on hoarders/black marketeers. The government has notified an order under the Essential Commodities Act to declare masks (2 ply and 3 ply surgical masks, N95 masks) and hand santizers as essential commodities up to June 30, 2020 KERALA 8.05 PM Three more test positive for coronavirus in Kerala: CM Three more people, including an Italian national, tested positive for coronavirus in Kerala on Friday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said. With the three fresh cases, the number of affected people in the State has touched 19, he told reporters here. An Italian tourist, who was staying at a resort in nearby Varkala, has tested positive and is kept in isolation there itself, Mr. Vijayan said. Health minister K K Shailaja, who was also present, said the foreigner will be shifted to the medical college hospital later. Mr. Vijayan also said yesterdays unconfirmed case in Thiruvananthapuram also tested positive. The third person is a UK-returnee and is in the isolation ward at the medical college hospital here, he said. At least 5,468 people are under surveillance in the State, Mr. Vijayan said, adding that 277 have been lodged in isolation wards at various hospitals across the state. The Chief Minister also said 1,715 samples have been sent for testing of which 1,132 turned out to be negative. Kerala has been hit by the second round of coronavirus cases after the countrys first three positive cases in the state were successfully cured and discharged from hospitals last month. ROME 8.00 PM Indian medical team in Italy to test stranded Indians for coronavirus A medical team from India reached Italy on Friday to test stranded Indian nationals for the coronavirus so that they can be brought back. The death toll from COVID-19 jumped over 5,000 on Friday as the number of cases around the world topped 134,000. Italy has more than 15,000 cases and over 1,000 deaths -- the most outside of China, the epicentre of the disease. The Indian mission in Rome said it was working actively with Indian ministries and local authorities in Italy to address COVID19 situation being faced by stranded Indians JAIPUR 7.45 PM Rajasthan Assembly adjourned till March 26 Rajasthan Assembly Speaker C. P. Joshi on Friday adjourned the House till March 26 in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. As soon as the House passed Finance Bill and Appropriation Bill by voice vote, Mr. Joshi announced the adjournment. As you all know that the entire country is worried about coronavirus. The Centre has issued an advisory in this regard and the Chief Minister has also highlighted the matter. Keeping (this) in view, the House is adjourned till March 26, the speaker said. KIEV 7.40 PM Ukraine reports first death from novel coronavirus Ukraine on Friday reported its first death from the coronavirus as authorities said the country was closing its borders to foreigners in a bid to keep the pandemic at bay. A woman who was diagnosed with the coronavirus yesterday... has died, Ukraines Deputy Health Minister Viktor Lyashko told reporters. The ex-Soviet country, which has a population of 42 million, has so far reported three confirmed cases of the coronavirus. NEW DELHI 7.30 PM Army postpones all recruitment rallies by a month The Indian Army has postponed all recruitment rallies by a month, and has asked its personnel to travel only for essential duties in the wake of novel coronavirus outbreak, army sources said on Friday. The sources added that instructions have been issued to all concerned to accord adequate focus on health security and all ranks must take precautions to avoid infection. All recruitment rallies will be postponed by one month, a source said. Besides this, travel by personnel has also been restricted but only for essential duties. They are also advised to choose video-conference facilities instead of travel. Command headquarters have also been instructed to establish adequate quarantine facilities at following locations to support plans of the government. Accordingly, quarantine facilities have been established at Manesar (300 beds), Jodhpur (1000), Jaisalmer (1000), Jhansi (1000), Binnaguri (300) and Gaya (300). JAMMU 7.10 PM J&K govt. orders closure of all malls, gyms, swimming pools in Jammu The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday ordered closure of all malls, gyms, swimming pools, recreational clubs in the district till March 31 as a precautionary measure to contain the spread of novel coronavirus, an official said. Any violation of this order shall invite action under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by order of the district magistrate, District Magistrate, Jammu, Sushma Chauhan said. NEW DELHI 7.05 PM Kejriwal thanks Centre for cooperation During his speech in Delhi Assembly, the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said "I thank the Centre for all the cooperation in confronting the COVID-19 epidemic." Mr. Kejriwal said "It is because of joint efforts like this across the country that coronavirus is at the stage of containment in India." The Chief Minister warned "Healthy people must not wear masks, they might have the opposite effect." Mr. Kejriwal said "Sanitisers are also not needed; all you need to do is wash your hands properly every half an hour." He requested all the MLAs to spread the word about the precautions among the people. NEW DELHI 6.55 PM IIT-Delhi directs students to leave hostels The Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi has directed students to leave hostels by Sunday in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. In view of the current COVID-19 epidemic, as a preventive measure decided by the competent authority, the students are required to leave the hostels positively by midnight of March 15, 2020. There is no need to vacate the room though. Please fill the entry and exit register of the hostel concerned and the mess rebate form. This applies to students currently living in Nalanda and IP Apartments and in off-campus hostels in Katwaria Sarai and Jia Sarai also, Dean of Student Affairs Rajesh Khanna said in an official communication. The institute had on Thursday announced suspension of classes and all events till March 31. PhD students may stay back if their research is in crucial stage. Foreign students who are staying within the campus may also stay, Khanna said. PRAGUE 6.20 PM Czechs close borders from March 16 over virus spread The Czech government said Friday it would ban all foreign travellers from entering and all Czechs from leaving the country as of March 16 in a bid to stem the coronavirus spread. As of midnight Sunday-Monday, we ban all foreigners from entering the Czech Republic and, at the same time, all Czech citizens from leaving the Czech territory, Interior Minister Jan Hamacek told reporters. Its a very tough measure but we think it may fundamentally contribute to stemming the spread of the coronavirus. The measure does not concern foreigners with permanent residence or a residency permit for over 90 days in the EU member state, which has 117 confirmed cases of the virus and no deaths. The government also ordered a mandatory two-week quarantine for people coming to the Czech Republic from 15 risk countries as of Friday at noon, with the exception of transit travellers. These countries include China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, Spain, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark and France. The government has also designated the act of spreading coronavirus as a crime, Prime Minister Andrej Babis said. On Thursday, the Czech government declared a 30-day state of emergency. MUMBAI 5.50 PM Remaining ODIs against South Africa called off Indias remaining two ODIs against South Africa in Lucknow and Kolkata called off in wake of COVID-19 pandemic, says a BCCI official. MAHARASHTRA 5.45 PM Epidemic Diseases Act invoked Maharashtra government invokes Epidemic Diseases Act in wake of coronavirus scare, announced Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in Assembly. Malls, gyms, cinema halls, swimming pools to remain closed in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune, Pimpri Chinchwad and Nagpur from 12 midnight, says Mr. Thackeray in Assembly. PARIS 5.20 PM Coronavirus deaths pass 5,000: AFP tally The death toll from the coronavirus pandemic has risen to 5,043, according to an AFP tally based on official sources at 1630 IST on Friday. A total of 3,176 people have died in mainland China, followed by 1,016 in Italy, and 514 in Iran the three countries with the highest number of deaths. Since COVID-19 was first detected in December, more than 134,300 people have been infected in 121 countries and territories NEW DELHI 5.15 PM India evacuates more than 1000 persons The Health Ministry officials, on Friday, said that India had evacuated 1,031 persons, including from Maldives, US, Madagascar and China. Total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in India rise to 81, including 16 Italians, the officials said. The officials further added that the Centre has decided to allow international traffic through 19 border checkposts out of 37. They further said Indo-Bangladesh cross border passenger trains and buses to remain suspended till April 15, or earlier if so decided. They said "Exercise will be undertaken on Saturday to bring back Indian passengers stranded in Iran." LONDON 5.05 PM Englands tour of Sri Lanka postponed due to coronavirus Englands ongoing tour of Sri Lanka was on Friday called off in view of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the ECB said, calling the situation unprecedented. The decision was announced while the English cricketers were playing the second day of their final warm-up fixture in Colombo. A two-match Test series, part of the World Championship, was due to start in Galle next Thursday. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic worsening globally, and after discussions with Sri Lanka Cricket, we have today made the decision to return our players to the UK and postpone the forthcoming Test series between Sri Lanka and England, the ECB said in a statement. At this time, the physical and mental wellbeing of our players and support teams is paramount. We will now look to bring them home to their families as soon as possible. These are completely unprecedented times, and decisions like this go beyond cricket. Englands home series against the West Indies in June and the T20 Blast might also get affected due to the novel coronavirus pandemic after the government identified a likely peak period of COVID-19 in the country. On Thursday, the British government said it will not ban sporting fixtures immediately but didnt rule out the option. NEW DELHI 4.55 PM Modi calls on SAARC to fight coronavirus Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called on the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to fight the coronavirus threat jointly. This came minutes after India evacuated 44 citizens who from the Iranian city of Qom after the cancellation of flights due to coronvirus outbreak in that country. I would like to propose that the leadership of SAARC nations chalk out a strong strategy to fight coronavirus. We could discuss, via video conferencing, ways to keep our citizens healthy. Together, we can set an example to the world and contribute to a healthier planet, said Mr. Modi in a social media message. IRAN 4.50 PM Iran reports 85 new virus deaths, taking total to 514 Iran announced Friday that the new coronavirus has claimed another 85 lives, the highest single-day death toll in one of the worlds worst affected countries. Sadly, 85 people infected with the COVID-19 disease have died in the past 24 hours, bringing to 514 the overall number of deaths in Iran, health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said in a televised news conference. PUNE 4.40 PM One more tests positive in Pune One more person, with travel history to US, tests positive for coronavirus in Pune, taking number of cases in city to ten and that in Maharashtra to 17. The total number of positive COVID-19 cases in the country stands at 79. One person has died so far. PATNA 4.40 PM Schools, Colleges and Cinema halls in Bihar to be shut till March 31 After a high level meeting with chief minister Nitish Kumar and top officials, Bihar chief secretary on Friday said that all schools, colleges, Cinema halls and coaching institutes will be closed till March 31. All parks and botanical garden in the state too will be shut during this period. A nine-bed isolation ward has been made in the government owned Patna Medical College and Hospital. Currently two suspected patients of Coronavirus are admitted there. CHANDIGARH 4.30 PM Haryana shuts down all colleges, universities Haryana government has decided to close all universities and colleges (government and private) in the state till March 31 as a precautionary measure in the wake of Coronavirus disease (Covid-19). Separately, the department of school education has also decided to close all government and private schools in five districts including - Sonepat, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Faridabad and Gurgaon till March 31. An order issued in this regard, said that the examinations in these schools will be held as per schedule.The schools in the remaining districts of Haryana would continue to function as usual. BENGALURU 4.35 PM Bengaluru malls, pubs, theatres closed for a week from March 14 To curb the spread of , all malls, cinema halls, pubs, exhibitions and summer camps in Bengaluru will be closed for a period of one week starting from March 14, 2020. Briefing the media after a meeting with several departments, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa stated that even colleges and universities will be closed. He said that all IT professionals and those working in AC rooms will also be advised to work from home. He said that all wedding functions and sport activities will also have to be cancelled. LUCKNOW 4.20 PM All schools, colleges in UP to be shut till March 22 The Uttar Pradesh government announced on Friday that all schools and colleges in the state where exams were not going on, have been closed till March 22 in view of the coronavirus scare. Exams would go on according to schedule, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, adding the people concerned have been instructed to take all precautionary measures and maintain hygiene. The decision would be reviewed on March 20 on the basis of which the future course of action would be decided MUMBAI 4.10 PM AI cancels flights to Italy, France, Germany, 3 other countries till April 30 National carrier Air India has cancelled flights to Italy, France, Germany, Spain, South Korea and Sri Lanka till April 30, an airline official said on Friday. The decision has been taken in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. On Thursday, the carrier said it was curtailing services to various other countries, including Spain, France and Sri Lanka. The carrier has already cancelled flights to Kuwait. MAHARASHTRA 3.50 PM 2 more test positive in Nagpur Two more persons tested positive for coronavirus in Nagpur, on Friday, officials said. Two days after a 45-year-old man was found to be infected with coronavirus in Nagpur, his wife and friend also tested positive on Friday, Divisional Commissioner Sanjiv Kumar said. The man had returned from the US last week along with his wife and the friend, he added. He was admitted to the city-based Indira Gandhi Government Medical College and Hospital (IGGMCH), officials said. After he tested positive for coronavirus, 15 persons who were in close contact with him, including his wife and the friend, were put under observation and their samples were sent to lab testing, they said. His wife and friend, who have now tested positive, are being treated at the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) here, they added. MANESAR 3.15 PM Positive COVID-19 cases rises to 76 One individual who had returned from Italy on March 11, 2020 and quarantined at Armys facility at Manesar has been tested positive for COVID-19. The individual was employed in one of the restaurants in Italy since last 14 years. As per procedure, has has been shifted to an isolation facility at Safdarjung Hospital for further medical examination and recovery, Army sources said. NEW DELHI 2.40 P.M. IPL suspended till April 15 The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Friday decided to suspend the Indian Premier League (IPL) till April 15 as a precautionary measure against COVID-19 pandemic. "The BCCI is concerned and sensitive about all its stakeholders, and public health in general, and it is taking all necessary steps to ensure that, all people related to IPL including fans have a safe cricketing experience," Jay Shah, Honorary Secretary, BCCI, said. The decision comes a day after the Sports Ministry asked all national federations, including the cricket board, to follow the Health Ministrys advisory and avoid large gatherings in sports events. KERALA 2 P.M. 68-year-old man under observation for coronavirus dies in Kottayam Panic gripped Chengalam near in Kottayam when a 68-year-old man who had been under observation for suspected COVID-19 infection died on Friday. According to officials, the deceased was under isolation at his residence when he developed uneasiness. He was shifted to the Kottayam Medical College, but was declared brought dead. His son had come into direct contact with one of the COVID -19 patients from Chengalam between February 29 and March 8. Accordingly, the youth was listed as a primary contact while his father was marked as a secondary contact, said an official. NEW DELHI 1.30 PM 44 Indian pilgrims evacuated from Iran India on Friday evacuated 44 citizens who were stuck in the Iranian city of Qom after flights were cancelled due to coronvirus outbreak in Iran. The evacuation came a day after External Affairs Minister Dr S that limited number of commercial flights would be allowed to fly back the Indians who were stranded in Qom, Tehran and other Iranian cities. Second batch of 44 Indian pilgrims has arrived today from Iran. Our efforts to bring back the others continue, said Mr Jaishankar announcing the arrival of the latest batch of evacuees who landed in Mumbai in an Iran Air flight. ODISHA 1 P.M. Odisha imposes restrictions on congregation, to regulate social functions Odisha government on Friday announced to impose restrictions on congregations aiming at social distancing to contain the spread of COVID-19 by invoking powers under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The State Cabinet which met on Thursday declared COVID-19 as a disaster for the State under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to adequately empower our public officials to combat the spread of COVID-19. It also approved COVID-19 Odisha Regulations, 2020. The government moved to regulate social gatherings and assemblies like religious functions, marriage receptions and parties by local authorities. The competent officers have been authorised to impose required restrictions on assemblies and congregation. The government has earmarked 200 crore to augment the Public Health Response Fund to combat the threat of the pandemic and for making required expenditure. NEW DELHI 12.40 PM The Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Jamia Millia Islamia on Friday suspended classes with immediate effect till March 31 and advised students to avoid large gathering in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. NEW DELHI 12.30 PM A day after declaring COVID-19 epidemic, Delhi government has decided to not allow any sporting events in the national capital, until further orders. This would mean IPL matches scheduled to be held in Delhi have to be shifted out. KALABURAGI 12.15 PM Kalaburagi put on high alert after man dies of COVID-19 Just as the death of a 76-year-old man from Kalaburagi was confirmed to have been caused by COVID-19 at the late night on Thursday, the Kalaburagi district was put on high alert. According to Deputy Commissioner B. Sharat, 31 people who were in direct contact with the deceased person and who were home-quarantined have now been shifted to quarantine ward in State-run ESIC medical complex. They are considered as high-risk suspects and each one of them is provided with one medical officer. Four medical professionals who had treated the patient before his death in a private hospital are also among the high-risk suspects. Fifteen more people who were also in contact with the dead man in one or the other way also quarantined in ESIC isolation ward. GHAZIABAD 11.20 AM 700 employees of a Noida firm told to work from home Around 700 employees of a private company in Noida have been asked to work from home after was tested positive for . Anurag Bhargava, Chief Medical Officer, Gautam Buddh Nagar, confirmed to The Hindu that the employees have been put under surveillance. The patient, a resident of Delhi, used to travel to Noida every day. It has been learnt that he came into contact with many people before he was detected positive. Right now, he is in Delhis Safdarjung Hospital. As a precautionary measure, his colleagues have been asked to work from home, he said. VIJAYAWADA 11.06 AM A.P. Govt. looking for 105 people who returned from COVID-19 hit countries The Department of Health is still looking for 105 foreign returnees from COVID-19 hit countries in the State as of Thursday. It is not known if these people had undergone basic screening for the symptoms of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) upon arrival in the country. The department has traced 57 such persons and put them under home isolation since Wednesday. According to the evening bulletin on COVID-19 outbreak, one person tested positive to COVID-19 and 328 people, including 319 at homes and 9 at hospitals, have been placed under isolation. 10.45 AM CRPF cancels anniversary celebrations The CRPF on Friday postponed its raising day celebrations planned to be held next week in view of the coronavirus outbreak. The 3.25 lakh central force was supposed to hold the main ceremonial parade and display of martial skills with the involvement of thousands of troops at its officers academy campus in Gurgaon on March 19 to mark its 81st raising day. Taking a similar action, the Central Industrial Security Force had last week postponed its anniversary day celebrations to be held on Friday. However, the CISF is now mulling to hold this event on March 28 after reviewing the threat posed by the disease. - PTI 10.20 AM KERALA A glimpse into an isolation ward in Kerala At the reception desk of the administrative block of Government Medical College Hospital, Ernakulam, you are asked to disinfect your hands using a sanitiser. On the wall across from the desk is a white board screaming out the word of the day, Alert in English and Jagrata in Malayalam. At the other end of the lobby is a wide glass door, behind which a white curtain running across the small courtyard leading to a towering seven-storey building segregates two sets of people, all wearing face masks. Some are seated in chairs, while a few stand around having animated talk over their phones. A few desks with people in personal protective equipment (PPE) are seen in the portico and inside its opaque glass doors. It houses the largest isolation facility in the State for symptomatic suspected COVID-19 cases and confirmed patients. 10 AM UNITED KINGDOM Premier League in doubt as Arteta, Hudson-Odoi get coronavirus The Premier League was thrown into chaos as Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta and Chelsea winger Callum Hudson-Odoi both contracted the new coronavirus, leaving at least one game postponed and other fixtures in doubt. Arsenal\'s match at Brighton was put on hold after Arteta\'s diagnosis sent the London club into lockdown, while Chelsea\'s players and coaching staff were also ordered into isolation. Chelsea said they would discuss their upcoming games, starting with Sunday\'s trip to Aston Villa, with Premier League officials. The league will hold emergency talks on Friday regarding future fixtures in light of the pandemic, which has shut down football and other sports around the world. - AFP 9.45 AM AUSTRALIA Australian pacer Kane Richardson tested for coronavirus, results awaited Australian fast bowler Kane Richardson has been tested for the novel coronavirus after he reported illness and will miss the first ODI against New Zealand on Friday. The right-arm pacer, who returned with Australian team from South Africa earlier this week, informed the medical staff of a sore throat on Thursday and was tested for the virus, though the results of the test are awaited. Our medical staff are treating this as a typical throat infection but we are following Australian Government protocols that require us to keep Kane away from other members of the squad and perform the appropriate tests given he has returned from international travel in the last 14 days, a Cricket Australia spokesperson was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au. Once we receive the results of the tests and Kane recovers in the next few days we expect he will re-join the team. We will not be making further comment until something changes. - PTI 9.30 AM DELHI 112 housed at ITBP quarantine test negative for coronavirus All 112 people admitted to an ITBP quarantine facility here for over a fortnight have tested negative for coronavirus and are expected to be released on Friday, a senior official said. All of them were evacuated last month from Wuhan in China. 9.15 AM DELHI Delhi shuts schools, colleges and cinemas The was declared an epidemic by the Delhi government on Thursday. Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal chaired a meeting at Raj Niwas with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to review the . All cinemas, schools and colleges except those where exams are on will remain shut till March 31. Disinfecting all public and private places will be made compulsory. The Delhi government is preparing more quarantine facilities. 9 AM KARNATAKA Bengaluru-based software engineer tests positive A software engineer, who works in Bengaluru, has tested positive for on Thursday taking the total number of confirmed cases in Karnataka to five. The newly marrie, who returned on March 6 from his honeymoon to Greece, Health officials and ambulance drivers in personal protective gear by the side of the seven-storey COVID19 screening and 30-room isolation facility at Ernakulam Medical College. Thulasi Kakkat Padma awards ceremony postponed Even as a 68-year-old woman in Delhi became of coronavirus, a was declared in the United States on Friday over the to free up $50 billion in federal aid. Mr. Trump also said he after facing possible exposure. Meanwhile, with the second death and more than 80 positive cases of , India has launched a containment lockdown, according to experts, with several States closing schools, colleges and theatres and cancelling public events. The country, which is in the second stage of transmission, recorded the second fatality in the national capital. Health officials confirmed that the Delhi resident, who came in contact with her COVID-19 positive son, died at RML Hospital on March 13 night. COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% We have been related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, and . Here are the latest updates: 9.35 P.M. No fresh cases in Kerala, monitoring of people reaching by road & rail to be strengthened No fresh cornonavirus cases were reported in Kerala on Saturday, as the government decided to strengthen monitoring of people who reach the State by rail and road, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said. Mr. Vijayan, who chaired the daily evaluation meet in Thiruvananthapuram, told reporters that a total of 302 people are in isolation wards in hospitals across the state. A total of 7,677 people are under observation in the state, out of which 7,375 people are under home quarantine and 302 are in isolation wards across the state. Out of the total of 1,897 samples sent for testing, 1,345 tested negative, the Chief Minister said. Coronavirus care centres would be set up near airports in the state, he said. The restrictions imposed have succeeded in limiting the spread to a certain extent, Mr. Vijayan said, adding that a set of volunteers would be enrolled to aid the health department and they would be given special training by the officials. A special team will monitor all the passengers of inter-state trains at the first station inside Kerala borders. 8.50 P.M. Dont conceal coronavirus-like symptoms, consult doctor immediately: Mamata West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged people on Saturday to not conceal coronavirus-like symptoms such as fever and cold, and immediately consult a doctor. Appealing to people not to panic, she said there was no emergency-like situation in the state, but everyone should remain alert. Do not conceal if you are suffering from fever and cough or facing breathing problems. Go to the doctor straightaway. Remember, if you take rest for 14 days, chances of your recovery are there, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo told Bengali television news channel "ABP Ananda". Referring to the shutting of educational institutions in the state, she said it was a precautionary measure. The chief minister also urged teachers to readjust the time-table of academic courses and asked them to work from home. We must continue with our normal life but take all precautionary measures. There is no problem in West Bengal at the moment, but that does not mean nothing will happen. We have to remain alert, she said. Ms. Banerjee said the ongoing budget session of the state Assembly should be shortened in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. 8.30 P.M. Centre frames guidelines on handling of COVID-19 casualties Amid a controversy over the cremation of the 68-year-old woman who died in Delhi after being infected with novel coronavirus, the Union health ministry has begun working on framing guidelines for handling the bodies of those who die of the disease. Though it is unlikely that coronavirus infection could spread from handling of a body, the guidelines are being drafted to dispel any misconception and raise awareness regarding spread of the disease from a deceased, a health ministry official said. Coronavirus infection is a respiratory disease which spreads through droplets and the probability of mortuary or disposal staff contracting the virus from the dead is unlikely as against in case of high-risk pathogens like Ebola and Nipah which have very high chances of spreading through direct contact with body-fluids of the deceased, the official said. The World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on Infection prevention and control of epidemic and pandemic-prone acute respiratory infections in health care recommends proper use of personal protection equipment in accordance with standard precautions to avoid direct contact with body fluids while moving a body from isolation room or area. About mortuary care and post-mortem examination, WHO recommends packing and transporting a body with acute respiratory infection to a morgue, crematorium or burial by ensuring it is fully sealed in an impermeable body bag before being removed from the isolation area to avoid leakage of body fluid. When properly packed in a body bag, the body can be safely removed for storage in the mortuary, sent to the crematorium, or placed in a coffin for burial, it said. The global health body advises using personal protective equipment such as disposable, long-sleeved, cuffed gowns for handling bodies; if the outside of the body is visibly contaminated with body fluids, excretions, or secretions, it has to be ensured that the gown is waterproof. It further recommends that mortuary staff and burial team apply standard precautions like proper hand hygiene and use appropriate personal protective equipment, including facial protection, if there is a risk of splashes from the patients body fluids or secretions onto the body or face of the staff member. Transmission of lethal infectious diseases associated with mortuary care has been reported... manage each situation on a case-by-case basis, balancing the rights of the family with the risks of exposure to infection, WHO said. 6 P.M. Maharashtra govt. orders closedown of schools, colleges The Maharashtra government has ordered closedown of schools and colleges in the area of jurisdiction under municipal corporations, city councils and nagar panchayats. The decision is effective till March 30. All examinations except Class X and XII have been postponed. All anganwadis along with Private coaching classes have been closed down too. The information was from State\'s Health Minister Rajesh Tope. "Strict action will be taken against rumour mongering. Prisons will be checked too" Home Minister Anil Deshmukh in the Assembly. 5. 45 P.M. Casinos, pubs, other public places to remain closed in Goa The Goa government on Saturday announced closure of educational institutes and public places including casinos, swimming pools and pubs in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak in the country till March 31. The order will come into force from Sunday (March 15) midnight. PTI 5. 35 P.M. Two more test positive in Maharashtras Yavatmal Two people who had returned from Dubai test positive for coronavirus in Maharashtras Yavatmal. PTI 5 P.M. Padma awards postponed The Ministry of Home Affairs announced that the Padma awards ceremony scheduled to be held on April 3 has been postponed. The date and time of the ceremony will be announced at a later date. 4. 45 P.M. BCCI, AIFF suspend tournaments BCCI suspends Irani Cup tie, the last fixture of men\'s domestic season, scheduled between Saurashtra and Rest of India in Rajkot from March 18 due to COVID-19 outbreak. Women\'s Challenger Series, scheduled in Ahmedabad from March 29, has also been suspended. No domestic cricket will be played till further notice, the cricket body has said. Also, the All India Football Federation on Saturday suspended tournaments at all levels, including the flagship I-League, till March 31 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension will come into effect from Sunday. Adhering to the advisories issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, and directives from several State Governments, all footballing activities under the aegis of AIFF stay suspended till March 31, 2020, the countrys apex football body said in a statement. NAGPUR 4.30 P.M. One more tests positive in Nagpur One more person tested positive for coronavirus in Nagpur on Saturday, taking the number of such cases in the city to four and in Maharashtra to 20, officials said. A 43-year-old man has tested positive for coronavirus in Nagpur. He was admitted to the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in the city, officials said. He had travelled to the US along with the man, who is the first person to be found positive for coronavirus in the city, they said. With this, the total number of coronavirus cases in Nagpur has gone up to four now, they said. Of the total number of coronavirus positive patients in the state, 10 are in Pune, four in Mumbai, and one each in Thane and Ahmednagar, officials said. RWANDA 4.15 P.M. Indian man tests positive in Rwanda Rwanda has confirmed its first case of , an Indian citizen who arrived in the East African nation from Mumbai on March 8, the Health Ministry said on Saturday. He had no symptoms on arrival but presented himself to a health facility on March 13, the ministry said. Rwanda is the 19th African nation to report the presence of coronavirus. He is currently under treatment in stable condition, isolated from other patients, the ministry said. The tracing of all contacts has been conducted for further management. 3.20 PM COVID-19 a \'disaster\' The Ministry of Home Affairs has notified COVID-19 as a \'disaster\' for providing assistance under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). An ex-gratia relief of Rs. 4 lakh to kin of those who died of COVID-19, cost of hospitalisation for managing patients as fixed by State Government, will be provided. 3.10 PM US Embassy, Consulates in India cancel all visa appointments from Mar 16 The US Embassy and Consulates in India have cancelled all visa appointments from March 16 in the wake of coronavirus outbreak. A statement issued by the US Embassy here said, US Mission India posts, in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, are cancelling immigrant and non-immigrant visa appointments from March 16, 2020, onward. Your visa appointment stands as cancelled. Once Mission India resumes regular consular operations, appointments will be made available and you will be able to reschedule, it said. WEST BENGAL 3 P.M. West Bengal govt. closes all educational institutions till March 31 The West Bengal Government on Saturday announced that all schools, colleges and universities in the State will remain closed till March 31, in the view of evolving situation on the spread of COVID-19 . It has been decided that all Government, government- aided, private educational institutions- schools, colleges, universities, madrsahs, SSK / MSK will remain closed from 16 March , 2020 to 31 March 2020 in public interest," a press release issued by the State government said. WEST BENGAL 2.30 P.M. West Bengal seals border with Bhutan The West Bengal government has sealed the States border with Bhutan in the wake of novel coronavirus pandemic, a senior official said on Saturday. The West Bengal Police, which mans the border gate on the Indian side in Jaigaon in Alipurduar district, stopped the movement of goods and travellers from India to Bhutan on Friday evening, the official said. The move comes after Bhutan recently issued a notification to the Alipurduar district administration informing it about a halt in tourist and business activities in the wake of coronavirus outbreak, he said. The Himalayan kingdom had earlier this month banned the entry of foreigners after an American tourist tested positive for the coronavirus. HYDERABAD 2.10 PM Fresh case of COVID-19 reported in Hyderabad Less than 12 hours after Telangana reported its only COVID-19 patient has recovered, another patient has tested positive for the virus. The patient has been placed in isolation and being treat in Gandhi Hospital, Hyderabad. The patient had recently travelled to Italy, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekara Rao told the Assembly. A high-level meeting of Health Minister, secretaries of various departments is underway to review preventive measures to check spread of corona virus in Telangana. The Chief Minister has called for a Cabinet meeting at 6 pm. NAGPUR 1.30 P.M. Four admitted in Nagpur hospital return home without informing authorities Four persons admitted to a government-run hospital in Nagpur for suspected coronavirus infection, returned home without informing the authorities, police said on Saturday. The incident occurred late Friday night, they said. According to police, the four persons were later traced and asked to return to the hospital. Their test results are awaited. Four persons, including two women, had come to the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College and Hospital (IGGMCH) on Friday morning to give their blood samples for suspected coronavirus infection. They were kept in the isolation ward. However, at night they left the hospital without informing the authorities, a police official said. We later traced them and contacted them on phone. They have been asked to return to the hospital. They told us that they were annoyed over the delay in getting the test results and also over sharing the toilet with coronavirus positive patients admitted in the hospital, he added. So far, three persons have been found positive for coronavirus infection in Nagpur. HYDERABAD 12.50 PM Telanganas first COVID-19 patient discharged The index (first) COVID-19 case from Telangana was discharged from Gandhi Hospital on Friday night. Though guidelines state that a person who tested positive for coronavirus can be discharged after 14 days of isolation at hospital provided he/she tests negative twice consecutively, the index case from the State was discharged on the 13th day, the date of admission (March 1) included. The 24-year-old man will be in would be under home isolation for 14 days more. His medical condition would be monitored for the fortnight. TIRUCHI 12.35 PM Screening at temples Devotees being screened by health officials to prevent the further movement of people with COVID-2019 symptoms, at Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam on Saturday, March 14, 2020. M.Moorthy A day after the each at Alipiri and Srivarimettu as a precautionary measure, authorities screened devotees at Srirangam Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam, near Tiruchi in Tamil Nadu. In tune with the measures taken by the Central and State governments to contain the spread of , the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has embarked on a twin-pronged strategy to create awareness among pilgrims, and to screen them at the entry point. 12.30 PM Saudi cancels international flights for two weeks Saudi Arabia said Saturday that it would halt all international flights to the kingdom for two weeks in the latest effort to contain the spread of infection. Gulf nations have been scrambling to contain the pandemic, which has spread to more than 100 countries and infected more than 130,000 people. Of special concern is nearby Iran, where one of the worst outbreaks has infected more than 11,000 and . 12.15 P.M. Nearly 12 lakh international passengers screened for coronavirus: Civil Aviation Ministry Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday said so far nearly 12 lakh passengers coming from abroad have been screened for coronavirus at various airports across the country. Speaking at Wings India 2020 an aviation related event in Hyderabad, the Union Minister said there would be a drop of 15 to 20% in domestic air traffic for the time being due to the virus concerns. He further said, out of over 11 lakh passengers who were screened at 30 airports only 3,225 were referred to tests. Indian airports have set up a benchmark for other countries in terms of taking precautionary measures such as screening and making facilities available at aerodromes in the wake of the virus outbreak, he added. 11.50 AM Rajasthan closes schools, cinema halls till March 30 Rajasthan government on Saturday decided to close all educational institutions, coaching centres, gymnasiums, cinema halls and theatres till March 30 to prevent the . Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who presided over a high-level meeting here, said the decision had been taken as a precautionary measure in accordance with the Centres advisory after the World Health Organisation (WHO) . 11.30 AM Australia-New Zealand remaining ODI games cancelled The as the visiting will have to hurry back home to avoid a new set of travel restrictions owing to the novel coronavirus pandemic. According to a report in ESPNCricinfo, a three-match T20 International series that was scheduled in New Zealand after the ODI series in Australia also stands cancelled at the moment. 10.25 AM Keralites stranded in Rome arrive at Kochi airport An Emirates flight carrying a section of the 40-odd Malayalis for over three days landed at the Cochin International Airport Limited on Saturday around 8.30 a.m. A total of 21 stranded passengers were flown to Kochi this morning, CIAL said. Flights to Iran were cancelled . The stranding was because of the March 6 notification that made \'pre-flight negative tests\' mandatory before boarding from Italy and South Korea. Iran, Italy and South Korea are the worst hit apart from China. The notification came in force on 10 March midnight surprising many passengers. 10.15 AM RSS meet in Bengaluru cancelled Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sanghs Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), which was to begin on March 15 in Bengaluru, has been cancelled owing to restrictions imposed on public gatherings to prevent spread of . The government of Karnataka has imposed for a week on all places and events of public gathering starting Saturday. 10.00 AM Swaminarayan sect closes all temples globally In view of the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, the Swaminarayan sect has announced to close all its temples globally and suspend routine activities until further notice as part of its efforts to protect the health of volunteers, visitors and local communities. , which has been declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation, has claimed over 5,000 lives, including 41 in the US, and infected more than 134,000 people globally. The Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam (BAPS) Swaminarayan Sanstha, which runs about 100 temples in the US, over the weekend in particular is visited by thousands of devotees every month. The BAPS is a volunteer-driven organisation that aims to improve society through individual growth by fostering Hindu ideals of faith, unity, and selfless service. To prevent large gatherings, BAPS mandirs (temples) will be closed throughout the world, but devotees will be given daily darshan through the websites of each mandir, the BAPS said in a media release. 9.20 AM U.S. summons Chinese envoy over Beijing\'s coronavirus comments The U.S. State Department summoned the Chinese ambassador to the United States on Friday to protest against comments by Beijing suggesting the U.S. military might have brought the coronavirus to Wuhan, as tensions between the two global powers over the outbreak intensified. David Stillwell, the top U.S. diplomat for East Asia, delivered a very stern representation to China\'s ambassador Cui Tiankai, a State Department official said, adding that Beijing\'s envoy was very defensive. The State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said China was seeking to deflect criticism of its role in starting a global pandemic and not telling the world. Spreading conspiracy theories is dangerous and ridiculous. We wanted to put the government on notice we won\'t tolerate it for the good of the Chinese people and the world. 9.00 AM Latin America death toll rises to 5 Argentina announced its second coronavirus-related death on Friday as Ecuador reported its first, taking the total death toll in Latin America to five as the virus shows signs of spreading rapidly. Venezuela, Uruguay, Guatemala and Suriname reported their first cases of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall cases in the region have more than doubled in the last two days to over 340 as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) warned governments on Thursday to prepare their health services to cope. 8.15 AM Canada shuts Parliament Canada shut down Parliament and advised against all non-essential travel outside the country while Prime Minister Justin Trudeau governed remotely from his home, in self-imposed quarantine for the new coronavirus. Dr. Theresa Tam, the chief public health officer, also advised more social distancing, no handshakes and kisses. The Canadian government is advising the cancellation of all large events like concerts. Transport Minister Marc Garneau said cruise ships with more than 500 people will not be able to dock in Canada until July 1. Overseas flights returning to Canada will also be restricted to a small number of airports in the country. Canadas House of Commons voted to shut down for at least five weeks to help ensure lawmakers do not contribute to the spread of the virus. The moves came a day . The Prime Minister himself has been in self-imposed quarantine. 8.00 AM Miami mayor tests positive for virus after Brazilian event The mayor of the city of Miami has tested positive for the new coronavirus after meeting with a Brazilian senior official who was also in close proximity to President Donald Trump. Mayor Francis Suarez said in a Friday statement that he was not feeling any symptoms and advised anyone who shook hands with him or was close to him since Monday to self-isolate for 14 days. Florida politicians such as US Sen. Rick Scott had expressed concerns about coming into contact with the Brazilian presidents press secretary Fabio Wajngarten, who tested positive after joining Bolsonaro in a visit to Trumps Mar-a-Lago estate last weekend. As of Friday afternoon, Florida tallied 45 people in the state testing positive for COVID19, ranging in age from 25 to 83, the state health department announced. Two of them have died. Most appear to be travel-related but in more than a dozen cases, the route of infection was not immediately clear. 7.45 AM Jaipur Foot USA postpones mega camp in Patna The Jaipur Foots US chapter has deferred a mega camp in Patna to provide the needy artificial limbs in view of travel restrictions and precautionary measures implemented by the government of India to combat the novel coronavirus. The new dates of the Dr B R Ambedkar mega camp will be announced soon, Jaipur Foot USA chairman Prem Bhandari said. Hundreds of differently-abled people from in and around the Bihar capital were slated to get artificial limbs and other equipment at the April 14 camp, which was being organised to mark the 129th birth anniversary of Dr B.R. Ambedkar. 7.30 AM New Zealand cancels mosque massacre remembrance New Zealand has cancelled a national remembrance service to mark Sundays first anniversary of the Christchurch mosque attacks because of coronavirus fears, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said. This is a pragmatic decision. Were very saddened to cancel, but in remembering such a terrible tragedy, we shouldnt create the risk of further harm being done, Ms. Ardern said Saturday. , People pray in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie alle Fornaci, at Aurelio district in central Rome on March 15, 2020 as Italy imposed unprecedented national restrictions on its 60 million people to counter the coronavirus outbreak. Italy hits one-day record with 368 deaths. Number of confirmed cases in India has crossed 110. The Union Health Ministry on Sunday said there were 110 confirmed cases of in the country. However, reports from States put the figure of persons testing positive at 114. Italy recorded 368 new deaths from the novel coronavirus, its highest one-day increase to date. The worldwide death toll rose past 6,000, with nearly 160,000 infections after 105 died in Spain. While China remains the country with the most deaths, the pandemic is now spreading more rapidly in Europe. 11.15 PM Italy hits one-day record with 368 new coronavirus deaths: official data Italy recorded 368 new deaths from the novel coronavirus, its highest one-day increase to date, taking the total to 1,809, the most outside China, official data showed. The number of infections has reached 24,747, a count released to the media by Italy\'s civil protection service said. The northern Lombardy region around Milan remained the European epicentre of the pandemic, officially reporting 1,218 deaths, or 67% of the Italian total. But March 15 also saw the number of deaths in the southeastern Puglia region around the city of Bari double from eight to 16. The Lazio region that includes the Italian capital Rome has officially recorded 16 deaths in all up from 13 on March 15 and 436 infections. 11.00 PM Singapore confirms 14 more cases Fourteen new coronavirus positive cases were reported in Singapore on Sunday, taking the total number of such cases to 226 in the island-nation. It is the highest number of new cases Singapore has reported in a single day. Three patients are linked to previous cases. 9.50 PM Uttarakhand reports first coronavirus case Uttarakhand on Sunday reported its first confirmed case of coronavirus with a probationer at the Forest Research Institute (FRI) testing positive for the virus. The probationer had returned from Spain on March 11, Director (Health) SK Gupta told PTI. A designated laboratory in Haldwani confirmed he is suffering from coronavirus, he said. He has been admitted at the isolation ward of Doon Medical College and Hospital, the official said. Originally from Agra in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, the probationers swab samples had been sent along with that of another person to Haldwani for testing as they had both returned from Spain recently, he said. The second person has tested negative, he said quoting, reports from Haldwani that arrived on Sunday. Swab samples of the two had been sent after they showed coronavirus symptoms, he said. 8.25 PM Two more test positive in Kerala On Sunday, two more confirmed cases were confirmed from Kerala. One person is from Munnar and another one from Thiruvananthapuram. 8.00 PM One more tested positive in Maharashtra A woman residing in Pune districts Pimpri-Chinchwad area with a travel history to Japan tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday, taking the total tally in the district to 16 and the States tally of positive cases to 33, Pune Divisional Commissioner Dr. Deepak Mhaisekar on Sunday. He said the patient\'s swab sample was sent for testing on March 14 and had returned positive. This is the sixth case in the Pimpri-Chinchwad area to test positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours after five persons three women and two men - tested positive on Saturday. Thus far, a total nine cases in the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation and seven cases in the Pune Municipal Corporation have tested positive for COVID-19. Maharastra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Sunday said the police had been instructed to impose Section 144 of the CrPC, if required, to prohibit large crowds in wake of the outbreak. 7.30 PM Global death toll passes 6,000 A spike in deaths from the coronavirus in Spain has pushed the global toll past 6,000, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources. The worldwide death toll rose to 6,036, with 159,844 infections after 105 died in Spain. While China remains the country with the most deaths with 3,199, the pandemic is now spreading more rapidly in Europe, with 1,907 deaths in the continent\'s worst-hit country Italy 7.10 PM One more test positive in Karnataka One more person from Kalaburagi has been confirmed in Karnataka. The patient . 6.55 PM Spain reports 2,000 new virus cases and more than 100 deaths Spain on Sunday reported some 2,000 new coronavirus cases and more than a hundred deaths over the last 24 hours, the latest spike in Europe\'s second-most affected country after Italy. The new figures raise Spain\'s number of COVID-19 infections to 7,753 and its death toll to 288 after the government imposed a near-total nationwide lockdown, banning people from leaving home except to go to work, get medical care or buy food. 5.30 PM PM Modi, SAARC leaders participate in video conference to chalk out strategy "We evacuated nearly 1400 citizens including some from our neighbouring countries. We recognize other countries are also concerned about safety of citizens in India. So we briefed foreign diplomats," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said. Mr. Modi offered $10 million for SAARC COVID-19 emergency fund. India offered online training capsules for SAARC emergency response teams. Narendra Modi @narendramodi Chalking out a plan to combat the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus with SAARC leaders. Narendra Modi @narendramodi Chalking out a plan to combat the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus with SAARC leaders. pscp.tv 51.8K 16K people are talking about this Afghanistan "We are in an unknown territory. Our major vulnerability is the border with Iran," Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said. He suggested a common framework for tele-medicine for helping the poor and the vulnerable in South Asia. He sought coordination between SAARC and SCO for learning from the Chinese experience. Maldives President of the Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih said Maldives has 13 COVID-19 cases. There has been no death so far. Tourist arrivals declined by 22.8% in Maldives in March. A 35% drop in tourism is expected this year. Tourism contributes a quarter of Maldives\' GDP, he said. He added that $446 million shortfall due to COVID-19 is expected this year. "Long term recovery plan should be included in the comprehensive regional strategy on COVID-19," Mr. Solih said. Sri Lanka Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said there are a large number of Sri Lankans in Italy, adding that "all nationals arriving will spend 14 days quarantine in different locations in Sri Lanka". He said the first patient was a Chinese lady who recovered. "At present we have 11 cases in hospitals," he said. Mr. Rajapaksa said a national task force has been created, with power that meets daily to stop the spread of COVID-19. Twelve hospitals have been declared suitable for treating the disease in Sri Lanka. "34 Sri Lankan students were evacuated from Wuhan by Air Lanka. They were quarantined for 14 days. None tested positive. 750 Sri Lankans are in various universities in China. They are quarantined. "Sri Lankan general elections will be held on time but big meetings are discouraged. "All major international conferences meetings have beencancelled. Gatherings for religious reasons have been stopped for two weeks," Mr. Rajapaksa added. Any passenger coming from high risk countries will be quarantined in Sri Lanka . Because of these reasons, the country\'s economy has taken a hit. Tourists from Italy, Germany and EU are the main visitors to Sri Lanka, he said. Bangladesh Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina thanked Mr. Modi for hosting 23 Bangladeshi students evacuated from China. So far there have been three COVID-19 cases in Bangladesh, she said. "All SAARC countries need to collaborate to defeat COVID-19. WHO regional leader can be invited in this mechanism. "Bangladesh will be happy to host a SAARC based institution to fight COVID-19," she said. Nepal Prime Minister of Nepal, K.P. Oli, said the movement of third country nationals through the land border has been suspended. All mountaineering permits have been suspended for spring 2020. Bhutan Prime Minister of Bhutan Lotay Tshering said that the first person with COVID-19 has left Bhutan. He was airlifted and is now with his family. Pakistan Dr Zafar Mirza of Pakistan said that Pakistan has managed to keep COVID-19 cases at minimum which was praised by WHO. All measures are being monitored by Prime Minister Imran Khan. Entire western border has been closed for 3 weeks. Entry only at 3 international airports. All educational institutions have been closed for 3 weeks. Learn from SAARC observer states especially China where COVID-19 emerged first. Pakistan representative asks for immediate lifting of lockdown of Kashmir to ensure medical care and supplies to the COVID-19 affected people. -- Kallol Bhattacharjee reports 5.15 PM Kerala CM seeks PM Modi\'s intervention to restore beneficial clauses in SDRF Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has sought the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to restore the beneficial clauses in the State Disaster Respond Fund (SDRF) for providing relief to COVID-19 patients. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs had on March 14 issued an order permitting the utilisation of SDRF for responding appropriately to Covid-19, but later made some modifications to it. As per the initial order the fund could have been used to provide compensation in case of any death related to COVID-19 as well as utilisation of the fund for treatment of patients. While terming the order as a welcome step, the Chief Minister pointed out that a partial modification of the order the same day that took away the beneficial provisions. 4.30 PM KAZAKHSTAN Kazakhstan declares emergency Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev declared a state of emergency on Sunday due to the coronavirus outbreak, barring almost all travel to and from the country. The decree published by the President\'s office restricts entry to and departure from Kazakhstan for everyone except diplomats and those invited by the government. The emergency is set to last until April 15. 4.15 PM TEHRAN Iran\'s death toll from coronavirus reaches 724 - Health official on Twitter Iran\'s death toll from COVID-19 has reached 724, with 113 new deaths in the past 24 hours, an Iranian health official tweeted on Sunday, adding that some 13,938 people have been infected across the country. In the past 24 hours, 1,209 new cases have been confirmed ... with 113 deaths in the past 24 hours, the death toll has reached 724, Alireza Vahabzadeh, an adviser to Iran\'s Health Minister, tweeted. 3.44 PM Al-Aqsa mosque, 3rd holiest in Islam, closes over coronavirus concerns The Islamic endowment overseeing the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, the third holiest site in Islam, said the mosque itself and other buildings will be closed over concerns about the . Sheikh Omar Kiswani, the director of the mosque, said Sunday that prayers will continue to be held outdoors. The closure is to continue indefinitely. 3.15 PM India-Bangladesh passenger train services suspended India-Bangladesh passenger train services between Kolkata and cities in the neighbouring country have been suspended from Sunday as a precaution against the spread of COVID-19, on a Union government directive, an Eastern Railway official said. The Eastern Railway said services of Maitree and Bandhan Express trains will remain suspended from March 15 to April 15 or till further orders, whichever is earlier. The services of the two trains have been suspended as precautions being taken to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus, the ER official said. While Maitree Express connects Kolkata with the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, Bandhan Express runs between Kolkata and Khulna city of the neighbouring country. 3 PM WEST BENGAL 10 admitted to Kolkata hospital with COVID-19-like symptoms Ten persons have been admitted to the isolation ward of the Beliaghata ID and BG Hospital here with symptoms like those of COVID-19, a senior health department official said on Sunday. All the 10 persons, who are from across the State, have a history of travelling abroad or coming in contact with foreigners, he said. One of the two admitted persons from Kolkata had travelled to Switzerland in the last week of February, the official said. The other city resident had recently travelled to Darjeeling with a British citizen. After returning from the hill town, he complained of fever and cold, he said. Swab and blood samples of the admitted persons have been sent for medical examination, the official added. 2.45 PM ASSAM Assam shuts schools, cancels exams till March 29 The Assam government on Sunday ordered shutting down of educational institutions, gymnasiums, swimming pools and cinema halls with immediate effect till March 29 in the wake of novel coronavirus outbreak. Assam Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna, addressing a press conference here said, Even though no positive case has been detected in the State so far, we are taking all precautionary measures. Cases in country climb to 108 The number of COVID-19 cases in the country rose to 107 on Sunday noon, with 12 fresh cases in Maharashtra, the Union Health Ministry said. The figure does not include a 59-year-old woman who tested positive today in Aurangabad city of Maharashtra, according to a State health official. The Health Ministry figure (107) includes two persons who died in Delhi and Karnataka. With the fresh case in Maharashtra, the number of positive cases has gone up to 32 in the State, and 108 in the country. 1.15 PM NEW DELHI 218 Indians evacuated from Italy sent to ITBP quarantine A total of 218 Indians, mostly students, brought here from Italy on Sunday have been taken to an Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) quarantine facility in south-west Delhis Chhawla area, officials said. The Air India flight from Milan landed around 9.45 a.m. at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA). 1.10 PM ANDHRA PRADESH Local body polls put off for six weeks The State Election Commission (SEC) has deferred the local body elections by six weeks due to the threat of COVID-19. It will resume the election process after the arrest of the spread of Coronavirus, or its decline, and normalcy is restored, State Election Commissioner (SEC) N. Ramesh Kumar announced at a press conference on Sunday. 12.50 PM UTTARAKHAND Uttarakhand government shuts schools, colleges and cinema halls The Uttarakhand government has declaredan epidemic and shut all multiplexes, cinema halls, degree colleges and technical institutes across the state till March 31, official sources said. The decision was taken at a meeting of the State council of ministers on Saturday night. However, medical colleges will remain open, they said. 12.45 PM JERUSALEM Coronavirus crisis delays start of Netanyahu corruption trial Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu\'s corruption trial was delayed on Sunday for two months, until May, due to the coronavirus crisis. Israel\'s Justice Ministry said the trial, due to have opened on March 17 with the reading of an indictment against Israel\'s longest-serving leader in three graft cases, would begin on May 24 due to developments related to the spread of the coronavirus. Mr. Netanyahu, who is spearheading Israel\'s tough measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus, has denied any wrongdoing in the investigations. Charges against him include bribery, breach of trust and fraud. 12.45 PM KERALA 20 passengers evacuated at Kochi airport after man who tested positive found on flight Twenty people on a Dubai-bound Emirates flight from Kochi were evacuated before takeoff on Sunday after it was found that a native of the United Kingdom who tested positive for COVID-19 was among the 270 passengers. It was earlier feared that all the passengers would undergo a check for the viral fever, however, health authorities took the call and decided to evacuate only 20. Later, the flight left for Dubai. 11.20 AM TAMIL NADU Avoid travel out of Tamil Nadu for 15 days, says CM As part of precautionary measures to prevent the spread of , Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Sunday appealed to the general public to avoid travel out of Tamil Nadu for the next 15 days. He also urged people to keep off social gatherings in large numbers in public places. The State government ordered closure of kindergarten and up to class V sections in all schools till March 31. 10.30 AM Pilgrimage to Kartarpur Sahib suspended Pilgrimage and registration for Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara in Pakistan will be suspended beginning Sunday midnight in view of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Home Ministry said. The government has also suspended movement of all types of passengers through international border points with Pakistan from 00:00 hours of March 16 in view of the threat from coronavirus. 9.45 AM Over 230 Indians evacuated from Iran, quarantined at Army wellness centre in Jaisalmer Two Air India flights carrying over 230 Indians from -hit Iran landed in Jaisalmer on Sunday morning and the passengers have been quarantined at the Indian Army Wellness Centre at Jaisalmer. Defence spokesperson Col. Sombit Ghosh said, 236 persons have landed in Jaisalmer by two Air India flights this morning. They are being quarantined at the Indian Army Wellness Centre at Jaisalmer, Col. Ghosh said. S.Korea reports 76 new coronavirus cases South Korea on Sunday reported 76 new coronavirus cases and three more deaths, a fall in new cases to double-digits for the first time in over three weeks. South Korea, which has the , now has a total to 8,162 confirmed infections and 75 deaths, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said (KCDC). 3.20 AM 234 Indians stranded in Iran have arrived in India: Jaishankar Two hundred and thirty-four Indians stranded in coronavirus-hit Iran have arrived in India, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday. Also read: Dr. S. Jaishankar @DrSJaishankar 234 Indians stranded in have arrived in India; including 131 students and 103 pilgrims. Thank you Ambassador and team for your efforts. Thank Iranian authorities. 30.3K 5,226 people are talking about this COVID-19 queries answered Volume 90% 3.10 AM Special Air India flight with 211 students departs from Milan India in Milan @cgmilan1 211 students & 7 compassionate cases departed by AI flight .all those who helped us through this difficult situation. Special to team & Italian authorities. Consulate will continue to ensure welfare of all Indians in northern 4,307 1,162 people are talking about this Union Health Ministry, Sanjeeva Kumar said on Saturday said that a Mahan Air flight bringing back Indian passengers from Iran will land in Mumbai on Saturday midnight. Also read: Explained: Spain locks down its citizens, while France shuts nightlife Spain locked down its 46 million citizens and France ordered the closing of the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the cafes and restaurants - as governments took increasingly desperate measures to put more space between people and contain the coronavirus. Also read: COVID-19: Do\'s and don\'ts from the Health Ministry Volume 90% UK advises citizens against travel to Spain British government on Sunday amid the ongoing coronavirus outbreak. Britons who are currently in Spain should follow the advice of local authorities, said Britain\'s Foreign and Commonwealth Office, adding that transport services to the country will be operating at reduced levels. Trump tests negative for coronavirus President Donald Trump has tested negative for the new coronavirus, according to the presidents personal physician. The White House released the test results Saturday night after Mr. Trump told reporters hours earlier that , following days of resisting being screened despite the fact that he had been in recent contact with three people who have tested positive for the virus, including members of the Brazilian presidents delegation who visited with him at his Florida resort. GOA Casinos, pubs, other public places closed The Goa government on Saturday announced closure of educational institutions and public places including casinos, swimming pools and pubs in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak in the country till March 31. The order will come into force from Sunday (March 15) midnight. MAHARASHTRA Schools, colleges, malls to be shut till March 31 The Maharashtra government on Saturday announced closure of all schools, colleges, training institute, anganwadis in urban areas as the number of novel coronavirus cases rose to 31 in the State. Health Minister Rajesh Tope said in the Assembly that new patients have been detected from across the State. MUMBAI New COVID-19 testing lab at KEM Mumbai is all set to have a new laboratory to test the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Civic health officials on Saturday said the new testing facility will be ready at KEM Hospital in Parel by next week. Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporations (BMC) health officer Dr. Daksha Shah said besides opening the new laboratory, the working hours of the existing facility at Kasturba Hospital will be increased. The new lab at KEM will be opened at the earliest. We are waiting for some tests to be carried out on the premises, she said. DELHI COVID-19 victim cremated after initial refusal The body of a 68-year-old woman from Delhi, who succumbed to COVID-19, was cremated at Nigambhod Ghat on Saturday after initially being denied permission by the crematorium, said her family. KARNATAKA Hampi, key attractions in Kodagu among places closed for a week Ballari Deputy Commissioner S.S. Nakul ordered the closure of heritage sites in Hampi exercising powers vested under Section 144(3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The Deputy Commissioner and the District Magistrate issued the order on Saturday banning the entry of all tourists between 6 a.m. of March 15 and 6 a.m. of March 22., Police keep vigil on a deserted Juhu beach in Mumbai on Monday as people kept away over COVID-19 fears, March 16, 2020 Globally, over 6,000 people have died, and more than 162,000 have been infected by COVID-19. As world continues to grapple with the , the Union Health Ministry on Sunday said there were 110 confirmed cases of in India. , however, put the figure of persons testing positive for COVID-19 at 123. Ten persons have so far been discharged after treatment. Globally more than 162,000 are infected and over 6,000 have died. We have been related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the latest updates: TAMIL NADU 10.25 PM Entry into Tamil Nadu Secretariat restricted With Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami advising to take precautionary measures to check the spread of Coronavirus, Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam on Monday imposed restrictions on the Fort St. George campus, the states seat of power. All the Departments of Secretariat are requested not to convene meetings unless it is very urgent and not to ask the HoD/Directorate officials to come to Secretariat in a routine manner, a circular issued by Mr. Shanmugam in the evening said. Department heads were asked to instruct their staff to remain at home if they have symptoms like cold, fever, cough, shortness of breath/breathing difficulties and consult doctors. Staff members were urged to frequently wash their hands with soap at least for 20 seconds as a precaution and drink hot water. All the staff and visitors in the Secretariat will be subjected to thermal scanning in order to diagnose any symptoms of the virus, it added. A senior official clarified that normal functioning of the government offices would not be affected. -- Dennis S. Jesudasan TELANGANA 10.15 PM Fresh case in Telangana, total number is 4 A fresh case of coronavirus was reported on Monday, taking the number of such cases in Telangana to four even as the state government stepped up its preparedness to prevent the spread of the virus. One person tested positive and the number of positive cases is four, according to a media bulletin on COVID-19. It said results of 22 samples are awaited. The four cases include the first positive case of a 24-year-old techie who has been discharged from hospital after recovery. A report from Karimnagar said 10 people, who came from Indonesia on a religious visit to the town, and three local residents were shifted to the state-run Gandhi hospital in Hyderabad after one of them showed symptoms related to COVID-19, a health official said. Meanwhile, state Health Minister E Rajender said in a press release that people coming to Telangana from neighbouring Maharashtra by road would be screened for COVID- 19 at checkposts. This is being done as Maharashtra has seen a high number coronavirus cases. MAHARASHTRA 9.30 PM With 2 new cases, Maharashtras Covid-19 count now 39 The number of Covid-19 patients in Maharashtra rose to 39 on Monday after two people, including a Filipino, tested positive for the novel coronavirus in Yavatmal and Navi Mumbai, said state health department officials. At 39, Maharashtra has the highest number of coronavirus cases among states in the country. A 51-year-old woman, one of 40 people who had returned from Dubai, tested positive for the virus in Yavatmal, an official said, adding she was the mother of an IT professional who tested positive for the infection in Pune earlier. The number of Covid-19 patients in Yavatmal now stands at three, he said. In the group of 40 that returned from Dubai, 15 have so far tested positive, 22 have tested negative, and three, from Belgaum in Karnataka, who are not infected, have been placed under home observation, a state government release said. The other person who tested positive on Monday is a citizen of the Philippines currently residing in Navi Mumbai, it said. The release said, so far, seven of 10 persons who returned from the Philippines have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, while the others have not been infected. PUNE 9.00 PM No move yet to impose Sec. 144 in Pune Clarifying that there is no move as yet to impose Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) in its totality in Pune district to curb the spread of COVID-19, district authorities said on Monday that the police would only investigate those people under Section 144 (1) who flouted the administrations orders. People relate Section 144 with curfew and think that its imposition will bring all movement to a standstill. Nothing of that sort has been invoked till now. A purely administrative order under Section 144 (1) empowers the district police to investigate all those found violating guidelines issued by the administration to check the spread of COVID-19, Pune District Colelctor Naval Kishore Ram told The Hindu. BENGALURU 8.45 PM U.S. returnee tests positive for virus, cases touch 8 in Karnataka A 32-year-old man, who returned from the U.S. via London earlier this month, has tested positive for coronavirus making it the eighth case in Karnataka, the health department said on Monday. He was on home quarantine, and is now admitted to an isolation facility. One positive case was confirmed today [Monday]. The total number of cases in the State is eight, including one death... He had returned from the U.S. via London on March 8 by the same flight as patient number-4 who tested positive, a statement said. He was under home quarantine, and is now put in an isolation facility, it said, adding that his two primary contacts were wife and housemaid, and all preventive measures and contact tracing have been initiated, the statement said. Further details would be shared on March 17, it added. The health department bulletin also said the five other COVID-19 positive patients are in isolation at designated hospital in Bengaluru and all are stable. NEW DELHI 8:20 PM ASI-protected monuments, central museums to be shut till March 31 All ASI-protected monuments and central museums across the country will be shut till March 31 in view of the threat of COVID-19, Union Culture Minister Prahlad Patal said on Monday. An order regarding the same will be issued soon, he said. NEW DELHI 7:55 PM Share tech-driven solutions to tackle coronavirus: Prime Minister Modi Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday took to Twitter, asking people to share technology-driven solutions for coronavirus. Harnessing innovation for a healthier planet. A lot of people have been sharing technology-driven solutions for COVID-19. I would urge them to share them on @mygovindia, he said. The Prime Minister said such efforts can help many. The \'COVID 19 Solution Challenge\' is being hosted on the mygov.in website. AHMEDABAD 7:50 PM Gujarat government orders closure of national parks, sanctuaries Gujarat government on Monday ordered closure of national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves in the State in view of the COVID-19 threat. A circular issued by the Chief Wildlife Warden Shyamal Tikadar said the States national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves will remain closed till March 29. It said the sites under lockdown include Sakkarbaug Zoological Park in Junagadh, Devaliya Safari Park and Ambardi Safari Park. The newly-built Sardar Patel Zoological Park at Kevadiya, close to the Statue of Unity, will also remain closed, it said. The release added that permissions granted under Section 28 of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, for film shooting, research etc shall also remain suspended till March 29, and fees paid for the same online will be refunded. No cases have been detected in Gujarat as of now. NEW DELHI 7.30 PM New travel restrictions in place Travel of passengers from EU countries, European Free Trade Association, Turkey, U.K. to India prohibited from March 18, the Heath Ministry announced on Monday. It has also imposed the following measures to avoid exposure to COVID-19. Expanding compulsory quarantine for minimum 14 days for passengers coming from or transiting UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait. After Group of Ministers meeting, govt proposes social distancing measures to be in force till March 31. Non-essential travel should be avoided; buses, trains and aeroplanes to maximize social distancing in public transport. Encourage private sector organisations, employers to allow employees to work from home wherever feasible. Travel restrictions have been further tightened to prevent spread of COVID-19 from high-risk areas. Contact tracing of positive coronavirus cases led to identification of over 5,200 contacts who are under surveillance. Local authorities to have dialogue with opinion leaders, religious leaders to regulate mass gatherings. Meanwhile, ICMRs Dr. Gangakhedhar sais that currently there is no evidence that we are landing into community transmission. NEW DELHI 7.30 PM New toll-free number, email ID for queries on COVID-19 As India sees a surge in novel coronavirus cases, the Union Health Ministry on Monday activated a toll-free 24x7 national helpline number, 1075, to address queries related to the infection. The previous helpline number, 011-239 78046, will also remain operational, the Ministry officials said. Besides the toll-free numbers, the Ministry also issued a helpline email ID ncov2019@gmail.com. NEW DELHI 6.50 PM MEA launches helplines for those seeking assistance The Ministry of External Affairs on Monday launched helplines for those seeking assistance in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. All hands on deck! @MEAIndias helplines for COVID-19 Control Centre are open. Control Room: 1800118797 (toll free), +91- 11- 23012113, +91- 11- 23014104, +91- 11- 23017905, MEA Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted. He also shared a fax number +91- 011-23018158 and an email address - covid19@mea.gov.in -- for those wanting to reach out to the ministry in connection with issues related to the outbreak. Additional Secretary Dammu Ravi has been appointed as the point person for coordinating the response to COVID-19. He has four other officers and staff members to support him, officials said. Our missions abroad are working round the clock and responding to queries from Indian nationals abroad. Missions have set up their helplines and are proactively responding to queries over phone and emails as well as using social media platforms to reach the Indian community members in these countries, an official had said. NEW DELHI 6.45 PM Delhi HC limits its functioning, few Benches to take up only urgent matters The Delhi High Court decided on Monday to limit its functioning due to the novel coronavirus pandemic and hold hearing of only few Benches till March 20. It decided that the functioning of the high court stands restricted till March 20, when the situation will be reviewed by the committee. On March 17 and March 19, four Division Benches, four single judge Benches for civil jurisdiction and three single judge Benches each for criminal and original jurisdiction would hear only urgent matters. On March 18 and 20, three Division Benches, three single judge Benches for civil jurisdiction and three single judge Benches each for criminal and original jurisdiction would hear only urgent matters. CHENNAI 6.35 PM Educational institutions, theatres, malls across T.N. to remain closed until March 31 Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami ordered closure of all educational institutions across the State till March 31. He also ordered the closure of all cinema halls, malls, amusement parks, swimming pools, gymnasiums, zoos and museums across the State until March-end. Dennis S. Jesudasan The State government also imposed restrictions on weddings, banned public meetings and processions, among others, until March 31. BENGALURU 6.30 PM IISc announces 15-day lockdown The Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru has suspended all academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for 15 days following the coronavirus threat. These include classes, examinations, seminars, conferences, visits and laboratory work, according to a notice issued by the institutes Registrar. All students are instructed to proceed to their homes before noon of March 16, 2020 and await further instructions, it said. The residents of the campus and the faculty should stay home, avoid social gatherings and maintain social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus, the notice added. MUMBAI 6.10 PM Ajanta-Ellora, Siddhivinayak, Tuljapur temples closed Authorities in Maharashtra, which has registered the highest number of coronavirus positive cases in India, have decided to close some prominent tourist and religious attractions as a precautionary measure. The world-famous Ajanta and Ellora caves near Aurangabad, the popular Siddhivinayak temple in Mumbai and the Tuljabhawani temple in Osmanabad district would remain closed in view of the coronavirus situation in the State, officials said. Entry restrictions to Mantralaya, the State Secretariat in south Mumbai which sees thousands of visitors daily, will also be in force, Public Health Minister Rajesh Tope said. NEW DELHI 6.05 PM IOC official says no deadline for decision on Olympics The leader of the IOCs coordination commission for the Tokyo Olympics said there is no May deadline to cancel the games and he remains confident the event will go ahead despite sports coming to a virtual standstill globally amid the coronavirus outbreak. John Coates, who will have to go into government-mandated self-isolation when he returns to Australia this week from Olympic business in Europe, told the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper: Its all proceeding to start on the 24th of July. Dick Pound, a former IOC vice president, said in an interview with The Associated Press last month that the end of May loomed as a possible deadline for the IOC to make a call on the Tokyo Olympics. AGRA 6.00 PM Agra: Woman who fled hospital tests positive for coronavirus Agra (U.P.), A 25-year-old woman, whose husband in Bengaluru is hospitalised with coronavirus, has tested positive for COVID-19 in Agra, three days after she fled from a hospital without informing authorities, officials said on March 16. So far, there have been seven positive cases in the Taj city and five of the patients have recovered from the novel virus while two, including this woman, are under treatment, the Health Department officials said. Around 20 people related to these two patients have been quarantined for observation and in order to check the spread of the virus, they added. According to the officials, this woman and her husband returned from their honeymoon in Europe earlier this month and landed in Mumbai. From there they went to Bengaluru, where her husband, who works for an IT company, tested positive for coronavirus and was hospitalised. The woman then left for Delhi and later came to her parents house here and allegedly did not cooperate with the health department officials on March 12 for a coronavirus test despite being highly suspected. The woman has tested positive for the coronavirus on Sunday and has been hospitalised for treatment. Eight of her family members have also been quarantined. There is one more man who has tested positive earlier and is undergoing treatment. Eleven of his family members have been quarantined. So far, there have been seven positive cases of COVID-19 in Agra, five of them have been treated and sent home, a Health Department official told PTI. RANCHI 5.55 PM Jharkhand announces closure of educational institutions till April 14 Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren announced closure of all educational institutions in the State till April 14 as a precautionary measure in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Informing the Jharkhand Assembly about this, Mr. Soren said the shutdown will be applicable on government as well as private educational institutions, besides coaching centres and hostels, starting March 17. He, however, said students from the poor family background will be allowed to stay in hostels with the government looking after them. The Chief Minister also said that directions would be issued to all private establishments not to cut pay of their employees if anybody did not turn up for duty on count of coronavirus. Mr. Soren said that 175 of a total of 488 people who returned home in the State did not show any symptoms of the virus, while the rest were under close observation. MUMBAI 5.50 PM Maharashtra Raj Bhavan tour suspended till March 31 The Maharashtra Raj Bhavan tour for citizens has been suspended till March 31 due to the novel coronavirus threat, an official said. The tour of the sprawling complex, the residence of the state governor, is well patronised and 20 people are let in every day after prior booking, the official informed. The tour booking for April is full but we will try to adjust those who missed out on it this month, he added. It was introduced in 2015. KOLKATA 5.45 PM Bengal civic polls deferred amid coronavirus scare: SEC Civic polls in West Bengal, including for the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), have been postponed for the time being in the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak, a senior official said on Monday. The decision was taken at an all-party meeting called to decide the dates for the elections, State Election Commissioner Sourav Das said. We have decided to defer the civic polls for the time being because of the coronavirus outbreak. We will again hold a meeting to take a call on the matter after 15 days, he said. MAHARASHTRA 5.35 PM 2-hour work day in Bombay HC from March 17 The Bombay High Court and its Benches at Nagpur, Aurangabad and Goa shall function for only two hours in a day from March 17 until further orders in view of the novel coronavirus outbreak. The HC on March 16 issued a circular after a meeting held by acting Chief Justice B.P. Dharmadhikari and other senior judges. The functioning of the high court at its principal bench, in Mumbai, and other benches in Nagpur, Aurangabad and Goa shall be from noon to 2 p.m. from March 17 till further orders, the circular issued by HC Registrar S.B. Agarwal said. It added that all district courts and magistrates shall also endeavor that their working time not exceed three hours a day, and that they take up for hearing only urgent matters. WEST BENGAL 5.00 P.M. West Bengal invokes Epidemic Diseases Act, closure of educational institutions extended till April 15 The West Bengal government on Monday invoked the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and extended the closure of educational institutions from March 31 to April 15. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who held a meeting with different stakeholders, said that the Act has been invoked to ensure that people with symptoms of COVID-19 remain in isolation. Ms Banerjee said that the State government has created a separate fund of Rs 200 crore. The fund will be used for purchasing masks, protective gear used for medical staff and upgrading the infrastructure of health facilities. The Chief Minister advised that all auditoriums and cinema halls remain closed and said all steps should be taken to restrict public gathering. However, she said that malls and markets should not be completely closed as people will run out of supplies. - Shiv Sahay ANDHRA PRADESH Parties fume at A.P. Governments insouciance about COVID-19 Major political parties joined in flaying the State government for making light of the COVID-19 scare that is rocking the entire world. The government came under fire for gross unpreparedness, even as its neighbours Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka had pulled up their socks to face the pandemic. TAMIL NADU Situation under control, says T.N. Health Minister Attempting to allay apprehensions raised by the DMK over the spread of COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu, the ruling AIADMK government on Monday reiterated that the situation was under control and there was no need to panic. However, the DMK urged the Chief Minister to hold video conference meetings with his counterparts in neighbouring States. 4.50 P.M. EU leaders to hold video conference tomorrow Leaders of the European Union will take part in an emergency video conference on Tuesday to discuss measures to contain COVID-19 that has affected thousands in Europe, European Council chief Charles Michel announced on Monday via Twitter. "I have decided to call a video conference with the European Council members on Tuesday 17 March to follow up on our actions on Containing the spread of the virus, providing sufficient medical equipment, boosting research and limiting the economic fallout is key," Mr. Michel tweeted. COVID-19 could impact India through trade channel: RBI COVID-19 could impact India through trade channel, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das has said. The growth momentum of India could be impacted due to global growth. Tourism, airline, hospitality industry are suffering, Mr. Das says. RBI has been taking calibrated measures in the past few days. RBI has several policy instruments at its command and stands ready. "We propose to conduct another US-dollar sell buy swap on March 23. RBI will conduct Long Term Repo Operation (LTRO) of Rs 1 lakh crore," he says. He also urges people to use digital transaction over cash. "We have advised banks to offer more and more digital payments," he says. I am not ruling out any possibility, says Mr. Das when asked about rate cut. MAHARASHTRA 4.15 P.M. Maharashtra postpones all university and school examinations, except classes 10 and 12 Maharashtra government postpones all university and school examinations, except standard 10th and 12th, until further notice, said State health minister Rajesh Tope. All scheduled elections in State also deferred for the next three months. KERALA 3.50 PM 79 booked for swarming Kochi airport to welcome TV show participant Despite warnings against public gatherings in the wake of the , a group of over 70 people swarmed the Cochin International Airport late on Sunday to welcome Bigg Boss participant Rajith Kumar, resulting in swift police action against them. MAHARASHTRA 3.35 P.M. Maharashtra govt. to restrict large gatherings at shrines, religious sites Dadar beach in Mumbai wears a deserted look with the general public keeping away due to COVID-19 fears, Monday, March 16, 2020 Maharashtra government on Monday decided to restrict large gatherings at shrines and religious sites, including temples, mosques, churches and others until March end. The government will also apply a unique stamp, identity number at the back of the hand of those who are currently quarantined for easy identification in public places. Chief Minister Uddhav Thakceray has empowered district officials to take all necessary measures, including closing of discos and pubs if needed, in both rural and urban areas. The government has also restricted all Cabinet and State ministers from entering government offices and State secretariat in large numbers. The general public is also restricted from entering the State headquarters. The government has also restricted ministers\' entourage to less than 10 persons, including PA and PS. Mr. Thackeray signed the order on Monday afternoon. Watch COVID-19: Masks and sanitisers are now essential commodities A video on what the Essential Commodities Act is and what commodities come under the Act. What is the Essential Commodities Act? Volume 90% TRIPURA Tripura declares closure of educational institutions till March 31 Tripura government on Monday announced closure of all educational institutions in the State in an attempt to stem spread of . Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath, who announced the decision at a press conference, informed that the closure would remain effective till March 31. BIHAR 3.10 P.M. Bihar government to bear full expenses of treatment of Covid-19 patients in State The Bihar government will bear full expenses of treatment of coronavirus patients in the State, says Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. In the event of COVID-19 claiming a life, the next of kin of each deceased will get ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh, Mr Kumar said. - PTI WEST BENGAL 3.05 P.M. West Bengal Assembly budget session cut short The Budget Session of the West Bengal Assembly will be cut short over the coronavirus scare and the House will not meet after Tuesday, Speaker Biman Banerjee said on Monday. At an all-party meeting in the Assembly premises that was attended by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Partha Chatterjee and floor leaders of opposition parties, the speaker said the second part of the session, which commenced on Friday, will be truncated as part of the precautionary measures being taken to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Those who attended the meeting said all agenda except for three Bills, including the appropiation Bill, will be put on the back-burner. Earlier, Bihar budget session too was cut short. - PTI 2.35 P.M. RBI governor Shaktikanta Das to hold press conference at 4 p.m. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das is holding a press conference at 4 p.m. on Monday as market mayhem continues due to concerns coronavirus pandemic. There are speculations that Mr. Das may announce a rate cut. If it happens, this will be the first inter-meeting rate reduction since the monetary policy committee was instituted in February 2016. The hurried presser comes amid widespread call for a rate cut following similar steps by the worlds leading central banks. The US Federal Reserve has cut the policy rates to near zero levels in a span of 10 days. Similarly, the Bank of England has also slashed the rates by 50 basis points, and so did the European Central Bank. Many analysts, over the past week, have said the RBI has legroom to cut rates to the tune of 65 bps by June. Some like Barclays and BofA have also spoken about the likelihood of an inter-meeting cut (before the April 3 policy meeting). Between February and October 2019, the RBI had cut the policy rates by a cumulative 135 bps to a nine-year low of 5.15%. - PTI NEW DELHI Public gatherings of over 50 not allowed in Delhi, says Kejriwal A gathering of more than 50 people will not be allowed in Delhi, in the wake of , to prevent the community spread, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced Monday. This also applies to people protesting; religious, social, political a gathering of more than 50 people will not be allowed, he told a press conference. India to stop shooting of all film, television and digital productions from March 19-30 The Indian Motion Picture Producers Association (IMPPA) on Sunday called for a halt of shoots of all entertainment formats in a bid to curb the coronavirus outbreak. A joint meeting of the leading bodies IMPPA, Western India Film Producers Association (WIFPA), Indian Film and TV Producers Council (IFTPC), Indian Film and Television Directors Association (IFTDA) and Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) arrived at the unanimous decision to stop shooting of films, TV serials, web series and all other entertainment, including digital formats, from March 19 to March 31. Most airlines will be bankrupt by May-end unless there is coordinated govt-industry action, says CAPA Most airlines in the world will be bankrupt by the end of May and only a coordinated government and industry action right now can avoid the catastrophe, said global aviation consultancy firm CAPA in a note on Monday. As the impact of the coronavirus and multiple government travel reactions sweep through our world, many airlines have probably already been driven into technical bankruptcy, or are at least substantially in breach of debt covenants, it stated. Across the world, airlines have announced drastic reduction in their operations in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. For example, Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines stated on Sunday that it would be grounding 300 aircraft in its fleet and reduce flights by 40 per cent. CAPA said, By the end of May-2020, most airlines in the world will be bankrupt. Coordinated government and industry action is needed - now - if catastrophe is to be avoided. Cash reserves are running down quickly as fleets are grounded and what flights there are operate much less than half full, it added. Forward bookings are far outweighed by cancellations and each time there is a new government recommendation it is to discourage flying. Demand is drying up in ways that are completely unprecedented. Normality is not yet on the horizon, it said. CAPA said the failure to coordinate the future will result in protectionism and much less competition. The alternative does not bear thinking about. An unstructured and nationalistic outcome will not be survival of the fittest. It will mostly consist of airlines that are the biggest and the best-supported by their governments. The system will reek of nationalism. And it will not serve the needs of the 21st century world. That is not a prospect that any responsible government should be prepared to contemplate, the consultancy firm said. - PTI TAMIL NADU Chennais protests in Old Washermanpet temporarily suspended In a precautionary measure against a possible COVID-19 outbreak, the Federation of Tamil Nadu Islamic and Political Organisation on Monday, temporarily suspended its Shaheen Bagh-style protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, National Population Register and National Register of Citizens which have been taking place in Old Washermanpet for the last 31 days. 2.20 P.M. No stone being left unturned to ensure people are healthy: Narendra Modi Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said there has been a coordinated response to the coronavirus outbreak and asserted that no stone is being left unturned to ensure people are healthy. He also tagged tweets of various people highlighting the different aspects of how India is combating COVID-19. In a series of tweets with the hashtag India Fights Corona, Mr. Modi said the encouragement from people highlighting the steps being taken to combat the virus is boosting the morale of all those doctors, nurses, municipal workers, airport staff and all other remarkable people at the forefront of the fight. Responding to a tweet by a man saying that he has cancelled all my meetings and suspended all business travel, the Prime Minister said, A wise call. Avoiding non-essential travel and minimising social outings are welcome steps. At all levels, various authorities are working in sync to ensure COVID-19 does not spread. No stone is being left unturned to ensure people are healthy, Mr. Modi said. I am sure our citizens will not do anything that puts the lives of others in danger. Our doctors, nurses, healthcare workers are putting great efforts. They are out there, helping people. We will always cherish their contribution." Responding to a Twitter user who said the government is systematically handling travellers to avoid corona contagion, Mr. Modi said, Doing our best to ensure everyone is healthy and those showing symptoms get proper care. "It is a united and coordinated response from everyone and this shows the strong spirit of the nation in such situations." - PTI 1.40 PM MAHARASHTRA Uddhav mulling total lock down as COVID-19 cases reach 37 Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is holding an emergency review meet with state health officials after four new positive cases of COVID-19 were reported from Mumbai and Navi Mumbai and reports of 11 patients leaving hospitals without informing authorities, on Monday. Sources present in the meeting being held at Varsha, Chief Minister\'s official residence, said Mr Thackeray is discussing two proposals of the state Health Department, which include a proposal to totally lock down the state and cancelling all examinations near future. \'\'We are discussing possibilities of cancelling all examinations across the State in this meet,\'\' Health Minister Rajesh Tope said. Senior state officials said the meeting is being attended by Chief Secretary Ajoy Mehta, cabinet ministers Rajesh Tope and Aaditya Thackeray among other district officials joining via video conferencing. 12.35 PM MAHARASHTRA Four new positive COVID-19 cases have been reported from Maharashtra. This includes three in Mumbai and one in Navi Mumbai. The total count in the State now stands at 37. 12.20 PM PAKISTAN Bangladesh tour of Pakistan cricket team postponed indefinitely The Pakistan and Bangladesh cricket boards decided to postpone the upcoming One-Day International and Test in Karachi indefinitely amid the COVID-19 pandemic which has derailed sporting calendars globally. Bangladesh were due to arrive in Karachi on March 29 to play an ODI on April 1 and the second, the PCB said in a statement. Here is a list of due to coronavirus outbreak. 12.10 PM BIHAR Bihar Assemblys Budget session truncated in view of coronavirus pandemic. No sittings after today, A man looks at face masks at a market in Kolkata on March 17, 2020. West Bengal reports first case; Private labs will be asked to offer COVID-19 testing for free, says ICMR. India has reported its third coronavirus fatality with a 63-year-old dying in Mumbai, Health Ministry officials said. As the world continues to grapple with the , India has been taking several steps to ensure the virus doesn\'t spread in the country. This includes tightening the land borders and travel ban. In addition to this, several States have closed educational institutions, public places like parks, theratres and malls, and have advised against inter-State travel. There were 143 confirmed cases of in India and three people have been reported dead so far. As of March 16, the WHO has reported 1,68,019 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 6,610 deaths worldwide. We have been related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the latest updates: WEST BENGAL West Bengal reports first case West Bengal has reported its first positive case of coronavirus as a student who returned from United Kingdom tested positive. Senior officials of the State government said that the student has been kept under isolation at Infectious Diseases and Beliaghata General Hospital in Kolkata. The student arrived in the country on March 15 and has been in contact with three persons including his parents and a driver. This is the first positive case from the fourth most populous State in the country. As on Tuesday there are 18 persons kept in isolation at different health facilities and the State which has tested over 12,200 passengers from different destinations. The State has already closed educational institutions, cinema halls and advised against major public gatherings. The State has also set up a special fund of Rs. 200 crore to combat the situations and invoked the Epidemic Disease Act. - Our Kolkata Bureau MUMBAI Air India to suspend flights to Europe, UK from March 19 Air India on Tuesday announced temporary suspension of its entire services to Europe and the UK from March 19. The decision to suspend air services to the U.K. and the European Union member countries was taken in the wake of travel and visa restrictions due to the coronavirus outbreak, Air India said in a tweet. The airline flies to London and Brimingham in the UK, and Frankfurt, Milan, Rome, Madrid, Vienna, Stockholm and Copenhagen in Europe. Services to Milan, Rome and Madrid was temporarily suspended earlier. All passengers travelling to UK & Europe, may kindly note that in view of DGCA instructions regarding travel and visa restrictions related to #COVID2019, all flights to/ from UK & Europe will operate only till March 18, 2020 & will remain suspended from 19th to 31st March, 2020, Air India said in a tweet. SINGAPORE Singapore reports 23 new cases Singapore on Tuesday reported 23 new cases of coronavirus, bringing the total number of infections to 266 in the country. This is the highest number of confirmed daily cases reported so far. Of the 23 new cases, 17 are imported, that is, people who got infected when they were abroad, the Ministry of Health said. Fourteen patients are in critical condition in the intensive care unit, the ministry said. Five more patients have been discharged, taking the total number of people fully recovered to 114, it said. NEW DELHI Cannot confirm whether over 250 Indians in Iran have tested positive: MEA officials Ministry of External Affairs officials on Tuesday said they cannot confirm whether more than 250 Indians in Iran have tested positive for novel coronavirus. The Indians who are in Iran are being very well looked after by our mission. The ambassador is giving a lot of attention to them. Every care is being taken by the Mission, in coordination and cooperation by the government of Iran, MEA Additional Secretary Dammu Ravi told reporters. Cannot confirm that over 250 Indians in Iran have tested positive for coronavirus, he said in response to a question about media reports claiming that more than 250 Indians in Iran have tested positive for the virus. COPENHAGEN WHO calls for boldest actions from all European countries The World Health Organizations (WHO) regional office for Europe on Tuesday said there is a need for bold measures in all European countries, calling the continent the epicentre of the new coronavirus pandemic. Every country, with no exceptions, needs to take their boldest actions to stop or slow down the virus threat, Hans Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, told a press conference. RUSSIA Russia begins testing potential coronavirus vaccine Russian scientists have begun to test vaccine prototypes for the new coronavirus, and plan to present the most effective one by June, a laboratory chief at a state biotech institute said. Russia has reported 93 cases of infection but no deaths, according to official numbers published on Tuesday. The prototypes have been created. We are starting laboratory testing on animals, to ensure effectiveness and safety, Ilnaz Imatdinov of the Vector Institute in Siberia told the Vesti Novosibirsk television channel on Monday. In June we will present one or two showing the best results. Vector Institute is a state virology and biotechnology centre in Novosibirsk, which previously worked on vaccines for the Ebola virus. NEW DELHI Two in ITBP quarantine test positive Two youth, who were evacuated from Milan on March 15, have tested positive for coronavirus (Covid-19). Both of them were shifted from the ITBP camp in Chhawla in west Delhi to the Safdarjung Hospital on Monday after they showed symptoms of the dreaded disease. According to government sources, the youth were among the group of 218 persons who were evacuated from Milan in Italy. They landed in India on March 15. The two youth started showing symptoms of the virus on Monday and were immediately shifted to the Safdarjung Hospital for proper care. On Tuesday, the authorities said that both have tested positive for Covid-19. MAHARASHTRA Two persons test positive in Maharashtra; total count 41 Two persons, one in Mumbai and another in Pune, tested positive for the coronavirus in Maharashtra on Tuesday, taking the number of confirmed cases in the state to 41, officials said. The number of Covid-19 patients includes a 63-year-old man who died in Mumbai earlier in the day, becoming the first casualty of the disease in the state. A 49-year-old man who had returned from the United States on March 7 tested positive on Tuesday. In Pune, a 26- year-old man who had returned from the US on March 14 tested positive, officials said. TAMIL NADU TN forms Special Task Force to tackle COVID-19 Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday told the Legislative Assembly that he had issued directions for constitution of a Special Task Force under the leadership of Chief Secretary to take action and monitor the steps to tackle COVID-19 pandemic in Tamil Nadu. He said the government periodically was holding discussion with the officials of the Railways, Airport Authorities and other important departments and issued advisories. The government was also following the directions issued by the centre and taking measures on a war-footing. The Chief Minister said the Special Task Force would include the secretaries of the Departments of Health, Rural Development, Municipal Administration and Water Supplies, Revenue Administration and Disaster Management, Labour and Employment, Transport, Information and Technology, Public and Rehabilitation and Industries. The other members are the Commissioner of Revenue Administration, Director General of Police, Director of Medical Education, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Director of Medical and Rural Health Services, General Manager of the Southern Railways, Director of the Chennai Airport, Chairman of the Chennai Port Trust, and a public health expert each from the government and private sectors. Health Minister Vijayabaskar said a video conferencing was held in the Dr MGR Medical University to get the advice and opinion of internationally-renowned experts including Dr Sowmya Swaminathan. -- Special Correspondent KARNATAKA One more test positive in Karnataka; total to 11 According to the health department the 11th patient is a 67 year old female who is resident of Bangalore returned from Dubai via Goa on March 9. The department also stated that she has a medical history of chronic kidney disease (CKD). "She has been in strict home quarantine since coming to Bangalore. On 16 March, she has been admitted in designated isolation hospital," the bulletin released by the health and family welfare department. A total of 21 high risk contacts have been identified including 5 family members and are under strict home quarantine. KARNATAKA ISKCON shrines in Bengaluru to remain shut The International Society for Krishna Consciousness temples at Rajajinagar and Kanakapura Road here would remain closed from early morning of Wednesday till further notice. The measure has been taken in view of COVID-19 outbreak in parts of India, an ISKCON statement said. However, temple worship and traditional temple sevas to the deities will continue to be conducted privately by the resident priests of the temple, it said. In addition, resident devotees will continue to perform bhajans and kirtans in the temple for the welfare of the world, the statement added. PUDUCHERRY Puducherry Union Territory reports first case of COVID-19 The Union Territory on Tuesday reported its first confirmed case of with a 68 -year-old woman in the enclave of Mahe testing positive for the virus. The patient had been under observation at the Government General Hospital, Mahe, since her return from Umrah in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. After her arrival at the Calicut airport on March 13, she reported to Mahe GH for a mandatory check-up. As she was asymptomatic, doctors advised her to be quarantined at home, said a senior doctor at the GH. NEWS DELHI Private labs will be asked to offer COVID-19 testing for free: ICMR We are in Stage-2 (local transmission), said Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Balram Bhargava said on coronavirus outbreak, adding "We cannot say that community transmission will not happen in India." All asymptomatic patients who have taken international flights in past 14 days should get tested if they develop symptoms. We have 72 functional ICMR laboratories in govt sector for testing. 49 more will be active by month-end, he said. Private NABL accredited laboratories will soon be operationalised. We are in the process of engaging private NABL accredited laboratories for carrying out testing of COVID-19 cases. We appeal to all private laboratories to offer COVID-19 diagnosis free of cost, Mr. Bhargava said. Bindu Shajan Perapadan, PTI MAHARASHTRA Platform tickets hiked to 50 in western India In a bid to discourage people from visiting railway stations, divisions across Western Railway (WR) and Central Railway (CR) have hiked the platform tickets across stations from the current 10 to 50. "This will prevent excess people from coming to the stations just to drop people off," a senior railway official said. On CR the decision has been taken on its Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Bhusaval and Solapur division. WR has adopted a staggered increase of platform tickets across stations with only Surat having Rs. 50, while most stations the increase is up to 15. KARNATAKA Centre taking all steps for safe return of Indians stranded in Italy: Karnataka govt The Karnataka government on Tuesday said the Centre was making all efforts for the safe return of Indians, including those from the state, stranded in Italy that is severely hit by the coronovirus outbreak. The External Affairs Ministry is already on the job in this regard, deputy chief minister C N Ashwath Narayan said in the Legislative Assembly. The Centre was taking all required measures, he said. Those Indians who were stranded in Milan airport were brought back after tests were conducted. For those at Rome tests and screening have been done and based on report they (authorities) will take a decision on whether they need to be taken to isolation or not, he added. Earlier, raising the issue, Congress legislator Priyank Kharge said in Italy, which has seen a large number of cases and is under shutdown, nearly 400 people from Karnataka were stranded there, and sought Chief Ministers intervention by speaking to the External Affairs Ministry. Archaeological Survey of India shuts down all its 3,691 monuments and sites. Yesterday it had closed only the 143 ticketed monuments and museums. All Central Government offices have been asked to discourage to the "maximum extent" the entry of visitors, a Personnel Ministry order states. All Central Government servants have been asked to "avoid non-essential official travel". Meetings, as far as possible, should be done through video conferencing. RAJASTHAN Rajasthan bans all 50-plus gathering in public places till March 31 The Rajasthan government on Tuesday banned all gatherings at public places exceeding 50 people till March 31 to fight the coronavirus outbreak. The ban will be in force till March 31 after which the situation will be reviewed and appropriate decision taken. MAHARASHTRA After West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, local body elections in Maharashtra has been stayed due to COVID-19 outbreak. The State Election Commission made the announcement. THIRUVANANTHAPURAM V. Muraleedharan goes on self quarantine Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan. H\_Vibhu The Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan, who had attended a meeting at the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology on March 14, has gone into self quarantine on his own after it emerged that one of the doctors at the Institute had tested positive for COVID 19. Mr. Muraleedharan had attended a meeting at SCTIMST on March 14, in which the Director as well as several senior doctors and senior administrative officials had taken part. It was on March 15, Sunday that tests had confirmed that one of their doctors, who had returned from Spain after higher studies, was positive for COVID 19. NOIDA Two test positive in Noida Two new cases of COVID-19 have come to light in Gautam Buddh Nagar of Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday. Anurag Bhargav, Chief Medical Officer, Gautam Buddh Nagar said two patients in Noida have tested positive. Both have been isolated and admitted to the designated hospital. Those who have come in contact with them are being put under surveillance. One has a traveling history to France. The travel record of the other patient is being ascertained, said Dr Bhargav. - Anuj Kumar LADAKH Three more test positive in Ladakh Three more persons test positive for COVID-19 in Union Territory of Ladakh, taking the total number to six. "Two fresh cases were detected in Leh and one in Kargil," an official spokesman said adding all of them were locals. Section 144, banning assembly of more than four people, has been imposed in Kargil district after the development. - Peerzada Ashiq TRAVEL ADVISORY Central Government on Tuesday has issued additional travel advisory stating that the travel of passengers from Afghanistan, Philippines, Malaysia to India is prohibited with immediate effect. No flight shall take off from these countries to India and airline shall enforce this at the port of initial departure. This instruction is a temporary measure and shall be in force till March 31 and will be reviewed subsequently, the release noted. MAHARASHTRA Mumbai reports first COVID-19 death A 64-year-old man who had returned from Dubai succumbed in Mumbai on Tuesday. He was first admitted at the Hinduja Hospital in the city and later shifted to the isolation facility at Kasturba Hospital. His wife and son have also tested positive. - Jyoti Shelar KALABURAGI Doctor who treated Kalaburagi COVID-19 victim tests positive One of the two COVID-19 cases reported from Karnataka is a 63-year old doctor from Kalaburagi. He had treated the 76-year old man who died and later tested positive for COVID-19. Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner B. Sharat said the doctor had visited the patient\'s house and treated him initially. The doctor was under home-isolation for some days now. He is now shifted to ESIC quarantine ward, Mr. Sharat said. Kalaburagi administration is now keeping the doctor\'s direct contacts and the deceased man\'s secondary contacts in home-isolation. - Kumar Buradikatti KARNATAKA Karnataka reports tenth case Three more person in the State have tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday, taking the total number of infected cases to 10. Of the new cases, two are from Bengaluru and one is from Kalaburagi. Also read HONG KONG Hong Kong to quarantine all people entering the city from Thursday Hong Kong will quarantine for 14 days all people entering the Chinese-ruled city starting midnight on Thursday to , the Asian financial hub\'s leader Carrie Lam said on Tuesday. SOUTH KOREA S.Korea reports fewer than 100 new coronavirus cases for a third day South Korea reported 84 new on Tuesday, marking a third day in a row that the county has reported fewer than 100 new infections amid growing hopes that Asia\'s largest outbreak outside China may be easing. The new numbers are well below a Feb. 29 peak of 909, and bring the country\'s total infections to 8,320, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said. COVID-19 queries answered Volume 90% CANADA Canada shuts borders to foreign nationals Canada closed its borders to all foreign nationals except U.S. citizens and permanent residents on March 16, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urging people to limit social contact to stem the spread of . Several other countries have taken the same step. The 27-nation European Union proposed shutting its external borders for 30 days on Monday. Travel from EU, U.K. banned as India tightens preventive steps In a series of temporary preventive measures, the Group of Ministers (GoM) on on Monday banned the entry of travellers from European Union nations, the European Free Trade Association, Turkey and the United Kingdom to India from March 18. After its seventh meeting on the , the GoM also called for expanding the compulsory quarantine for a minimum period of 14 days for passengers coming from/transiting through UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait. ODISHA Two persons who left from hospitals, return Owing to pressure from fellow villagers, friends and relatives, a person with suspected COVID-19 infection who had escaped from the MKCG medical college and hospital in Berhampur on March 15, returned to the hospital to get admitted again. In a similar incident, another person admitted in the isolation ward of the Kandhamal District Headquarter Hospital (DHH) in Phulbani escaped on Monday. A search was launched after the Additional District Medical Officer (ADMO) of Kandhamal lodged a complaint with the police. MAHARASHTRA Three-year-old among 6 new COVID-19 cases A three-year-old girl from Kalyan and her 33-year-old mother are among the six new patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 in Maharashtra on Monday, taking the total count in the State to 39. The childs father, who had travelled to the U.S., had tested positive earlier. The other patients who tested positive on Monday include two Philippines nationals, aged 47 and 42, who had come to Navi Mumbai, a 44-year-old woman from Mumbai with a travel history to Lisbon in Portugal, and a 51-year-old woman from Yavatmal who was part of the Dubai tour group. DELHI Monuments, National Museum closed till March 31 The Union Ministry of Culture announced on Monday that all ticketed monuments and museums maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India across the country and the National Museum at New Delhi would be closed to the public from Tuesday till March 31 in view of the COVID-19 crisis. Goodbye handshake, welcome namaste Volume 90% MUMBAI BMC starts door-to-door surveillance Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials have started door-to-door visits as a measure to tackle the novel coronavirus pandemic. Officials have visited more than 10,000 housing societies to check for people with any history of foreign travel, anyone with COVID-19 symptoms and also tracking those discharged after showing no symptoms. France imposes restrictions on movement French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday ordered stringent restrictions on people\'s movement that would last at least two weeks to slow the and said the army would be drafted in to help move the sick to hospitals. Maharashtra government orders private offices to go for work from home Maharashtra went into partial lockdown mode with the government announcing closure of private office spaces, religious shrines, and wedding functions after fresh cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) were reported from across the State on Monday. At a meeting with health officials, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray warned that citizens would have to show greater self discipline for the next 15 days which are crucial for the mutation of the virus or the government would be left with no option but to go for a total closure of the financial capital and rest of the State. KERALA 126 on U.K. tourists contact list quarantined The Health Department has placed in quarantine 126 people in the district, who had come in contact with the U.K. tourist who tested positive for COVID-19. The tourist was offloaded from an Emirates flight along with others on Sunday following the District Collectors intervention., A police officer operates a drone at the Gateway of India to keep vigil on the crowd and to spread awareness about coronavirus through a built-in audio system in the drone, in Mumbai on March 18, 2020. First case reported from Kashmir Valley; CBSE class 10, 12 board exams postponed; JEE-Main exam deferred. India reported its third death from the on Tuesday. The number of COVID-19 cases tested positive in India is 162 and there are 145 active cases including the first case reported from Kashmir Valley and three more from Rajasthan. According to WHO, as of March 17, there were 184,976 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 7,529 deaths in 159 countries. We have been related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the updates: DELHI 10.50 PM Three of family test positive in Rajasthan Three of a family from Rajasthans Jhunjhunu who had recently returned from Italy have been tested positive for coronavirus, prompting the government to impose Section 144 of the CrPC in the entire state. The Rajasthan government also imposed a curfew within a km of their residence in Jhunjhunu. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot after holding a review meeting directed to impose the restrictions to curb the spread of the infection. The patients had returned from Italy on March 8. Their samples were sent to Jaipurs SMS Hospital for testing. Rajasthan Health Minister Dr. Raghu Sharma said they are being brought to Jaipur for treatment. He said all those people who came in their contact will be screened. DELHI 10.40 PM CBSE postpones class 10, 12 board exams till March 31 The Central Board of Secondary Education has postponed ongoing class 10, 12 examinations till March 31 in view of the coronavirus outbreak. All ongoing CBSE examinations in India and abroad postponed till March 31 and will be rescheduled thereafter... after an assessment of the situation, CBSE Secretary Anurag Tripathi said. All ongoing evaluation work will be suspended during the period, he added. The CBSE announcement came following a directive from the HRD ministry saying exams are important but safety and security of students and teachers is equally important. HRD Ministrys NTA postpones JEE for IIT, engineering college admissions The Joint Entrance Exam (JEE-Main) for admission to IITs and engineering colleges has been postponed in view of coronavirus, according to the HRD Ministrys National Testing Agency (NTA). The exam was earlier scheduled from April 5-11. The JEE-Main exam has been postponed. The new date will be decided in accordance with the board exams schedule and other competitive exams to ensure there is no clash, a senior NTA official said. DELHI 10.30 PM Modi to address the nation Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation on March 19 evening on the situation arising out of coronavirus outbreak and the efforts to combat it, the Prime Ministers Office said. PM Shri @narendramodi will address the nation on 19th March 2020 at 8 PM, during which he will talk about issues relating to COVID-19 and the efforts to combat it, the PMO tweeted. In another tweet, the PMO said Modi chaired a high-level meeting to review the ongoing efforts to contain COVID-19. Ways to further strengthen Indias preparedness were discussed, it said. J&K 10.20 PM Kashmir records its first case of coronavirus: Officials MAHARASHTRA 9.30 PM Two more test positive in Maharashtra, total cases rise to 45 in the State A 21-year-old male with travel history to Philippines, Singapore and Colombo has been found positive for COVID-19 in Pimpri Chinchwad. A 50-year-old man from Ratnagiri with a travel history to Dubai has also tested positive for COVID-19 taking the Maharashtra count to 45. So far 19 cases in have been reported from Pune district eight in Pune city and 11 in the township of Pimpri-Chinchwad. Shoumojit Banerjee and Jyoti Shellar NEW DELHI 8.30 PM Varsities advise students to leave hostels, access to reading rooms, mess prohibited Suspension of mess facilities, closure of libraries and common areas and restrictions on movements are some of the problems students may have to face as universities and educational institutions in the country advise them to leave hostels in view of the coronavirus outbreak. The Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad, has directed students to vacate their respective hostels latest by midnight of March 18. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, which had also directed students to vacate hostels, has allowed foreign students and PhD scholars whose research is at crucial stages to stay. The National Institute of Rourkela has said the students who are staying back will do it at their own risk. The Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University too have advised students to leave hostels. The classes in universities and educational institutions are suspended till March 31. NEW DELHI 8.00 PM Delhi HC experimenting with video conference facility to conduct proceedings The Delhi High Court on March 18 said it was experimenting with holding proceedings through video conferencing in view of the coronavirus pandemic and the system would probably be in place by next week. A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar said experiments and trial runs were being conducted to ensure that the system works smoothly and successfully. From next week proceedings through video conferencing might be seen in a few cases, the court said. Wait for 2-3 days. We are experimenting. It will probably be done by Monday [March 23]. On Monday we want to conduct one matter by video conferencing. We have installed the system at our residence and here [high court] and rehearsals have been done. We will do some more rehearsal to ensure we can do it successfully, the Bench said while hearing a plea seeking holding of court proceedings through video conferencing to ensure that no person infected with COVID-19 comes to the court premises. KARNATAKA 7.50 PM Infected Hyderabad techie\'s contacts show no symptoms The health department said on Wednesday that none of the Hyderabad techie\'s contacts traced in Karnataka have shown symptoms. The 24-year-old software professional on March 2 worked for a Bengaluru-based company. He had travelled by an Indigo flight from Dubai to Bengaluru on February 20 and had worked with 13 colleagues in the Bengaluru office before coming to Hyderabad by bus on February 22. NEW DELHI 6.45 PM Monitoring prices of soaps, cleaners: govt. The Centre is closely monitoring the prices of soaps, floor cleaners and thermal scanners due to a sudden surge in demand for these items amid the growing number of COVID-19 cases in the country, Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Wednesday. MAHARASHTRA 6.30 PM Total coronavirus cases in Maharashtra rise to 43 A 68-year-old woman has tested positive in Mumbai on March 18. The number of confirmed cases in Maharashtra has now gone up to 43. Jyoti Shellar Earlier in the day, four passengers, all belonging to the same family, were de-boarded from a Delhi-bound train at Palghar station in Maharashtra after they were found with quarantine seal. They were de-boarded from coach number G4 & G5 of 12216 Garib Rath on 18/03/2020 at Palghar station when the TTEs noticed & also co-passengers raised an alarm seeing a stamp on their hands, railway authorities said. NEW DELHI 6.15 PM Transport Ministry suggests cutting down passenger transport The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has written to the States and the Union Territories advising on cutting down of passenger transport. It has urged the States to facilitate refunds in case advance bookings were made. - Jagriti Chandra TAMIL NADU 6.00 PM Second case reported in Chennai Minister for Health and Family Welfare C. Vijayabaskar tweeted: "#Coronaupdate: #RGGH, Chennai reports the 2nd positive case for #Covid19. The Pt hails from Delhi, is in isolation & stable is under the observation of the expert team treating #Covid19. #TNHealth @MoHFW\_INDIA #Vijayabaskar" Tamil Nadu recorded its second positive case of disease, COVID-19, on March 18. A 20-year-old youth, who had travelled from Delhi to Chennai in a train, tested positive for COVID-19 and is already in the isolation ward of Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH). Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar, in a tweet, said the patient was in isolation and his condition was stable. He is under the observation of an expert team. NEW DELHI 5.50 PM Vistara suspends international operations Vistara, a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines, has announced the suspension of international operations from March 20 to March 31, 2020 Jagriti Chandra "Due to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on border controls and air travel across the world, Vistara is temporarily suspending its international operations from 20 March 2020 to 31 March 2020," the airline said in a statement. At present, the airline operates to five foreign destinations - Colombo, Kathmandu, Dubai, Bangkok and Singapore. KERALA 5.30 PM Kerala issues guidelines to foreign tourists Strengthening surveillance and control measures against the coronavirus in Kerala, the State government on Wednesday issued guidelines to ensure safe return of around 5,000 foreign tourists in the southern State. In view of some countries seeking mandatory certificate stating that the passengers are COVID-19 negative, the State government directed all foreign travellers in the State to contact the COVID-19 district cell which will ensure their sample test for coronavirus. The testing laboratory will issue them certificate which will enable them to fly to their respective nations. The tourist on receiving the certificate to ensure quick departure to their respective countries by following all precautions in health advisory while travelling from their stay place to the airport, at the airport and in the flight, the guidelines said. NEW DELHI 5.15 PM Rajya Sabha MP raises issue of shortage of sanitisers, masks Rajya Sabha Congress MP Ripun Bora on Wednesday highlighted problems being faced by people due to shortage and high prices of sanitisers and masks amid outbreak of coronavirus. Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the House, he said the government has asked people to take precautionary steps like cleaning of hands. Mr. Bora said there was shortage of sanitisers, soaps and masks not only in metro cities, but also in rural areas of the country. He said these items were being sold at exorbitant prices. The Congress member urged the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to monitor the supply, and ensure their availability and proper prices so that there is no panic among the public. TELANGANA 5.00 PM 343 Indian students in Malaysia headed to India who were stranded in Malaysia have boarded two Air Asia flights at Kuala Lumpur. The flights one headed to Visakhapatnam and the other to Delhi are likely to reach between 10.30 p.m. and 11.00 p.m. Ramesh Susarla 4.50 PM All malls in Gurugram to be shut down Gurugram district administration has ordered closing down of all shopping malls, weekend bazaars, pubs, bars, night clubs, lounges, cinema halls and multiplexes till March 31. Pharmacies, grocery stores and super markets have been exempted. Weddings, family gatherings, conferences, sports and religious activities should not have more than 50 persons. 4.40 PM Total cases in Telangana rise to 7 Telangana Health Minister\'s office has said another person has tested positive for COVID-19. This takes the number of cases in the State to 7. One person has recovered. This take the total number of cases in the country to 153. 4.00 PM Resident doctor of Lucknow\'s KGMU tests positive A 25-year-old junior resident doctor of the King George Medical University (KGMU) in Lucknow has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) after coming in contact with two patients undergoing treatment for the disease on its premises, a hospital spokesperson said on Wednesday. The KGMU subsequently, in a statement, announced suspension of all undergraduate academic classes and examinations till April 2 as a preventive measure to stem the spread of COVID-19. The doctor has been kept in an isolation ward a 3.20 PM One more test positive in Noida A resident of Noida, who recently returned from Indonesia, has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, Gautam Buddh Nagar health officials said on Wednesday. The total number of positive cases for the COVID-19 in the district now stands at four, Chief Medical Officer Anurag Bhargava said. 3.00 PM 276 Indians with coronavirus abroad As many as 276 Indians infected with coronavirus are abroad, the Ministry of External Affairs informed the parliament today. This includes 255 in Iran and 12 in UAE. One Indian each has tested positive in Rwanda, Kuwait, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. As many as 12 people are being treated in Italy. The Indian Embassies in the respective countries are in touch with such Indian citizens regarding appropriate medical attention in cooperation with local authorities. 2.45 PM TN portal The Tamil Nadu Health Department has launched a web portal - -- as a one-stop centre for all queries on coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Now, people with travel history and symptoms of COVID-19 can self-report on the portal following which the 24x7 control room will get in touch with them. 2.35 PM Two more test positive in Karnataka Two more positive cases of have been reported in Karnataka, taking the total number of cases to 13. The two new cases are a 56-year-old male, a resident of Bengaluru who returned from USA on 6th March, and another 25-year-old female, who returned from Spain around the same time. Both have been quarantined and are being treated in designated isolated hospitals in the city. 1.10 PM Big Temple to closed for devotees till March 31 The Big Temple in Thanjavur will remain closed for devotees and tourists till March 31, according to the Collector, M.Govinda Rao. Regular pujas would continue to be performed at the Sri Brahadeeswarar Temple. The closure of the temple for devotees and the tourists was taken as a precautionary measure to prevent possible spreading of the COVID-19 virus, he said. 1.05 PM Former Union Minister Suresh Prabhu goes into self-quarantine Former Union Minister Suresh Prabhu. File Former union minister and BJP MP Suresh Prabhu has self quarantined himself at his residence for the next 14 days, as a precautionary measure following his return from Saudi Arabia to attend a meeting on March 10. Sources said though Mr. Prabhu has tested negative for the , he, however has decided to stay in isolation as a precaution. PTI 12.45 PM Now, Goa says no positive cases in the State Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Wednesday said a Norway national in the state has tested positive for novel coronavirus but shortly afterwards retracted the remarks. Mr. Rane said the earlier information was based on a hoax call to the concerned nodal officer. The Norway national came to Goa on February 20. He was having fever since March 10 and was isolated as a suspect in hospital in Panaji, the minister had told PTI earlier today. 12.15 PM Bihar govt. declares COVID-19 an epidemic The Bihar government has declared as an epidemic and issued the Bihar Epidemic Diseases COVID-19 Regulation 2020. The regulation has given legal powers to government officials to conduct mass screening of suspected patients, including forcible isolation, sealing of any geographical area and taking punitive action against those hiding symptoms of the virus, running away from isolation centres or spreading misinformation. Amarnath Tewary 12.10 PM Three doctors from Institute of Nephro-Urology in Bengaluru under home quarantine Three doctors from the State-run Institute of Nephro-Urology located in Victoria Hospital campus have been home quarantined since Tuesday as one of the doctors is related to the 20-year-old girl, who tested positive for on Monday. Those under home quarantine include the institutes director Keshavamurthy R. 12.05 PM Pay and use quarantine facility in Delhi A municipal worker near the Ibis hotel at the Aerocity, which is one of the three hotels to quarantine people. The Delhi government has offered pay and use quarantine facilities in three premier hotels in the Aerocity near the airport for people. People can book rooms in RedFox, IBIS and Lemon Tree hotels situated near the Indira Gandhi International Airport. They will have to stay mandatorily for 14 days. These hotels have been asked to set aside 182 rooms for this purpose. The maximum limit of the per day rate has been set at Rs 3,100. The bills will have to be paid by the guests who want luxurious isolation during the quarantine," Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said. 12.00 NOON U.P. govt schools to promote all students up to Class VIII without examination Students of classes one to eight of all government primary schools in Uttar Pradesh will get promoted without having to appear in examinations in view of the coronavirus outbreak. Orders have been issued to promote all students, studying in schools run by the basic education department, of class one to eight to next classes without examination. All schools have been closed till April 2, Additional Chief Secretary, Education Renuka Kumar said in a order issued on Tuesday night. Competitive and other examinations, except Boards, have been postponed till April 2. 11.55 AM SC notice to states, UTs over non-availability of mid-day meals to children The Supreme Court Wednesday took note of the non-availability of mid-day meals to children as schools in many parts of the country have been shut due to the coronavirus pandemic. A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde took suo motu cognisance of the matter and issued notices to the states and union territories asking them how children were being provided mid-day meals amid the shut down of schools. Schools in Delhi-NCR and many other states are closed till March 31 in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. 11.30 AM BJP not to hold protest for one month: J.P. Nadda The Bharatiya Janata Party has decided not to hold any protest or demonstration for a month in view of the coronavirus outbreak, party president J.P. Nadda said on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. The party will not holding public gatherings, he said adding if they have to convey anything, senior party leaders will do so through memorandums. All party units have been asked to spread awareness about coronavirus and their dos and donts, Nadda said. The BJP presidents statement came a day after in a parliamentary party meeting of the BJP asked MPs to spread awareness among the people in small groups about coronavirus and suggested that they should refrain from launching any mass agitation till April 15. 11.00 AM KARNATAKA Covid-19 restrictions to continue for another week The existing COVID-19 restrictions in Karnataka are all set to be continued for another week, said Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa in Bengaluru on Wednesday. There is a need to take all possible measures to ensure that the disease is contained in the State. We will discuss about in the cabinet meeting scheduled in the afternoon and make an announcement, he told reporters. (Afshan Yasmeen) 10.30 AM National Restaurants Association issues advisory to close operations from today Now it will be difficult to have food outside home as the National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI) has advised its member restaurants across the country to shut down from March 18 to 31 in view of the serious health risk posed by to lakhs of employees and millions of customers. Read: 9.25 AM Pune woman tests positive A woman with a travel history to France and the Netherlands has tested positive for COVID-19, taking the total tally of positive novel coronavirus cases in Pune district to 18 and the , said Pune District Collector Naval Kishore Ram on Wednesday. The person, in her late 20s, had returned to Pune after travelling to France and the Netherlands. With this case, Pune now has eight COVID-19 positive cases and Pimpri-Chinchwad has 10, said Mr. Ram. 9.15 AM Army jawan in Leh tests positive for COVID-19 making it the first case in the armed forces. He contracted it from his father who returned from Iran recently. 9:00 AM Kyrgyzstan confirms first few coronavirus cases Kyrgyzstan has confirmed its first three coronavirus cases, Healthcare Minister Kosmosbek Cholponbayev said on Wednesday. Three Kyrgyz nationals tested positive after arriving from Saudi Arabia, he told a briefing. 9:00 AM Coronavirus claims 11 more lives in China The epicentre of the novel coronavirus outbreak Wuhan city in China reported a single confirmed case for the second consecutive day on Tuesday even as 11 people died of the deadly disease in the country, taking the toll to 3,237, health officials said on Wednesday. 8:20 AM 5,680 flights cancelled: the coronavirus impact on global air travel Close to 5,680 planned flights which were supposed to either depart from or arrive at 10 foreign airports this week were cancelled mostly due to related to COVID-19. Airports in Italy and South Korea are the most affected, while the ones in India and the U.S. are less affected. Mumbai is the most affected Indian airport while among international airports Amsterdam was hit the most due to cancellations. 8:15 AM Turkey confirms first coronavirus death Turkey confirmed late on Tuesday its first death related to the coronavirus and the country more than doubled its confirmed cases to 98, from 47 a day earlier. Health Minister Fahrettin Koca told a press conference that an 89-year old died after contracting the virus from someone who had contact with China, the epicentre of the global outbreak. Turkey diagnosed 51 more cases on Tuesday, he said. 8:00 AM Justin Trudeau warns virus restrictions could last weeks, months Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has urged Canadians to hunker down for possibly weeks or months of business closures and home-stay to prevent the spread of new coronavirus. He said his government was preparing to roll out a new package of financial supports -- worth Can$25 billion (US$18 billion), according to public broadcaster CBC -- to ease the burden on Canadians and their businesses. His government is also considering using the Emergency Measures Act, an extremely rare measure. WEST BENGAL West Bengal reports first case West Bengal has reported its first positive case of coronavirus as a student who returned from United Kingdom tested positive. Senior officials of the State government said that the student has been kept under isolation at Infectious Diseases and Beliaghta General Hospital in Kolkata. The student arrived in the country on March 15 and has been in contact with three persons including his parents and a driver. MAHARASHTRA COVID-19 claims Indias third victim in Mumbai India reported its third death from the COVID-19 pandemic on Tuesday, with the Union Health Ministry putting the number of positive cases at 137. However data from States puts the number at 143. The deceased person had a history of travel to Dubai and was being treated in Mumbai, Joint Secretary in the Union Health Ministry Lav Agarwal said at a press conference. 7:30 AM 51 private labs will soon be allowed to conduct tests The test, test, test prescription of the World Health Organisation (WHO) is not for India, Director-General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Balram Bhargava said on Tuesday, stressing that community transmission of has not yet occurred. Dr. Bhargava, however, also announced that 51 private laboratories [accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)] will soon be allowed to test for COVID-19 to enhance capacity for diagnosis and detection in addition to the 72 functional laboratories., A security personnel checks the temperature of a government employee at North Block in New Delhi on Thursday. According to WHO, as of March 18, there were 8,657 deaths in 166 countries Highlights Ban on international flights to land in India between March 22 and 29 Given the gravity of the situation, we cannot allow all OCIs/Indians to return: MEA 4 dead, 160 active cases in India CBSE, ISC and ICSE postpones board exams In a first, China reports zero new domestic cases 155 trains cancelled till March 31 The number of cases tested positive in India crossed 180 on March 19. There are over 160 active cases, including the first cases reported Gujarat. The on the pandemic, and called for a Janata Curfew on March 22 between 7 am and 9 pm. According to him this exercise will help the country to face future challenges. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), as of March 18, there were 207,860 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 8,657 deaths in 166 countries. We have been related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the updates: NEW DELHI 8.00 PM Highlights from PM Modi\'s address to the nation on coronavirus: Normally when a natural disaster or political crisis occurs it is restricted to some countries, but this time it has engulfed the whole world. Even WW-I and WW-II did not involve as many countries as Coronavirus has done. India has, for the last two months, tried to combat the disease. But for the last few days an atmosphere is being created that we are somehow safe. This is not the right way to think. Every Indian requires to be alert and take precautions. Friends, you have never disappointed me whenever I have asked you for something. Today, I ask 130 crore Indians I want your next few weeks. My dear countrymen, till now science has not alighted on a confirmed treatment or vaccine to combat Coronavirus. It is therefore natural to be worried. Narendra Modi @narendramodi My address to the nation. Narendra Modi @narendramodi My address to the nation. #IndiaFightsCorona pscp.tv 109K 45.4K people are talking about this In countries where the disease has spread widely, a specific thing has been seen. There has been an explosive rise in the cases after a trough. The Government of India is carefully watching these trends. There are some countries which have managed to combat this to an extent, and we have seen that it has been done with the active cooperation of its citizens. For our country, which is developing one, it is a big challenge. To combat it two important things are required One is Sankalp (resolution) and Sayyam (patience). As citizens, we must resolve that we will perform our duty and follow the directions of the Central government that we will avoid being infected and save others from being infected. When there is no medicine for this disease then prevention is important. If we are healthy, others will be too. We can do this by avoiding gatherings, what is being called social distancing. In these times, this social distancing is important. If you feel that you are well or that nothing will happen to you by roaming around in markets, it is not correct. You will be doing an injustice to yourself and to your family and fellow countrymen. For the next few weeks please do not venture out without any pressing need. Those who work in government, hospitals, media etc. may not be able to avoid it, but the rest should. I request senior citizens, those above 60-65 years of age, please do not venture out of your homes. When I was a child, when war used to be declared, villages upon villages used to undergo blackouts. Therefore Im asking countrymen to impose a Janata Curfew a self-imposed, self-regulated curfew. On March 22, this Sunday, from morning 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. this Janata Curfew should be undertaken. Those attached to essential services, they may need to venture out. This attempt on March 22, will be a demonstration of our resolve to take on the challenge of this disease. I request State governments also to help implement this. There are many civil society bodies, I request them to also help in this endeavour of Janata Curfew. You can call 10 new people in a day and discuss this. This Janata Curfew will be like a crucible for us to test whether India is ready to deal with coronavirus. I want another bit of cooperation from you on March 22, for the last two months many of our people working at hospitals, police departments, rail and airport staff have been working to serve others without caring for themselves. This is not an ordinary service as they run the risk of being infected. They are a bulwark between us and coronavirus. I want that on March 22, we thank all such people. The manner of this thanksgiving should be at 5 p.m. we stand at our doors or balconies of our houses and express, at least for 5 minutes, our thanks by clapping or beating thaalis. Local governments should alert people at 5 p.m. on Sunday. In this time of crisis, you also have to keep in mind that our hospitals are not overloaded so that they can combat coronavirus. Therefore I ask those going in for routine check-ups to avoid it, and if you need medical advise try and get it over the phone. I also request you to postpone elective surgeries. The economy is also being affected deeply by this pandemic. The Govt. of India has set up, under the FM, the setting up of a COVID-19 task force. This task force will, after due consultations with stakeholders, take decisions in a short frame of time. This pandemic has undoubtedly hit the economic situation of middle, lower-middle, and poor communities. I ask industrialists to also treat employees humanely and not cut pay of those who cant make it to work. Please remember they too need to run their homes. I also assure the country that we are taking all steps to make sure that all necessities will be available as always. Please do not do panic buying, buy as you normally would. I am confident that in the coming days you will undertake your duties and responsibilities as before. We must face this crisis with great determination. Our priority should be to save ourselves from coronavirus. Everyone is contributing to fight this crisis. It is important that in this situation, humanity must prevail, India must prevail." GUJARAT/UTTAR PRADESH 7.55 PM First cases reported from Gujarat; number of Uttar Pradesh cases rise to 19 Two positive case of coronavirus in Gujarat. One Surat-based person has returned from U.S. while another case is from Rajkot where the person returned from Saudi Arabia. This is the first time that Gujarat has reported confirmed cases of the viral infection. Mahesh Langa Number of positive cases in U.P. is officially 19, says U.P. Directorate of Health Services. The latest cases were reported in Lakhimpur Kheri district (on the Indo-Nepal border) and Lucknow. Omar Rashid JHUNJHUNU 7.40 PM Day after testing positive, three of Italy-returned family rushed to Jaipurs SMS Hospital The three members of a Rajasthan family who had recently returned from Italy and tested positive for coronavirus were rushed to Jaipurs Sawai Man Singh Hospital on March 19. Jhunjhunu Collector Umardeen Khan said they were sent to the Jaipur hospital at 3 p.m. along with a team of doctors. A couple and their two-year-old daughter who had recently returned from Italy were tested for coronavirus on March 18, prompting the Rajasthan government to impose gathering restrictions under Section 144 of the CrPC in the entire State. The patients belong to Rajasthans Jhunjhunu and had returned from Italy on March 8. The collector said a curfew within 1-km of their residence was imposed till March 20 and people in the area have been advised to stay indoors. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot during a high-level meeting advised people to stay indoors. He said action will be taken under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code against the suspected patients who do not comply with the home isolation norms. In the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary (Medical and Health) Rohit Kumar Singh informed that 1,100 people have been kept in home isolation in the State, of which 265 are in Jaipur. KERALA/NEW DELHI 7.15 PM One more tests positive in Kerala; Indian dies of COVID-19 in Iran One more person tests positive for coronavirus in Kerala, taking the number of cases to 25, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on March 19. Meanwhile, an Indian who tested positive for coronavirus has died in Iran: Ministry of External Affairs official. LDF govt announces financial package The LDF government on March 19 announced a 20,000 crore special financial package to overcome the crisis being faced by the State following the virus outbreak. A man hailing from Kasaragod district, who had returned from Dubai and was under observation, has tested positive for the virus on March 19, Mr. Vijayan told reporters after a meeting to review the COVID-19 situation. At least 31,173 people are under surveillance, of whom 237 are in observation in hospitals in the state, he said. Mr. Vijayan said 64 people were hospitalised on March 19. MUMBAI 7.00 PM Curbs put on roadside shops, outlets, eateries in Navi Mumbai As part of measures to contain the spread of coronavirus, the Navi Mumbai civic body issued orders closing roadside shops and commercial stores, outlets operating on footpaths and areas near crowded railway stations on alternate days till March-end, officials said. As per the orders issued by the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC), these roadside shops and commercial outlets will remain open on alternate days, they said. The civic administration is making every attempt to control crowd movement and prevent spread of the virus, the official said. As part of measures to reduce large crowd, municipal commissioner Annasaheb Misal issued orders closing shops and commercial outlets on roadside, footpaths and near crowded stations such as CBD Belapur, Nerul, Vashi, Sanpada, Kopar Khairane, Ghansoli and Airoli on alternate days, he said. NEW DELHI 6.45 PM Restore 4G net services in J&K to fight coronavirus: Amnesty International Amnesty International India (AII) on Thursday urged the Centre to immediately restore high-speed 4G internet services in Jammu and Kashmir to help people in preparing against the spread of coronavirus. The responses to corona virus cannot be based on human rights violations and a lack of transparency and censorship, the statement said. Complete internet shutdowns have also been imposed intermittently in certain areas in the guise of security. There is growing anxiety around the pandemic and unwarranted restrictions on content and dissemination of information only stands to add to the panic. Complete shutdowns or restricting of internet speed or access makes it difficult for people to navigate their way through a difficult time further undermining their trust in the authorities, the statement said. AMARAVATI 6.40 PM Tirupati Balaji temple to be shut for devotees; Malls, theatres closed in A.P. The famous hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala near Tirupati and all other major temples will be out of bounds for devotees while malls and cinema halls would be closed down in Andhra Pradesh till March 31 as part of measures to check spread of coronavirus, the state government announced on Thursday. The restrictions would come into force from Friday, Deputy Chief Minister for Medical and Health A.K. K Srinivas (Nani) said briefing reporters here after a high-level meeting on COVID-19, chaired by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. The daily rituals in all these temples will, however, be performed by the priests. Only the devotees will not be allowed, he said. NEW DELHI 6.00 PM Restaurants in Delhi to be closed until March 31 Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced in New Delhi on Thursday that restaurants in the national capital would not be allowed to serve clients on their respective premises but would be allowed to continue take-away and home delivery services. The decision was taken at a meeting between Mr. Kejriwal and Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal to review measures taken against the COVID-19 epidemic in the city. All restaurants and eateries to remain closed except delivery and takeaways. Provision of mobile vans with essential commodities of daily use and essential medical items at various residential areas being explored, Mr. Baijal tweeted. The suspension of all non essential services of government till further orders was also decided upon at the meeting, Raj Niwas stated. Jatin Anand CHANDIGARH 5.50 PM Punjab to suspend public transport from March 20 midnight The Punjab government on Thursday announced suspension of public transport services from the midnight of March 20 (Friday), besides restricting public gatherings to less than 20 in the State. It has also decided to shut marriage palaces, hotels, restaurants, banquets and dining places, except home delivery services and takeaways in the entire State. Public transport buses, tempos and auto rickshaws will be suspended from the midnight of Friday, Local Bodies Minister Brahm Mohindra said. The decisions were taken in a meeting of the seven-member Group of Ministers (GoM), formed by the Punjab government to review the situation triggered by the coronavirus outbreak on a daily basis. The GoM also decided to restrict the public gathering to 20. Earlier, it was restricted to 50 people. The Minister further said that the exams of Classes X and XII of the Punjab School Education Board have been postponed till March 31. All Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, senior superintendent of police have been directed not to leave their stations, the Minister said. ISLAMABAD 5.40 PM Pakistan closes Wagah border with India for two weeks amid coronavirus scare Pakistan announced on March 19 to close down Wagah border with India for two weeks as the number of coronavirus cases in the country rose to 341. The country\'s Interior Ministry, through a notification, said that it closed the key border point with India for an initial period of two weeks with immediate effect". It said the measure was taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, in the best interest of both the countries. Pakistans western border with Iran and Afghanistan had already been closed to curb the spread of the deadly virus which had infected people in more than 150 countries. NEW DELHI 5.30 PM India bans entry of all international commercial passenger flights from March 22 to March 29 The Government of India issued the following notification in an official statement: No scheduled international commercial passenger aircraft shall be allowed to land in India from March 22, 2020 for one week. State Governments shall issue appropriate directions so that all citizens above 65 (other than for medical assistance) except for public representatives/govt. servants/medical professionals are advised to remain at home. Similarly all children below 10 should be advised to stay at home and not to venture out. Railways and civil aviation shall suspend all concessional travel except for students, patients and divyang category. States are being requested to enforce work for home for pvt sector employees except those working in emergency/essential services. To reduce crowding all Group B and C Central govt. employees will be asked to A attend offices on alternate week and staggered timings for all employees. NEW DELHI 5.20 PM Highlights from the MEA press meet on coronavirus: Crisis like this knows no borders and you need regional and international cooperation. PM Modi made several proposals and we are moving very fast on these. The emergency fund is up and running. SAARC countries have asked us for masks, gloves, medicines... Total requests have crossed $1 million. SAARC Foreign Secretaries, Health Secretaries will hold conference calls shortly." On Indians stranded abroad: Given the gravity of situation we couldn\'t allow all OCIs/Indians to return. The advisory is to travel as little as possible. Our Missions are trying to reach out to them. Given gravity of situation we couldn\'t allow all OCIs/Indians to return. The advisory is to travel as little as possible. Our Missions are trying to reach out to them. We have reviewed the action taken by countries, and decided to take Japan off from the list of travel restrictions. Situation in Iran is very severe, and we are deciding our response on bringing Indians who are stranded there... Some are negative, some are positive. In the past week we have evacuated 590 Indians from Iran. We believe in times to come those who are infected will recover and we will repatriate them. Our Missions have many challenges and are making arrangements for Indians stranded in the face of a complex environment. Let us assure you, those who have tested negative will be brought back. However many flights are required... Whether it is 1 flight or 2 flights. For those who are positive, there is a different protocol. If those who are stranded stay in touch with Missions, take help from the local communities they will be fine. In the case of Indian nationals stranded abroad, it is safer for them to stay there. They may have no symptoms but could develop them later. So we have to be careful about spreading them around. Some airlines have implemented the embargoes wrongly and left Indians stranded in transit. We are looking into this case by case. We have brought back all who wanted to from Singapore. People in Manila are being facilitated by the local mission and situation under control. We are receiving reports of Indians stranded in London and Schiphol, but no confirmed information. On evacuations from Italy: Indian medical team got back 380 samples, out of which 376 was negative while four were positive. The next batch of evacuations will be from Iran. A large number of those have tested negative and we will be trying to bring them back soon. On Indians in Qom: Adequate care was taken to analyse samples of pilgrims there. We have separated those who are negative and positive. Things are now quite controlled and people are recovering. Suhasini Haidar NEW DELHI 5.15 PM 16 infected Indians on cruise ship back home after treatment Sixteen Indian nationals on board a cruise ship, who had tested positive for coronavirus, had returned home after treatment at hospitals in Japan the government informed the Sabha on March 19. In a written reply to a question, Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan said a total of 138 Indians, including 132 crew members, were on-board the Diamond Princess Cruise ship which had docked off Japan following the virus outbreak. Of these, 119 Indian nationals were brought back to India on a special Air India flight on February 27, 2020 and quarantined at an Indian Army facility at Manesar, Haryana. 16 Indian nationals had tested positive for the novel coronavirus. They were treated in on shore medical facilities in Japan. All of them have been discharged after completion of their treatment and as per available information have returned to India, he said. Three Indians had chosen to stay back and were quarantined at an onshore facility in Japan, Mr. Muraleedharan said. GURUGRAM 5.10 PM Two women test positive in Gurugram Two women, including a 22-year-old studying at the United Kingdom, have tested positive for COVID-19 in Gurugram. It took the total number of positive cases in Gurugram to four. Chief Medical Officer, Gurugram, J.S. Punia, told The Hindu that the student had tested positive for COVID-19 and the samples of her three family members were also been taken for examination. In the second case, the 42-year-old wife of a COVID-19 patient has tested positive. Her husband had returned from the UK on March 7. COLOMBO 4.55 PM Sri Lanka postpones parliamentary polls Sri Lanka on Thursday indefinitely postponed parliamentary elections that were scheduled for next month in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The Chair of the Election Commission, Mahinda Deshapriya, said the polls scheduled for April 25 cannot be held as planned due to the prevailing situation over the coronavirus outbreak in the country The new date will be announced after March 25 and depends on how quickly the virus can be tackled, Deshapriya told reporters. PUNJAB 4.15 P.M. Punjab reports first coronavirus death Punjab has reported its first case of coronavirus death, after a 70-year old man died at civil hospital in Banga town of Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar district. The deceased had arrived from Germany via Italy at Delhi airport on March 7, and proceeded to the State the same day. He was a known case of diabetes and hypertension, and was confirmed as COVID positive on March 18, said an official statement on Thursday. Cautioning of a worsening COVID-19 crisis in the country, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh the central government to allow private hospitals and labs to conduct tests in order to ensure access to all the people, even as the state reported its first case of Corona death. CHENNAI 4.15 PM One more tests positive in Chennai A 21-year-old student from Dublin, Ireland has tested positive for COVID-19. He is being teated at Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital. Health minister VijayaBhaskar said the student arriveed at Chennai airport on March 17. He was screened and home quarantined. His test results came today. With this, the number of cases in Tamil Nadu rose to three. One person has recovered. 3.00 PM Central govt asks 50% of its staff to work from home The Centre on Thursday decided to allow 50 per cent of its employees to work from home and the remaining to attend office every day besides implementing different time slots for working hours, in its effort to further check the spread of coronavirus. The Heads of Department (HoDs) may ensure that 50 per cent of Group B and C employees are required to attend office every day and the remaining 50 per cent staff should be instructed to work from home, a Personnel Ministry order said. Further, the working hours for all employees who attend office on a particular day should be staggered, the order said. CHENNAI 2.00 PM Deserted streets of Chennai Pavement shops in Chennai\'s marketplace T.Nagar on Thursday have been closed as a preventive measure to stop the spread of COVID-19. The ever-crowded T.Nagar, a commercial hub of Chennai, wore a deserted look as all shops were shut down as a preventive measure. A rare sight of people playing cricket in Ranganathan Street., T. Nagar, Chennai. The iconic shop street that connects Mambalam Railway station with T. Nagar Usman Road, is home to several retail outlets. PANAJI 1.50 PM Goa to screen domestic travellers at airport Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Thursday announced that domestic travellers arriving at the states Dabolim airport will also be screened for coronavirus infection. There is a possibility that some coronavirus infected persons may travel on domestic flights. We want to screen all travellers who come through the airport, he said. MUMBAI 1.40 PM Mumbais dabbawalas to suspend services till month-end Mumbai\'s dabbawalas seen wearing masks in front of Churghate station on Thursday. Mumbais famed tiffin suppliers, the dabbawalas, on Thursday said they are suspending their services till March 31 in view of the coronavirus situation. Subhash Talekar, spokesperson of Mumbai Dabbawala Association on said the service will remain suspended from Friday as a precautionary measure. MUMBAI 1.30 PM 6 Singapore-returned persons de-boarded from train in Mumbai Six passengers having stamped as \'Home Quarantine\' on their hands, as they came from Singapore, were found in today\'s 19015 Saurashtra Exp leaving Mumbai Central at 8.20 am. They were deboarded at Borivali station as they boarded this train from Mumbai Central for Vadodara. On board Dy Ticket Inspector informed the control room at Mumbai Central. The station superintendent and a docto attended and passengers were de-boarded at Borivali. MUMBAI 12.35 PM Uddhav Thackeray urges people to stay at home Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray urged people of his State to stay at home and avoid public transport such as trains and buses. "This is a different type of war going on," says Mr. Thackeray. "This is war against virus." The entire govt machinery is working on war foot for people. We are telling you to stay inside, dont travel and these people are working 24 hours for you, he said. Virus is marching ahead, cases are growing... It is important to lessen the load on govt machinery... They are humans too, Mr. Thackeray said. Please avoid bus and trains. We can together defeat this virus, he added. Mr. Thackeray said he spoke to people stranded in Singapore and arrangements will be made for their return. They would be quarantined and if needed, isolated. A 22-year-old woman with travel history to the UK and a 49-year-old woman with travel history to Dubai have tested positive of Thursday taking the Maharashtra count to 47. 12.15 P.M. Curbs imposed in Srinagar after detection of first case The Srinagar administration on March 19 imposed restrictions on the movement of locals and halted public transport, a day after a 65-year-old woman was detected as the first person who tested positive for in the Kashmir region. These restrictions saw concertina wires being set up on the main roads leading to Srinagars Khanyar, the area where the patient hails from. Many parts of the commercial hub Lal Chowk also witnessed regulation of traffic by a huge deployment of security personnel. Locals said they were facing a lockdown as the security forces were not allowing them to move around freely 11.20 AM Ferozepur division of Northern Railways suspends several train services The cancelled trains are Delhi Sarai Rohilla and Pathankot (from March 18 to March 30); New Delhi to Ferozepur Cantt and Ferozepur to New Delhi (from March 20 to March 29); and Jabalpur to Atari (from March 21 to March 28); Attari-Jabalpur (from March 22 and 29); Jabalpur-Attari weekly express (from March 24 to 31); Attari-Jabalpur weekly express (from March 25 and April 1). 11.05 AM ISC and ICSE examinations scheduled between March 19 and 31 March postponed. The revised dates will be announced later said a press release from the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations 11.00 AM ANDHRA PRADESH Second positive case in Andhra Pradesh A second positive case has been reported in the State, this time from Prakasm district. According to a bulletin issued by it Thursday morning, a person belonging to Prakasam tested positive, from among 13 identified in the district with COVID symptoms. Special chief secretary K.S. Jawahar Reddy stated in the latest bulletin that total 883 persons have been identified so far for observation, 254 completed the observation, three are in home isolation and four admitted to hospitals. Of the 109 samples tested till date, two turned positive and the results of 13 samples is awaited. 10.45 AM KARNATAKA One more positive case in Karnataka One more positive case has been reported from Karnataka. The new case is the first from Kodagu. With this the total count of confirmed cases in Karnataka has touched 15, including the person who succumbed to the disease. While more details of the case are yet to be revealed by the State Health Department, Health Minister B. Sriramulu tweeted on Thursday morning that the person had returned from Saudi Arabia and has now been quarantined in a designated isolated facility. 10 AM CHANDIGARH Chandigarh reports first confirmed case The first confirmed case of COVID-19 has been reported in Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana. The condition of the patient is, however, stable, a senior official said on March 19. A 23-year-old woman, who recently returned from the United Kingdom, has tested positive for COVID-19, B.S. Chavan, Director-Principal of the Government Medical College and Hospital at Sector-32 here, told The Hindu. 10 AM MUMBAI Railways cancels 84 more trains; 155 trains cancelled till March 31 Railways cancelled 84 more trains, which will not operate between March 20 and March 31 in view of coronavirus and low occupancy, officials said. With this, the total number of cancelled trains has climbed to 155. The national transporter had cancelled around 99 trains on Wednesday night. All passengers having tickets in these trains are being informed about it individually, the official said. - PTI 9.30 AM CHINA No new domestic coronavirus cases for first time, says China For the first time after the deadly coronavirus broke out about three months ago in Wuhan, China on Thursday said that no new domestic cases of the were confirmed, including in the virus epicentre, even as eight more fatalities have been reported, taking the death toll in the country to 3,245. Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) in its daily report said that no new domestically transmitted cases of the novel coronavirus disease were reported on the Chinese mainland on Wednesday. KERALA Keralas temple festivals go lean, cut down on celebrations Temple festivals in the State have assumed a sombre note. The characteristic gaiety and razzmatazz that mark such celebrations have given way to an abiding caution to contain the outbreak. A board put up by the Palkulangara Sree Bhagavathy Temple in the capital on Wednesday cautioning devotees against crowding at the annual festival that begins on Thursday. The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), which manages about 1,200 temples, has taken the lead in observing the protocol set by the government. The board has issued a circular to the temple advisory committees comprising mostly residents in each locale to suspend all cultural programmes and mass feasts held as part of the festivals till normalcy returns. DELHI Ministry wants curbs on public transport The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has advised all States and Union Territories to take necessary steps to contain the spread of by restricting public transport. Refunds may be provided for advance bookings to passengers, a Ministry statement said on March 18. USA First member of U.S. Congress tests positive U.S. Representative Mario Diaz-Balart said on March 18 he has tested positive for , becoming the first member of Congress known to have contracted the virus. Diaz-Balart, a Florida Republican, said in a statement he has been self-quarantining in Washington since Friday and had not returned home to South Florida because his wife\'s pre-existing conditions put her at exceptionally high risk. Also read: DELHI Modi to address the nation Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation on March 19 evening on the situation arising out of coronavirus outbreak and the efforts to combat it, the Prime Ministers Office said. PM Shri @narendramodi will address the nation on 19th March 2020 at 8 PM, during which he will talk about issues relating to COVID-19 and the efforts to combat it, the PMO tweeted. DELHI CBSE postpones class 10, 12 board exams till March 31 The Central Board of Secondary Education has postponed ongoing class 10, 12 examinations till March 31 in view of the coronavirus outbreak. All ongoing CBSE examinations in India and abroad postponed till March 31 and will be rescheduled thereafter... after an assessment of the situation, CBSE Secretary Anurag Tripathi said. All ongoing evaluation work will be suspended during the period, he added. The CBSE announcement came following a directive from the HRD ministry saying exams are important but safety and security of students and teachers is equally important. HRD Ministrys NTA postpones JEE for IIT, engineering college admissions The Joint Entrance Exam (JEE-Main) for admission to IITs and engineering colleges has been postponed in view of coronavirus, according to the HRD Ministrys National Testing Agency (NTA). The exam was earlier scheduled from April 5-11. The JEE-Main exam has been postponed. The new date will be decided in accordance with the board exams schedule and other competitive exams to ensure there is no clash, a senior NTA official said. JAMMU AND KASHMIR Kashmir records its first case of coronavirus: Officials The Kashmir Valley on March 18 recorded its first positive case for in Srinagar, mayor of Srinagar Municipal Corporation Junaid Azim Mattu said. I have been informed a short while ago that #Srinagar has had its first positive case for #Covid2019. Its a congested area in the city interiors. We have to be transparent to convey the gravity of the challenge and also seek serious measures and responsible behaviour, Mr, Passangers, mostly migrant workers, stand in queues to buy tickets at Lokmanya Tilak Terminus in Mumbai on Friday, March 20, 2020 Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for a Janata Curfew on March 22 between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. to control the spread of the virus. The total number of positive cases in India touched 234 on March 20. On Thursday night, on the pandemic, and called for a Janata Curfew on March 22 between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. to control the spread of the virus. We have been related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the latest updates: Centre caps retail price of surgical masks, sanitisers A notification from the Consumer Affairs Ministry said that it has capped the retail price of hand sanitisers at 100 (for 200 ml). It has also capped the prices of surgical masks. - Jacob Koshy JABALPUR 8.30 P.M. Madhya Pradesh records first cases Madhya Pradesh recorded its first COVID-19 cases as four people tested positive for novel coronavirus in Jabalpur. These patients included three members of a family who had returned from Dubai recently, said Jabalpur collector Bharat Yadav. The fourth person had returned from Germany, he added. - PTI 9.00 P.M. Universal screening for all passengers from US, UK and Australia The Health Ministry has decided to expand universal screening for all passengers coming from the United States, U.K. and Australia. They will be either quarantined or isolated, depending on their risk profile, the Ministry said in a tweet. HARYANA 8.20 P.M. Two test positive in Haryana Two more people tested positive in Haryana, one each from Panipat and Faridabad. Both the people had travel history to affected countries. With this, the total count in the State touched 6, with four cases in Gurugram reporter earlier. - Ashok Kumar LUCKNOW 7.50 P.M. The Taj Hotel in Lucknow where singer Kanika Kapoor stayed was shut down temporarily by the administration, as per a statement by the District Magistrate. . - Omar Rashid 7.30 P.M. CRPF personnel in J&K on extended leave The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has directed its men already on leave to avail further 15 days leave and not to join duties in Jammu and Kashmir till April 5. All our men, including officers, who are on leave, have been asked not to join duties till April 5. Their leave period has been extended for 15 days. Similarly, leaves of those who intend to leave Kashmir for vacations have been cancelled and only emergency cases will be allowed to avail leave, a CRPF spokesman in Srinagar said. - Peerzada Ashiq HRD Ministry advises States, UTs to provide meals to eligible children To protect the health & promote immunity among school-going children, the HRD Ministry has advised the State governments & Union Territories to provide freshly cooked meal or food security allowance, whichever is feasible, to eligible children, till the time their schools are closed due to COVID-19 outbreak. - Priscilla Jebaraj 7.00 P.M. The total number of positive COVID-19 cases in the country have touched 220. Of these, 200 are active cases. The virus has claimed four lives so far. Four new people in Chandigarh have tested positive, taking the total cases to five in the city. In Kerala, five UK citizens were confirmed positive, with which the count in the State went up to 33. CHANDIGARH 6.40 P.M. Four people test positive in Chandigarh Four new people tested positive for COVID-19 in Chandigarh, taking the total number of infected people in the State to five, the State government said in an official statement on Friday. - Vikas Vasudeva HARYANA 6.40 P.M. Haryana government Home department has advised all district magistrates to impose Section 144 under CrPC in their respective areas in view of the situation emerging out of COVID-19. - Ashok Kumar AHMEDABAD 6.30 P.M. \'Voluntary Family Quarantine\' in Ahmedabad Ahmedabad Municipal Commissioner Vijay Nehra said on Friday: "We are starting Voluntary Family Quarantine where entire family of a person coming from overseas agrees to stay at home for 14 days. AMC will deliver all essential items like ration, masks, sanitiser, medicines, etc. free at the home of such families." - Mahesh Langa 6.20 P.M. Goa postpones State board exams A circular issued by authorities in Goa declared that all examinations for classes 9 till 12, scheduled for March 21st onwards have been postponed till further orders. This includes State board exams for class 10 and 12. Yogi Adityanath instructs State government hospitals to offer only emergency services Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed government hospitals in U.P. to offer only emergency services to avoid crowding. Non-essential OPD and tests should be deferred till March 31, says UP CMO. All cultural, social and "manglik" events in UP will be deferred, the CM said and appealed to the people to restrict number of invites to marriage functions to 10 people. Official functions like junta darshan, tehsil diwas, arogya mela etc. were postponed till April 2. - Omar Rashid 6.10 P.M. Uttarakhand bans entry of domestic and foreign tourists The Uttarakhand government on Friday into the State till further orders to contain the spread of coronavirus. An order issued by Health Secretary Nitesh Jha said several advisories have been issued in the past asking people to avoid unnecessary travel. - PTI 6.00 P.M. Five UK citizens test positive in Kerala Five UK citizens who were under treatment at the isolation facility of Government Medical College, Ernakulam, tested positive for COVID-19. They were part of the group comprising the COVID-19- infected UK citizen who was offloaded from a plane and was brought for treatment here. - S. Anandan 5.45 P.M. All 25 cases sent to BHU-IMS test negative All the 25 cases sent to the Institute of Medical Sciences, BHU (Varanasi) tested negative and the patients have been discharged. The cases included a patient from France, one each from Dubai and USA, and the rest from east UP and Bihar, as per data shared by medical superintendent of Sir Sunderlal Hospital, Institute of Medical Sciences, BHU. - Omar Rashid GUJARAT 5.25 P.M. Two more test positive for COVID-19 in Gujarat, taking the number of positive cases in the State to 7. It includes 3 in Ahmedabad, 2 in Vadodara and one each in Rajkot & Surat. CHENNAI 5.20 P.M. Chennai Metro Rail has announced there will not be any services on Sunday March 22. "In the wake of JANTA CURFEW to be observed on 22-03-2020(Sunday), Chennai Metro Rail Limited has decided to keep its services closed for one day. The move is aimed at encouraging the public to stay indoors and maintain social distancing and fight COVID-19," the Chennai Metro announced on Twitter. Derek OBrien goes into self-quarantine Trinamool Congress MP Derek OBrien self-quarantined himself after BJP MP Dushyant Singh, who sat beside him in Parliament, revealed that he he , who has tested positive for COVID-19. Mr. Singh and his mother, have also gone into self-quarantine after attending Ms. Kapoors party in Lucknow, Ms. Raje tweeted on Friday. Vasundhara Raje, son Dushyant Singh go into self-quarantine after attending singer Kanika Kapoors party BJP MP and son of former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, Dushyant Singh, has gone into self-quarantine after attending singer Kanika Kapoors party, sources said on Friday. in the country and says shes under complete quarantine and medical care. There were reports that the singer landed in Lucknow from the United Kingdom via Mumbai and was admitted in a city hospital after she showed signs of flu. In a statement released on instagram, the 41-year-old Baby Doll singer said she developed signs of flu in the last four days. Mr. Singh was among several socialites present at a party thrown by Ms. Kapoor. Thereafter, he also went to the Parliament. LADAKH 3.30 P.M. Two more test positive in Ladakh Two more persons have tested positive for coronavirus in Ladakh, taking the number of such patients in the Union Territory to 10, a senior government official said on Friday. Commissioner Secretary (Health) Rigzin Samphel said both the latest cases were from Choshot village of Leh, which was already notified as a containment area by the district administration. After the reports of the two patients came positive, they were immediately shifted to an isolation ward in a hospital here by health officials, Samphel told reporters here. He said the test reports of 55 more patients, including 11 taken on Friday, were sent to a laboratory in Delhi. Officials said the condition of all the coronavirus patients in the Union Territory was stable. - PTI ODISHA Odisha has put restrictions on assemblage of more than seven persons in public spaces. LUCKNOW 3.15 P.M Partial shutdown in Lucknow till March 23 All offices, establishments and institutes barring essential services like hospitals, ration shops, medical stores, etc to be shut down in a part of Lucknow till March 23, as per orders of the district magistrate. The affected area falls within Aliganj, Mahanagar, Indira Nagar, Gudamba and Vikas Nagar of the U.P. capital. Lucknow has reported 8 positive cases, with four new cases today. - Omar Rashid ASSAM Assam to wire money to each person from State stranded abroad Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that the State government has advised the state election commission to defer BTC polls, scheduled on April 4, due to COVID-19 pandemic and the need for social distancing. He added that the Assam government would transfer $2,000 to each person from the State who went abroad in the last 30 days and are stuck/unable to return home. - Rahul Karmakar TELANGANA 2.50 P.M. Telangana court tells government to postpone SSC exams The Telangana High Court on Friday directed the State government to postpone the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams, which had begun on Thursday, from March 23 to 30. There will be no change in the exam to be held on Saturday. The first of the annual SSC exams was held on Thursday. The second exam too was conducted on Friday. The exam on March 31 would be held without any change. A division bench of Chief Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy gave the interim direction, after hearing a PIL petition seeking deferment of the SSC exams. The plea was filed by a private educational institute faculty member M. Bala Krishna. Hearing the petition which was moved as lunch motion, the bench sought to know why the Telangana government wanted to go ahead with the exams while the central boards postponed CBSE and ICSE exams. The bench said that already authorities imposed prohibitive orders under section 144 of Cr.P.C. in Karimnagar town after a group of Indonesia nationals, who arrived there by train, showed symptoms of COVID-19. The petition would be heard again on March 30. - Marri Ramu PUNJAB 2.30 P.M. Fresh case reported in Punjab A fresh case of was on March 20 reported in Punjab, taking the total number of positive cases in the State to three, according to an official. A 69-year-old woman, who recently returned from the United Kingdom, tested positive in Punjab\'s Mohali town of Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar district. Mohali civil surgeon Manjit Singh told The Hindu that the condition of the patient was stable. She is under treatment at Civil Hospital, he said. ODISHA AIIMS Bhubaneswar superintendent concealed sons travel history, say resident doctors The Resident Doctors Association (RDA) of AIIMS Bhubaneswar on March 20 demanded action against the medical superintendent of the premier institute as he reportedly hid the travel history of his son, who tested positive for coronavirus. In a representation to B. Geetanjali, Director of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, the association said it was gross negligence on the part of the medical superintendent to conceal the travel history of his son who was admitted in the AIIMS isolation unit and kept in doctors room. MUMBAI 1.40 P.M. Local trains and buses to continue to function: Maharashtra CM Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray addresses a press conference in Mumbai on the measures taken by the State. Thackeray: "Only 25% government employees will be present from earlier 50%. Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Nagpur is seeing a rise in the number of patients all offices, shops will be closed except essential commodities, till March 31. "There are 52 positive patients 5 are cured but they will under observation for the next 14 days. Banks will remain open. "Local trains and buses to continue to function. They are the lifelines of the city. Nearly all staff of essential services such as hospitals depend on them. Hence we have taken the decision to keep trains and buses working. "Do not stop the daily wages of labourers kindly dont skip humanity. If crowd continues in railway and buses, only then we will take the steps to stop them. It has reduced considerably but we want to reduce it more. State Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad has said that all exams from standard 1 to 8 are cancelled. Remaining papers of standard 9 and 11 to be held after April 15. All teachers, except that of standard 10 will work from home. - Mumbai Bureau NEW DELHI 12.25 PM 206 cases in India Indian Council of Medical Research in a release issued by Friday said that a total of 206 individuals have been confirmed positive among suspected cases and contacts of known positive cases so far in India.- Bindu Shajan Perappadan GANDHINAGAR 12.20 PM Three more test positive in Gujarat Three more persons tested positive for coronavirus infection in Gujarat, taking the number of such cases in the state to five, officials said on Friday. Two of them are women from Ahmedabad, while the third patient is a male from Vadodara. All of them had recently visited foreign countries. - PTI 12.15 PM BHUBANESWAR Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting him to postpone house-listing, updating National Population Register, and census-related activities in view of COVID-19 scare. - Satyasundar Barik 12.10 PM MUMBAI Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope in his daily briefing, said the total number of cases in the State stands at 52. 12.05 PM KOLKATA Second case reported in Kolkata as student who returned from U.K. tests positive The second case of was reported in Kolkata on Friday morning as another student who returned from the U.K. tested positive. The patient returned to Kolkata on March 13 from London and tested positive, an official told The Hindu. The 22-year-old-student has been kept in isolation at the hospital of infectious diseases in central Kolkata, the official said. He is a resident of south Kolkata. 11.55 AM UTTAR PRADESH Lucknow has reported four fresh cases, taking the total number of cases in Uttar Pradesh to 23. The total number of confirmed cases of the deadly infection in the state is 23 eight each in Agra and Lucknow, four in Noida, two in Ghaziabad and another in Lakhimpur Kheri. 11.50 AM PUNJAB Pathlawa village quarantined after resident dies of COVID-19 After a 70-year-old resident, with travel history to Germany and Italy, tested positive for and died in Punjab, his native village Pathlawa with a population of around 3,000 in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district has been quarantined. Vinay Bublani, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar, told The Hindu that all entry and exit points had been restricted and adequate arrangements put in place to fulfil the basic requirements of residents in the village. We are collecting samples of those displaying symptoms, he added. 11.40 A.M. BENGALURU Rail official in Bengaluru who hid her COVID-19 positive son in guest house suspended An official of South Western Railway has been suspended for hiding her son, who returned from Germany and later tested positive for coronavirus, at a railway guest house in Bengaluru, officials said on Friday. She not only failed to inform authorities about her sons return from Germany but also endangered the lives of others by lodging him in a railway rest house near the main Bangalore railway station, railway spokesperson E. Vijaya told PTI. The Assistant Personnel Officer (Traffic) has been suspended, Vijaya said. The 25-year-old man, who came from Germany via Spain and was instructed to be in home quarantine after he landed at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on March 13, later tested positive for COVID-19 on March 18, a railway spokesperson told PTI. She virtually hid her son to protect her family but endangered all of us, a South Western Railway official said. - PTI 10.20 AM BHUBANESWAR Odisha reports second case Odisha has reported the second confirmed case of novel coronavirus after a man who returned from a COVID-19-affected country tested positive, the state health department said. "Today 14 samples were tested at RMRC (Regional Medical Research Centre) Bhubaneswar out of which one is positive for #COVID2019," the Health and Family Welfare Department tweeted on Thursday night. "This is the second positive case in Odisha." The man has a travel history to a COVID-19-affected country. The state surveillance unit has started tracing the contacts, according to the department. This is the second positive case in the state after a Italy-returned researcher was found positive, the department said. - PTI 9.30 AM INDIA Stay where you are, MEA tells Indians abroad Urging Indians and residents who are stranded in different cities abroad to find alternative accommodation locally at least until the end of the month, the Ministry of External Affairs said Indian missions are helping them make arrangements and they must stay put where they are. It is not advisable for people to move from one region to another region. This must be understood in the context of the gravity of the crisis. These restrictions are temporary, so one should not panic. If Indians are held up in some places, our advice would be to stay put, said Dammu Ravi, additional secretary in charge of coordinating the efforts to counter COVID-19. MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar added that the government was requesting other countries to extend the visas for Indians who have to stay on, in the same manner that India has facilitated visa-extensions for foreign nationals in India. 9.10 AM INDIA Railways withdraws concessions to discourage travel In a first, the Ministry of Railways has withdrawn concessions for all categories of passengers, except students, persons with disabilities and patients, to discourage non-essential travel. Citing a health advisory issued to control the spread of , the railways said as a special case, no concessional general and computerised reservation tickets for bookings made on or after March 20, 2020, till further advice. The railways provides rail travel concessions to 51 categories of people, including senior citizens, sportspersons, those nationally awarded, journalists, and unemployed youth. 8.50 AM CHINA China exonerates doctor reprimanded for warning of virus China has taken the highly unusual move of exonerating a doctor who was reprimanded for warning about the coronavirus outbreak and . The official China News Service late on Tuesday said police in the epicenter city of Wuhan had revoked its admonishment of Dr. Li Wenliang that had included a threat of arrest and issued a solemn apology to his family. It said two police officers had been issued disciplinary punishments for the , without giving further details. The 33-year-old ophthalmologist died in early February at Wuhan Central Hospital, where he worked and likely contracted the virus while treating patients in the early days of the outbreak. 8.30 AM INDIA Opinion President Kovind on coronavirus pandemic: What nature seems to be telling us The outbreak of has created an unprecedented situation around the world. Humankind is no stranger to calamitous outbreaks of diseases. However, this is the first viral outbreak of this nature and scale in our lifetime. Today, my thoughts are with all those battling the virus, with the families of all the victims around the world, and also with the doctors, paramedics and health officials and all others who have put their lives at risk for the rest of us. I commend people for their mature response in the face of the crisis. Their support is helping all institutions work in a coordinated manner to fight the outbreak. Our healthcare system has shown great alacrity and competence in meeting the extraordinary and evolving challenge. Our leadership and administration have proved their mettle in these testing times. I believe that together we will weather the storm. I also commend the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, for taking pre-emptive measures in right earnest to contain the pandemic at the very beginning and reaching out to our neighbours in SAARC to launch joint efforts to check its spread in the neighbourhood. Even the World Health Organization (WHO) has acknowledged Indias efforts as worthy of emulation for the rest of the world., The Disaster Response Force teams of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, wearing protective gear, spray disinfectant chemicals on the Necklace Road amid concerns over the spread of COVID-19 in Hyderabad Several States have imposed prohibitory orders to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. The total number of people testing positive for the virus stood at 271 with 65 new cases on March 21, the Union Health Ministry said. Reports from the States put the . The Centre said there was yet in the country. A nation-wide call for a \'\' has been announced from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on March 22 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Railways will not ply any passenger trains in the said hours; bus connectivity too is likely to be limited. The Hindu has brought out an on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the latest updates: 10.35 PM ASSAM Four-and-a-half-year-old-girl is Assams first positive case Assam has reported its first case of novel coronavirus with the initial test of a four-and-a-half-year-old-girl in Jorhat district turning out to be positive, the Deputy Commissioner said. Deputy Commissioner Roshni Aparanji Korati told PTI that results of the test done in Jorhat Medical College and Hospital (JMCH) laboratory came positive this evening. We have sent the samples to ICMR-RMRC laboratory at Lahowal in Dibrugarh district for a recheck. The result is expected tomorrow afternoon, she added. Ms. Korati informed that the girls family had recently travelled from Bihar in a train to Jorhat. The girl, her sister and her mother came to Jorhat on March 19. Health workers visited the family on March 20 and brought them to JMCH as the girl exhibited symptoms. A sample was taken for testing and today evening, the result came, she informed. 10.30 PM RAJASTHAN Rajasthan announces complete lockdown till March 31 In a late night decision, Rajasthan government announces complete lockdown of the State till March 31. All government and private offices, malls, shops, factories and public transport across the State will remain closed till March 31. Only essential services will be exempted from the lockdown. 8.45 PM KARNATAKA Five new coronavirus cases in Karnataka, total mounts to 20 Five fresh coronavirus cases have been reported in Karnataka on Saturday, taking the total number to 20 in the state, the Health department said. Till date 20 COVID-19 positive cases have been confirmed in the state which includes one death, it said in a bulletin. It said 18 positive patients are in isolation at designated hospitals and are stable. Sharing details of the new cases, the department said three are from Bengaluru, while the other two are from Chikkaballapura and Mysuru. The patients from the city who tested positive include a 53-year-old woman, a high risk contact of another person who tested positive earlier and was on strict home quarantine. The other two are a 39-year-old man, who had returned from Amsterdam, on March 19, and a 21-year-old man, who had returned from Edinburgh, Scotland on March 17. A 31-year-old man from Chikkaballapura with a travel history to Mecca has tested positive. He had returned to India on March 14. The other is a 35-year-old man from Mysuru who returned from Dubai. --PTI 8.30 PM WEST BENGAL Fourth confirmed case in West Bengal A 57-year-old man with no history of travelling abroad tested positive for novel coronavirus in West Bengal, making it the fourth confirmed case in the State, a health department official said on Saturday. The resident of Dumdum in North 24 Parganas district was admitted to a private hospital on Monday with fever and dry cough. His symptoms intensified since Thursday, according to the official. The mans samples tested positive twice and he is currently at an isolation ICU of the hospital, the official said. 8.15 PM LUCKNOW Vasundhara Raje, Dushyant Singh and Jai Pratap Singh test negative Uttar Pradesh Health Minister Jai Pratap Singh, former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje and, were among those who tested negative for the coronavirus, . Also read: All samples collected from people who attended the parties in which Ms. Kapoor was present in Lucknow have tested negative, the Uttar Prasdesh Directorate of Health Services said on Saturday. Meanwhile, the number of COVID-19 positive cases in the State climbed to 26 with fresh cases from Noida and Moradabad, the latter a woman with a travel history from France. 8.00 PM NEW DELHI Delhi budget session to be held on single day The five-day Budget Session of the Delhi Assembly will now be held on a single day on March 23 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, a government official said on Saturday. According to the original schedule, the session was to be held from March 23-27. The Delhi government will present its budget on March 23. On the same day, it will be passed, the official said. The number of COVID-19 cases in India rose to 283 on Saturday, the Union Health Ministry said. The contagion has claimed one life and infected over 20 people in Delhi. 7.45 PM NEW DELHI Sonia urges people not to panic, pitches for relief package Congress president Sonia Gandhi urged people on Saturday not to panic in view of the coronavirus outbreak and said the country will not bow down to this painful crisis. She suggested a host of measures to help those affected due to the coronavirus and said a comprehensive, sector-wise relief package was required to be announced by the government to support those hit by its economic fallout. In a statement, Ms. Gandhi urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the government to increase the number of testing facilities across the country and make public the details of hospitals and medical facilities through a dedicated portal. She also pitched for a special budgetary allocation for enhancing the facilities to combat the virus. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. A comprehensive, sector-wise relief package needs to be announced forthwith by the government, including necessary tax breaks, interest subvention and deferment of liabilities. For the salaried class, the government and the RBI must consider a deferment of EMIs, the Congress chief said. 6.50 PM KERALA 12 more test positive in Kerala Twelve more fresh cases of coronavirus were reported from Kerala on Saturday, taking the tally to 49, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said. While six more people tested positive from Kasaragod, three each new cases were from Kannur and Ernakulam districts, Vijayan told reporters after a COVID-19 review meeting in Thiruvananthapuram. All those who were diagnosed with the virus today had returned from Dubai recently, Vijayan said. 6.45 PM NEW DELHI Modi holds video conference with representatives of pharma companies Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held a video conference with representatives of pharma companies. Mr. Modi told the pharma companies that this was the time to boost production. The pharma companies assured the Prime Minister that India has enough supplies of all essential pharma commodities and there is no reason to worry. Chemists and Pharma companies assured the Prime Minister that they will work on this crisis with the government to ensure that supply chains remain working 24/7. Nation comes first! 6.40 PM WEST BENGAL Coronavirus: Mamata to chair all-party meeting on Monday The West Bengal government convened an all-party meeting on March 23 to discuss measures being taken in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, sources said on Saturday. Letters have been sent to all major political parties, urging them to attend the meeting at 4 pm, they said. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will be chairing the meeting that will be held in State secretariat Nabanna, sources said. Leaders of all major political parties in the state said that they will be present in the meeting. 5.30 PM TAMIL NADU TN confirms three more confirmed cases The Tamil Nadu Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar said "three foreign nationals under observation in Tamil Nadu test positive for coronavirus taking the total number of cases to 6 in the State." "All 6 positive cases are imported cases from different regions with travel histories & not community transmitted. New cases were already quarantined & in our radar. Screening is more intensified at all ports of arrival incl Railway, dom.arrivals & interstate borders," he tweeted. 5.00 PM TAMIL NADU Chennai beaches shut until further orders Following an announcement by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), all beaches in Chennai, including Marina beach, Thiruvanmiyur, Palavakkam and Elliots beaches were shut from 3 p.m. on Saturday. Corporation Commissioner G. Prakash said that all beaches that come under the jurisdiction of the Chennai Corporation would be closed till further orders and asked for citizens to be informed accordingly. 4.50 PM NEW DELHI Not everybody needed to wear masks, social distancing more important: Health Ministry Union Health Ministry, on Saturday, said "We are conducted training on critical care management at 1,000 places through video conference." It said "Asymptomatic direct, high-risk contacts of confirmed cases should be tested once between day 5-14 of coming in contact." It further said that "Lot of misinformation about masks; not everybody needed to wear them, social distancing more important." The Union Health Ministry said "262 people, mostly students, to fly from Rome to India on Saturday." A mock drill will be held on March 22 for emergency response for handling coronavirus cases in government hospitals, said the Health ministry. The Health Ministry official said "Government is working to ramp up production of masks, sanitisers" and also asked States to allow deodorant manufacturers to produce sanitizers. The official also said "There is no shortage of essential commodities, masks and sanitizers, dont indulge in panic-buying." -- PTI 4.45 PM NEW DELHI Modi praises T.N. govts initiatives to control coronavirus The initiatives taken by the Tamil Nadu government towards preventing the spread of coronavirus in the State have come in for praise from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr. Modi called Chief Minister K Palaniswami over phone on Saturday and congratulated him on the measures taken to control spread of the virus. The Chief Minister thanked Mr. Modi and explained in detail the series of measures taken by his government in the State, an official release said. Mr Palaniswami informed Mr. Modi that his nine-point agenda would be followed in Tamil Nadu during the Janta Curfew on Sunday. 4.40 PM TELANGANA Telangana borders to be closed for 24 hours As a precautionary measure to prevent COVID-19, the Telangana government has decided not to allow traffic of other States for 24 hours. The 24-hours self isolation will begin from 6 a.m. on Sunday. Public staying on the borders are requested to observe Janata Curfew as well as 24-hours self isolation and cooperate the State government. All the State borders, sub-roads and other thoroughfares will be closed. Private vehicles, travel operators, autos and RTC buses of neighbouring States are requested not to enter into Telangana from 6 a.m. on Sunday to 6 a.m. on Monday. Task Force teams have been arranged which will restrict the entry of vehicles of other States on the borders. The measure has been taken to prevent the dreaded coronavirus, the officials said. However, there will be relaxation from self isolation for emergency services such as ambulances, milk vans, vehicles carrying medicines and the media personnel. Private travel operators running their services to Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Karimnagar, Khammam and other places from Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and other States are requested to cooperate, the officials said. -- Rajulapudi Srinivas 4.30 PM NEW DELHI Kejriwal holds digital press conference In his first digital press conference held in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal reduced the number of people allowed to assemble in the national capital to five, down from 20. We are not affecting a lockdown at the moment but we may need to do so for the sake of the city, the country, said the Delhi Chief Minister. He also increased the amount of ration from the earlier 4 kg to 7.5 kg, as well as waived off the nominal rate of 2 per kg. There are 72 lakh people who get ration... this will be free now, he said. Kejriwal said the government has also decided to double the pension benefits of widows and the economically backward to help alleviate some effect of the coronavirus epidemic. About the Janata Curfew on Sunday, he said the option to suspend public transport was discussed, but realised that may affect people needing to travel for emergencies. So, half the number of public buses will be on the roads tomorrow. 4.20 PM UTTAR PRADESH U.P. announces 1,000 financial aid to 35 lakh labourers, free ration to 1.65 crore workers The Uttar Pradesh government on March 21 announced that around 35 lakh labourers in the State will get 1,000 each as financial aid while free ration for one month will be provided to 1.65 crore construction workers amid the outbreak. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials for immediate release of payment to MNREGS workers in the State and to make foodgrains available to the poor in cities and villages, a statement issued by the U.P. government said. 4.10 PM WEST BENGAL West Bengal shuts bars, pubs, parks, museums and others till March 31 West Bengal government orders shutting down of all restaurants, bars, pubs, nightclubs, amusement parks, museums and zoos till March 31 in wake of coronavirus pandemic. 3.30 PM JAMMU AND KASHMIR Farooq Abdullah releases 1 Cr from his MPLAD funds National Conference president Farooq Abdullah is unlikely to attend the ongoing session of Parliament because of the COVID-19 outbreak, according to his family. Dr. Abdullah has many health issues, which make him very vulnerable to coronavirus. He is staying away from Parliament for two reasons: he is recovering from a cataract surgery and the fear of coronavirus, a family member told The Hindu. Released on March 13 after over seven months of detention following the revocation of Jammu and Kashmirs special status in August last year, the five-time Chief Minister maintained silence on the political issues and chose to spend time with his family and visiting his incarcerated son Omar Abdullah as per the jail manual. He released 1 crore from funds allocated to him under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme to combat the threat of COVID-19. I hope the amount I have released from my MPLAD fund will give the required flip to the efforts of the agencies concerned to deal with the situation in an effective way. The party is alive to the situation, and we will walk the extra mile to lend a hand...in curbing the spread, he said. Dr. Abdullah has also asked two MPs of his party, Muhammad Akbar Lone and Hasnain Masoodi, to release funds for their constituencies. 3.15 PM NEW DELHI Govt caps maximum retail price of 200ml hand sanitizer at 100 till June The government has capped maximum retail price of hand sanitizer at 100 per 200ml bottle till June 30 this year amid sharp rise in the prices of this product amid the coronavirus oubreak. Similarly, price of a 2 ply (surgical) mask has been capped at 8 and that of 3 ply (surgical) mask at 10 till June 30, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said in a statement. The price cap has been imposed taking into account the sharp increase in prices of raw materials used in making of face masks and hand santizer, Mr. Paswan said. Earlier this month, the government had declared sanitizers and masks essential commodities to prevent hoarding and price manipulation of such goods. On March 19, the government had placed price limits on alcohols used in making hand sanitizer. --PTI 3.10 PM IRAN Iran reports 123 new coronavirus deaths, raising total to 1,556 Iran said on Saturday that 123 more people had died from coronavirus, raising the official death toll to 1,556 in the Islamic republic, one of the world\'s worst affected countries. Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 966 more cases have been confirmed over the past 24 hours and 20,610 people are now known to have been infected in Iran. 2.40 PM DELHI Crowded waiting areas at Delhi Airport People who have travelled from abroad complained of crowded waiting areas inside the Delhi Airport, in which COVID-19 can spread and waiting time as long as 11 hours on Saturday. My daughter landed at 2.45 am from Canada and she is still inside the airport. She told me that it is overcrowded inside the airport and there are people from affected areas such as England and Dubai waiting along with them. This defeats the purpose of isolation, a person who is waiting for his 20-year-old daughter at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi told The Hindu. Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted that the State government will hold all press conferences digitally. All Delhi Govt. press conferences will be conducted digitally now. Its very important that all journalists, who are on the forefront of our battle against Corona, also protect themselves as they are in a high exposure environment. 2.15 PM GUJARAT Cases in Gujarat climb to 13 Coronavirus positive cases climb to 13 in Gujarat. New cases from Surat, Gandhinagar as the deadly infectious virus spreads in the Sate. Out of 13 cases, 12 have recently returned from abroad, said Deputy CM and Health Minister Nitin Patel. 2.10 PM WEST BENGAL West Bengal postpones HSC exams West Bengal government postpones Higher Secondary examination mid way due to spread of Coronovirus (COVID -19). The State Board examination for Class XII started on March 12 and was scheduled to continue till March 27. A decision on holding the examinations scheduled on March 23, March 25 and March 27 will be announced after April 15. More than 7.90 lakh students in the state were appearing in the examinations. 2 PM TELANGANA Couple in Warangal deboarded from train after they were found to have home quarantine stamp A newly-married couple travelling from Secunderabad by Train number 22691 KSR Bengaluru City-Hazrath Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express were deboarded at Kazipet junction in Warangal district on Saturday morning after they were found with home quarantine stamp on their wrist in wake of COVID-19. 12.30 PM MAHARASHTRA Woman in Pune with no foreign travel history tests positive A Pune woman in her early 40s with no history of foreign travel has tested positive for COVID-19, confirmed Pune district authorities on Saturday taking the total tally of positive cases in the district to 22. The woman, presently on ventilator support at the citys Bharti Hospital, tested positive for COVID-19 after her throat swabs were sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) to check for the possibility of H1N1 (swine flu) infection, said an official. 12.25 PM KERALA Cases filed against mosque and temple for defying the orders Despite orders from the government and district administration to avoid congregation at religious places, a large number of people neglecting the orders gathered at mosques and temples in Kannur. The police took cases against over 200 people, including the authorities of three mosques and a temple, on Saturday. According to the District Police Chief Yathish Chandra, the cases were filed against the mosque and temple authorities for allowing to conduct mass and also temple festival, by defying the orders imposed in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak. The cases were taken against a mosque committee member and those came for the mass at Palot mosque and 19 Mile mosque in Mattanur police limit, and Shivapuram in Maloor police limit. In Taliparamba, police took a case against Trichambaram temple committee authority for organising the temple festival on Saturday. Mr. Chandra said the seriousness of the disease has been already been discussed with all the religious leaders and the concerned police station has called the authorities to avoid any congregation where more than 50 people assemble at a place. However, defying the orders the masses and temple festival was organised in the district. This cannot be tolerated as it is against the government order and putting the lives of several people at risk, he said. He said cases under IPC 188 Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (Negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) has been filed against them. He further said that it has been decided to serve notice at all the religions institutions to avoid mass and other congregations. 12.20 PM MAHARASHTRA Mumbai Metro suspends operations on Sunday due to Janata Curfew As a part of the \'Janata Curfew\' announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mumbai Metro announced that it would not be operating on March 22. "In continuation of its fight against COVID-19 and in support of Honble PMs appeal of Janata Curfew, Mumbai Metro One suspends operations on 22/03/2020 (Sunday) to encourage people to stay at home and make Janta Curfew an unprecedented success," it said on Twitter. 12 PM INDIA SBI opens emergency credit line for borrowers Amid businesses getting affected due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, the countrys largest lender State Bank of India has opened an emergency credit line to meet any liquidity mismatch for its borrowers. The additional liquidity facility Covid-19 Emergency Credit Line (CECL), will provide funds up to 200 crore and will be available till June 30, 2020, SBI said in a circular issued on Friday. The loan will be offered at an interest rate of 7.25% with a tenure of 12 months. The bank said the credit line is open for all standard accounts which have not been classified as SMA 1 or 2 as on March 16, 2020 are eligible to avail this credit line. 11.45 AM MAHARASHTRA Couple booked for hiding foreign travel history A case was registered against a couple in Maharashtras Jalgaon district after they allegedly failed to inform the authorities about their trip to Thailand, police said on Saturday. People with history of travel abroad have been advised to remain under mandatory quarantine due to possible exposure to coronavirus, irrespective of whether they show any symptoms of the infection. A survey team from the district administration on Friday tracked down the couple, who had failed to inform the authorities about their recent trip to Bangkok and Pattaya in Thailand, an official from Amalner police station said. The couple, who live in Gajanan Nagar area of Amalner, had recently visited Thailand. When the team questioned them about their travels, the duo said they had only been to their sons place in Pune, he said. However, further investigations revealed that they had travelled to Thailand, he said, adding that the couple has been booked under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Epidemic Diseases Control Act, 1897. The duo has been quarantined and their swab samples have been sent for testing, he said. - PTI 11.35 AM MAHARASHTRA Maharashtra issues guidelines to limit use of A/Cs Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Saturday announced government has issued circulars directing people to restrict use of air conditioning in the wake of the COVID-19 scare. The WHO guidelines are clear on this and COVID-19 can sneak through AC ducts and vents so the directive, he said. The directive issued by State Health Secretary Pradeep Vyas said the air conditioned rooms have grater possibilities of the COVID-19 virus surviving or entering through vents and thus the there should be minimum use of the cir conditioning in government and private offices. 11.25 AM GUJARAT One more person tests positive in Gujarat One more person with recent travel history to Srilanka tested positive for COVID-19 in Gujarat. So far, 8 persons have been found infected with the virus in the State. 11.20 AM KARNATAKA Health official suspended for careless screening A Health Department official deployed at Tumakuru railway station to screen passengers for fever has been suspended for going about his task carelessly while busy on his mobile phone. A video of him talking on his mobile phone while conducting thermal screening carelessly was widely circulated on social media on Friday. The official is identified as Narasimhamurthy A., a Senior Health Assistant. He was assigned to do thermal screening of passengers arriving at Tumakuru railway station on Friday. Meanwhile, Tumakuru Deputy Commissioner Dr. K. Rakesh Kumar has imposed Section 144 in the district till March 31 as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the district. Section 144 is not applicable to students who have to attend examinations and to those who attend funeral in the district. 11.15 AM PUNJAB Three fresh cases in Punjab Three people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Punjab\'s Mohali, Dr. Harman, the nodal officer at the health department (S.A.S Nagar district), told The Hindu. The total cases in Punjab have now reached six. 10.55 AM KARNATAKA Another positive case in Karnataka Another person has tested positive for COVID-19 in the State taking the total number of cases to 16. A 32-year-old resident of Gowribidanur in Chikkaballapur, who returned from Mecca, has tested positive. Health Minister B. Sriramulu confirmed this in a tweet on Saturday. 10.50 AM RAJASTHAN Six new cases in Rajasthan Six new coronavirus positive cases have been detected in Rajasthan, of which five are in Bhilwara and one in Jaipur. With this, the total number of positive cases in Rajasthan is 23, though three of them were cured by treatment in isolation. The five new cases in Bhilwara are those of para-medical staff of a private hospital where the doctors who tested positive on Friday at work. 10.40 AM KARNATAKA In Karnataka, hotels and restaurants will be open only for takeaways till end of month The State government has directed all hotels and restaurants in municipal corporation limits to stop dining facility and remain open only for takeaways and online ordering from Saturday till March 31 to stop the spread of . Pubs and bars too will be closed, while takeaway liquor shops can stay open. In an order on Friday, the government also imposed a ban on jatras, urs and other such religious gatherings to ensure social distancing. It also stated that all medical staff involved in COVID-19, including students of medical and para-medical courses, cannot be given leave. 10.35 AM TAMIL NADU Justice S.M. Subramaniam of Madras High Court will contribute his one month salary of 2.25 lakh for the welfare of unorganized sector labourers who had lost their earnings due to COVID-19. He will hand over the cheque to TN Chief Secretary at the Secretariat today. 10.30 AM WEST BENGAL Third coronovirus case from West Bengal West Bengal on Saturday reported the third case of coronovirus infection when a 23-year-old woman tested positive for the viral infection. The woman had a history of travel to Scotland and hails from Habra in North 24 Parganas. She has been shifted to isolation ward of Infectious Disease and Beleghta General Hospital. Earlier this week two youths aged 18 and 22 years have been tested positive for the Coronovirus infection. Both of them have a travel history to United Kingdom and are being treated at the same hospital. 10.20 AM INDIA Ola, Uber suspend ride-sharing option across India Indias two biggest app-based aggregator cab services, Uber and Ola, have decided to suspend their ride-sharing option Uber Pool and Ola Share in the light of the rising cases of COVID-19 in the country. We are determined to help reduce the spread of coronavirus in the cities we serve. With that in mind, we are suspending the Uber Pool service across India. In line with the Government advisory, we urge people to stay safe and discourage non-essential travel, a Uber spokesperson said. 10 AM INDIA Despite clearance, KLM flight from Amsterdam with 100 Indians refused permission to land in Delhi A flight from Amsterdam to Delhi carrying 100 Indian passengers, including a pregnant woman, was not allowed to land in Delhi on Saturday because of worries over the pandemic, hours after it was given clearance to arrive, sources confirmed. [There were] some gaps in interpreting the advisory, which has led to this problem, a senior official told The Hindu, indicating that the government will try to resolve the issue on Saturday, with less than 24 hours to a being put into place. The photo shows the flight path of KLM 871, which was not allowed to land in Delhi. The flight, KLM 871, was due to land in Delhi around 1 in the morning on Saturday, but was redirected back to Amsterdam by civil aviation authorities at the last minute before landing, a flight path of the plane shows. 9.30 AM AUSTRALIA Shane Warne turns gin distillery over to hand sanitiser Legendary leg-spinner Shane Warne has turned his hand from making gin to making hand-sanitiser as shortages frustrate attempts to control the outbreak. Warne, who retired from test cricket in 2007 with a record 708 wickets, is a part-owner of the award-winning SevenZeroEight gin distillery. The co-founders of the company include two prominent West Australian surgeons and Warne said the company would turn its production from gin to alcohol hand rubs which would be provided to two hospitals in the western state. 9.10 AM INDIA Patients with respiratory illness in hospitals will also be tested, says ICMR The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has revised its testing strategy to contain the spread of . Testing is now offered to all hospitalised patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (fever and cough and/or shortness of breath). Also, asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of a confirmed case should be tested once between day 5 and day 14 of coming into his/her contact. In a , the ICMR said that all asymptomatic individuals who have undertaken international travel in the last 14 days should stay in home quarantine for 14 days, and that they will be tested only if they become symptomatic (symptoms include fever, cough, difficulty in breathing). All family members living with a confirmed case should be home quarantined too, according to guideline. All symptomatic contacts of laboratory confirmed cases, all symptomatic health care workers, and all hospitalized patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (fever AND cough and/or shortness of breath) will be tested as well. 9 AM MAHARASHTRA Maharashtra takes lead to put fliers from U.S. on home quarantine list In its fight against COVID-19, Maharashtra is the only affected State to have included passengers arriving from the United States on its home quarantine list. The government of India list, updated multiple times since the exercise began on January 17, has listed 22 countries on the current list before a week-long curfew on international flights comes its force on March 22. The U.S. was put on the Mumbai airports Airport Health Organisation (APHO) list after Health Minister Rajesh Tope issued instructions following his visit to the airport, where staff are grappling with multiple directives, also being frequently updated, from State, Centre, APHO etc. This would also essentially mean that direct passengers from the U.S. landing anywhere other than Mumbai are not being quarantined. Besides, Mumbai and Bengaluru. other airports are yet to introduce a hand stamping system for those who have been asked to be in home quarantine. 8.30 AM ITALY Italys death toll tops 4,000 after new one-day record Italy reported a record 627 new coronavirus deaths on March 20 and saw its world-topping toll surpass 4,000, despite government efforts to stem the pandemics spread. The Mediterranean countrys daily rate of fatalities is now higher than that officially reported by China at the peak of its outbreak around Wuhans Hubei Province. But Matteo Bassetti of Italys prestigious San Martino clinic in Genoa said the government probably had no idea how many people really had the new disease. 8 AM SOUTH KOREA South Korea reports 147 new coronavirus cases South Korea reported 147 new coronavirus infections on Saturday, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The new cases bring the country\'s total to 8,799. The newly reported cases rose back up to above 100, from the 87 recorded on Friday, although South Korea has been experiencing a downward trend in new, fighting the coronavirus With 53 confirmed cases, Workers disinfect streets of Amritsar in the wake of coronavirus pandemic on March 21, 2020. Parliaments Budget session likely to conclude on March 23. India reported three more on Sunday, including the first casualties from Bihar and Gujarat, taking the toll to seven and the number of COVID-19 cases rose to 361, officials said, as authorities suspended all train passenger and inter-state bus services till March 31 in unprecedented steps to contain the spread of the infection. A 38-year-old man with a kidney ailment and recent travel history to Qatar died at AIIMS-Patna and a 67-year-old man died at a hospital in Surat in Gujarat, state officials said, but the Union Health Ministry was yet to confirm the deaths. Another death was reported from Mumbai of a 63-year-old man. On Sunday, a \'Janata Curfew\' from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., called for by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to practise social distancing in a bid to curtail the spread of the novel coronavirus. The Hindu has brought out an on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the latest updates: 9.00 PM NEW DELHI Budget session likely to be concluded on Monday The Budget Session of Parliament is likely to be concluded on Monday after passage of the Finance Bill in both Houses, sources said on Sunday. The session, which was earlier scheduled to conclude on April 3, is now likely to be adjourned sine die on March 23, sources said. The session is likely to be concluded almost 12 days before its scheduled winding up due to the looming threat of COVID-19. Many political parties including TMC have decided not to attend the session on Monday due to the coronavirus scare amid lockdowns announced by many states for varied periods, sources said. 8.25 PM KERALA 15 more fresh COVID-19 cases reported in Kerala Fifteen new positive cases of coronavirus were detected in Kerala on Sunday, taking the total number of infected persons under treatment in the state to 64, the government said. Health department said out of the 15, five are in Kasaragod district, four in Kannur and two each in Malappuram, Kozhikode and Ernakulam districts. The states first three positive COVID-19 cases had been discharged already after they recovered. This is the highest number of positive cases reported on a single day in the state so far. A total of 59,295 people are under observation in the state, out of which 314 are in isolation wards, health ministry said in a release. At least 4,035 samples have been sent for testing and 2,744 came back negative, the release said. 8.15 PM NEW DELHI Domestic flights will continue to operate as usual from Delhi airport: DGCA Minutes after Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that no domestic or international flight will operate from the Delhi airport from Monday till March 31, a senior official of aviation regulator DGCA clarified that domestic flights will be operating as usual at the airport. The Centre had announced three days ago that no international flight will be landing on the Indian soil from Sunday onward for a period of one week. Domestic flights to and from the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi will continue to operate and the airport will remain functional, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) official said. At a press conference on Sunday evening, Mr. Kejriwal told reporters that no domestic or international flight would be allowed to arrive at the Delhi airport from March 23 to March 31. In an order, the Delhi government subsequently reiterated the same. However, with the DGCA stating that domestic flights will continue to operate at the Delhi airport, the confusion was cleared. 7.30 PM NEW DELHI Chinese Ambassador to India wishes country early victory As the number of coronavirus cases across the world continues to rise, Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong on Sunday wished his host country an early victory over the pandemic. Pay tribute to all those who have contributed to the fight against COVID-19. Wish India an early victory over the epidemic, Mr. Weidong said on Twitter. The total number of positive coronavirus cases in India stands at more than 340, according to the Health Ministry. Seven people have died in the country so far due to the contagion. Many Indian states have imposed partial or complete lockdowns for varying periods to hinder the spread of the virus. 6.45 PM MADHYA PRADESH Woman tests positive in Bhopal, fifth case in MP A woman studying law, who recently returned from London, tested positive for coronavirus in Bhopal on Sunday, making it the fifth case of COVID-19 in Madhya Pradesh and first in the state capital, officials said. Earlier four persons- three who returned from Dubai and one from Germany- had tested positive for coronavirus in Jabalpur, they said. A 26-year woman, who had returned from London on March 17 and reached Bhopal next day tested positive fort COVID-19, an official said. The student recently returned to Bhopal from London where she was pursuing a post-graduate law course and her test report was found positive for coronavirus, Bhopal commissioner Kalpana Shrivastava told PTI. She is admitted to a hospital and being provided treatment as per the protocol, another official said, adding that the area where she resided is being sanitised. Bhopal collector Tarun Kumar Pithode said there was no need to panic as standard protocols were immediately followed. 6.00 PM KARNATAKA Youth tests positive in Dakshina Kannada A youth who had arrived by a flight at Mangaluru International Airport on March 19 is positive for COVID-19, according to Sindhu B Rupesh, Deputy Commissioner. She told reporters in Mangaluru on Sunday that the 22 year old youth has been quarantined in Government Wenlock Hospital and is recovering now. "It is the first positive case confirmed in Mangaluru. The youth had been directly taken from the airport to Government Wenlock Hospital in an ambulance on March 19 as he had shown symptoms while screening at the airport," the DC said. 5.30 PM WEST BENGAL Lockdown announced in West Bengal West Bengal will be almost entirely shut, with exemption to emergency services, from 5 p.m. on Monday till Friday, March 27, a State government order said. All commercial establishments, offices, factories workshops or god-owns will remain shut along with public transport services, including auto-rickshaws and taxis. However, transport of all kinds to and from hospitals are exempted. All essential services related to administrative work, media or civil supplies are exempted too. All health related services, banks and ATMs too will remain open, the order said. All foreign returnees are directed to remain under strict home quarantine. Congregation of more than seven persons is also prohibited. 5.20 PM DELHI Section 144 to come into effect in Delhi from 9 pm Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava imposed Section 144 in the entire city, which prohibits the gathering of five or more persons at any place. The order issued by Mr. Shrivastava reads that it has become necessary to take all required precautionary steps to mitigate the possible detrimental effects of the spread of COVID-19 for public health, public safety and public order. Therefore, Section 144 of CrPC has been imposed all over the city. The order will come into effect from 9 p.m. today and will remain valid up to March 31 midnight. 4.15 PM Our motto is \'isolate, isolate, isolate\': ICMR Chief "There\'s been an increase in number of case s in last few days," said Lav Agrwal, Joint Secretary, Health Ministry during a press briefing. The 75 district lockdown a "natural and logical progression" of the Janata curwfew, Mr. Agrawal said. "To isolate those coming in from abroad is critical," said ICMR Chief Balram Bhargava. "There have been very few deaths. We have tested 17,000. 111 labs in India are capable of testing. 60 private labs are capable of testing. We have capabilities to conduct 60,000-70,000 tests per week. "But we can\'t test indiscriminately. Our motto is \'isolate, isolate, isolate\'. "We have tested 5000 last week. "This virus is a biosecurity hazard and we wanted to ensure that the private sector has the capabilities and personnel to conduct tests. There is no issue regarding the prices of testing. "We are in the process of procuring anti-virals but we don\'t know how well they will work. We have anti-virals to use in moderate severity cases. "Every State will have a hospital earmarked for COVID-19 treatment," Mr. Bhargava said. Mr. Agrawal said 1200 new ventilators have been ordered. 4.05 PM Union government announces lockdown in 75 districts till March 31 The Union government on Sunday advised State governments to issue appropriate orders to allow only essential services to operate in the 75 districts which have reported confirmed cases of or casualties reported relating to the disease, up to a period ending on March 31. This would amount to a lockdown for these 75 districts spread across the country. 4.00 PM GUJARAT Gujarat reports first death A COVID-19 patient in Surat has died. It is the first death from Gujarat where 18 cases have been found so far. 3.50 PM PUNJAB Seven fresh cases in Punjab, total climbs to 21 Seven people from Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district have tested positive for COVID-19, according to a senior official. The seven people who have been tested positive had come in contact with the 70-year-old man of Pathlawa village in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district, who died last week and was tested positive for coronavirus, Dr. Rajinder Bhatia, civil surgeon, S.B.S Nagar told The Hindu. All these seven patients had come in contact with the deceased. Three of them are family members, one is a close contact of the same village and two others are persons who travelled along with him from Germany via Italy, said Dr. Bhatia. 3.30 PM Paramilitary forces suspend movement of troops till April 5 The countrys paramilitary forces comprising about 10 lakh personnel have ordered immediate suspension of movement of troops for any kind of travel, including leaves or routine work, and directed them to be where they are till April 5 to check COVID-19 outbreak in their ranks, officials said. The forces have also asked all jawans and officers to fill up a declaration form to state that none of their family members have travelled to any foreign destination in the recent past and in case someone has, they need to be tested or put into isolation on a case-to-case basis. 3.20 PM MAHARASHTRA All cities in Maharashtra to go under Section 144: Uddhav Thackeray Maharashtra CM Udhhav Thackeray addressed a press conference and urged people to maintain the Janata curfew till tomorrow. All cities in Maharashtra will have Section 144 implemented from March 22, he announced, adding, "We have to be more sensitive towards next days. We have entered into critical stage now." No gathering of more than 5 people will be allowed in urban areas of Maharashtra. No international flights will arrive in Mumbai after tonight, he said. The CM also announced that only 5% employees will be present in government offices across the State. The capacity allowed earlier was 25%.This will continue till March 31, said Mr. Thackeray. 3.15 PM Anand Mahindra offers to convert Mahindra resorts to temporary care facilities Industrialist Anand Mahindra, chairman of Mahindra Group, has offered to convert Mahindra Holiday resorts as temporary care facilities and plans to make ventilators at Mahindra manufacturing units to help fight the deadly coronavirus pandemic. Besides, he also decided to create a fund and contribute 100% of his salary towards this cause. 3.00 PM GUJARAT Four new cases in Gujarat, total goes up to 18 Four new COVID-19 cases were found in Gujarat, taking the total number of those infected with it to 18 in the State, officials said. Of the four new cases, two each were reported from Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar, they said. Total number of cases of coronavirus has risen to 18 in Gujarat, Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel told reporters. 2.40 PM WEST BENGAL Bengals fourth COVID-19 patient in critical condition, put on ventilator The fourth person who tested positive for COVID-19 in West Bengal is in critical condition and has been put on ventilator, sources at a city hospital, where he is undergoing treatment, said. The 57-year-old man was diagnosed on Saturday. He was admitted to the hospital on March 16 with fever and dry cough. Family members, who have been placed under quarantine, said the man had not travelled to any foreign country recently, following which police personnel visited his home for verification of the claim. Initial investigations suggested that the man has a son who works abroad, but he has not visited home in the recent past, a source in the police department said. 2.30 PM TAMIL NADU All suburban train services cancelled till March 31 The Southern Railway has cancelled all suburban train services from March 23 to 31. The railway department had earlier cancelled all long distance trains till March 31, as a part of the COVID-19 prevention measure. In a press release, the railway department stated that all suburban train services would be stopped from midnight of March 23 to 31. The suburban train services being operated to the minimum on Sunday to comply with the Janata Curfew would be fully stopped from 12 a.m. The press note stated that only goods train services would be operated. 1.50 PM TAMIL NADU TN govt extends Janata Curfew till 5 a.m. Monday Tamil Nadu government has extended the window of Janata Curfew till 5 a.m. on March 23, according to an official release issued on Sunday afternoon. The curfew was being extended considering the welfare of the people, it stated. However, there is no ban on essential services, it added and sought the cooperation of the general public on this regard. 1.45 PM TELANGANA 22nd COVID-19 patient in Telangana A 24-year-old man from Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, who was confirmed positive for coronavirus on Sunday, has been admitted to a designated hospital in Telangana. He is the 22nd COVID-19 patient in the State. He had returned from London via Dubai. His condition is stable. 1.30 PM INDIA All trains cancelled till March 31 The Ministry of Railways announced the cancellation of all passenger trains till March 31 in the wake of COVID-19. In a statement issued on Sunday, it said that with the exception of goods trains, all services, including passenger trains, long-distance Mail/Express and Intercity trains (including premium trains), will remain cancelled till March 31. Bare minimum suburban services and Kolkata metro rail service will continue to run till March 22 midnight, post which they stand cancelled as well. The circular added that the trains that started journey before 4 a.m. on March 22 will run up to their destinations. 1.20 PM INDIA Banks to provide only essential services from tomorrow The Indian Banks\' Association has said banks will only provide basic services from March 23. Cash deposit and withdrawal, clearing of cheques, remittances and government transaction are the essential services that will be provided. "We request all our customers to bear with us as all other non-essential services during this period may be suspended," IBA said. 1.10 PM PUNJAB Punjab orders complete lockdown till March 31 As the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Punjab climbed to 14, the State government ordered a complete lockdown with immediate effect across the State in a bid to check spread of the virus. Punjab Chief Minister tweeted on Sunday that a State-wide lock down till March 31 has been ordered. All essential govt services will continue and shops selling essential items such as milk, food items, medicines, etc will be open. All Detuty Commissioners and Senior Superintendent of Police have been directed to implement the restrictions immediately, said the order issued by Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh. In Punjab, as many as 11 positive cases were reported in a single day on March 21. Meanwhile, most public places in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh wore a deserted look amid the \'Janata Curfew\' proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. 1.05 PM GUJARAT After Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot and Vadodara, Gandhinagar too will remain in lockdown till March 25. No public transport services, no commercial and business establishments to operate except essential services. 1 PM CHANDIGARH Fresh case confirmed in Chandigarh A new case of COVID-19 has been confirmed in Chandigarh, taking the total number of COVID-19 positive cases in the city to six, said the government, in a statement on Sunday. The man, a secondary contact of the positive case who had returned from United Kingdom, had been tested at Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in Sector 32, and his sample tested positive for coronavirus, said the statement. The health condition of all positive cases is stable, it added. 12.50 PM WEST BENGAL TMC asks its MPs to withdraw from Parliament The TMC on Sunday announced that it has given instructions to all its MPs to withdraw from Parliament and return to their constituencies in view of the coronavirus scare. TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek OBrien has written to presiding officers of both houses urging then to wind up the proceedings of the House on Monday, March 23. TMC has 22 MPs in Lok Sabha and 13 in Rajya Sabha 12.40 PM HYDERABAD 50 people with travel history stopped near Hyderabad Around 50 people, who had arrived from Qatar at Mumbai and were travelling to Hyderabad in a hired bus, were stopped at the border village of Margi on Sunday. The hired bus that was bringing passengers from Mumbai airport was stopped at a border village near Zaheerabad. All the passengers are being shifted to a quarantine centre in Gachibowli, Hyderabad After consulting authorities at Hyderabad, the group is to be shifted to a quarantine centre at Gachibowli in Hyderabad. Superintendent of Police S. Chandrasekhar Reddy confirmed that they will be shifted to quarantine centre. 12.30 PM KARNATAKA Six passengers in Dubai flight show symptoms of COVID-19 In Bengaluru, six of the 195 passengers from Karnataka who arrived at the Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru from Dubai on Sunday have symptoms of COVID-19. They are suspected to have the virus, and their samples will be sent for testing. Health and Family Welfare Minister S. Sriramulu said that they have been admitted to the isolation facility of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases. He said that the remaining passengers will be taken to Akash Institute of Medical Sciences, Bengaluru. 12.10 PM BIHAR Bihar reports first death Bihar on Sunday reported first its death due to COVID-19. The test of the deceased was found positive. He was also undergoing treatment for kidney ailment at the Patna-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). The deceased has been identified as Saif Ali, 38, from Munger district. He had recently returned from Qatar. The AIIMS officials have confirmed that deceased was COVID-19 positive. He had travel history and was put under observation for sometime, said director of AIIMS Dr. Prabhat Kumar Singh. 12 PM TAMIL NADU Another person tests positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar said another person had tested positive for COVID-19. The Minister said he had been isolated and was undergoing treatment. Local health officials said that the patient, a woman student, native of Coimbatore and studying in Spain, had arrived in Bengaluru on March 17 and travelled to Coimbatore by train. Her father and sister are to be quarantined, and officials are also trying to trace the taxi driver who transported her. 11.30 AM MUMBAI Mumbai records second COVID-19 death. A 63-year-old man who was admitted in the HN Reliance Hospital succumbed early on Sunday. The patient had diabetes and hypertension and developed acute respiratory distress syndrome leading to his death. 11 AM KARNATAKA Karnataka seals borders with all States The Karnataka government had decided to close all the State borders, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa announced on Sunday morning. All the upcoming elections would be put off for the time being, he said. Victoria Hospital would be used especially to handle cases and the other patients there would be shifted to hospitals elsewhere. 11 AM NOIDA Cluster sealed in Greater Noida after COVID patient detected A cluster comprising of commercial establishments and several housing societies was sealed in Greater Noida on Sunday after a COVID-19 positive patient was detected in the area. An order issued by B.N Singh, District Magistrate of Gautambuddh Nagar said that all blocks and residential societies in Alpha-1 sector shall remain temporarily sealed from 10 a.m. March 22 (Sunday) till 7 a.m. March 24. The order said that the decision was taken after a person residing in B-Block at Alpha 1 was detected COVID-19 positive. Any kind of movement by people and vehicles, except for emergency purposes have been prohibited in the area. 10.30 AM KARNATAKA 33-year-old man who came from Australia tests positive A 33-year-old person who had arrived in Dharwad, Karnataka from Australia has been tested positive for . Deputy Commissioner M. Deepa confirmed that he was the 21st case to be reported from Karnataka. 9.40 AM HYDERABAD Prabhas in self-quarantine after returning from films shoot abroad Actor Prabhas has announced that he is in self-quarantine in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. In a short statement posted on Twitter, the Baahubali actor said he recently returned from Georgia after completing a films shoot and therefore decided to keep himself insolation. On safely returning from my shoot abroad, in light of increasing risks of COVID-19, I have decided to self-quarantine. Hope you all are also taking the necessary precautions to be safe, Prabhas tweeted on Saturday. The actor is currently working on filmmaker Radha Krishna Kumars untitled film, which also features Pooja Hedge. 8.20 A.M PUNJAB Punjab orders lockdown in few districts Amid rising number of , the Punjab government has ordered a lockdown in few districts till March 25 including Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr), Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala and Jalandhar. Punjab Chief Secretary Karan Avtar Singh, in a statement said that \'\'establishments in districts of Nawanshahr and Hoshiarpur have been closed while the partial lockdown has been ordered in Jalandhar with effect from 7 a.m. on March 22 up to midnight of March 25 by the District Magistrate. Likewise, it has also been advised to close down establishments in district Kapurthala from March 23 as a precautionary measures. 7.30 AM RAJASTHAN Rajasthan announces complete lockdown till March 31 In a late night decision, the Rajasthan government on March 21 announced a complete lockdown of the State till March 31 to contain the spread of coronavirus. All and private offices, malls, shops, factories and public transport across the State will remain closed in the duration, while Rajasthan\'s borders with other States will be sealed. Only essential and medical services will be exempted from the lockdown, according to the orders issued after the decision was taken at a high-level meeting presided over by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot at his residence. Mr. Gehlot said it was necessary for people to stay indoors to fight the pandemic. Stay home for three months, UK tells 1.5 million most at risk Up to 1.5 million vulnerable people in Britain, identified as being most at risk from the epidemic, , the government said Sunday. Those with underlying health conditions such as bone or blood cancers, cystic fibrosis, or who have had an organ transplant have been advised by health officials to do all they can to shield themselves from the virus, including confining themselves at home for a long period. "People should stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives," Communities secretary Robert Jenrick said in a statement. Confined by virus, Frenchman runs marathon on his balcony In the age of confinement, Elisha Nochomovitz figured out a way to run a marathon anyway back and forth on his balcony. Thats right. He ran 42.2 kilometers (26.2 miles) straight, never leaving his 7-meter-long (23-foot) balcony. Like athletes who ran around their Wuhan apartments or cyclists who found ways to train in their locked-down Abu Dhabi hotel rooms, Nochomovitz wanted to show others that its possible to stay fit as , Coronavirus live updates Three new cases surface in Tamil Nadu MARCH 23, 2020 08:29 IST UPDATED: MARCH 24, 2020 12:29 IST A Jammu Municipal Corporation health worker fumigates an area as a precautionary measure against the spread of coronavirus at Government Medical College hospital in Jammu, Thursday, March 19, 2020. Based on a combination of numbers reported by the central Health Ministry, and updates from the States, the total number of confirmed cases in the country on March 23 stands at 425. All train, metro and inter-State transport services across the country were on Sunday till March 31. On Sunday, a \'Janata Curfew\' from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., called for by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to practise social distancing in a bid to curtail the spread of . The Hindu has brought out an on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the latest updates: 10:10 PM CHENNAI Three new cases surface in Tamil Nadu Three new COVID-19 cases have surfaced in Tamil Nadu, according to State Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar. One of the new patients is a 25-year-old male from Purasawalkkam, who returned from London recently. He is currently admitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital. The second one, also a returnee from London, is a 48-year-old man from Tiruppur who has been admitted to the ESI Hospital in Coimbatore. The third, a 54-year-old male from Madurai, admitted to the Rajaji Hospital, has no travel history to an affected country. Mr. Vijayabaskar said they will retrace his steps to see if he had any contact with an affected individual and added that all three of them are currently in isolation. -Serena Josephine M. 10.00 PM RAJASTHAN Rajasthan announces 2,000 crore financial assistance Rajasthan government announces a package of 2,000 crore for providing financial assistance to poor and marginalised people during the lockdown period. About 1.41 crore families in the State will benefit from the package. 9:50 PM BENGALURU Chief Minister Yediyurappa announces lockdown in Karnataka Karnataka CM B.S. Yediyurappa announces lockdown from March 24 till 31 in entire State. 9:25 PM GUJARAT Complete lockdown in Gujarat till March 31 The entire State of Gujarat will be put under complete lockdown from midnight of March 24 to March 31. Inter-State borders have been sealed and vehicle movement would be restricted to just essential services, according to Shivanand Jha, Director General of Police, Gujarat. 9:00 PM TRIPURA Tripura to be put under lockdown Tripura will be placed under lockdown from 2 p.m. on Tuesday till March 31 in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb announced. Public transport would not be permitted during this period and shops, commercial establishments, offices, factories and workshops will remain closed, he announced at a press conference on Monday. Any gathering in public places has been banned as Section 144 has already been imposed. 8.55 PM ANDHRA PRADESH Andhra Pradesh reports one more case The number of confirmed COVID-19 patients rose up to 7 in Andhra Pradesh, the latest number is third case from Vizag. The other three are from Nellore, Kakinada and Prakasam 8:10 PM LUCKNOW Cases in Uttar Pradesh climb to 33 The number of COVID-19 cases in Uttar Pradesh climbed to 33, as per the Directorate of Health Services, with fresh cases from Ghaziabad and Pilibhit. According to the directorate figures, Agra, Noida and Lucknow have reported eight cases each and three have been detected in Ghaziabad. Lakhimpur-Kheri, Moradabad, Varanasi, Kanpur, Pilibhit and Jaunpur have reported one case each. 7:55 PM MUMBAI 8 new cases reported in Maharashtra Maharashtra count has now gone up to 97. Three more cases reported from Mumbai, four from Sangli and one from Satara. 7:30 PM IRAN Iran reports 127 new deaths, raising toll to 1,812 Iran on Monday announced 127 new deaths from the novel coronavirus, raising the official toll to 1,812 in one of the worst hit countries along with Italy, Spain and China. Health ministry spokesman Kianouche Jahanpour said 1,411 new cases had been recorded in Iran over the past 24 hours, bringing the total of those infected to 23,049. Mr. Jahanpour, who was speaking during his daily news conference devoted to the pandemic, said he would no longer give a breakdown of cases by province. This was necessary, he said, to avoid sparking undue concern among residents of the most stricken areas and ensure that those in less affected zones remained cautious. All of Irans 31 provinces have been hit by the novel coronavirus outbreak. 7:15 PM MUMBAI Uber suspends services across country Uber has suspended services across the country in compliance with government directives to limit movement for reducing the spread of COVID-19. Andhra Pradesh: Tirupati, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam Delhi NCR Gujarat: Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot Jharkhand: Dhanbad, Jamshedpur, Ranchi Maharashtra: Mumbai, Nagpur, Pune Punjab: Amritsar, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Ludhiana Rajasthan: Ajmer, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Udaipur Telangana: Hyderabad Uttar Pradesh: Agra, Bareilly, Kanpur, Lucknow, Prayagraj, Varanasi West Bengal: Asansol, Durgapur, Siliguri Uber Pool and Uber Intercity services have been suspended across the country, until further notice, the release said. 7:10 PM DELHI HRD Ministry asks Navodaya schools to allow medical facilities in unoccupied hostels The Ministry of Human Resource Development on Monday directed Navodaya schools in the country to make their unoccupied hostels available to respective district administrations to be used as any kind of medical facility in view of the coronavirus outbreak. Assessing the current situation, I have advised Commissioner Navodaya Vidyalaya to make their hostels (where no students are staying) available for the respective District Administrations, aiding them to fight COVID-19, Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said. 7 PM AGARTALA 12 students from Tripura stranded in Punjab The Tripura government on Monday requested its counterpart in Punjab to provide logistics and food to 12 students, including girls from the State, who were driven out from hostels in Punjab. The state government swung into action after a student in a tweet made an appeal to Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb. The student, Shubhanjan Das, informed that they were expelled from their hostels in Punjab in wake of the severe coronavirus outbreak. Their flight to Delhi was slated for March 25. -Syed Sajjad Ali 6:45 PM CHANDIGARH Chandigarh to go under curfew from March 24 Curfew to be imposed in Union Territory Chandigarh starting March 24 till further orders in wake of COVID-19, a government statement on Monday said. 6.20 PM KERALA Kerala announces lockdown upto March 31, 28 new cases detected Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan while briefing the media said that the lockdown will be implemented in Kerala up to March 31 following a sharp spike in coronavirus cases on Monday. He announced that 28 new cases had been detected in the State. The total number of cases in Kerala is 92. 5:40 PM DELHI Lockdown announced in national capital "We have taken the decision to effect lockdown because of the magnitude of the danger that COVID-19 poses to each one of us, our families, our children, announced Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday. He said Delhi\'s track record in the containment of the viral disease has so far been good and added that there will be strict enforcement of curfew from March 24. "This is the time to show your humanity; for one human being to help another human being. Please help and feed those who require this help," Mr. Kejriwal said. He also announced that 50% of the total public buses in the region, instead of 25% as announced earlier, will ply from tomorrow. -Jatin Anand 5:30 PM KOLKATA West Bengal records first Coronavirus death West Bengal reported the first death of a COVID-19 patient on Monday. A 57-year-old resident of Dum Dum was admitted to a private hospital in the city on March 16. The patient was tested positive on Saturday. About an hour back, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee confirmed the death during an all-party meeting at the State Secretariat. She said the patient had a history of travel to Italy and his son and other family members stay there. "The 57-year-old male patient, who was admitted to the Salt Lake unit on 16.03.2020 with high fever and cough, expired on 23.03.2020 at around 3:35 pm....He was detected COVID-19 positive after samples were sent to NICED [National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases] and SSKM Hospital on 20.03.2020 and 21.03.2020, a statement from the private hospital where the patient was admitted said. So far, seven patients had tested positive. 5:20 PM MUMBAI Maharashtra imposes curfew Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said he has imposed curfew in the entire State. All the district borders have been sealed. The government has also placed restriction on the number of travellers in cars and autorickshaws - 3 and 2 respectively, including the driver. "These are not times for entertainment... This has been done because despite telling softly, some people aren\'t listening," Mr. Thackeray said. - Alok Deshpande 4:55 PM PUNE Pune police likely to stop vehicular movement in city to combat spread of contagion With several citizens in the city still treating the COVID-19 contagion with more than a touch of levity, the Pune police on Monday said it was considering a complete stoppage of vehicular movement in the city till March 31. While a formal announcement in this regard is awaited, Dr. K. Venkatesham, Commissioner of Police, Pune City, indicated the same on Microblogging site Twitter. Vehicle movement will be stopped completely in the evening today pl note...rqst [request] to reduce vehicle movement till formal order. Grocery, medicine , milk, vegetables, chicken, mutton may be taken from neighbourhood ( walking distance) pl do not plan for inter district vehicle movement. Stay home is mantra, he said in a series of tweets while responding to queries on Twitter. The Pune polices move is prompted by the large vehicular movement, especially the presence of private vehicles, in the citys streets a day after the Janata Curfew, which swept off virtually every two- and four-wheeler off the citys densely crowded streets. 4:50 PM CHANDIGARH Haryana has extended the lockdown for the entire State Chief Minister Manohar Lal in a press conference announced a slew of relief measures in view of the state-wide lockdown. BPL families in Haryana will get free ration for the month of April. Registered construction workers will be be paid Rs.1,000 per week starting from March 3. Wheat or rice will be supplied to government school children to their homes under mid-day meal scheme Vendors and rickshaw-pullers not registered with the government can fill forms in each district for registration for relief. 4:40 PM DELHI Domestic flights to be grounded from March 24 The Ministry of Civil Aviation has announced that domestic flight operations will cease with effect from 23.59 hours IST on March 24, 2020. 4.05 PM ICMR prescribes anti-malarial drug for high-risk COVID-19 cases The National Task Force for COVID-19, constituted by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recommended the use of hydroxy-chloroquine for treatment of high-risk cases of those infected with SARS-CoV-2 or novel coronavirus. Also known as HCQ, hydroxy-chloroquine, is used to treat malaria. 4 PM DELHI Delhi Budget allocates more money to health sector A 65,000 crore Budget for financial year 2020-21 for Delhi, up over 18% from the last fiscal, was tabled in the Assembly on Monday, the first day of a lockdown in the national capital to prevent the possible community spread of the coronavirus. Presenting the annual budget, Delhi Finance Minister Manish Sisodia announced the allocation of 3 crore immediately and 50 crore in the next fiscal in the health sector, especially given the current circumstances. The amount would fund efforts to confront the coronavirus pandemic. Allocation of 2,820 crore for power subsidy across various categories was also announced. The subsidy will continue, Sisodia added. Talking of public transport, he said that 2,485 new buses will be inducted this fiscal and 1,880 buses will be inducted in the next fiscal. While 250 crore have been earmarked for procurement of DTC buses, Rs 1100 crore will be allocated for viability gap funding in the cluster scheme. The free bus ride scheme will continue. 3.30 PM TELANGANA Telangana reports first case of local transmission The number of positive COVID-19 cases in Telangana rose to 30, with three new cases reported today. Hyderabad has detected first case of local transmission on March 20. The patient is the son of a person living with COVID-19, who had recently returned to Hyderabad from Dubai. The Health Department officials has confirmed it as a case of local transmission today. 3.30 PM DELHI Delhi HC suspends all operations Delhi high court suspends all operations including that of all district courts in the capital till April 4. Urgent matters will, however, be heard using video conference. 2.30 PM TAMIL NADU State-wide lockdown in Tamil Nadu Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami announced State-wide restrictions from 6 p.m. tomorrow. He said the district borders would be closed. Section 144 would be imposed from 6 p.m. tomorrow. Even transport and taxis would not ply. Orders would be in force till March 31. Tamil Nadu Transport Secretary said, Private vehicles are different from public vehicles. People can use their personal vehicles. As for media vehicles, he added, They are allowed. 1.55 PM TELANGANA As people take lockdown lightly, Telangana Government tightens rules The Government of Telangana has decided to tighten the rules governing in the State till March 31 to check the spread of . There will be 100% curfew between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m., it had announced. Scene at a petrol station in Hyderabad on March 23, 2020. Exemptions would be given only to medical emergencies, and those violating the rules would be dealt with strictly. Checkposts would be set up at all police stations to see people came out only for buying essentials or in case of emergencies. 1.50 PM KERALA Brother and sister defy home quarantine, fly back to U.K. A brother and sister, who were put under home quarantine after returning from the U.K. as per the guidelines, defied quarantine and flew back to the U.K. without informing the health officials of North Paravur in Ernakulam. The duo had arrived from the U.K. on March 13 and were asked by the health authorities to remain on mandatory quarantine for 14 days at their home at Peruvaram in North Paravur. 1.40 PM ANDHRA PRADESH Andhra Pradesh announces State-wide lockdown People buy vegetables at Patamata Rythu Bazar on March 23, 2020. People thronged the market to buy essential commodities after Janata Curfew and heavy rush was seen in all markets. With the aim of preventing the spread of COVID-19, a complete lockdown of Andhra Pradesh (A.P.) till March 31 came into effect on Sunday night. This is to facilitate a more aggressive action by the government in exercise of its powers under Section.234 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897. 1.30 PM KERALA Contacts of new patients in Ernakulam alerted The people, who were reported to have tested positive for the on Sunday, had already placed themselves under quarantine after they reached Kochi from U.K. and Dubai. While the 21-year-old woman had reached Kochi from U.K. via Dubai and Chennai on March 18 in the 6E 298 flight, the 61-year-old man had reached Kochi on March 16 in the Dubai-Kochi flight AI 934. 1.20 PM DELHI DGSMC offers Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tilla Sahib inn for quarantine facilities The Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal offering the Sarai (inn) at Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tilla Sahib to be used as quarantine facilities for those affected by COVID-19. The DGSMC also said that langar will be provided by Gurudwaras in the city, to the needy and those affected by the epidemic. 1.10 PM TAMIL NADU Indian Medical Associations Tamil Nadu branch comes forward to help government The Indian Medical Associations (IMA) Tamil Nadu branch has come forward to help the State Government for the management of COVID-19. IMA informed the government that willing member hospitals were ready to keep 50% of their bed strength reserved for the management of COVID-19 in case of any eventuality. If any private hospital was ready to convert its entire facility for COVID-19 management, that was also welcomed by IMA. 1.05 PM GOA Goa govt extends Janata curfew; industry delegation meets CM Goa witnessed total shut down for the second consecutive day on Monday as the state government extended the Janta curfew to contain the spread of coronavirus. A delegation of various industrial bodies in Goa met Chief Minister Pramod Sawant at his residence on Monday, urging him to allow the industry work with 20% workforce. 1.00 PM IOA to wait and watch for a month after Canada pulls out of Tokyo Olympics The Indian Olympic Association on Monday said it will wait and watch for at least a month before taking any call on Tokyo Olympics participation after of the showpiece event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 12.50 PM ARUNACHAL PRADESH The Arunachal Pradesh government has announced a lockdown in the State from Monday evening till March 31, officials said. All essential services will be allowed during the period, according to a notification issued by Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar on Sunday night. 12.40 PM HIMACHAL PRADESH Himachal Pradesh placed under lockdown till further orders, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur announces in Assembly. 12.30 PM DELHI The last international flight landed in Delhi Airport just before midnight on March 23 before international arrivals were suspended till 0531 hours of March 29. A Delhi airport official said that the last flight to land was AI 014 that flew the Ahmedabad Delhi sector and was coming from London. He added that all the passengers have exited the airport after screening. 12.25 PM U.P. Lucknow protest against CAA suspended as city comes under lockdown The women holding a dharna against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the National Population Register, and the National Register of Citizens at the foot of the Hussainabad Clocktower in Lucknow since January 17 suspended their protest on Monday due to the lockdown in the city over . 12.15 PM KERALA Kerala converts Government Medical College hospital into COVID-19 centre Kerala has converted the Government Medical College hospital, Ernakulam, into a COVID-19 centre. The 500-bed hospital will be used exclusively for COVID-19 patients. A scene from Government Medical College, Ernakulam, as it is converted into a COVID-19 Centre. All other patients presently under treatment at the hospital will be shifted to the District hospital in Aluva, General Hospital in Ernakulam or the Indira Gandhi Cooperative Hospital in Kadavanthra. This apart, only emergency OP and dialysis centre will function here. Other patients have been asked to seek treatment at a nearby government hospitals. 12.10 PM CHANDIGARH Another case in Chandigarh One more person in Chandigarh has been tested positive for (Covid-19), taking the total to such cases to 7 in the city, said a government statement. According to the statement a 21-year old man has been tested positive for COVID-19. He is a secondary contact of a positive patient. The patient is undergoing treatment at the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in Sector 32, said the statement. -- Vikas Vasudeva 12.05 PM DELHI Will grant special parole to convicts to decongest prisons, Delhi govt. tells HC The AAP government told the Delhi High Court that it had decided to decongest its prisons to check the spread of coronavirus by providing convicts with the options of special parole and furlough. The Delhi government told a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad that it was going to amend its prison rules to provide the options of special parole and furlough. Also read: 12.00 PM Supreme Court mulls shutting down The Supreme Court on Monday said it was mulling over shutting down its functioning and considering to hear urgent matters through virtual means. The top court said that by Tuesday evening, all lawyers chambers in and around the apex court premises would be sealed. A Bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde said the apex court administration would temporarily cancel all proximity cards to dissuade lawyers from coming to the court. The bench, also comprising justices L N Rao and Surya Kant, said only Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Dushyant Dave could authorise lawyers to enter the top court premises for urgent reasons. 11.50 AM MAHARASHTRA BMC to take testing facilities to homes The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will be giving at-home COVID-19 testing services so as to ease the load on Kasturba Hospital, where people with flu-like symptoms are queuing up by the dozen. If a doctor has advised a patient to undergo testing, the BMC or affiliated private hospitals will collect the sample from the patients home. -- Tanvi Deshpande 11.50 AM MAHARASHTRA Maharashtra Minister Jitendra Awhad (NCP) demands that the government should enforce a curfew since people are not taking the lockdown seriously anymore. Scene from a petrol pump at Borivali, on March 23, 2020. Arunangsu Roy Chowdhury Some people have no idea how dire the crisis is and while the lock down does not seem to work anymore, the Chief Minister should enforce a total communication ban now," he said. -- Sharad Vyas 11.30 AM DELHI The Delhi High Court has suspended breath analysing test through tube for air traffic controllers. The Court directed authorities to hold an urgent meeting tomorrow for exploring alternative methods of the breath analysing test. 11.20 AM Centre asks State governments to strictly enforce lockdown: official statement The Centre has asked State governments to strictly enforce the lockdown and take legal action against violators, according to an official statement. 11.10 AM Cases climb to 424 in the country There are 424 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country till date. Of these, 393 are active cases. 47 new cases were reported overnight. There have been 18 new cases from Maharashtra and 11 from Gujarat. 11.00 AM ASSAM Assam govt. asks residents stranded abroad to send details for financial aid The Assam government has issued an e-mail id for residents of the State, who have been stranded abroad due to suspension of international flights in view of the coronavirus pandemic, to send their details for providing financial assistance, an official said. An advisory issued by Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna said that residents, who went abroad 30 days before the suspension of international flights from March 22 and are unable to return to their homes due to the coronavirus outbreak, will receive the one-time financial assistance of $2,000. 10.45 AM GUJARAT 11 new cases reported in Gujarat, taking the total number of cases in the State to 29. Ahmedabad tops the chart with the highest number of cases, 13, while Vadodara has six. In Vadodara, four members of a family have tested positive. 10.40 AM WEST BENGAL Seven cases in West Bengal as State braces for four-day shutdown Beginning from 5 pm on Monday, entire West Bengal will be shut down till March 27 midnight. The decision was taken after the State reported seven COVID-19 cases till Sunday night. Morning markets and shopping complexes witnessed heavy rush on Monday as people wanted to stock essential supplies. 10.20 AM DELHI Even as the National Capital Region is under lockdown, the Delhi government has decided to present the Budget on Monday. Today. Budget will be presented in the Delhi Assembly. Despite lockdown in Delhi, it is necessary to do this because without passage of budget, the government won\'t be able to spend money from April 1," Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi. - Jatin Anand 10.30 AM Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed his anguish that several people are not taking the lockdown seriously. In a tweet in Hindi, Mr. Modi said: "Many people still not taking lockdown seriously. Please save yourself, save your family and follow instructions." He also requested the State governments to ensure the lockdown is strictly enforced. 10.15 AM GUJARAT 19 booked for \'Corona festival\' Ahmedabad Police has booked 19 people who celebrated "Corona festival" in Khadia locality on Sunday. On the day when India was observing \'Janata curfew\', these people allegedly took out a rally at 5 pm for \'thanksgiving.\' - Mahesh Langa 10.00 AM MAHARASHTRA The number of positive COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra rose to 89, State Health has said. A 68-year-old man from Philippines, who tested positive for coronavirus infection and later recovered, has died at a hospital in Mumbai, the city civic body said on Monday. 8.30 AM TAMIL NADU No lockdown in Tamil Nadu today The Tamil Nadu government will on Monday take a decision on imposing stringent restrictive measures in Chennai, Kancheepuram and Erode districts, which figure among the where the Centre has advised maintaining only essential services in view of the outbreak. We will take a decision on imposing severe restrictions in these districts at a high-level meeting on Monday morning. We want to be cautious before announcing closure of establishments in Chennai and elsewhere, a government official said. Another senior official said that the State government is taking stock of the situation and will come up with a notification. No lockdown as of now. It is a normal day tomorrow [March 23]. The State government will take a call, he added. 7.30 AM JAPAN Tokyo Olympics may be postponed due to coronavirus Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said for the first time on Monday that the may need to be postponed if the event cannot be held in its complete form due to the The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Sunday after an emergency meeting that it is stepping up its scenario planning for the 2020 Games due to start on July 24, including a possible postponement. UAE UAE to suspend all passenger flights The United Arab Emirates announced on March 23 it will temporarily suspend all passenger and transit flights amid the . The Emirati authorities "have decided to suspend all inbound and outbound passenger flights and the transit of airline passengers in the UAE for two weeks as part of the precautionary measures taken to curb the spread of the COVID-19", reported the official state news agency, WAM. SINGAPORE Singapore Airlines grounds most of its fleet that it would cut capacity by 96% and ground almost all of its fleet in response to travel restrictions that the carrier said was the greatest challenge it had ever faced. Shares of the airline were down more than 8% by 0129 GMT, while the broader market was down over 7%. The move comes as to travellers and transiting passengers in an effort to stem the spread of the virus. 80 districts in lockdown to contain virus spread Unprecedented restrictions were imposed in 80 districts across 17 States and five Union Territories affected by the pandemic. State governments will issue orders allowing only essential services to operate in districts with confirmed COVID-19 cases. The focus should be on closure of all activities except essential services such as hospitals, telecom, medicine shops and provision stores, an official release said. South Asian coordination on pandemic crisis intensifies Members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation intensified anti-COVID-19 steps to secure people from the pandemic. Sri Lanka evacuated a large number of Buddhist pilgrims from India in the early hours of Sunday before India stopped all flights as Kathmandu boosted health inspection on the Indo-Nepal border. Four pvt. labs get approval to carry out COVID-19 tests Four private laboratories Thyrocare, Suburban Diagnostics, Metropolis Healthcare Ltd. and HN Reliance Foundation Hospital have received approval from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to carry out COVID-19 tests. At least 16 more laboratories are in the pipeline for approval and more names will be added to the list within this week., People wearing face masks as a precaution against the new coronavirus at Ernakulam South Railway Station on March 23, 2020 Thulasi Kakkat According to WHO\'s March 23 update, globally, over 14,000 people have died, and more than 334,000 have been infected. Based on a combination of numbers reported by the central Health Ministry, and updates from the States, the total number of confirmed cases in the country on March 24 stands at 564. On Monday, the , including the suspension of all domestic flight operations until the end of March, to slow down the spread of the novel coronavirus. Thirty States and Union Territories moved to a complete lockdown mode, and governments warned of strict punitive action against those who violate preventive measures. The Hindu has brought out an on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019@gmail.com Here are the latest updates 9: 30 PM CHENNAI Three fresh cases detected in Tamil Nadu Tamil Nadu Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar, in a tweet, announced that three new cases have been identified in Chennai. One of the cases, a 65-year-old male, is a returnee from New Zealand who is being treated in a private hospital. The second one, a 55-year-old woman, has been admitted to Kilpauk Medical College Hospital. The third one, who is being treated at Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital, is a 25-year-old male who recently returned from London. With this, there are 17 cases in Tamil Nadu, which also includes two foreign nationals. 8:30 PM TIRUPATI New case in Tirupati One more positive COVID-19 case has been reported at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. Total positive cases in the State is now eight. 7:40 PM New cases detected in Gurugram, Uttar Pradesh Two more positive COVID-19 cases have been detected in Gurugram, taking the total number to 10. Of the total 232 samples taken so far, reports for 50 samples are still awaited. COVID-19 positive count in Uttar Pradesh shot up to 37 with three fresh cases in Noida and one in Shamli. 7:20 PM MANGALURU Three new cases test positive in Mangaluru Three persons from Kasaragod district tested postive for COVID-19 on Tuesday, according to a statement by Deputy Commissioner Sindhu B Rupesh. A total of five passengers who arrived at the Mangaluru International Airport have been tested positive so far. 7:00 PM THIRUVANANTHAPURAM With 14 new cases, Kerala overtakes Maharashtra in active case count Kerala reports 14 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday, taking the number of those undergoing treatment to 105, announced the State\'s Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Kerala has overtaken Maharashtra, whose confirmed cases numbered 104 today. Government takes over the closed down Anjarakandy Kannur medical college for converting it as designated or special hospital in the wake of increasing cases of COVID in Kannur and neigbhouring districts. 6:50 PM CHANDIGARH Haryana to appoint 447 new doctors, creates revolving fund of 100 crore for medical departments In an effort to contain COVID-19, the Haryana government on Tuesday decided to appoint 447 recently selected doctors besides creating a revolving fund of 100 each for the departments at the forefront of the battle against the infection. Among the other health measures, the government decided to notify hospitals for the treatment of the victims apart from allowing private laboratories at four places to conduct tests. The cost of tests referred to the private laboratories will be borne by the state government. 6:35 PM DELHI 22 private lab chains registered with ICMR for coronavirus tests: Health ministry At least 22 private laboratory chains, having around 15,500 collection centres spread all over the country, have been registered with the Indian Council of Medical Research (CMR) till Tuesday for conducting COVID-19 tests, Health Ministry officials said. Besides, 118 government laboratories have been included in the ICMR network of COVID-19 testing. The network has a capacity to test 12,000 samples daily. In the last five days, on an average, 1,338 samples have been tested by government labs each day, an ICMR official said. 6:15 PM CAIRO, EGYPT Egypt imposes night-time curfew for two weeks starting March 25 Egypt will impose a night-time curfew for two weeks from March 25 to contain the spread of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouli announced. Movement will be banned on all public roads from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.... for two weeks, Mr. Madbouli told a Tuesday news conference. All mass transport, public and private, will be halted over the same period, he said and added that penalties for violators include a fine of up to 4,000 Egyptian pounds (just over $250) and even imprisonment. 6:05 PM BHOPAL Two new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday take count to nine in Madhya Pradesh Two persons, one each in Shivpuri and Gwalior districts, tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday, taking the total count in Madhya Pradesh to nine. "Some days ago the person had returned from abroad, and had been in home quarantine since," said Shivpuri Collector Anugraha P. "Today, the person, on being tested positive, has been shifted to the isolation ward of the district hospital, where doctors are monitoring the case. The condition of the person is stable now." Ms. Anugraha advised people to stay home for at least 14 days in a bid to contain the disease. She further said the district had been put under lockdown until March 31, during which only essential services will be available. Meanwhile, a person in Gwalior district, who had returned from Khajuraho in Chhatarpur district recently, has tested positive. "The person may have come in contact with an infected foreign national there," said a Gwalior district official. 5:50 PM PUNJAB Six new cases in Punjab, tally increases to 29 With six fresh cases reported on Tuesday, the number of positive COVID-19 cases in Punjab have reached 29, said a government statement. 5.00 PM I&B orders State governments to facilitate print and electronic media outlets to fight fake news around COVID-19 In a bid to fight \'fake news\', rumours and speculations that have been doing rounds on social media regarding the coronavirus, the Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry has issued directions to all State governments to facilitate functioning of all print and electronic media outlets. In an order issued on Monday, the Ministry has said that proper functioning of the media network is essential to create awareness among people, to give important messages and also to keep the nation updated of the latest status. "False and fake news need to be avoided and good practices need to be promoted and these network play a pivotal role in ensuring the same," the Ministry said in its directive. 4.40 PM Country should have taken coronavirus threat more seriously: Congress The Congress on Tuesday alleged that the government is criminally culpable of not defining specifications of personal protection equipment for doctors and health workers till March 2, with party leader Rahul Gandhi saying the country should have taken more seriously. 4.30 PM Railways to release full salary to lakhs of contractual workers during suspension of service In a huge relief to lakhs of contractual employees, the railways has decided to release their full salaries even as it In an order issued on Tuesday, the railways has said that due to prevailing COVID-19 situation in India and the stoppage of trains, several contractual staff engaged in on-board housekeeping service, sanitation, pantry car and commercial activities have been stranded and have to compulsorily stay at other places, while others have to be in readiness to attend duties at a short notice. 4.15 PM Need to tackle spread of pessimism and negativity, PM tells journalists Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it is imperative to keep the fighting spirit of the people up as the country tackles the spread of coronavirus, and emphasised the need to tackle the spread of pessimism, negativity and rumour-mongering. Interacting with senior journalists from the print media via video links, he also said the citizens need to be assured that the government is committed to countering the impact of COVID-19. 4 PM Centre asks states to allow veterinary hospitals, clinics to function amid lockdown Amid complete lockdown in many States, the Centre has directed State governments to allow normal functioning of veterinary hospitals and clinics. However, veterinarians and related officials should ensure strict personal hygiene and avoid public gathering, the Union Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fishery Ministry said in a directive. 3.50 PM NOIDA Woman with \'no travel history\' tests positive in Noida A Noida woman in her mid-40s has been tested positive for COVID-19, taking the total number of infected people in Gautam Buddh Nagar to nine, district officials said. Anurag Bhargav, Chief Medical Officer, Noida told The Hindu. The test report of a resident of Sector 137, with no travel history, has been found positive. Her sample was sent to Lucknow three days back. Dr Bhargav said the information from the Chartered Accountant husband of the woman, revealed one of his British client visited him and stayed in India for three days. It seems the British citizen infected the husband and he, in turn, seems to have infected his wife, who works in Delhi. He said as per the information with them the U.K. citizen has left the country. The samples of the husband and his daughter have been sent for investigation. They have been isolated and the entire society is being sanitised. 3.30 PM Government extends tax deadlines in view of lockdown due to coronavirus Giving relief to citizens unable to meet deadlines due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the last date for filing of income tax returns for FY2018-19 has been extended to June 30. Also, interest rate on delayed payment has been cut to 9% from 12%, she told reporters. 3.10 PM JAMMU AND KASHMIR Two persons have tested positive for COVID-19 in Jammu and Kashmir. Total number of cases stands at 6, according to a government spokesperson. -- Peerzada Ashiq 3.00 PM ANDHRA PRADESH Andhra Pradesh cancels SSC public exams The SSC Public Examinations have been postponed for two weeks and the revised schedule will be announced on March 31. 2.50 PM TELANGANA Three more cases in Telangana With three new COVID-19 cases reported in Telangana, the State total has climbed to 36. Scene from a village in Telangana\'s Khammam district. 2.40 PM KARNATAKA Four new cases have been reported in Karnataka, raising the State total to 38. Orders have been issued to extend the lockdown to the entire State till April 1. New COVID 19 helpline numbers 080-46848600 and 080-66692000 are now functional in the State, apart from the existing helpline number 104 Arogya Sahayavani. 2.30 PM GOA Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has announced a hundred percent lockdown in the State from midnight. 2. 20 PM MANIPUR Statewide curfew clamped in Manipur A statewide curfew was declared in Manipur after a 23-year-old woman tested positive for COVID-19, officials said. The State was on Monday evening placed under a lockdown till March 31, however, people were still venturing out, they said. The curfew was imposed to further check the movement of people in the wake of the first COVID-19 case in the northeastern region being reported from the state, they said. It will remain in force till further orders, they said. 2.10 PM WEST BENGAL Two new cases in West Bengal The number of cases in West Bengal has increased to nine with two new cases reported today. Both patients have a history of foreign travel. One person returned from London and the other from Egypt. 2.00 PM Labour Ministry issues advisory to all Chief Ministers and Lieutenant-Governors to transfer money into accounts of construction workers registered with their labour welfare boards. About Rs.52,000 crore is available in the cess fund for the 3.5 crore registered workers, the Ministry says. 1.40 PM SIKKIM Sikkim to be under lockdown Sikkim will be placed under lockdown from 6 am on Wednesday till March 31 to check the spread of coronavirus. Jacob Khaling Rai, the political secretary to Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, said all shops and business establishments will remain shut throughout the State. Private vehicles and taxis will not be allowed to ply. Essential services such as pharmacies, petrol pumps, LPG supply and movement of government and Army vehicles have been kept out of the purview of the lockdown. Other essential services such as telecom, internet, postal, banks and ATMs will remain operational during the period. Civil defense personnel will also be exempted. 1.35 PM TAMIL NADU Chennai reports three new cases Three people from Chennai have been diagnosed with COVID-19. All three of them have recently reported from abroad. Two of them have been admitted to Stanley medical college hospital, while the third one is undergoing treatment at KMC. Their conditions are stable, State Health department said. 1.35 PM MADHYA PRADESH MP govt designates Bhopal Memorial Hospital as treatment facility The Madhya Pradesh government has issued an order designating the ICMR-run Bhopal Memorial Hospital and Research Centre (BMHRC), which caters to Bhopal gas tragedy survivors, as the State-level COVID-19 treatment facility. Only patients suffering from the infection will be treated there now, read an order issued by Pallavi Jain Govil, Principal Secretary, Public Health and Family Welfare Department. So far, the State has recorded seven cases: six in Jabalpur, and one in Bhopal. On Monday night, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan imposed curfew in both the cities. 1.30 PM UTTAR PRADESH The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to extend lockdown in 17 districts to the entire State (75 districts) by Wednesday morning. 1.15 PM India has tremendous capacity in eradicating coronavirus pandemic: WHO India, which led the world in eradicating two silent killers smallpox and polio in the past, has a tremendous capacity in eradicating the deadly coronoavirus pandemic that has now claimed nearly 15,000 lives globally, according to a top WHO official. The executive director of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Michael Ryan, said India, the worlds second most populous country, has a tremendous capacity to deal with the coronavirus outbreak as it has the experience of eradicating the small-pox and polio through targeted public intervention. 12.40 PM MAHARASHTRA Third death in Mumbai A 65 year old man who tested positive for COVID-19 succumbed in Mumbais Kasturba Hospital on Monday. The patient was brought in critical condition and died within hours of admission. This is the third death from Mumbai. 12.30 PM KARNATAKA All Indira canteens to be closed in Karnataka Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Tuesday said all Indira canteens will remain closed during the lockdown period to avoid gathering of large number of people. On Monday, the State government had announced that Indira Canteens would provide food free of cost for the benefit of daily wage workers and poor people in the wake of a complete lockdown. When asked about what alternative the government would provide, he said , Closure of canteens is needed to avoid the rush near the canteen as it may lead to problems. 11.50 AM DELHI Modi to address nation at 8 pm today Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation at 8 p.m. today, March 24 on vital aspects relating to the menace of COVID-19, he tweeted. 11.40 AM TAMIL NADU TN CM announces 3,280 crore package for low income groups Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday announced a 3,280 crore package to provide relief to the poor, senior citizens, agricultural labourers, autorickshaw drivers, construction workers and daily wagers who would be affected by the lock-down necessitated as a precaution against the spread of COVID-19. In a suo motu statement in the Tamil Nadu Assembly on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said all the ration card-holders would get 1000 and free rice, dal, cooking oil and sugar. 11.20 AM DELHI Sonia writes to Modi on plight of construction workers Congress President Sonia Gandhi has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on rolling emergency measures for construction industry workers. In her letter, Ms Gandhi said construction industry employs over 44 million people and is the second largest employer in India. They should be given emergency welfare measures such wage support. 11.10 AM DELHI Election Commission of India has deferred the Rajya Sabha elections that were scheduled on March 26. 10.40 AM \'What pandemic? I still prefer watching movie in a theatre\' A section of the Indian population is still not serious about the COVID-19 pandemic despite the growing number of cases each day, according to an ongoing study of the impact of the outbreak on movie hall-going behaviour. The study, titled \'Impact of COVID-19 Outbreak on Theatre-Going Behaviour in India\' is being conducted across 80 cities in the Hindi-Tamil-Telugu film industry zones with a sample size of 1,200 committed film-goers every week. 10.30 AM GUJARAT With four new cases, the total COVID-19 patients in Gujarat has risen to 33. The fresh cases were reported from Surat and Gandhinagar. - Mahesh Langa 10.20 AM MAHARASHTRA COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra crosses 100 Three persons from Pune have tested positive for the pandemic, while another case has been reported from Satara, taking the total number of cases in Maharashtra to 101. Pune alone has reported 31 cases - Shoumojit Banerjee 10.00 AM KARNATAKA Karnataka Legislature to wind up today Congress leaders R.V. Deshpande and Siddaramaiah in the Legislative Assembly on Monday. With the number of people affected by COVID-19 in Karnataka sharply increasing to 33, the Business Advisory Committee of the State legislature has decided to wind up the ongoing session on Tuesday. Masks made an entry to the Legislature as well. Prominent among them was Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah, his son Yathindra, who is a doctor, and Anjali Nimbalkar, also a doctor. 9.40 AM MAHARASHTRA 12 Mumbai patients on the way to recovery In a positive development, a repeat test of Maharashtras index patients the Pune couple came negative on Monday. Civic officials in Pune said that samples of the couple will be sent for testing again on Tuesday and if they are negative, the husband and wife will be discharged from the hospital. Twelve COVID-19 patients admitted in Mumbai have tested negative in their two consecutive samples. 9.15 AM MADHYA PRADESH Curfew in Bhopal, Jabalpur The Madhya Pradesh government has imposed curfew in Bhopal and Jabalpur cities, where coronavirus cases have been found. Lockdown has so far been ordered in 39 out of the total 51 districts of the state in view of the coronavirus pandemic. Soon after assuming charge, state Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan held a meeting around Monday midnight and issued the directives. - PTI 9:00 AM MANIPUR Manipur reports first case Manipur has its first confirmed COVID-19 case. A young girl who recently returned from the U.S. was found positive. It is first case in the Northeast region of the country. (-Iboyaima Laithangbam) S.Korea doubles coronavirus rescue package to 100 tln won South Korea on Tuesday doubled a planned economic rescue package to 100 trillion won ($80 billion) to save companies hit by the coronavirus and put a floor under crashing stocks and bond markets. The package includes 29.1 trillion won in loans to small- and medium-sized companies, while another 20 trillion won will be used to buy corporate bonds and commercial paper of companies facing a credit crunch, President Moon Jae-in said in an emergency economic policy meeting. 8:00 AM USA 139 COVID-19 deaths in 1 day, Trump signs executive order to prevent medical supplies hoarding U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order to prevent hoarding of vital medical supplies and personal protective equipment as the country for the first time registered over 130 deaths in a day due to coronavirus. 7:00 AM JAPAN 2020 Olympic Games will be postponed, says IOC member Dick Pound The International Olympic Committee has decided to postpone the Tokyo 2020 Summer Games because of the , IOC member Dick Pound said on March 23, as a window slowly began to open that would allow the showcase to be staged next year. 6:30 AM U.K. Britain imposes lockdown to combat spread of coronavirus Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered Britons on March 23 to stay at home to halt the spread of coronavirus, imposing curbs on everyday life without precedent in peacetime. All but essential shops must close immediately and people should no longer meet family or friends or risk being fined, Johnson said in a televised address to the nation., A policeman wearing a face mask stands guard at a road checkpoint in Srinagar on March 25, 2020 during the first day of the 21-day nationwide lockdown . According to WHO\'s March 24 update, globally, over 16,000 people have died, and more than 375,000 have been infected. India has 618 confirmed cases of , of which 562 are active, according to data from the Health Ministry and State governments. The death toll stands at 13, with s. Gujarat has reported its second death. Among India\'s immediate neighbours, China has registered over 80,000 confirmed cases so far, according to the WHO. Over 3,000 people have died due to the virus. In Pakistan, over 800 confirmed cases and six deaths have been registered. The Hindu has brought out an on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019-at-gmail.com. The Prime Minister has announced a WhatsApp helpdesk number: 9013151515. Here are the latest updates: 11.25 P.M. TAMIL NADU Tamil Nadu reports three more cases Three more cases has been reported from Tamil Nadu. State Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar tweeted that an 18-year-old man who was in contact with Tamil Nadu\'s second patient, a Dubai-returned 63-year-old man who returned from Dubai and a 66-year-old Man who was in contact with infected Thai nationals are among the new cases. The new cases are isolation at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Chennai, Wallajah GH and IRT, Perundurai respectively. 10.45 P.M. TELANGANA/A.P. Telangana, A.P. report two fresh cases each Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have reported two new cases of coronavirus each. Of the two A.P. cases, one has returned from the U.S. and the other from Delhi. 10.40 P.M. RAJASTHAN Two fresh COVID-19 positive cases have been reported in Rajasthan. One each from Bhilwara and Jhunjhunu, taking the number of coronavirus-infected patients in the State to 38. 10.20 P.M. GUJARAT Second death reported in Gujarat A lady patient infected with Coronavirus has died in Ahmedabad civil hospital. This is the second death in Gujarat. TAMIL NADU The second positive -19 patient in , who was undergoing treatment is recovering well and will be discharged in two days. PUNJAB Two fresh cases reported in Punjab taking total to 31 The Punjab government on Wednesday issued a fresh set of directives to the police and civil administration to ensure that the people are not inconvenienced during the lockdown even as the State has reported two fresh cases of . The States Health department said two new cases of COVID-19 had been reported in Punjab on March 25 taking the total to 31. One patient is from the Hoshiarpur district is a close contact of a positive case. The other patient is from Ludhiana and doesnt have a travel history. The source of the patients infection is being identified, it said. 8.00 P.M. KARNATAKA Karnataka sees 10 new cases on March 25, total rises to 51 Ten new cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Karnataka on March 25 taking the total number of cases to 51. Although Health Minister B. Sriramulu tweeted on March 25 morning that a woman from Gowribidanur who tested positive after returning from Mecca succumbed to the infection in Bowring and Lady Curzon hospital at 1 a.m. on Wednesday, department officials said as she also had other co-morbidities, they were waiting for all her other reports. The 51 cases include one death and three persons who have been discharged. UTTAR PRADESH The COVID-19 positive cases in UP is now 38, with a fresh case in Pilibhit, as per directorate of health services. The patient is a contact of a recent positive case, a woman who had travelled from Saudi Arabia. Election Commission allows use of indelible ink to mark those quarantined The Election Commission of India on Wednesday said it had allowed the government to use indelible ink, which is normally used to mark voters, to mark people ordered quarantine themselves at home in view of the extraordinary circumstances due to the () pandemic. In a letter to the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry, the ECI wrote that it had taken the suo motu decision to allow the use of indelible ink with certain conditions. The ECIs decision followed several State governments using different stamps to mark those who had been ordered to quarantine at home after returning from abroad. 6.40 P.M. INDORE M.P records first death Madhya Pradesh recorded its first COVID-19 death after a 65-year-old woman, originally from Ujjain, succumbed to the disease in Indore on Wednesday. She was tested positive earlier today. Mamata Banerjee demands 1,500 crore package from Centre to tackle coronavirus West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday sought a 1,500 crore package from the Centre to support the State governments efforts to deal with the () outbreak. Speaking to reporters through video-conference from the State secretariat, Ms. Banerjee said the Centre should provide a special package as the State is finding it difficult to do everything with its limited resources. We had made the same request at the all-party meeting two days back. The Centre should announce a special financial package for the State in the current situation, she said. Watch A history of pandemics since the 20th century The historys worst known infectious disease outbreak of the Spanish flu occurred in 1918. The influenza virus H1N1 killed more than 50 million people and infected over 500 million people across the world. A history of pandemics since the 20th century Volume 90% 6.20 P.M. BHOPAL Journalist who attended Kamal Naths press meet tests COVID-19 positive Panic gripped officials and journalists in Bhopal on Wednesday as a senior journalist, who had attended a press conference of former Chief Minister Kamal Nath and visited the Vidhan Sabha and the Raj Bhavan, tested positive for . The journalist is the father of the woman, who was the first case in the city to test positive on March 22 after returning from London. He is the 15th positive case in the State. 6.05 P.M. NEW DELHI Please abide by conditions of lockdown given by PM Modi: Kejriwal Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal addresses the media. "I appeal to you with folded hands: please abide by the conditions of lockdown announced by the prime minister," he says a day after Narendar Modi\'s address to the nation announcing the nationawide 21-day lockown. "We have devised a method to assist those private employees who do not have ID cards whether they are employed at Govt. hospitals or facilities associated with essential services or private ones everything to do with their manufacturing, storage or distribution will get passes. "Just call 1031 and you will be assisted with information about how you can get an e-pass." "This was for those associated with essential services; when it comes to those who are not associated with these services, there is no pass needed. You can walk to your neighbourhood store and purchase what you need to, no one will stop you from doing so." He talked about the issues of medical staff being harassed by landlords. "We will take very strict action against those landlords who are harassing or misbehaving with doctors, nurses, hospital staff dealing with corona patients based only on suspicion; orders to this effect have been issued," Mr Kejriwal said. "I appeal to you again, the Navratras are also on, take a pledge that you will ensure that anyone around you will not go to sleep hungry. This is real worship, this is real service for the nation." 5.50 PM J&K Four people test positive Kashmir Four more people testes positive in Kashmir on Wednesday, taking the total number of cases to 11. All four persons were part of a religious event attended by a patient who tested postive on Tuesday, said the Jammu & Kashmir government. 5.30 PM NEW DELHI PM Modi announces WhatsApp number to serve as coronavirus helpdesk Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said he was very pained by the misbehaviour of some people against doctors, airlines crew and staff of essential services who are at the forefront of combating coronavirus. He also asserted that the deadly virus does not differentiate between the rich and the poor asked people to be at home and practice social distancing. Addressing people of his parliamentary constituency of Varanasi via video, he said the Mahabharata war was won in 18 days but this war against coronavirus will take 21 days. He was referring to the 21 day nation-wide lockdown announced by him on March 24. He pointed out that around one lakh people infected with COVID-19 are recovering and this also needs to be highlighted. The PM announced that the Centre has tied up with WhatsApp to create a helpdesk for providing credible information on coronavirus. The number is 9013151515. 5.00 P.M. NEW DELHI Shops selling essentials, medicines will remain open throughout 21-day lockdown: Javadekar Union minister Prakash Javadekar on Wednesday said there was no need for people to panic as shops selling essentials and medicines will remain open throughout the 21-day lockdown imposed to combat the coronavirus outbreak. He also said there were sufficient legal provisions available to deal with black marketeers and hoarders. 4.40 PM CHENNAI The Amma Canteen at Chennai\'s Royapettah catering to the public on Wednesday, the first day of the nationwide lockdown. 4.30 PM MUMBAI Passenger train services cancelled till April 14 The Railways in an official release said all passenger train services, including suburban trains and Kolkata Metro, will remain suspended till April 14. However, freight operations shall continue. 4.20 PM NEW DELHI Delhi allows production of ethanol-based sanitisers The Delhi government has granted permission to all the manufacturers of drugs and cosmetics in the capital to produce such items with ethanol as the base up to June 30, authorities said on Wednesday. Health Minister Satyendar Jain, in a tweet, shared a copy of a circular with regard to the decision taken by the Drug Control Department of the Kejriwal government, and also said, No separate license is required for the same. 4.00 PM LONDON Britain\'s Prince Charles tests positive Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, for COVID-19, reported ITV. The Prince of Wales has tested positive for Coronavirus, Clarence House said in a statement. He has been displaying mild symptoms but otherwise remains in good health and has been working from home throughout the last few days as usual. The statement added that the Duchess of Cornwall has also been tested but does not have the virus. The Prince and his wife, Camilla, are self-isolating at home in Scotland. It is not possible to ascertain from whom the Prince caught the virus owing to the high number of engagements he carried out in his public role during recent weeks," the statement said. 3.50 PM NEW DELHI Centre postpones Census, NPR exercise The first phase of the Census 2021 and updation of NPR, decided by the State/UT governments beginning from April 1, 2020 and various related field activities, are postponed until further orders, the Ministry of Home Affairs said in a press statement. 3.40 PM MUMBAI Police in Mumbai, Delhi reach out to e-commerce platforms Amidst increasing confusion over the terms and conditions of the nationwide lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Mumbai Police on Wednesday started reaching out to e-commerce platforms to ensure that essential commodities were delivered to citizens without any hitches. Bhaskar Rao IPS @deepolice12 I have called a meeting of online,e commerce food, medicine, groceries, vegetables/ fruits or animal products delivery aggregatorsTODAYat 7 pm at My office,No1, Infantry Road, Bangalore. One representative from each agency may please come. We promise all cooperation, please come. 7,560 2,551 people are talking about this Gurugram Police @gurgaonpolice All officers of Gurugram Police have been directed that following online delivery services @wow\_express Tokyo goods shall be allowed to operate. 5,615 2,650 people are talking about this Meanwhile, the Delhi police have created a WhatsApp group with all e-commerce companies to resolve issues related to mobility at the earliest. Curfew passes will be issued to vehicles involved in delivery of essential items. 3.40 PM NEW DELHI ECI allows use of indelible ink to mark those under home quarantine The Election Commission of India allowed the use of indelible ink to mark those ordered to quarantine at home and told the Health Ministry not to mark any finger on the left hand and to standardise the mark. 3.30 PM JAMMU & KASHMIR J&K administration orders closure of government offices The Jammu and Kashmir administration has ordered the closure of all government offices, excluding those providing essential services, till April 14 in the Union Territory. - PTI 3.30 PM NEW DELHI It\'s not true that delivery has stopped everywhere, says Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, in reply to a question about grocery delivery services suspending operations, at the Cabinet briefing. 3.20 PM GUJARAT Gujarat to provide free grocery essentials to 60 lakh ration card holders The Gujarat government will provide food items like wheat, rice, pulses and sugar free of cost to around 60 lakh ration card holding families through fair price shops starting April 1, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said on Wednesday. 3.00 PM NEW DELHI Will give the States all the ration for 3 months in advance: Javadekar Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, while addressing a Cabinet briefing, says: "All essential goods shops will remain open. But we need to follow social distancing like a shopkeeper did in Anand in Gujarat or in Puducherry." Governance in the time of coronavirus: A photo from todays meeting of the Union Cabinet He holds up photos of people standing in circles drawn in chalk outside grocery shops. Mr. Javadekar says: "The question of what will happen to the poor is raised. But we should not forget that the Central government gives 80 crore people ration. It\'s the world\'s largest food security scheme," adding, "We will give the states all the ration for 3 months in advance." The Union Minister said the government provides wheat for Rs. 2 when it costs the Food Corporation of India Rs.27, and rice for Rs.3 when it costs Rs.37. Also read: All States have been told to start helplines and the Union Home Ministry will announce its own helpline number today, says Mr. Javadekar. People don\'t need to rush and buy in bulk. Shops will stay open for 21 days, he says. "The government is keeping an eye on the situation. If they were working here, they must have been living somewhere. They should stay where they are," he says when asked about migrant workers who are staying at bus shelters or train stations. 3.00 PM NEW DELHI No new case in Delhi since Sunday, say officials No new case of COVID-19 in Delhi has been reported in the past 60 hours, according to Delhi government officials. The last positive case in the city was detected on Sunday, when the total number of cases increased to 30 from 27. The total number of cases has remained at 30 since then. 2.50 PM TAMIL NADU Tamil Nadu reports five new cases Five news cases of COVID-19 have been recorded in Tamil Nadu as four Indonesian nationals and their travel guide from Chennai tested positive at the Salem Medical College. They had been under quarantine since March 22. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said all students between Class 1 and 9 will be declared to have passed their annual examinations for this academic year. All the Class 12 students, who could not appear in their public exam on March 24 would be able to appear for the paper another day, the date for which will be declared later. 2.45 PM CHENNAI Migrant workers stranded as trains stop plying Migrant workers at the MGR Central railway station on March 23. Migrant workers living in Chennai were stranded at the MGR Central Railway Station, after trains stopped plying on March 23. They have been lodged at a community hall in Chinthadripet in Chennai since then. The Chennai Corporation along with its network of volunteers is supplying food to these workers. 2.20 PM MADHYA PRADESH Second positive case in Bhopal The father of the first patient in Bhopal has tested positive for COVID-19, said Bhopal Collector Tarun Kumar Pithode. With this, two cases have been detected in the city so far. Also read: 2.00 PM KARNATAKA Udupi reports first COVID-19 case A 34-year-old man has tested positive for COVID-19 here. This is the first case in Udupi district. A press release issued by the District Health and Family Welfare Officer here on Wednesday said that the man had come from Dubai to Udupi district on March 18. Since he showed symptoms of COVID-19, he was admitted to the District Government Hospital here on March 23. His throat swab was sent for test and the preliminary report stated that he had tested positive for COVID-19. 1.45 PM NEW DELHI PM Modi chairs Cabinet meeting sans the oval table Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs a cabinet meeting as ministers maintain social distancing. The large oval table was gone and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other ministers sat in chairs kept at a distance from each other as they practised social distancing to combat COVID-19 during a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday. Pictures showed that the ministers had small side tables next to their chairs to allow them to keep their documents. 1.30 PM KARNATAKA COVID-19 patient dies in Karnataka A 75-year-old woman from Gauribidanur in Chikkaballapur district, who had tested positive for COVID-19 after returning from Mecca, died in the wee hours of Wednesday at the State-run Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital in Bengaluru. Health and Family Welfare Minister B. Sriramulu confirmed this in a tweet. The positive patient had several co-morbidities including diabetes and cardiac issues. She has also suffered a hip fracture and was undergoing treatment for the same. The cause of her death will be known only after all her other reports are out, Mr Sriramulu tweeted. The first COVID-19-related death in Karnataka was reported from Kalaburagi. A 76-year-old man, also with a travel history Mecca, had died on March 12. He was the countrys first victim of COVID-19. 1.25 PM RAJASTHAN Rajasthan reports 4 new cases Four new COVID-19 positive cases have been reported in Rajasthan, of which three are from Bhilwara and one from Jodhpur. The total number of cases in Rajasthan is now 36. Among the Bhilwara cases, two of the infected are hospital staff. The other one was infected by a doctor who was tested positive a few days ago. The Jodhpur patient is a train co-traveller of two who had tested positive for COVID-19 earlier. 1.20 PM USA U.S. Senate, White House agree on $2 trillion Coronavirus rescue plan The White House and Senate leaders of both parties announced agreement early Wednesday on unprecedented emergency legislation to rush sweeping aid to businesses, workers and a health care system slammed by the coronavirus pandemic. The urgently needed pandemic response measure is the largest economic rescue measure in history and is intended as a weeks- or months-long patch for an economy spiraling into recession and a nation facing a potentially ghastly toll. 1.10 PM MIZORAM Mizoram man who returned from Netherlands is second positive case in Northeast A 50-year-old man from Mizoram who returned from the Netherlands on March 16 has tested positive for , States Health Minister R. Lalthangliana said on Wednesday. His is the second case in the Northeast. The first was that of a 23-year-old biomedicine student who had returned to her hometown Imphal, Manipurs capital, from the U.K. on March 21. 1.05 PM KERALA Kerala enforces total prohibition The Kerala government on March 25 enforced total prohibition in the State to prevent people from queuing up in front of State-run liquor outlets during the An anxious buyer waits his turn to wash his hands with soap and water before entering a premium liquor store operated by Bevco in Thiruvananthapuram However, it is weighing a proposal to allow the Kerala State Beverages Corporation or shuttered bars to sell liquor online or as takeaway. Currently, it is illegal for bars to allow customers to take away alcohol. Hence, the government will have to tweak the liquor rules to approve the proposed transaction. 1 PM GUJARAT Total cases in Gujarat jump to 38 The total number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Gujarat touched 38 on Wednesday after five new cases were reported in the past 24 hours. This includes three cases of local transmission. Gujarats Principal Secretary (Health) said during the morning briefing thata total of 20,688 people are under quarantine in the State. Of this, 430 people are under government quarantine facility, 38 at private facilities, and 20,220 are under home quarantine across Gujarat. The district-wise break-up of the cases are as follows: Ahmedabad - 14; Surat - 7; Rajkot - 3; Vadodara - 7; Gandhinagar - 6; Kutch - 1 12.50 PM MAHARASHTRA We will celebrate Gudi Padwa once we defeat this virus: Uddhav Thackeray Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, in a press conference in Mumbai, urged the citizens to stay indoors. "I am not here to say anything negative today. I know what you have been through last night," he said, adding that we don\'t know where the "enemy" is. "May be this lockdown is bringing families together... it\'s something we lost over the years," he said. A Maharashtrian couple erect \'Gudi\' to celebrate Maharashtrian New Year Gudi Padva at Girgaum in Mumbai on Wednesday. He said that the government is in talks with the corporates with regard to the plight of daily wage labourers, and urged that payments to employees not be stopped. Please go alone if you are going to get vegetables, medicines, he told the citizens. "Today is Gudi Padwa (Maharashtrian ). Ideally it should have been festive mood. We are going to celebrate it, but only after defeating this virus," said Mr. Thackeray. 12.40 PM KERALA Kerala to provide free ration to all The Kerala government on Wednesday decided to give free provisions to all ration card holders in the State. Below poverty line cardholders will get an additional 35 kg of rice free next month. Other sections of cardholders, including above the poverty line and those holding non-priority cards would get up to 15 kg of rice free. The government would also give free provision kits to those under home quarantine, irrespective of their income status. 12.30 PM CHENNAI Police register cases against three for jumping home quarantine The police have registered cases against three more person who left their homes despite being on home quarantine. On Tuesday, in the first such case, Kodambakkam police had against a 45-year-old civil engineer for leaving his home, violating home quarantine. The police have registered cases under sections of 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), section 270 (malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), section 271 (disobedience to quarantine rule) and Section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act and Sec 51(b) of the Disaster Management Act. 12.20 PM MAHARASHTRA Five more cases detected in western Maharashtra Maharashtras sugar heartland witnessed a surge in after five members of a family in Sangli district in the western part of the State tested positive, said authorities on Wednesday. The States tally of positive cases rose to 112. While details are awaited, it is believed that the members of this family from Sanglis Islampur tehsil either themselves had a history of travel to West Asia or were close contacts of previously diagnosed cases. 12.10 PM TAMIL NADU Tamil Nadu sanctions 2,187 crore towards cash support, essential commodities The Tamil Nadu government has sanctioned funds to the tune of 2,187.8 crore, towards implementing the by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami in the State Legislative Assembly that cash support of 1,000 and essential commodities would be distributed to each of the eligible ration card holders across the State, as part of measures to mitigate the effect of the shut down on account of COVID-19. According to a government order issued few hours after the CMs announcement in the House on Tuesday, 2,014.69 crore has been earmarked towards distributing cash assistance and 173.1 crore has been allocated for supplying essential commodities through Public Distribution System (PDS) shops. 12 PM DELHI No need of panic-buying: Arvind Kejriwal Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Anil Baijal and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday assured Delhiites that the availability of essential items will be ensured. "Given the situation we are in, there was no other way except a lockdown. We also want minimal inconvenience to the public, and will ensure the availability of essential items," said Mr. Baijal. "Milk, vegetables, edibles, products of daily use, and medicines are essential items, and we will ensure their availability. The Centre, LG and I are all working together. I want to assure you that there is no need to engage in panic-buying. All your needs will be met, I assure you, said Mr. Kejriwal. He added that the government is making arrangements to issue passes, and that by Wednesday evening, arrangements will be in place to issue e-passes for those engaged in the supply of essential items. This will include vegetable vendors, said the Delhi CM. 11.50 AM NAGALAND Village councils restricting entry of people in Nagaland Sreets in the Nagaland were empty on Wednesday on the first day of nationwide lockdown imposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in an attempt to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Police personnel along with \'Dobashis\' have been deployed in strategic locations in the districts to restrict movement of people, except those who are outdoors for purchasing essential commodities and medicines. In the state capital, volunteers of Angami Youth Organisation were also manning important points to prevent people from stepping outide their homes. Many village councils have issued strict orders restricting the entry of people into the villages, and restraining the locals from leaving the area, without the permission of the authorities concerned. - PTI 11.40 AM MANIPUR No newspapers in Manipur, new year celebrations lacklustre The people in Manipur woke up on Wednesday morning to find that there were no newspapers, particularly when people need information following the report that a 23-year-old girl was the first person to have contracted COVID-19 in the Northeast region. This despite the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in a March 23 official letter, instructing all Chief Secretaries to ensure the operational continuity of electronic and print media in the face of the pandemic. 11.30 AM KERALA The lockdown will pay off, says Alappuzha survivor He had his first tryst with a lockdown in the Chinese city of Wuhan, ground zero of the COVID-19 outbreak. After receiving a text message in the early hours of January 23, he, along with his friends, scrambled to reach the Wuhan Tianhe international airport to catch a flight back home. With the lockdown already in place, the airport was closed by the time they reached there. But the group was lucky enough to get into the last train heading to Kunming, some 1,800 km away. From there, they all boarded a flight first to Kolkata and landed in Kochi on January 24. After reaching his house in Alappuzha, the 23-year-old medical student went straight into strict self-quarantine. The rest are known facts. He was tested positive for COVID-19 on February 2, the second such case in the country. But, in two weeks, the medical student became the first person in India to be cured of the disease. 11.25 AM BIHAR Bihar reports fourth COVID-19 case A 39-year-old man from Patna who recently returned from Gujarat has been tested positive for COVID-19 in Bihar. He has been admitted to the isolation ward of government-owned Nalanda Medical College and Hospital in Patna, said nodal officer for COVID-19 in Bihar, Dr. Ragini Mishra. 11.20 AM Practising social distancing... People stand in a queue for gas cylinder in South Mumbai on Wednesday. At Anna Nagar in Chennai, residents practice social distancing in front of a super market. The otherwise busy General Hospital in Ernakulam saw only a trickle of patients on Wednesday, day one of the 21-day national lockdown. In the photo, patients stand in queue with space in between as advised by medical professionals. 11.10 AM JODHPUR 277 people evacuated from coronavirus-hit Iran reach Army facility in Jodhpur A batch of 277 people evacuated from the -hit Iran arrived at the Jodhpur airport in Rajasthan on Wednesday early morning, a defence spokesperson said. He said preliminary screening of the evacuees, mostly pilgrims, was conducted at the airport upon arrival and thereafter they were taken to the Army Wellness Facility set up at the Jodhpur Military Station. 11 AM KERALA Life at an apartment complex in the time of lockdown With 1,268 apartments split into 15 blocks and spread over 26 acres, the DLF New Town Heights at Kakkanad is easily one of the biggest apartment complexes not just in Kochi but in the entire State. The challenge of managing a prolonged lockdown, therefore, is big with the residents welfare association giving top priority to waste management. Many residents have gone to their hometowns while there are a large number of retirees who are staying back. We have drawn up extensive plans to make their stay smooth and comfortable without having to venture out for anything, said S. Anish, secretary of the association. 10.30 AM DELHI Delhi death not due to COVID-19, says Health Minister The Delhi death reported on Tuesday night has tested negative for COVID-19, said the Union Health Minister in a release issued on Wednesday morning. The death toll due to COVID-19 in India is now nine. 10.20 AM INDIA Flipkart suspends operations Walmart-owned Flipkart on Wednesday said it was suspending its operations temporarily as India entered into a 21-day lockdown to contain the spread of . Consequent to the order issued on March 24 by the Ministry of Home Affairs announcing a 21-day lockdown across India to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus causing Covid-19, we are temporarily suspending our services, Flipkart said in a blogpost. The blog further said we will be back to serve you as soon as possible. 10.10 AM MADHYA PRADESH Five in Indore test positive, MP cases rise to 14 Five persons admitted in different hospitals of Indore have tested positive for coronavirus taking the number of COVID-19 cases in Madhya Pradesh to 14, health officials said on March 25. None of the patients in Indore have history of travel to abroad. 9.55 AM NEW DELHI The Ministry of Home Affairs has asked private security agencies to not lay off security guards as malls, shops and other establishments are shut. "This is the time for the private security industry to adopt a humane approach and protect its staff and members from lay-offs," it said in an order. 9.30 AM DELHI What lockdown? Despite repeated appeals from the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to the public on the perils of gathering in a crowd during the COVID-19 pandemic, food markets in West Delhi saw robusts crowds on day 1 of the 21-day national lockdown. A large number of people shop for vegetables at the Keshav Pur sabzi mandi in West Delhi on Wednesday, on day one of the nationwide lockdown announced by the Central government. 9.20 AM NEW DELHI No shortage of essential items, reiterates Centre The Ministry of Home Affairs on Wednesday release a GO reiterating that there will be no shortage of essential items during the 21-day lockdown. It asked the States to publicise that food, medicine, civil supplies and essential items will be available, amid possibilities of "rumour mongering" that there is a shortage. 8.30 AM NEW DELHI Govt gives power to zonal DCs to take strict action against landlords evicting doctors The government on Wednesday gave power to zonal Deputy Commissioners to take strict penal action against , engaged in fighting COVID-19, to vacate their rented premises. According to a government notification, such behaviour not only strikes at the root of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic but also tantamount to obstruction of duty of essential services. 4.30 AM JODHPUR 277 I, the government on Wednesday banned export of anti-malarial drug hydroxycloroquine, Pedestrians crossing a wall painting on the importance of social distancing at Dahanukar colony, Pune on Thursday. According to WHO\'s March 25 update, globally, 18,589 have died and 416,686 have been infected. India has 716 confirmed cases of , according to data from the Health Ministry and State governments. The death toll stands at 18. The Hindu has brought out an on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019-at-gmail.com. The Prime Minister has announced a WhatsApp helpdesk number: 9013151515. Here are the latest updates: 10.00 PM RAJASTHAN Three more test positive in Rajasthan Three more COVID-19 cases reported in Rajasthan. One from Jodhpur and two from Bhilwara. Two Bhilwara cases are close contacts and family members of the senior citizen who died earlier today. One is his son and the other is his granddaughter. Total confirmed cases in Rajasthan are now 43. 9.35 PM MAHARASHTRA Death toll rises to 5 in Maharashtra A 65-year-old woman who had tested positive for COVID-19 died at a hospital here on Thursday evening, taking the death toll of coronavirus patients in Maharashtra to five, officials said. The woman died at civic-run Kasturba Hospital, said the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). She was also suffering from diabetes and hypertension, the BMC statement said. In the morning, health officials had informed that test report of a woman from Navi Mumbai who had died on March 24 came out positive for coronavirus. Of the five persons who have died in the state so far, three were from Mumbai and two from the peripheral Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The woman who died on Thursday evening had been admitted to the Kasturba Hospital on March 23 after she complained of breathlessness. Number of coronavirus cases in Maharashtra increased by three to 125 during the day. 9.15 PM MODI AT G20 SUMMIT Let\'s put human beings rather than economic targets at centre, says Modi at G20 meeting While speaking in the videoconference of the G20 summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "Lets put human beings rather than economic targets at centre of our vision for global prosperity, cooperation." Mr. Modi called for sharing freely and openly medical research for development of humankind. At the G-20 summit, Mr. Modi pitched for developing more adaptive, responsive, affordable, human healthcare system to be deployed globally, say sources. The sources further added that Mr. Modi sought strengthening of global organisations like WHO to deal with healthcare issues. 8.55 PM ANDAMAN One tests positive in Andaman Man tests positive for COVID-19 in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, says official. 8.30 PM WORLD Virus infections near 500,000 as health systems buckle The number of coronavirus infections closed in on a half-million worldwide Thursday, with both Italy and the U.S. on track to surpass China, and a record-shattering 3.3 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits in a single week in a stark demonstration of the damage to the worlds biggest economy. In the U.S., an unprecedented $2.2 trillion economic rescue package to help businesses, hospitals and ordinary Americans make it through the crisis cleared the Senate and is expected to be voted on in the House on Friday. The plan would dispense checks of $1,200 per adult and $500 per child. At least 2.8 billion people, or more than one-third of the Earths population, are under severe travel restrictions. But the head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, scolded world leaders for wasting precious time in the fight against the virus that has already killed more than 22,000 people and infected over 480,000, thrown millions out of work and ravaged the world economy. "The time to act was actually more than a month ago or two months ago, he said Wednesday. We squandered the first window of opportunity. ... This is a second opportunity, which we should not squander and do everything to suppress and control this virus. 8.15 PM G20 LEADERS Saudi king to G20: let\'s unite against coronavirus Saudi Arabia\'s King Salman called on Thursday for G20 leaders to boost funding for a coronavirus vaccine, resume the normal flow of goods and services as soon as possible, and help developing countries overcome the global health crisis. His remarks came at the opening of an extraordinary, 90-minute video conference convened by the world\'s major economies to coordinate action over the outbreak that has infected more than 470,000 people and killed more than 21,000 worldwide. We must have an effective and coordinated response to this pandemic, the king said. On the trade front, the G20 must send a strong signal to restore confidence in the global economy by resuming, as soon as possible, the normal flow of goods and services, especially vital medical supplies. 7.15 PM TAMIL NADU Two more reports positive in Tamil Nadu Two more positive cases were reported in Tamil Nadu. A 24-year-old man and 65-year-old woman both returned from London have been tested positive and are admitted in isolation wards at KMC Hospital. According to Tamil Nadu Health Department both the patients are stable and the total stands now at 28. All persons, who have arrived into India after February 15, 2020, in addition to all those, who have already been advised, should remain in strict home/institutional quarantine for a period decided by health officials. 6.40 PM RIYADH Saudi king urges effective G20 response to virus crisis Saudi Arabias King Salman on Thursday urged G20 leaders to take effective and coordinated action to combat the global crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic, and called on them to assist developing nations. We must have an effective and coordinated response to this pandemic and restore confidence in the global economy, the King said in his opening remarks as G20 leaders began an emergency online summit. It is our responsibility to extend a helping hand to developing countries and least developed countries to enable them to build their capacities and improve their infrastructure to overcome this crisis and its repercussions, he added. 6.30 PM MAHARASHTRA Essential services can remain open for 24 hours, says Uddhav Maharashtra Chief Miniter, on Thursday, announced that "all grocery shops, chemists and other essential services can remain open for 24 hours." Mr. Thackeray further said "These shops will have to follow rules of social distancing and must take care in terms of health of customers." 6.20 PM KERALA 19 new COVID-19 cases reported in Kerala, 1.20 lakh under observation Kerala reported 19 more positive cases of coronavirus on Thursday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said. India has more than 700 confirmed cases of COVID-19, according to data from the Health Ministry and State governments. The death toll stands at 17. Kannur accounted for the highest number cases on Thursday with nine, while three cases each were from Kasaragod and Malappuram districts, followed by two from Thrissur and one each from Idukki and Wayanad, he told reporters here after a COVID-19 review meeting. He said more than 1.20 lakh people are under observation in the state. The Chief Minister welcomed the relief package announced by the central government to mitigate the sufferings of people in the wake of coronavirus outbreak. 6.00 PM SPAIN Spain virus death toll tops 4,000 The coronavirus death toll in Spain surged to 4,089 after 655 people died within 24 hours, the health ministry said on Thursday. It was a 19 percent increase on figures released Wednesday by the authorities in Spain, which has the worlds second highest death toll from the disease after Italy. The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 rose to 56,188, the ministry said. Despite a national lockdown imposed on March 14, which parliament on Thursday agreed to extend until April 11, both deaths and infections have continued to mount, with officials warning this week would be particularly bad. But the rise in the number of new deaths was smaller than that recorded on Wednesday when the figure rose by 738 or 27 per cent. Health authorities are hoping it will soon become clear whether the lockdown is having the desired effect. -- AFP 5.45 PM NEW DELHI IAF creates nine quarantine facilities The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Wednesday said it has created nine quarantine facilities of 200-300 personnel capacity each at its nodal bases across the country to combat the outbreak of . To monitor the prevailing situation and provide immediate response and assistance as required, a 24x7 crisis management cell has been set up at the IAF Headquarters and various Command Headquarters, stated an IAF press release. 5.40 PM ANANTAPUR First COVID19 positive case from Anantapur being treated in Bengaluru A 64-year-old male resident of Anantapur district has tested positive for COVID19 and is currently being treated in Bengaluru Rural district. This is the first case of any patient who had gone from Anantapur, testing positive for the Corona Virus. According to the official information given by the Government of Karnataka, he had returned from a trip to France on March 1 and later travelled again to Himachal Pradesh and returned to Puttaparthi. He travelled from Puttaparthi to Bengaluru on March 21 (Saturday) and during screening there, he tested positive. The confirmation came last night along with three other cases. This is the 54th case out of 55 positive cases recorded by Karnataka State. Out of the 55 positive cases 3 persons have been discharged after treatment and two had died till 8 a.m. on Thursday in Karnataka. About the Anantapur patient it said: He has been isolated and being treated in the designated hospital in Bengaluru Rural District, the communique said. Meanwhile, the Anantapur district administration and District Medical and Health officials are in the process of finding out where exactly he was living, the condition of people whom he met in Puttaparthi, his own family members, if they live here. 5.30 PM TAMIL NADU TN issues order to extend lockdown The Tamil Nadu government on Thursday announced extending the ongoing lockdown of the State to stem the spread of coronavirus till April 14, coinciding with the 21-day national lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The lockdown, announced by Chief Minister K Palainswami on Monday as part of the governments measures to tackle COVID-19, was originally scheduled to be in force till March 31, 2020. The lockdown and related orders announced till March 31 are being extended till April 14, an official release in Chennai said. The decision was taken at a review meeting chaired by the Chief Minister with various department heads and district collectors to discuss the steps taken to tackle the spread of the virus, it said. To implement the lockdown, the section 144 of Cr.Pc. was issued. It prohibits assembly of more than five persons. 5.25 PM EUROPE More than 250,000 declared coronavirus cases in Europe The number of declared coronavirus cases in Europe topped 250,000, according to an AFP tally on Thursday, more than half of which are in hard-hit Italy and Spain. Europe is the worst-affected region in the world with 258,068 cases, including 14,640 deaths, ahead of Asias 100,937 infections and 3,636 fatalities, according to a tally compiled from national health data and World Health Organization figures. Italy has 74,386 registered infections and Spain has 56,188. The global number of infections now stands at 481,230 across 182 countries, with 21,867 deaths. The number of actual infections is believed to be higher since many countries are only testing severe cases or patients who require hospitalisation. 5.18 PM NEW DELHI Order released on online delivery withdrawn The order which allowed online delivery services to operate in the Capital has been withdrawn by Delhi Police within hours of issuing. In an order dated March 26, which was released by police on Thursday morning, read that online delivery services like Zomato, Flipkart, Amazon, Swiggy, Myntra among others are allowed to operate in Delhi. However, the order was later withdrawn. The order shared around 4pm read This message may please be treated as withdrawn with immediate effect. Revised instructions shall follow. 5.05 PM NEW DELHI The Central government has capped the price of 3-ply meltblown face masks at Rs. 16/piece till June 30. 5.00 PM NEW DELHI Army looks at additional infrastructure for quarantine centres The Army has started the process of identifying additional infrastructure for setting up quarantine centres in each station for its personnel to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak, senior officials said on Thursday. The force is also preparing a plan to sidestep medical personnel from lesser virus-affected areas to those severely affected by the outbreak, the officials noted. 4.50 PM CHENNAI Tamil Nadu CM orders banks to stop collecting interest Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami orders private banks/small finance institutions and SHGs to stop collecting daily/weekly/monthly interest from parties until further orders. Criminal action will be initiated against violators. 4.30 PM ODISHA Odisha plans biggest COVID-19 hospitals in the country The Odisha government has planned to set up the biggest COVID-19 hospitals in the country. Tripartite agreements have been signed between the State, corporates and two medical colleges in Bhubaneswar - SUM and KIIMS Medical Colleges - to set up State-level hospitals with a capacity of 1,000 beds for treatment of COVID-19 patients. 4.00 PM NEW DELHI Rate of increase in cases has slowed: Health Ministry Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Health Ministry, in a press briefing says any person who doesn\'t support the Centre in social distancing and lockdown would make the government\'s efforts infructuous. "We request those who have come from abroad to follow quarantining," he adds. There\'s a containment strategy being followed aggressively. The cases are increasing, but the rate of increase has slowed. However, nothing can be taken for granted yet. The Cabinet secretary had a meeting with chief secretaries of States on preparedness. Online training has been initiated across country for doctors with AIIMS. Behavioural health modules have been introduced with NIMHANS to educate people about mental health, along with training and orientation for Asha health care workers, says Mr. Agarwal. Essential good and services, health services should be unrestricted, says a health ministry official. There are special charters for the northeast regions for supplying medicines. We implore people to stay where they are and avail required care locally. Rejecting a claim made by actor Amitabh Bachchan recently that houseflies can spread the COVID-19, the official says that the disease is an infectious disease and doesn\'t spread through flies. As many as 64,411 people are under suveillance, he adds. All patients with SARI (severe pulmonary) can be tested, says an ICMR official. However, all healthcare workers need not be tested. We are not seeing any unusual mortality among the elderly, says the ICMR, adding that nonetheless the elderly are more vulnerable. A meeting of a GoM (Group of Ministers) is on to take further decisions regarding travel. There is no evidence yet of community transmission. If we are unable to trace the contact history of one or two positive patients, it\'s not an instance of community transmission, says the ICMR official. Also read: "Only when it is happening in large numbers and we are unable to verify it, we will let you know. In fact that might necessitate further steps," he adds. \'Media should not report isolated incidents\' Media should not report isolated instances of untraceable contacts as it could spread fear, says Raman Gangakhedkar, chief scientist at ICMR. As many as 25 private labs are providing testing services. They have nearly 20,000 collection centres. However, testing has not been expanded majorly as several have not got their tests yet. If we implement the steps that we have imposed, then all the modelling that predict lakhs and millions of cases in India will be proved wrong. We should all strive for that, says Mr. Agarwal. 4.00 PM HYDERABAD Three more test positive in Telangana Three more COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in Telangana till Thursday afternoon, including a doctor couple from Domalguda in the city. Till now, the total number of cases in the State stands at 44, including one person who was discharged. 3.50 PM CHENNAI Migrant labourers from Andhra Pradesh walking towards the TN - AP border on Thursday. 3.45 PM BIHAR The test result of suspected COVID-19 patient from Bettiah in West Champaran of Bihar who died today has come negative, RMRI director Dr. Pradeep Kumar Das in Patna told The Hindu. 3.40 PM NEW DELHI Christian Michel moves Delhi HC Christian Michel James, alleged middleman arrested in connection with the AgustaWestland VVIP chopper scam, moved the Delhi High Court on Thursday seeking interim bail citing risk of contracting COVID-19 in Tihar Jail, where he is currently lodged. 3.30 PM NAGPUR One more patient has tested positive in Nagpur. With this, the total number of positive cases in Maharashtra touched 125. 2.40 PM RAJASTHAN Rajasthan reports two new cases Two new COVID-19 positive cases have been detected in Rajasthan. One is a 45-year-old man from Jaipur, and the other a 35-year-old man from Jhunjhunu. Both have travel history to the Middle East. The total number of confirmed patients in Rajasthan is now 40. Meanwhile, a 73-year-old man died in Bhilwara today. He was admitted in a state of coma from March 3 to 11 at a private hospital where some doctors were later found COVID-19 positive. Rajasthan Health Department says the man has died in coma because of kidney failure and brain stroke, and not due to COVID-19. 2.35 PM HYDERABAD Apollo Hospitals launches Project Kavach to tackle COVID-19 Apollo Hospitals has launched Project Kavach, a comprehensive approach to tackle COVID-19. This includes online self assessment for risk, testing, preventive measures, isolation rooms, engaging with and managing the patient. Group Chairman Prathap C. Reddy in a virtual press conference said the healthcare chain will launch its first set of isolation rooms with medical supervision on Saturday. They have idenfied 250 beds across India for COVID-19 patients, which can be scaled up. 2.30 PM MUMBAI An elderly couple gets their grocery delivered with the help of rope instead of going to shop, at Parel in Mumbai. 2.30 PM NEW DELHI Around 1,100 people in contact with COVID-19-infected doctor asked to home quarantine Around 1,100 people came into contact with a 49-year-old male doctor (case 28) and we are asking them to home quarantine themselves for 14 days, said a Delhi health department official. So far the administration has reached out to more than 900 of them, the official said. Most of them are the doctor\'s patients. "Also, 1,400 people, came into contact with case 10, and we are asking all of them also to home quarantine for 14 days. Most of them are from 500 houses in her area," the official told The Hindu. Case 10 is a 38-year-old woman, who travelled to India from the Saudi Arabia. Eight people, including the doctor (case 28), who have been primary or secondary contacts of case 10, have tested positive for COVID-19 so far, according to officials. 2.25 PM NAGALAND Petrol pumps to remain open on alternate days in Nagaland, groceries for 4 hours daily The Nagaland government on Thursday announced that petrol pumps across the State will remain open on alternate days. The State government has issued a directive to grocery shop owners to keep their shops open from 10 am to 2 pm daily. No positive coronavirus case has been reported in the State yet. 2.20 PM PATNA Bihar to provide Rs. 100 crore from CM\'s relief fund to the State Disaster Management The Bihar government has provided Rs. 100 crore from Chief Minister\'s relief fund to the State Disaster Management department to make arrangement of stay and food to all those from Bihar who are stuck at different place, either in the State or outside due to lockdown. Also read: 1.45 PM NEW DELHI A senior Delhi police officer has been qurantined. His daughter had recently returned from foreign country, said a police source. 1.30 PM KARNATAKA SSLC exams to begin only after April 20 The SSLC exams, which were scheduled to begin from March 27 and were postponed, will now be conducted only after April 20. The Department of Primary and Secondary Education has issued an order stating that fresh dates will be announced only after April 20. Furthermore, even the exams for class 7 to 9 have been postponed and will be conducted after April 20. The department has said that the examinations were earlier scheduled be conducted after March 31, but the lockdown has forced further postponement. 1.30 PM NEW DELHI Scientists identify 69 effective drugs for treatment An international team, including some Indian scientists, has identified 69 drugs and experimental compounds which may be effective in treating COVD-19. According to the researchers, some of the medications are already used to treat diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, and repurposing them to treat COVID-19 may be faster than trying to invent a new vaccine. 1 PM KARNATAKA No more retail sales in Mangaluru central market The Dakshina Kannada district administration has decided to suspend retail sales inside the Mangaluru central market. Taking into account the surge of coronavirus cases in the neighbouring district, the public will not be allowed inside the market from Thursday, an official release said. 12.40 PM DELHI Establishments providing essential services can be open 24/7: Delhi LG Delhi LG Anil Baijal said that establishments providing essential services and products will be allowed to stay open 24/7. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that he as asked all police officers and district in-charges to ensure that all shops and stores dealing in essential items are fully-stocked. He added that they have also been instructed to ensure that units manufacturing such items are operational. A patient waits for his turn outside a mohalla clinic in Delhi. Dismissing rumours that all mohalla clinics will be shut after a doctor in one particular clinic was tested COVID-19 positive, Mr. Kejriwal said that the clinics will remain open. 12.30 PM INDIA Nodal officer appointed in Kazakhstan to help stranded Indian students The Indian mission in Kazakhstan has appointed a nodal officer to help around 200 students who are stuck in the country after India suspended all international flights to fight the crisis. The decision came hours after the (MEA) to provide assistance to the Indian nationals. In a public notice, the Embassy of India in Nur Sultan declared Martin Cyriac Clemense, the Officer-in-Charge of Representative Office of India in Almaty, as the nodal person for ensuring the immediate necessities of the students, including boarding, lodging, food, medicine etc. 12.20 PM TIME Filipino shares his experiences as coronavirus survivor When Carlo Navarro, his wife and 15-year-old daughter visited Japan from the Philippines in February, they knew they were taking a chance with the coronavirus, but thought they would be spared if they took precautions. They wore masks and gloves and always had alcohol handy to sanitize their hands. But Mr. Navarro, a 48-year-old tax lawyer, began showing symptoms after they returned home. He was the fourth case in the Philippines, but the first Filipino to be confirmed with . 12.15 PM MADHYA PRADESH Madhya Pradesh registers 20 confirmed cases The number of COVID-19 cases in Madhya Pradesh rose to 20 with five more patients in Indore hospitals testing coronavirus positive, health officials said on Thursday. The tally includes a Ujjain-based woman, who died on Wednesday in Indore, the officials said. Among the five new cases in Indore, two are women, said a government medical college spokesperson. 12.10 PM CHHATTISGARH Three new coronavirus cases takes Chhattisgarh tally to six Three more persons, including a woman, have tested positive for in Chhattisgarh, taking the total number of confirmed cases in the state to six, officials said on Thursday. One of the cases was reported from the State capital Raipur, and one each from Durg and Bilaspur, they said. 12 PM TAMIL NADU Strict enforcement of lockdown In Chennai, police book two wheeler riders found violating the 21-day national lockdown. 11.45 AM WEST BENGAL One more tests positive West Bengal, total cases at 10 One more person tested positive for COVID-19 in West Bengal on March 26, taking the number of cases with the viral infection to 10. The 66- year-old resident of Nayabad in south Kolkata, who tested positive is admitted at a private health facility in the city. The patients samples were tested positive at the State-run SSKM Hospital, another testing facility in the State. 11.40 AM CHENNAI Pathways at Koyambedu market cleared of clutter to promote social distancing The COVID-19 situation has brought about many changes in the functioning of the Koyambedu market changes in operational hours and even short closures for cleaning operations are only to be expected. Significantly, the crisis seems to have also led to the resolution of one long-pending issue cluttered pathways. On all the three sections, dedicated to the sale of three categories of perishable items: flowers, fruits and vegetables, at the Koyambedu Wholesale Market complex, pathways have been freed of clutter and made wider so that visitors, who are mostly small traders, can practise a form of social distancing. 11.30 AM INDIA ICMR invites quotations from manufacturers for COVID-19 test kits In an urgent move towards expanding the diagnostics in India, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has invited quotations from manufacturers for supply of kits for testing. According to the apex health research body, it will procure seven lakh US FDA-EUA/CE-IVD/ICMR-NIV Pune-approved RNA extraction kits. Any manufacturer with an Indian-based supplier can submit quotations by Thursday 2.30 pm, the ICMR said. 11.25 AM GUJARAT Three dead in Gujarat; 43 confirmed cases so far Gujarat registered its third COVID-19 death after a 70-year-old man died of COVID-19 infection in Bhavnagar on Thursday morning. The other two deaths were reported from Surat and Ahmedabad. The total number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Gujarat jumped to 43 on Thursday. The State department said that the maximum number of cases have been detected in Ahmedabad, where 17 COVID-19 positive cases have been observed. 11.20 AM INDIA Sonia Gandhi writes to PM Modi in support of lockdown Congress president Sonia Gandhi writes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing her and the Congress party\'s support for the 21-day lockdown. Pigeons flock on the Delhi-Chandigarh highway, one of the busiest roads in Delhi, during the second day of the national lockdown in New Delhi "At this challenging and uncertain time, it is imperative for each one of us to rise above partisan interests and honour our duty towards our country and indeed, towards humanity," Ms. Gandhi writes in a four-page letter, along with suggestions for different sectors. 11.05 AM BIHAR Junior doctors at special hospital for COVID-19 in Bihar want to go on home quarantine Cocking a snook at the Bihar governments preparedness for COVID-19, as many as 83 junior doctors at Nalanda Medical College and Hospital (NMCH), which has been designated as the States first special hospital, have written to their superintendent seeking 15-day home quarantine as many of them have developed symptoms of the viral disease in the absence of protective kits and masks. Their petition has been forwarded to the Principal State Health Secretary Sanjay Kumar for further direction. 11 AM USA U.S. Senate unanimously passes $2.2 trillion coronavirus rescue package The U.S. Senate late Wednesday passed an unparalleledsteering aid to businesses, workers and health care systems engulfed by the coronavirus pandemic. The unanimous vote came despite misgivings on both sides about whether it goes too far or not far enough and capped days of difficult negotiations as Washington confronted a national challenge unlike it has ever faced. 10.55 AM INDIA Death toll due to COVID-19 rises to 13 in India, and the number of confirmed cases is 649, says Health Ministry. 10.50 AM MAHARASHTRA COVID-19 death toll in Maharashtra touches 4 The test report of a woman who died on March 24 turned out positive for coronavirus on Thursday, taking the COVID-19 death toll in Maharashtra to four. The woman, who hailed from Navi Mumbai, had symptoms similar to the coronavirus infection. Thus, as a precautionary measure, her samples were taken and sent for testing. The test came out positive this morning. We are now taking the necessary precautions for her relatives as well, an health official told PTI. - PTI 10.45 AM WEST BENGAL West Bengal detects 10th case An elderly man has been tested positive for COVID-19 in West Bengal, the tenth case of the deadly viral disease in the State. The 66-year-old from Nayabad in Kolkata had no history of travelling abroad or outside the State. He is undergoing treatment in the isolation ward of a private hospital and his family kept in home isolation under police protection. 10.40 AM MANIPUR Under lockdown, Manipur running out of essential commodities Prices of all essential commodities have been hiked unreasonably in Manipur which is under a lockdown to check the spread of . Some media reports quoted people as saying that rice and flour were not available. Some grocery shops which used to sell these items through the backdoor, in view of the curfew restrictions, have closed down as stocks had run out. The governments announcement that PDS rice for April will be distributed free of cost by March is yet to be translated into reality. Soon after , Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh said: The curfew will be in force for some time and people should stay indoors. There will be no shortage of essential items. While inter-State bus services are suspended trucks transporting essential items will not be obstructed. People should also stop panic buying since there shall be no shortage. However, ground realities are worrisome. 10.20 AM JAMMU AND KASHMIR Kashmir reports first death A 65-year-old man hailing from the Hyderpora area of the city died on Thursday, becoming the first fatality in Jammu and Kashmir due to coronavirus. "As we share the sad news of our first #Covid19 fatality, my heart goes out to the family of the deceased. We stand with you and share your grief," Mayor of Srinagar Junaid Azim Mattu tweeted. Government spokesperson Rohit Kansal also confirmed the death via Twitter. MADRID In Spains capital, ice rink turned into makeshift mortuary as number of cases soar Nurses and doctors demanded action after Spain reported its in cases on Tuesday and said about 14% of the nearly 40,000 infections were among health workers. The capital\'s Palacio de Hielo mall, home to an Olympic-sized ice rink, began operating as a makeshift mortuary after authorities said facilities were unable to cope. 10 AM GUJARAT Thousands of migrant workers leave on foot or motorcycles Facing lockdown and no work, major cities of Gujarat, including Surat, Ahmedabad and Vadodara, are witnessing an exodus of migrant workers leaving in the thousands, either walking or on motorbikes, with a complete shutdown of transportation services. Local officials said over 5,000 motorcycles have left Surat. Migrant workers from diamond and other sectors are leaving on motorbikes because factories are shut, a senior official from Surat said. MADHYA PRADESH Shivraj Singh Chouhan announces advance pension, home delivery of medicines Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday announced that all Below Poverty Line (BPL) families would be provided a months ration free, . Mr. Chouhan further said 1,000 would be provided to labourers as support through the State Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. NRDF puts 84 response teams on standby The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) will be part of the control rooms being opened in the States, at the order of the Union Home Ministry, to oversee the 21-day lockdown. Each of the 12 NDRF battalions has been divided into 84 response teams that have been put on standby. All the battalions are on a h, said an official. In Delhi, Two wheeler passengers explain to the police the purpose of their travel during a spot-checking at Kozhikode in Kerala. Worldwide, the number of coronavirus cases tops half a million, and deaths climb past 24,000. has claimed 21 lives in India as of March 27, according to data from the Health Ministry and State governments. As many as 871 people have been tested positive for the coronavirus. The to occupy the grim title of the country with the most coronavirus infections. China, meanwhile, reported its coronavirus infection in three days, and 54 new imported cases. Worldwide, the number of cases topped half a million, and deaths climbed past 24,000. In Iran, the death toll rose to 2,378 and , as confirmed cases rose above 1,000. overnight to 4,858. The Hindu has brought out a on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075 and 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019-at-gmail.com. The Prime Minister has announced a WhatsApp helpdesk number: 9013151515. Here are today\'s updates: 10:05 PM CHENNAI Second patient discharged in Tamil Nadu Patient no. 3, the young student who returned from Dublin and tested positive a week ago, on March 20, was discharged on Tuesday. They have been asked to be under home quarantine for 28 days, Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar told The Hindu on Friday. The 21-year old is the second patient to be discharged, after Case no. 1, a 45-year-old male patient from Kancheepuram, with travel history to the United Arab Emirates, who tested positive on March 7. He was discharged on March 19, and put under home quarantine. Another patient, Case no. 2, who travelled in a train from Delhi to Chennai, and tested positive on March 19, will be discharged in a day or two. He has already tested negative twice for the infection, and will be sent home soon. He is in the step down unit at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital," the Minister said. -Ramya Kannan 9:40 PM PORT BLAIR Cases in Andaman and Nicobar Islands rise to 6 Five persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Friday, taking the total number of such cases in the Union Territory to six, a senior official said. All the patients are part of the same group that returned to Port Blair on March 24, Chief Secretary Chetan Sanghi said. -PTI 9:35 PM CHENNAI Three new cases in Tamil Nadu Tamil Nadu Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar announced in the tweet that three new cases of COVID-19 have been detected in the State. The patients, a 73-year-old female from Chennai, who is at the Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital, a 61-year-old male contact of Indonesian nationals, who has been admitted to the Salem Medical College, and a 39-year-old male from Anna Nagar, Chennai, at the Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, are all stable and are being kept in isolation. -Serena Josephine M. 9:20 PM KOLKATA Five, including three children, test positive in West Bengal Five persons, including a 11-year-old boy, a six-year-old girl and a nine-month-old female infant, tested positive for the coronavirus in West Bengal on Friday, taking the number of people infected with the virus to 15. "They have a history of contact with a positive case from Delhi who came from U.K. on March 16," the official bulletin of State Health Department said . It also added that all those five of them belonged to "a closed group of siblings and relatives." The adult females who were diagnosed were 45 and 27 years old. -Shiv Sahay 9.10 PM NEW DELHI NEET postponed till last week of May The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), the examination for admission to undergraduate medical degree programmes, which was scheduled to be held on May 3, has been postponed. It is now likely to be held in the last week of May, though no exact date has been decided as yet, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said on Friday. The decision has been taken in view of the hardships faced by parents and students due to the COVID-19 epidemic, said the NTA, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development which conducts the examination. HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said he has directed the NTA to postpone the NEET as well as the already delayed Joint Engineering Examination\'s main paper (JEE-Main) until the last week of May. 8:55 PM NEW DELHI KV school buildings for suspected COVID-19 cases Kendriya Vidyalaya school buildings to be made available for temporary housing and quarantine of suspected COVID-19 cases, on the request of district administration or defence authority: Human Resource Development Ministry -Priscilla Jebaraj 8:50 PM MUMBAI 28 more cases crop up in Maharashtra, count becomes 153 With 28 persons testing positive for coronavirus in Maharashtra, the number of patients in the State rose to 153 on Friday, a Health Department Statement said. The new patients included 15 persons in Islampur in Sangli western Maharashtra\'s Sangli district. They had come in contact with a family which had returned from Saudi Arabia and some members of which had tested positive for the coronavirus. In Nagpur, four persons who had come in contact with a diagnosed patient tested positive. Two persons tested positive each in Mumbai and Thane and one each in Palghar, Kolhapur, Gondia and Pune. Another patient who tested positive is from Gujarat, the Health Department said. -PTI 8:20 PM CHENNAI Tamil Nadu announces additional curfews on shops, fuel stations Starting Sunday, shops selling vegetables and essential commodities will be open only between 6 a.m. and 2.30 p.m., Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said in an announcement on Friday. This restriction would also apply to petrol and diesel pumps, he said. Mr. Palaniswami also asked those who returned from abroad since February 15 and those who were in physical contact with them to voluntarily go into self-quarantine and apprise the local bodies about it. In addition to this, the government would allow food delivery services to function between 7-9.30 a.m. for breakfast, 12-2.30 p.m. for lunch and 6-9 p.m. for dinner, as a special case, he added. -Dennis S. Jesudasan 8: 15 PM UTTAR PRADESH Seven new positive cases detected in Uttar Pradesh, taking the total to 50. Four of the cases have been reported in Noida while two from Ghaziabad and one from Agra. Meanwhile, the State Health Department has announced plans to make Level-1 COVID-Hospitals operational in all 75 districts of the State. - Omar Rashid 8:10 PM GUJARAT Three more cases detected in Gujarat, taking the total number of cases to 46. The cases have been reported in Rajkot. -Mahesh Langa 7:45 PM JAIPUR Entire Walled City of Jaipur put under curfew after a man residing in Ramganj locality tested positive for the virus. The curbs were imposed in a limited area last night. -Mohammed Iqbal 7:30 PM BHOPAL A man tests positive for COVID-19 in Bhopal, taking the count of active cases to 25 in Madhya Pradesh. There are three cases in the State capital now. Two deaths owing to the illness have occurred in the State so far. -Sidharth Yadav 7:20 PM GUWAHATI Assam to turn 3 state-run hospitals into centres for treating Even though no coronavirus case has been reported in Assam so far, the State government has decided to turn three State-run hospitals into centres for treating COVID-19 patients to deal with the situation as and when it arises, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday. All patients admitted to the general wards of the medical college and hospitals in Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Silchar will be shifted to private medical establishments, he told reporters. -PTI 7:05 PM PARIS Death toll across world stands at 24,663 The number of deaths around the world from the novel coronavirus stood at 24,663, according to a tally compiled by AFP on Friday from official sources. More than 539,360 declared cases have been registered in 183 countries and territories since the epidemic first emerged in China in December. Of these cases, at least 112,200 are now considered recovered. The tallies, using data collected by AFP offices from national authorities and information from the World Health Organization (WHO), likely reflect only a fraction of the actual number of infections. Many countries are now only testing cases that require hospitalisation. -AFP 7:00 PM THIRUVANANTHAPURAM 39 fresh cases detected in Kerala Kerala reported 39 fresh cases on Friday, taking the total number of people under treatment to 164, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said. Of the 39 cases, 34 are from the worst affected northernmost district of Kasaragod, he told reporters after a review meeting here. From Kannur, two cases were reported and one each from Thrissur, Kozhikode and Kollam, he said. A total of 1,10,299 people are under surveillence and 616 are in isolation wards of various hospitals, he said. -PTI 6:50 PM MUMBAI Mumbai surgeon dies from COVID-19, civic body to reconfirm test results A senior surgeon attached to a South Mumbai hospital has become the latest casualty of COVID-19. The doctor was a contact of his U.K. returned grandson who has also tested positive. This has taken Maharashtras death toll to six. However, the civic body has said that they are reconfirming the test report as it was carried out in a private laboratory. -Jyoti Shellar 6:40 PM BHUBANESWAR Odisha announces 2,200-crore package for welfare of the poor Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday announced a 2,200-crore financial package to assist the weaker sections of the society, which are grappling under the unprecedented lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The package will benefit about 1.64 crore people of the State\'s total population of 4.5 crore. Mr. Patnaik said all the 94 lakh poor families covered under the food security scheme will get financial assistance of 1,000 each. The Odisha government has started providing foodgrains for three months to all the beneficiaries, he added. It is also providing advance social security pension for three months to the beneficiaries. The State will bear an expenditure of around 932 crore towards this measure, he added. Similarly, 22 lakh construction workers will get 1,500 each for the losses incurred due to the lockdown, Mr. Patnaik said. -PTI 6:30 PM SRINAGAR Army distributes rations to migrants, daily wagers in Kashmir The Army supplied free rations to daily wage earners and migrant labourers in Kashmir on Friday in the wake of the lockdown to combat the coronavirus threat, officials said. Hundreds of people benefitted and many more will be reached out to in the coming days, Army spokesperson Col. Rajesh Kalia said. He said Army personnel also distributed posters and leaflets containing various advisories and precautionary measures about the pandemic throughout the Kashmir valley. -PTI 6: 20 PM COLOMBO Over 2,000 Indians stranded in Sri Lanka due to lockdown Over 2,000 Indian nationals are among the 16,900 foreign tourists stranded in Sri Lanka due to the lockdown imposed by the government after the coronavirus outbreak, official figures released showed on Friday. At 2,439, the Indians are the highest among the number of tourists stranded in the island nation followed by the Chinese at 2,167, data from the Sri Lanka Tourism and Development Authority said. -PTI 6:15 PM NEW DELHI Mobilise voluntary, religious organisations to help: President to Governors, L-Gs President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday asked Governors and Lieutenant Governors of States and Union Territories to mobilise voluntary and religious organisations to aid efforts in containing the spread of coronavirus, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said. In a video-conference with the administrators, the President and Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, asked them to find ways to complement the efforts of the Centre and States in meeting the challenges arising from the outbreak. 6.10 PM NEW DELHI Centre releases Rs. 4,431 crore to clear pending wages under MGNREGA The Centre has released Rs. 4,431 crore to clear pending wages under the rural job scheme MGNREGA and will pay all dues by April 10, officials said a day after the government announced increase in wages under the programme. The announcement was made at a time a countrywide lockdown to combat the coronavirus outbreak has left wage labourers with no work and financial resources. The government will clear all pending wages under the employment guarantee scheme amounting to Rs. 11,499 crore by April 10, out of which Rs. 4,431 crore has been released till March 27, officials said. They said all the funds will be transferred directly into the beneficiaries bank accounts. Officials said the increase in wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) will come into effect from April 1. With this rise in wages, the national average wage under MGNREGA will increase to Rs. 202 per person per day from Rs. 182. There are 13.62 crore job card holders under the MGNREGA, out of which 8.17 crore are active job card holders. Officials also informed that individual-oriented work under MGNREGA such as work carried out by beneficiaries belonging to SCs and STs on their own land may continue. Similarly, the work done by women who are bread-earners of their families on their own land may also continue during the lockdown. But all other MGNREGA works have been stopped due to the threat of coronavirus. 5.40 PM INDIA GoAir offers its aircraft, crew, airport staff to govt for emergency services GoAir said it has offered the government its aircraft, crew and airport staff to carry out emergency services and repatriation of citizens, two days after another low-cost carrier IndiGo made a similar offer. Currently, while there is a ban on international and domestic passenger flights in the country, all-cargo flights can operate as usual, according to aviation regulator DGCA. --PTI 5.30 PM TELANGANA 10 new cases reported in Telanagana People queue up to buy vegetables and groceries at Shaikpet during the lockdown on Friday, March 27, 2020. With 10 new COVID-19 cases reported in Telanagana today, the total number of cases in the State rose to 59, said Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. "Out of this, one person has been discharged after treatment and the others are under treatment," the Chief Minister said at a press conference. Besides, about 20,000 people are currently in home quarantine or in Government faculties under surveillance, he said, adding all these people were being taken care of well. -- PTI 5.25 PM KASHMIR Four more have tested positive for COVID-19 in Kashmir, according to officials. --PTI 5.25 PM UTTAR PRADESH Six more test positive in U.P., count rises to 49: Official Six more persons have tested positive for coronavirus in Uttar Pradesh, taking the number cases to 49, a top official said. Six fresh cases were found positive for coronavirus in the state on Friday, Principal Secretary Health Amit Mohan told reporters. While four cases were found positive in Noida, two cases were found positive in Ghaziabad, Director,Information, Shishir told PTI. 5.20 PM DELHI Out of the 39 cases of in Delhi, 29 are of those individuals who came from outside and the rest contracted the disease in Delhi, said Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. It is currently under control in Delhi, he said. "I appeal with folded hands to those migrant workers who are trying to leave the city not to do so, we are making arrangements for you to stay and be fed in Delhi. Pension to as many as eight lakh people across categories has been disbursed so far. The amount is Rs. 5,000 for widows, the differently-abled, he said. -- Jatin Anand 5.15 PM UTTARAKHAND Uttarakhand CM releases Rs 50 lakh for stranded people Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Friday sanctioned Rs 50 lakh from the CM relief fund for the people from the state stranded in Delhi on way to their homes due to a nationwide lockdown. The amount has been handed over to Uttarakhands Additional Resident Commissioner in Delhi. --PTI 5.10 PM J&K Police tracing all persons who came in contact with J-Ks first COVID-19 casualty: DGP A day after a native of Srinagar who had a long travel history succumbed to COVID-19, Jammu and Kashmir police chief Dilbag Singh said efforts are on to trace all those people who came in contact with him so that they can be quarantined. He appealed to people to voluntarily come forward and said hiding information could prove to be fatal. -- PTI 5.00 PM INDIA Elderly, differently-abled, widows to get 3 months pension in advance The Centre will give three months pension in advance to nearly three-crore widows, senior citizens and differently-abled in the first week of April amid the lockdown over the novel coronavirus pandemic, officials said on Friday. Under the National Social Assistance Program (NSAP), a monthly pension is being given to the poor senior citizens, widows and persons with disabilities. 4.40 PM UK British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Health Secretary test positive British PM Boris Johnson has mild symptoms and will self-isolate. Britain\'s Health Secretary Matt Hancock on Friday said he had also tested positive for COVID-19. Following medical advice, I was advised to test for #Coronavirus. I\'ve tested positive. Thankfully my symptoms are mild and Im working from home & self-isolating, Hancock announced on Twitter. 4.15 PM INDIA India looking to participate in global clinical trials: ICMR Most of those deceased due to COVID-19 were elderly and had co-morbidities, said Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agrawal. The government is working to break transmission, he said. "We have asked a public sector unit to produce 10000 ventilators and bharat electronics Ltd has been asked to procure 30,000 additional ventilators within 3 months. This is to address shortage of ventilators, he added. President Ram Nath Kovind held video conferences with governors, Lt. governors, Red Cross society, to control COVID 19, he said. "1.4 lakh companies have asked their employees to work from home. "Home Ministry has allowed cargo movement and States have to ensure their smooth movement. "States and UTs have to take care of food and sanitation of migrant workers. "Indigenous manufacturers in the process of increasing supply of PPEs and N95 masks," Mr. Agrawal also said. A Home Ministry official said there is no plan to allow domestic flights to ferry migrants returning home. India is looking to participate in global clinical trials as now cases have increased-, said Dr. Raman R. Gangakhedkar, ICMR. "Out of 3.4 million probes ordered from Germany, 5 lakh were to have come today. However this isn\'t affecting testing," he further said. -- Jacob Koshy 4.10 PM INDIA Rahul seeks proper medical facilities in residential educational institutions Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday wrote to Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank to ensure proper medical facilities for residential educational institutions. Mr. Gandhi also requested the Minister to facilitate regular communication between students of such institutions and their parents. 4.00 PM INDIA ANI reports: Restrictions on domestic flights extended till April 14, 2020, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced. 3.50 PM KERALA Sabarimala temple festival deferred for the first time in 55 years For the first time in its history, the 10-day annual festival at the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple has been deferred in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual temple festival was scheduled to begin with the customary kodiyettu ceremony on March 29 to culminate with the ceremonial Aratt in river Pampa on April 7. However, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) has postponed the festival to a later date following the nationwide lockdown declared by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an effort to contain the disease. 3.40 PM INDIA SC seeks govt reply on over 800 stranded pilgrims in Iran The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response from the Centre on a plea to immediately evacuate and provide medical support to 800-odd Shia pilgrims stranded in Qom, Iran, on account of the COVID-2019 pandemic. 3.30 PM INDIA Contingency plans in place, says Gen. Naravane The Army has responsive and agile Quick Reaction Medical Teams (QRMTs) on standby to mobilise at six hours notice to meet the requirements of hospitals and the civil administration if needed, Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Manoj Naravane said on Friday. Also read: 3.20 PM TAMIL NADU 200 ambulances, over 3,000 new medical staff to join fight against COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu The special ward for COVID-19 patients, which will be in operation from tomorrow which is being disinfected at Medical college on Wallajah Road, on March 27, 2020. As part of consolidating efforts against the spread of COVID-19 in the State, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami directed that newly-recruited medical staff join service within three days of receiving their appointment orders. An official release stated that the CM has directed that 1,508 lab technicians, 530 doctors and 1,000 nurses newly recruited in accordance with rules through the Medical Recruitment Board, to join within three days after receiving their appointment orders. 3.15 PM KARNATAKA 10-month-old tests positive in Dakshina Kannada A ten month old baby has been tested positive for COVID-19 in Dakshina Kannada. The child from Sajipanadu village in Bantwal Taluk was suffering from fever and severe acute respiratory illness and hence had been admitted to a private hospital in Mangaluru on March 23. The childs throat swab had been sent for testing on the next day. It was confirmed as positive on March 23, a release from Ramachandra Bayari, District Health and Family Welfare Officer said today. 3.10 PM NORTHEASTERN STATES Assams neighbours worried by stamping of truckers Assams neighbours are worried by the screening and stamping of truck drivers and handymen assigned transportation of essentials amid a countrywide lockdown. The hill States in the Northeast surrounding Assam largely depend on supplies from outside the region. Because of a geographical advantage, essential commodities first reach Assam by train or road before being transshipped to the neighbouring States. 3.00 PM INDIA MHA asks States to stop mass exodus of migrant workers Construction workers leave for their native, Sindhanoor. They maintain social distance even as they walk, in Bengaluru\'s Kengeri Satellite Town on Friday, March 27, 2020. The Union Home Ministry on Friday asked State governments to prevent a mass exodus of migrant agriculture labourers, industrial workers and unorganised sector employees from their workplaces to hometowns amid a 21-day to combat theoutbreak. 2.50 PM TAMIL NADU Tasmac to keep all shops and bars closed until April 14 Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (Tasmac) has instructed its senior regional managers to keep all shops and bars closed until April 14. A circular to all senior regional managers on Friday directed them to keep vigil and ensure that there is no illegal sale of liquor during this period and to co-ordinate with prohibition enforcement wing officials in the district and ensure that no untoward incidents take place. 2.40 PM INDIA RBI Governor urges people not resort to panic buying; says Indian banking system is safe Allaying depositors concerns, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday asserted there Indian , and termed linking banks share prices to safety of deposits as fallacious thinking. The comments, which came after a massive correction in banking stocks following the Yes Bank crisis and coronavirus outbreak, also urged depositors not to resort to panic withdrawals. 2.30 PM INDIA Exempt PwD caregivers from lockdown curbs, States told The Union Government has asked all the States and Union Territories to ensure that caregivers of persons with disabilities (PwD) are able to reach them during the three-week lockdown imposed by the government to control the spread of 2.00 PM GOA Goa authority to take over Madgaon railway station platforms to provide shelter to homeless: order The Disaster Management Authority, Goa, will take over platforms of the Madgaon railway station to provide shelter to homeless people in view of the lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, according to an order. The order from Collector and Chairperson of South Goa District Disaster Management Authority Ajit Roy has issued a requisition under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 of the services of all platforms and station premises of Madgaon Railway Station which belongs to the Konkan Railway for shelter homes effective immediately 1.45 PM KERALA Kerala govt. registers case against IAS officer who jumped quarantine The Kerala State government has registered a case against an IAS officer who jumped quarantine. Deputy Inspector General of Police, Kori Sanjay Kumar Gurudin, told The Hindu that Kollam Sub Collector Anupam Mishra, had returned recently from Singapore and the health authorities had advised him to go into quarantine at his camp office. 1.35 PM ODISHA Odisha Assembly asked to stay under home quarantine as State reports third case The staff members of Odisha Assembly have been directed to stay under home quarantine as one of them had come in contact with a person who tested positive for coronavirus on Thursday night. He was the third COVID-19 patient in the State. The staff members have been asked to quarantine themselves because one of the staff members, who had come in contact with the coronavirus patient, had interacted with staff members for several days, Speaker of the State Assembly Surjya Narayan Patro told The Hindu. 1.30 PM INDIA DoT asks telcos to approach wireless wing for additional spectrum to meet data demand The DoT has asked telecom operators to submit their requirement for additional spectrum -- necessitated due to the upsurge in data consumption because of the lockdowm -- to the Wireless Planning Commission, according to industry sources. Telecom operators have requested the Department of Telecom(DoT) for additional spectrum allocation to meet the rising load on networks due to the ongoing lockdown mandating people to stay at home. -- PTI 1.20 PM MAHARASHTRA Pune crime branch seizes face masks worth 4.30 lakh, arrests two Against the backdrop of soaring demands for protective gear to ward off the coronavirus, the Pune police has arrested two persons and seized a hoarded cache of nearly 18,000 face masks worth more than 4 lakh from the citys Somwar Peth area. According to a senior police official, more than 17,800 masks worth 4.30 lakh were seized during a raid conducted by a unit of the Pune Crime Branch at a godown in Narpatgiri chowk on Thursday night. -- Shoumojit Banerjee 12.35 PM PUNJAB Five new cases in Punjab Five fresh positive cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Punjab. Confirmed cases have reached 38, Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu told The Hindu. 12.30 PM DELHI Thirty-nine cases reported in Delhi so far, says CM Arvind Kejriwal A guard outside a bank offers sanitizer to customers standing in a queue as they maintain social distancing, at Tagore Garden in West Delhi on Friday, March 27, 2020. Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal said a team of doctors tasked with creating a plan to tackle an increase in coronavirus cases has submitted its report. This plan has been divided in three stages depending on the number of cases. The plan details preparations in terms of ICU, testing facilities and other necessary services for three stages: 100, 500 and 1000 daily cases, respectively. We are currently at stage one of this, he added. Mr. Kejriwal also announced that the due to the ongoing lockdown to contain the COVID-19 epidemic. -- Jatin Anand 12.20 PM TAMIL NADU Six new cases have been reported in Tamil Nadu, according to the State\'s National Health Mission. Chennai Corporation Health Department worker sprays disinfectant at State Guest House in Chennai. 12.15 PM TAMIL NADU Tailors at government hospitals in T.N. come to the aid of healthcare workers, stitch cloth masks Many government hospitals have tailors to sew torn bedsheets or other hospital linen. In the wake of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), some of these hospitals have given the tailors another task -- to stitch cloth masks for hospital personnel, both as a stop-gap measure and as an alternative to disposable masks. 12.10 PM KARNATAKA Karnataka records third death A 65-year-old man, who died in Tumakuru, tested positive for COVID-19. Addressing a press conference in Tumakuru, Deputy Commissioner, Dr. K. Rakesh Kumar said that the person died around 10.45 am today. 12.00 PM ANDHRA PRADESH Twelfth case reported from Visakhapatnam Visakhapatnam has reported one more positive case, taking the total count to 12 in the State. The patient was a close contact of a 25-year-old male patient who returned from Birmingham in England to Visakhapatnam on March 17 via New Delhi by flights, according to the bulletin by the Health Department. A good samaritan offers food to a roadside dweller in Tirupati on Friday, March 27, 2020, in view of the lockdown. It is the second case of direct transfer from an infected person both in the State and in Visakhapatnam city where the highest number of cases were reported in the State. 11.50 AM JAMMU AND KASHMIR Restrictions continue in J&K, most mosques, shrines closed The restrictions on the movement and assembly of people to contain the spread of the continued in Kashmir for the ninth day on Friday as most mosques and shrines were shut to avoid large gatherings for congregational prayers, officials said. 11.40 AM BIHAR Three fresh cases reported in Bihar With three new cases of COVID-19 reported in Bihar, the figure touched nine in the State. Bihar, so far, . 11.30 AM MADHYA PRADESH One man died of COVID-19 in Indore on Thursday. Active cases jump to 24 in Madhya Pradesh. -- Sidharth Yadav 11.10 AM RAJASTHAN Two new cases detected in Rajasthan Two new COVID-19 positive cases have been detected in Rajasthan\'s Bhilwara city. Both are close relatives of the 60-year-old man who had tested positive and died yesterday because of dysfunctional kidney and other complications. The total number of confirmed patients is 21 in the worst-affected Bhilwara city and 45 in Rajasthan. 10.40 AM INDIA A total of 724 individuals have been confirmed COVID-19 positive in India with 17 deaths, according to data updated by the Union Health Ministry on Friday. As per State-wise data, 18 deaths have been reported. A total of 27,688 samples from 26,798 individuals have been tested for SARS-CoV2 as on March 27, 9 a.m., noted a release issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research. 10 AM ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS Second COVID-19 case in Andaman and Nicobar as man tests positive A man has tested positive for COVID-19 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the second such case in the Union Territory, a senior official said on Friday. A man, who returned from Kolkata on March 24, tested positive for the deadly virus on Thursday and the second patient had travelled with him on the same flight, Chief Secretary Chetan Sanghi said. Both were undergoing treatment at a hospital here, he added. All the 55 passengers of the plane were quarantined after the first case came to light. - PTI 9.30 AM KARNATAKA Hydroxychloroquine now a schedule H1 drug is now a schedule H1 drug, and can be sold on prescription only. According to a gazette notification issued by the Union Health Ministry, the sale of the drug from now on should be in accordance with the conditions for sale of drugs specified in Schedule H1 to the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945. 9.10 AM CHENNAI Koyambedu wholesale market to function on March 27 and 28 The Koyambedu wholesale market, including vegetable and fruits market, will continue to work on March 27 and March 28, according to traders welfare associations. Various traders associations had earlier announced that the market would remain closed on these two days in solidarity with the nation-wide lockdown. However, the decision was withdrawn after a meeting with the authorities concerned on Thursday morning. 8.50 AM MANGALURU Business as usual in Mangaluru\'s Central Market Notwithstanding Deputy Commissioner\'s prohibition on retail sales at the Central Market from Thursday, business was as usual at the wholesale vegetable and fruit market of Mangaluru on Friday morning. Thousands thronged to the market throwing all safety norms to the wind. However, customers had to park their vehicles outside the barricaded area and walk into the market, unlike usual. The DC\'s , says Health Ministry With 16 deaths and 694 positive cases, An aerial view of the deserted junction of Hanumanthwaka Highway in view of the lockdown in Visakhapatnam on Friday, March 27, 2020. The coronavirus outbreak has infected some 5,80,000 people and killed over 26,000 around the world after emerging in China in December 2019. has claimed more than 20 lives in India as of March 28, according to data from the Health Ministry and State governments. have tested positive for the coronavirus. The outbreak has infected some 5,80,000 people and killed over 26,000 around the world after emerging in China in December 2019. IMF chief said that the world has worse than the 2008 one, but projected a recovery next year. In , the coronavirus infections climbed past 1,00,000, with more than 1,600 dead. Meanwhile in Britain, Prime Minister became the first major world leader to test positive. The Hindu has brought out a on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075, 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019-at-gmail.com. The Prime Minister has announced a WhatsApp helpdesk number: 9013151515. Here are the latest updates: 10.55 PM ROME Italy\'s coronavirus toll tops 10,000 Italy\'s death toll from the novel coronavirus shot past 10,000 on Saturday with 889 new deaths, the country\'s civil protection service said. The toll in Italy, which has suffered more deaths than any other country, now stands at 10,023. An additional 5,974 infections brought to 92,472 the number of people who have officially tested positive for COVID-19 in Italy since the crisis began last month. -AFP 10.45 PM TURKEY Turkey coronavirus deaths pass 100: health minister More than 100 people have died from the novel coronavirus in Turkey, according to the health minister on Saturday, as 1,704 new cases were recorded. Fahrettin Koca shared the latest figures in an image on Twitter, showing 16 more people had died in the last 24 hours, pushing the total death toll to 108. With the new cases of COVID-19, Turkey has officially recorded 7,402 people with the virus. 9.50 PM ANDAMAN Total case rises to 9 in Andaman Three more test positive for COVID-19 in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, total cases in UT rise to 9, says an Health Official. 9.15 PM TELANGANA Telangana reports first death Telangana reports first COVID-19 death. Samples taken from 74-year old man after death tested positive on Saturday, says State Health Minister. 8.25 PM SRI LANKA Sri Lanka asks returnees from Chennai report to health authorities Travellers who recently returned from Chennai in India have posed a high-risk in Sri Lankas efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus, the countrys health authorities said on Saturday, ordering them to immediately report to public health officers. Director General of Health Services Anil Jasinghe said two of the COVID-19 positive cases reported on Saturday were those who recently returned from the Tamil Nadu capital. He issued directions that anyone who returned from Chennai during the last 14 days must inform the public health officers of their area and must go into self-quarantine for 14 days. Returnees from Chennai are high risk cases, they must immediately report to health authorities, Mr. Jasinghe said. He said that in view of increase in the number of coronavirus cases in Chennai it is very important for the returnees to undergo quarantine. 8.20 PM EUROPE Europe death toll from coronavirus surges past 20,000 The coronavirus pandemic has killed more than 20,000 people in Europe, according to a tally of official figures gathered by AFP at 1415 GMT on Saturday. Europe is now the most affected continent with 20,059 deaths from a total of 337,632 cases. The COVID-19 disease has killed 9,134 in Italy and 5,690 in Spain the two hardest-hit countries in the world, accounting for three quarters of all deaths in Europe. 8.00 PM SURESH RAINA Raina donates Rs 52 lakh Former India batsman Suresh Raina on Saturday donated Rs 52 lakh to the countrys fight against COVID-19 pandemic and urged others also to contribute in these times of health crisis. Rainas contribution is biggest from any Indian sportspersons across disciplines. Its time we all do our bit to help defeat COVID19. Im pledging Rs. 52 lakh for the fight against Corona (Rs. 31 lakh to the PM-CARES Fund & Rs. 21 lakh to the UP CMs Disaster Relief Fund). Please do your bit too. Jai Hind, Raina tweeted. 6.45 PM TAMIL NADU Two more test positive in TN Tamil Nadu Health Minister Vijayabaskar tweeted saying "A 60-year-old from Rajapalayam, Virudhunagar district, on Saturday, tested positive. He was admitted in Madurai Medical College. The patientis in isolation ward and is said to be stable." "Another 25-year-old male from West Mambalam, Chennai has been confirmed positive. The patient is undergoing treatment in isolation at a private hospital. His condition is said to be stable," said Mr. Vijayabaskar 6.40 PM KERALA, TELANGANA Six more cases in Telangana, Kerala Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, on Saturday, said that "6 new Covid cases in Kerala today. One death (first in state). 1,34,370 under surveillance." Mr. Vijayan also announced introduction of rapid testing to check for community transmission. In another south Indian State, six more were reported positive in Telangana taking the total to 65. 6.20 PM NEW DELHI All BJP MPs to release Rs 1 crore from MPLAD funds for coronavirus relief: Nadda BJP president J P Nadda on Saturday announced that all party MPs will release Rs 1 crore from their annual development fund to the central relief fund to fight coronavirus pandemic. In his tweets, he also said that all party MPs and MLAs will donate their one month salary towards it as well. All MPs & MLAs of Bharatiya Janata Party will donate their one month remuneration/salary to the central relief fund to support the fight against Covid19. All MPs of BJP will release Rs 1 crore from their MPLADS fund to the central relief fund in support to fight against Covid-19, he said. The party at present has 386 MPs 303 in Lok Sabha and 83 in Rajya Sabha. An MP gets Rs 5 crore every year as part of the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). 6.10 PM NEW DELHI Govt has committed all support to migrant workers during lockdown: Shah Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the Central government has committed all support to migrant workers during the 21-day lockdown announced to combat the coronavirus pandemic. The home ministry has also asked states and union territories to immediately set up relief camps for migrant workers, pilgrims etc., who are returning to their domicile states or trying to do so during this lockdown period. As per the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government has committed all support to migrant workers during lockdown period, Shah said, while reviewing the countrys preparedness to contain the spread of COVID-19. According to a home ministry statement, Mr. Shah has authorised states to use State Disaster Relief Fund for relief measures for migrant workers during the COVID-19 lockdown. 5.50 PM NEW DELHI Cong constitutes task force to handle situation in party-ruled states The Congress on Saturday constituted a task force to intensify efforts of party-ruled states to deal with the situation due to COVID-19 and help mitigate the sufferings of people. The task force includes P Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh, Tamradhwaj Sahu and M Veerappa Moily. Congress president has constituted a task force to intensify the efforts of Congress-ruled state governments to deal with the situation prevailing on account of COVID-19, in a coordinated manner, said an official communication from the party. The members of the task force will start work immediately with the respective Congress-ruled state governments to ensure that the daily distress and suffering of people is mitigated, the statement said. P Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh, Tamradhwaj Sahu and Veerappa Moily, i.e, the chairmen of respective manifesto implementation committees in the Congress ruled states will be its members, the Congress communication added. 5.45 PM SPAIN Spain counts 832 deaths in 24 hours, pushing toll to 5,690 The death toll from coronavirus in Spain surged over 5,600 on Saturday after a record 832 people died in 24 hours, and the number of infections soared over 72,000, the government said. Spain has the world\'s second-highest coronavirus death toll after Italy with 5,690 fatalities. The number of confirmed cases have jumped to 72,248 as the country moves to significantly increase testing. Although Spain\'s latest figures showed a daily increase of more than 8,000 cases, the rate of new infections appears to be slowing, with officials saying the epidemic appeared to be nearing its peak. 5.20 PM NEW DELHI PM announces emergency relief fund for coronavirus fight Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced the creation of an assistance and emergency situation relief fund where people can contribute and help in the governments fight against coronavirus. The Prime Ministers Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund will go a long way in creating a healthier India, he said on Twitter. People from all walks of life expressed their desire to donate to Indias war against COVID-19, he said, adding the fund has been constituted respecting that spirit. Akshay Kumar @akshaykumar This is that time when all that matters is the lives of our people. And we need to do anything and everything it takes. I pledge to contribute Rs 25 crores from my savings to jis PM-CARES Fund. Lets save lives, Jaan hai toh jahaan hai. Narendra Modi @narendramodi Replying to @narendramodi The PM-CARES Fund accepts micro-donations too. It will strengthen disaster management capacities and encourage research on protecting citizens. Let us leave no stone unturned to make India healthier and more prosperous for our future generations. 294K 120K people are talking about this 5.10 PM NEW DELHI Kejriwal appeal to migrants Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, on Saturday, said "We had appealed to migrant workers to stay back and some have decided to but some others havent; if we migrate in such large numbers, the possibility of the community spread of the coronavirus becomes significant; we are making arrangements for you, please stay where you are, we have made arrangements." Mr. Kejriwal said "Today, arrangements have been put in place at around 800 facilities including schools to feed the needy; in addition there are also flying squads which are helping us in doing so." The Delhi Chief Minister said "Arrangements to provide ration have been made across Delhi and each areas MLAs are ensuring that this is distributed while maintaining social distancing." 5.05 PM UNITED KINGDOM British PM Johnson speaks to Trump after coronavirus diagnosis British Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to US President Donald Trump over the phone to discuss the coronavirus pandemic soon after he took to social media to announce that he has tested positive for COVID-19 and has gone into self-isolation. The 55-year-old, who is believed to be the first world leader to have tested positive for the deadly virus, said his symptoms are mild which means he will carry on leading the response to the outbreak in the UK where the death toll jumped by 181 to hit 759 and the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 stood at 14,543 on Friday. Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with US President Donald Trump on Saturday. The President wished the Prime Minister a speedy recovery from coronavirus, a Downing Street spokesperson said on Friday evening. They agreed to work together closely, along with the G7, the G20, and other international partners, to defeat the coronavirus pandemic, the spokesperson said. 4.50 PM WORLD COUNT More than 600,000 coronavirus cases recorded globally More than 600,000 cases of the new coronavirus have been officially recorded around the world since the outbreak of the epidemic, according to an AFP tally at 1045 GMT on Saturday. There were 605,010 cases of infection with 27,982 deaths in 183 countries and territories. The United States had 104,837 cases of which 1,711 were fatal. Italy had the highest number of deaths at 9,134 and a total of 86,498 cases. China, the epicentre of the outbreak, had 81,394 cases and 3,295 deaths. The figures represent only a fraction of the number of infections as many countries only carry out tests on suspected cases if they are hospitalised. -- AFP 4.45 PM GUJARAT One more death in Gujarat A 46-year-old woman who had coronavirus infection died at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Hospital in Ahmedabad on Saturday afternoon, taking the number of COVID-19 patients who have died in Gujarat to four, authorities said. The total death toll in India rises to 23. The woman had tested positive for the virus on March 26 and had been put on ventilator, the hospital said in a statement. She was also suffering from hypertension and diabetes, it said. On Thursday, a 70-year-old COVID-19 patient died in Bhavnagar district. Before that, one death each was reported from Ahmedabad and Surat. 4.40 PM U.P. Five new cases in Gautam Budh Nagar Five news cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Gautam Budh Nagar, district officials said. With this, the total number of cases in the district has reached 23. Three persons have been tested positive in Noida, while a couple has been tested positive for the virus in Dadri area of Greater Noida, said Anurag Bhargav, Chief Medical Officer, Gautam Buddh Nagar. He said the travel history of the persons was being ascertained. Pigeon fanciers turn to ragi to feed their birds Against the backdrop of widespread uncertainty, which includes worries about reaching essential supplies to people in the next three weeks, at the least, feed-supply for homing pigeons certainly looks as big an issue as the size of a single grain. For pigeon fanciers though, this concern is big enough to crease their brow with a thousand worry lines. 4.20 PM INDIA Tata Trusts commit 500 crore Ratan N. Tata @RNTata2000 The COVID 19 crisis is one of the toughest challenges we will face as a race. The Tata Trusts and the Tata group companies have in the past risen to the needs of the nation. At this moment, the need of the hour is greater than any other time. 202K 73.7K people are talking about this Industrialist Ratan Tata announced on Twitter that the Tata Trusts have pledged 500 crore to provide protective equipment for medical personnel on the frontline, testing kits, modular treatment facilities and training for health workers among other provisions. 4.15 PM INDIA Focus now on COVID-19 hotspots: Health Ministry The Health Ministrys focus is now on hotspots where a large number of cases are being registered, said Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agrawal. "We are working with the States," he said. "Our focus now is to get the health infrastructure ready for COVID-19 patients. Ours is a graded effort. "Have asked CGHS to issue three months\' medicine to patients," Mr. Agrawal said. AIIMS is to offer online training for doctors and nurses, he added. He also says that social distancing is going to be crucial in breaking the chain of transmission. We have been pre-emptive and graded in our approach... We went for lockdown even when there were limited cases of local transmission." Yesterday 40,000 ventilators were ordered in addition to the existing ventilators. ICMR has no vaccine yet that is suitable for human trial, said Dr. Raman R. Gangakhedkar of ICMR. 4.00 PM TAMIL NADU Tamil Nadu Chief Minister seeks 9,000 crore from PM Modi to combat COVID-19 and its aftermath Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to grant 9,000 crore to Tamil Nadu and allocate a special grant of 1 lakh crore to the State governments to combat the COVID-19 disease and to deal with its aftermath. 3.55 PM INDIA Mohun Bagan donates 20 lakh for fight against COVID-19 Designated I-League champion Mohun Bagan has announced a donation of 20 lakh in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Mohun Bagan will donate Rs 20 lakh towards the West Bengal State Emergency Relief Fund to be used to combat the deadly coronavirus pandemic, Mohun Bagan announced on their official Facebook page. --PTI 3.50 PM ASSAM Police opens fire in air to quell unrest at Assam market Police opened fire in the air in Assams Bongaigaon district this morning to disperse an unruly mob at a market that attacked the security personnel when asked to abide by the lockdown order, an officer said. Nobody was injured, he said. People had gathered in large numbers at meat and poultry shops of Bhawlaguri market in the district without maintaining social distancing norms. --PTI 3.30 PM IRAN Iran records 139 more deaths Iran announced that 139 more people had died from the novel coronavirus, raising the official death toll to 2,517 in one of the world\'s worst-affected countries. Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told a news conference that 3,076 more cases had been confirmed in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of infections to 35,408. --AFP 3.15 PM U.S. U.S. to airlift its citizens stranded in India The U.S. government is making arrangements to airlift over 2,000 American citizens stranded in India due to the suspension of flights and the lockdown in the country to limit the spread of the cornovirus pandemic, the State Department has said. --PTI 3.05 PM KASHMIR Seven more cases in Kashmir Out of the seven who tested positive for COVID-19, four cases have history of contact with positive cases during religious congregations and three others have travel history outside Jammu and Kashmir, according to J&K government spokesman Rohit Kansal. --Peerzada Ashiq 3.00 PM KARNATAKA Ten new cases in Karnataka Ten new positive cases of COVID-19 have been detected in Karnataka in the last 15 hours, taking the total number to 74 in the State. While three of these are from Uttara Kannada and contacts of a patient who had tested positive earlier, five are contacts of of the 70-year-old woman from Gowribidanur in Chikkaballapur who died on March 24. 2.50 PM DELHI Helpline set up for stranded J&K residents in Delhi The Jammu and Kashmir administration has set up a dedicated helpline centre in Delhi to address the issues faced by stranded residents of the Union Territory due to the ongoing countrywide lockdown, an official spokesperson said. The 24x7 helpline with three telephone numbers -- 011-24611210, 24611108, 24615475 -- has been established in Jammu and Kashmir Resident Commission, New Delhi, to address the issues of the local residents stranded in the national capital and elsewhere in the country, the spokesman said. --PTI 2.45 PM INDIA MHA issues order allowing States to use SDRF for relief to the homeless The MHA issued an order allowing States to use State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for "Provision for temporary accommodation, food, clothing medical care etc." to homeless people including migrant labourers stranded due to lockdown measures and sheltered in the relief camps and other places. "This has been done for the containment of spread of COVID-19 virus in the country," the order said. -- Vijaita Singh 2.40 PM RAJASTHAN Two more cases reported in Rajasthan The two new COVID-19 positive cases are both nursing staff of emergency at a private hospital in Bhilwara. With this, the tally in the State rises to 54. -- Mohammed Iqbal 2.35 PM INDIA Farm activities exempted from lockdown rules to ensure food security: Narendra Singh Tomar Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said farming operations and related activities have been exempted from the lockdown rules for smooth harvesting of rabi crops and to ensure food security in the country. At this critical time, the exemptions have been given for agriculture related activities to ensure enough food supply to the people after the lockdown. It is also done to ensure ordinary citizens and farmers do not face problems, Mr. Tomar said in a statement. --PTI 2.30 PM MADHYA PRADESH The Madhya Pradesh government issued a fresh order, asking the liquor shops owners to keep their outlets shut till April 14 in view of the lockdown. - PTI 2.00 PM INDIA Gadkari asks NHAI chief, toll operators to ensure food, water support to migrant workers Migrant workers on their way to their home towns, like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other States, photographed at Raja Garden in New Delhi on Saturday, March 28, 2020. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari asked NHAI Chairman and toll operators across National Highways to provide food, water and other necessary support to migrant workers. The directions came amid reports that migrant workers are facing severe hardships while stranded at various parts in the country on account of nationwide lockdown in the wake of coronavirus pandemic. 1.50 PM INDIA Centre tells states, UTs to take action in maintaining hygiene in jails, handling prisoners Inmates at Hamirpur jail in U.P. maintain physical distance while they wait to use the phone to communicate with their relatives, on March 28, 2020. The Centre has asked all States and Union Territories to take appropriate action for maintaining proper hygiene in jails and handling prisoners, including foreign nationals, in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. In a letter to Chief Secretaries and DGPs of all States and Union Territories, the Home Ministry said the prevailing situation in the country is being monitored at the highest level and it is considered necessary that appropriate measures are taken at all levels without any exception. --PTI 1.30 PM GUJARAT Six more test positive for COVID-19 in Gujarat; count rises to 53 Gujarat recorded six new cases of coronavirus in the last 12 hours, taking the States tally of COVID-19 patients to 53, a senior official said. As many as six new cases were reported since Friday evening, taking the count of coronavirus patients to 53, principal secretary (Health) Jayanti Ravi said. --PTI 1.20 PM MAHARASHTRA Maharashtra tally reaches 160 as seven more test positive With seven more persons testing positive for coronavirus in Maharashtra, the total number of such cases in the state has gone up to 160, officials said. Of these seven new COVID-19 patients, five are from Mumbai and two from Nagpur, Health Department officials said. On Friday, 28 persons were found infected in different parts of the State, they said. --PTI 1.10 PM TELANGANA Job continues... To maintain social distancing as advised by the government, TV media personnel use a long stick with mike attached to take interview of a police official outside the historic Charminar in Hyderabad. 1.00 PM MADHYA PRADESH Four new cases in Madhya Pradesh Three men from Indore and one from Ujjain tested positive for COVID-19 on Friday night, taking the count of active cases in Madhya Pradesh to 31, according to the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore. The college had received 52 samples for testing on Thursday, of which three were inappropriate and 45 tested negative. Those who tested positive are aged 60,42 and 23 in Indore, and 23 in Ujjain. 12.45 PM INDIA Railways manufactures prototype of isolation ward in coaches The railways has manufactured a prototype of an isolation ward for treating COVID-19 patients by converting non-air-conditioned train coaches, it said on Saturday. 12.40 PM ASSAM Low number of COVID-19 cases in northeast no reason to be complacent, says Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Cases of COVID-19 have been low in the countrys northeast, but challenges on how to combat the disease are tougher. Speaking to The Hindu, Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the low number of cases currently in the region was no reason to be complacent, and that the State government was taking various measures to build hospital-bed capacity and for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and ventilators. 12.30 PM ANDHRA PRADESH First positive case from Visakhapatnam tests negative after treatment People maintain social distance as they stand outside a rythu bazar in Rajahmundry, on Saturday, March 28, 2020. The 65-year-old man from Allipuram area in Visakhapatnam, who was the first to test COVID-19 positive from the city and was under treatment at Government Hospital for Chest and Communicable Diseases, was tested negative by the Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory at Rangaraya Medical College, Kakinada. 12.20 PM KERALA First COVID-19 death in Kerala A 69-year-old man who was admitted to the COVID-19 care centre in Ernakulam died at 8 a.m. on March 28. He is Kerala\'s first COVID-19 victim. The man, who had returned from Dubai, was admitted to Ernakulam Medical College Hospital with pneumonia on March 22, said the authorities in a statement. 12.00 PM MADHYA PRADESH COVID-19 positive journalist booked for negligence in Bhopal The Bhopal police have registered a case against a , and later tested positive for COVID-19 for negligence and violating prohibitory orders. "Despite knowing his daughter was infected, the man went around the city and violated the lockdown too," said V.K. Singh, incharge, Shymala Hills police station. 11.50 AM KARNATAKA Complete lockdown in Dakshina Kannada Dakshina Kannada observed complete lockdown with the district administration withdrawing the permission given for the sale and purchase of essential commodities from 6 a.m. to noon after two new positive cases were reported in the district yesterday. Some milk booths in the city and other towns in the district sold the packets for some time early in the morning. Later they closed down. Hence the milk vans of Dakshina Kannada Cooperative Milk Union Ltd (DKMUL) had to return from many towns in the district and places in the city. All vegetable and grocery shops which otherwise operated from 6 a.m. to noon remained closed. The main central market in the city wore a deserted look. 11.40 AM TAMIL NADU TN records two new cases Tamil Nadu has recorded two new COVID-19 positive cases, TN health minister Dr. C. Vijayabaskar informed via Twitter. This includes a 42-year-old male from Kumbakonam and a 49-year-old from Katpadi. Both have a history of foreign travel and had transit via Middle East. The former had returned from West Indies and the latter from United Kingdom, and are in isolation at the Thanjavur Medical College Hospital in Thanjavur and at a Vellore private hospital respectively. Both the patients are stable. 11.30 AM INDIA There was no leniency in screening for foreign travellers, \'prosperous Indians\', says Centre India has been proactive and preemptive, and graded in its response to the crisis, the government said on Saturday. Amid criticism that the by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was without prior planning, the Centre released a timeline of its actions since the breakout of the global pandemic. It said India acted much before WHO declared COVID-19 as of international concern on January 30, to put in place a comprehensive response system at its borders. 11.20 AM BRITAIN Oxford Universitys coronavirus vaccine opens for clinical trial on humans As the world is grappling with thousands of deaths and lakhs of , there is some hope as the worlds top university Oxford has announced its vaccine is entering Phase 1 clinical trials in humans. In a press release, University of Oxford stated that its researchers working in an unprecedented vaccine development effort to prevent COVID-19 have started screening healthy volunteers (aged 18-55) on Friday for their upcoming ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine trial in Englands Thames Valley. The vaccine based on an adenovirus vaccine vector and the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein is already in production but wont be ready for some weeks still. 11.10 AM UTTAR PRADESH U.P. deploys buses to ferry migrants stuck on Delhi border to State A small group of migrant labourers walk past a deserted Lucknow street with their belongings to catch a bus to their home in East U.P. Uttar Pradesh government is deploying buses to ferry migrants stuck at various points on Delhi border to the State. Around 200 buses will depart every two hours, said an official. Transportation of such people will continue today and tomorrow, it has been informed. Transportation of such people will continue today and tomorrow. 11 AM KARNATAKA Infosys employee arrested in Bengaluru for post asking people to spread the virus on social media The Central Crime Branch (CCB) on Friday arrested a software engineer who was employed with Infosys for allegedly putting up a post on social media encouraging people to spread the . In his tweet, the accused, Mujeeb Mohammad, 40, wrote, Lets join hands, go out and sneeze with an open mouth in public. Spread the virus. A CCB official said, We have arrested the engineer for posting hate messages on social media. He has been booked under the IT Act and under Sections 269 and 270 of the IPC. The post went viral on Thursday. subsequently ordered an internal probe and terminated his employment. 10.50 AM RAJASTHAN Two new cases detected in Rajasthan Two more COVID-19 positive cases have been detected in Rajasthan, taking the total number of cases to 52. One of the newly-detected cases is from Ajmer: a 23-year-old salesman who had recently travelled to Punjab. The second case is from Bhilwara. The patient is a 21-year-old female typist from the private hospital where three doctors were previously found infected. 10.40 AM USA U.S. confirmed coronavirus cases cross 100,000: tracker The United States now has more than 100,000 confirmed cases of the new coronavirus, a tracker maintained by Johns Hopkins University showed Friday. There have been 100,717 cases including 1,544 deaths as of 6:00 pm Eastern time. The biggest cluster by far is in New York, home to almost half the cases, overwhelming the hospital system. The United States has around 15,000 more confirmed cases then the second country on the list, Italy, and 20,000 more than China, where the disease was first identified but has since peaked. 10.30 AM MANGALURU Infosys Foundation sends critical medical supplies worth 28 lakh to Mangaluru Infosys Foundation has sent critical medical supplies worth 28 lakh to Dakshina Kannada to tackle COVID-19, according to P. S. Harsha, Police Commissioner, Mangaluru. The vehicle carrying the medical supplies reached Manngaluru on March 28, he tweeted on Saturday. Ms. Sudha Murthy responded to the call of Mangaluru Police on behalf of Dakshina Kannada district administration and within 36 hours critical medical supplies worth 28 lakhs have reached Mangaluru. We thank Madam Sudha Murthy and Infosys Foundations Ramdas Kamat and team, the Commissioner tweeted. 10.20 AM USA China to share coronavirus data with U.S.: Trump China will share its data related to the novel coronavirus pandemic with the US and the country will learn from Beijings experience, President Donald Trump has said, a day after he held an hour-long conversation with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. , days after the U.S. president angered Beijing by referring to the coronavirus as Chinas ruling Communist Party posed a substantial threat to Americans health and their way of life. 9.30 AM INDIA Railway moves 1.6 lakh freight wagons Indian Railways on Friday said that it has moved more than 1.6 lakh freight wagons in the last four days, of which over one lakh wagons were carrying essential commodities, including food grains, milk, fruits & vegetables and petroleum products. Close coordination is being maintained with the State Governments so that rakes of essential commodities are handled smoothly without any delay, amidst various restrictions imposed in the wake of COVID-19, an official statement said, adding that freight movement is being closely monitored. The All India Station Masters Association on Friday also said that its members will contribute one days wage for the next three months, raising about 21 crore, to help tide over the impact of COVID-19. 9.20 AM TURKEY Turkey adopts voluntary quarantine, suspends international flights President Tayyip Erdogan called on March 27 for a voluntary quarantine in which Turks stay at home except for shopping or basic needs to stem a surge of , which jumped by a third in a day to 5,698 with 92 dead. If we don\'t want these measures to reach a further stage, we must abide by the voluntary quarantine rules verbatim. What does this voluntary quarantine mean? It means do not leave your house, Erdogan told a press conference late on Friday. 9.10 AM HUNGARY Hungary imposes two-week lockdown Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban announced a two-week lockdown on March 27 , despite criticism by rights groups. People will be allowed to go to work and do basic errands and exercise in the open, A health official places the home quarantine stamp on a passenger in a bus at Mithapur bus stand in Patna, Bihar. Many took a bus from Mumbai to reach their hometowns during the 21-day national lockdown to control the coronavirus pandemic. Since the lockdown was announced, India has added between 75-100 cases a day on average. India on Sunday reported more than 100 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the overall case load to 979. Reports from State health authorities put the death toll from COVID-19 at 29, with . Maharahstra reported two fatalities, while J&K and Delhi reported one each on Sunday. Maharashtra and Kerala continued to have the most cases at 203 and 202 respectively. Kerala reported 20 new cases, while 1.41 lakh people are under observation, State Health Minister K.K. Shailaja said. Maharashtra had 22 new cases, with 10 from Mumbai. Since the lockdown was announced on March 24, India has added between 75-100 cases a day on average. According to district-wise updated figures from the Union Health Ministry, Mumbai recorded the highest number of cases at 81, followed by Kasargod in Kerala with 78. Bangalore came next with 26. The Hindu has brought out a on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075, 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019-at-gmail.com. The Prime Minister has announced a WhatsApp helpdesk number: 9013151515. Here are the latest updates: 10.50 PM NEW YORK New York state nears 1,000 coronavirus deaths New York states coronavirus death toll is nearing 1,000. The state accounts for more than 40% of coronavirus deaths in the U.S. The number of disease-related deaths in the state jumped Sunday to 965 from 728 the day before, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. The vast majority have been in New York City. Figures released Sunday morning showed 678 coronavirus deaths in the city, which continues to be the epicenter of the pandemic in the U.S. Meanwhile, new data is showing which parts of the city are being hit the hardest by disease and that nearly a quarter of the people whove died of coronavirus in the state were nursing home residents. 10.05 PM ZIMBABWE Zimbabwe braces for 21-day coronavirus lockdown Zimbabweans braced Sunday for a three-week lock-down to curb the spread of the coronavirus which has killed one person so far and infected six others, and for many the lockdown means tough times ahead. President Emmerson Mnangagwa declared a 21-day total lockdown from Monday that will curtail movement within the country, shut most shops and banks, and suspend flights in and out of Zimbabwe. With independent sources saying the official number of infections is understated, the spread of COVID-19 could prove devastating for a country whose economy is crippled by hyperinflation and whose social health care systems are crumbling. Poor rains have exacerbated the crisis, with half of the 15-million-strong population facing severe food shortages. We are not against the lockdown, said Isaac Sayeed, who runs a stationery stall in the capital, Harare. 9.55 PM ANDHRA PRADESH 2 more test positive for coronavirus in AP In fresh cases of person-to- person transmission, two people tested positive for coronavirus in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday, taking the total to 21 in the state. The cases were from Visakhapatnam and both were contacts of the person who had returned from Birmingham in England and tested positive for coronavirus on March 17, the Medical and Health Departments latest bulletin said. It said that of the total 85 samples tested in the state on Sunday, all except the two turned negative. Meanwhile, the 65-year-old person in Visakhapatnam, who returned from Medina and tested positive for Covid-19 on March 17, responded well to the treatment and was stable now. The patient (number 3 in the state) was tested negative for Covid-19 yesterday and today, the bulletin added. With two new cases on Sunday, Visakhapatnam topped the list in the state with six cases in all. 8.47 PM ARMED FORCES Two Army personnel test positive Two personnel of Indian Army tested positive to COVID-19 on Sunday - a Colonel (Dr) in kolkota and a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) in Dehradun. Both had history of travel in first and second week of this month, Army sources said. Necessary contact tracing done and identified persons quarantined. Affected two persons are keeping good health and stable, an Army officer said. 7.45 PM NEW DELHI Transportation of all essential, non-essential goods allowed during lockdown: MHA Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Sunday asked all states and Union territories to allow transportation of all goods, without distinction of essential and non-essential, during the lockdown period. The home secretary made it clear that the newspaper delivery supply chain was also allowed under exemptions given for print media. In a letter to chief secretaries of the states and the Union territories, Bhalla said the entire supply chain of milk collection and distribution, including its packing materials, has also been allowed during the lockdown period. Groceries, including hygiene products such as hand wash, soaps, disinfectants, oral care items, battery cells and chargers, are also allowed, he said. The home secretary also included the services of the Indian Red Cross Society under the Establishment of National Disaster Management Authority. 7.40 PM GERMANY German minister commits suicide after \'virus crisis worries\' Thomas Schaefer, the finance minister of Germany\'s Hesse state, has committed suicide apparently after becoming "deeply worried" over how to cope with the economic fallout from the coronavirus, state premier Volker Bouffier said Sunday. Schaefer, 54, was found dead near a railway track on Saturday. The Wiesbaden prosecution\'s office said they believe he died by suicide. "We are in shock, we are in disbelief and above all we are immensely sad," Bouffier said in a recorded statement. 7.25 PM UTTAR PRADESH Confirmed cases rise to 72 in UP Number of positive COVID-19 cases in Uttar Pradesh climbs to 72, UP directorate of health services said. 11 new cases over the past 24 hours. Four in Noida, two in Ghaziabad, one in Bareilly and four in Meerut 7.20 PM USA Trump back-flips on New York lockdown - Some eight hours after stunning the New York metropolitan region with a proposal to place it under quarantine, US President Donald Trump decides against imposing a broad lockdown. His reversal comes on the same day as the US death toll tops 2,100, more than doubling in just three days. Of the fatalities more than a quarter are in New York City. The US has the most confirmed cases in the world. Health authorities urge residents in the states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut to refrain from non-essential domestic travel for 14 days. 6.55 PM TAMIL NADU Directive to schools, colleges and private organisations Greater Chennai Corporation, all District Collectors to allow two to three persons from every school, college and private organisations to prepare the salary list for three days March 30, 31 and April 1 during the lockdown, a Tamil Nadu Government order said. The GO further said "Companies that had employed workers from other States should continue to ensure their accommodation, food and medical requirement; District Collectors to ensure compliance." 6.45 PM WORLD COUNT More than 31,000 deaths worldwide At least 31,412 people have died worldwide from the coronavirus some 22,260 of those in Europe since the epidemic started in China in December, according to an AFP tally compiled on Saturday based on official sources. With 10,023 deaths, Italy alone accounts for almost a third of the world death toll. The next countries with the highest official deaths are Spain (6,528), mainland China (3,295), Iran (2,640) and France (2,314). 6.35 PM NEW DELHI Kejriwal asks migrant workers not to travel In a press conference, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed migrant workers not to travel home. Stay where you are is the mantra of the lockdown and we will fail to fight Coronavirus. Mr. Kejriwal said "If you love your life and love your family members please do not try to return home and avoid crowded places." The Delhi Chief Minister said "Indian villages have not had any any cases of Coronavirus if people try to leave the city and go to villages it will spread to villages." Mr. Kejriwal said "We have made enough arrangements for food as well as stay. We have cleared classrooms in schools and we can clear stadiums as well to provide accommodation in Delhi." 6.30 PM MAHARASHTRA One more succumbs in Maharashtra; death toll rises to 8 A 45-year-old man has succumbed in Buldhana taking the Maharashtra death toll to eight. This is the first death outside Mumbai Metropolitan Region and in the Vidarbha region. The number of cases has gone up to 203. 6.25 PM NEW DELHI Health Ministry issues SOP to guide ambulance staff in transporting COVID-19 cases The Union Health Ministry on Sunday laid down the standard operating procedure (SOP) for medical staff attending to or transporting a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. It said the SOP is meant to guide and train ambulance drivers and technicians in transporting COVID-19 patients. Ideally, there should be ambulances identified specifically for transporting COVID suspect patients or those who have developed complications, to the health facilities, according to the SOP. Currently, there are two types of ambulances ALS (with ventilators) and BLS (without ventilators). States may empanel other ambulances having basic equipment like that of BLS and use it for COVID patients, the Health Ministry said. It warned against use of the 102 ambulances for coronavirus patients and said they should only be used to transport pregnant women and sick infants. The emergency medical technician (EMT), driver of ambulance must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling, managing and transporting identified and suspected cases of COVID-19. The patient and the attendant should be provided with triple-layer mask and gloves, the SOP said. The ministry also provided a sample questionnaire to identify COVID-19 cases in its SOP. 6.20 PM KARNATAKA Two more men test positive for COVID-19 in Udupi Two more men have tested positive to COVID-19 in Udupi district on Sunday. According to the information provided by the District Health and Family Welfare Officer, a 35-year-old man from Udupi who had returned from Dubai on March 17, was admitted to a hospital in Karkala with symptoms of COVID-19 on March 27. His throat swab had been sent for testing and according to the report received on Sunday, he had tested positive for COVID-19. A 29-year-old man from Udupi had gone to Thiruvananthapuram and had returned from there. He was admitted to the hospital here with symptoms of COVID-19 on March 26 and he too had tested positive for COVID-19. Both these men had since been admitted to the Kasturba Hospital in Manipal for treatment, the release said. With this the total number of persons who had tested positive for COVID-19 in Udupi district goes up to three. It may be recalled that a 34-year-old man from Udupi district who had arrived in a flight from Dubai on March 18 and had tested positive for COVID-19 on March 25. -- Karnataka Bureau 6.10 PM KERALA Kerala reports 20 new cases Kerala reports 20 new cases of coronavirus. Total number of people under treatment for the infection rises to 181, says state Health Minister K K Shailaja. 6.00 PM TAMIL NADU Eight more test positive in TN Tamil Nadu Health Minister Vijayabaskar tweeted "TN reports 8 new positive cases from Erode (contact of the Thai Nationals who are undergoing treatment at IRT Perundurai). The patients were identified through TN Health\'s tracing. All patients are isolated for treatment." 5.45 PM UTTAR PRADESH Ensure no one sleeps hungry during lockdown, says Adityanath Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday held a meeting with 12 nodal officers of UP who have been appointed in different states and asked them to ensure that no one sleeps hungry during the 21-day lockdown imposed across the country in view of coronavirus outbreak. He asked them to co-ordinate with their respective state governments and local administrations, and ensure availability of food and lodging facilities for the people of UP, who are stranded in various states. Lockdown means a person stays wherever he/she is, and it should be implemented in everyones interest. This will ensure health safety, an official statement, quoting the chief minister, said. Efforts should be made to speak politely to the affected person and his/her problems must be resolved, the CM said. While reviewing the lockdown situation in the state with the senior UP government officials at his residence, Mr. Adityanath said his dispensation is working in coordination with the Centre in the fight against coronavirus. 5.40 PM TAMIL NADU Two discharged in Tamil Nadu Tamil Nadu Health Minister Vijayabaskar tweeted "Two patients returned from US admittd at the Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital as positve coronavirus cases from Porur were discharged on Sunday. They have recovered from the illness and tested negative twice. They will be home quarantined for next 14 days. I appreciate the Dean & team who took care of the patients." 5.20 PM INDIA JSW Group commits 100 crore to fight COVID-19 Sajjan Jindal led JSW Group has committed Rs 100 crore to the Prime Ministers Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM-CARES Fund) in support to all on-going relief efforts in light of the current COVID -19 Crisis. Chairman of the JSW Group, Mr. Sajjan Jindal while announcing the groups support said,, We are continuously evaluating the situation and I can earnestly say that the JSW Group is committed to assisting the government in all ways possible to deal with all COVID - 19 related fallouts. These immediate contributions is what we see is the need of the hour, and we have earmarked further monetary and non-monetary contributions so as to allow us to dynamically respond to all societal requirements in the future. -- Piyush Pandey 5.10 PM MAHARASHTRA 3 more test coronavirus positive in Maharashtra, tally rises to 196 With three more persons testing positive for coronavirus in Maharashtra, the number of such patients in the state has gone up to 196, state Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Sunday. However, he did not specify the places where these three new patients belong to. Three more people have tested positive, taking the tally to 196. However, 34 people have been discharged so far in the state. So the number of active COVID-19 patients in the state is 155, Tope said. All the cured and discharged people have been advised to observe mandatory home quarantine for 14 days from the date of discharge, he said. The current count of COVID-19 patients in the state is 196- Mumbai and Thane Region 107, Pune 37, Nagpur 13, Ahmednagar 3, Ratnagiri 1, Aurangabad 1, Yavatmal 3, Miraj 25, Satara 2, Sindhudurg 1, Kolhapur 1, Jalgaon 1 and Buldhana 1, he said. 5.00 PM INDIA Indian Railways extends its medical services to all central govt. employees Indian Railways has extended services of all its hospitals and dispensaries to all central government employees and their families in view of the spread of coronavirus, a Railway Board order said. The services include those of all 128 hospitals and 586 dispensaries of the Indian Railways all over the country. --PTI 4.40 PM WEST BENGAL Coronavirus Migrant workers returning to Balarampur village in West Bengal told to live in trees The families and villagers of seven migrant labourers returning home to Balarampur village in West Bengals Purulia district were told to make trees their home during self-quarantine. Also read According to local MLA, Shantiram Mahato, the labourers had returned on March 27 and were advised self- quarantine for 14 days as a precaution against COVID-19. 4.20 PM INDIA Focus on clusters with high numbers of cases: Health Ministry "We are focusing attention on clusters where there are a high number of cases," said Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agrawal. "10 empowered groups constituted to manage medical management, improve quarantining facilities, upgrade healthcare facilities. These groups will coordinate. "1.25 lakh wagons of essential goods consisting of sugar, grains, oil etc have been transported. "By and large, lockdown is being implemented well," said Home Ministry spokesperson Punya Salila Shrivastava. "Stranded labour has to be taken care of. Labourers must be quarantined for 14 days. Their wages must be paid in full. No rent to be charged from them for a month," Mr. Shrivastava added. "We have conducted 35,000 tests," said Dr. Raman R. Gangakhedkar of ICMR. "We are using 30% of our testing capacity." "Abbot test that detects covid in 5mins not yet available in India. But it\'s an antibody test, not a PCR test," Mr. Gangakhedkar said. The government\'s toll-free number 08046110007 was also shared, for anyone facing mental health problems. It is coordinated by NIMHANS. --Jacob Koshy 4.00 PM GOA Two more cases in Goa Two more COVID-19 positive cases have been recorded in Goa, taking total cases to 5. One of the patients had returned from the Bahamas, while the other was in touch with one of the three men who had tested positive earlier this week. -- Aditya Anand 3.50 PM KERALA Migrant workers stage protest defying lockdown High drama prevailed in Payipad town on the outskirts of the Kottayam district on Sunday morning when hundreds of staged a public protest defying the country-wide lock down. The protests began by 11 a.m when the , mostly from West Bengal and Assam, staged a blockade on the Changanassery-Mallappilly Road demanding food and travel facility for returning to their homelands. The attempts by the police and the Payippad Panchayat authorities to pacify the protesters are yet to reach a breakthrough. 3.45 PM INDIA Defence Ministry employees to contribute one day\'s salary to PM-CARES Fund Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has 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 Rs 500 crore will be collectively provided to the fund from various wings, including the three Services Defence PSUs and others, according to the Ministry pf Defence. -- Dinakar Peri 3.40 PM PUNJAB Punjab govt issues advisory, asks industry not to sack workers, reduce wages The Punjab government has issued an advisory to industries and commercial establishments in the state, asking them not to terminate employees or deduct their wages, as non-essential factories remain shut due to a countrywide lockdown to combat coronavirus. Any employee who takes leave due to the COVID-19 pandemic should be treated on duty as also the workers of factories or units made non-operational by any government order over coronavirus, the advisory said. --PTI 3.30 PM INDIA Indian Railways apprehend "enormous" rush to hospitals soon The Indian Railways apprehend an "enormous" rush to hospitals soon and have decided to hire the services of retired para-medical staff. In a note to all General Managers of Zonal Railways and Production Units, the Railway Board on Saturday said "keeping in view the pandemic situation because of the outbreak of Coronavirus disease, it is apprehended that extra para-medical staff will be required for handling the enormous rush expected in few weeks." 3.15 PM HARYANA Haryana govt provides over 800 buses to UP to ferry migrant workers to their villages The Haryana government has provided over 800 State roadways buses to Uttar Pradesh to ferry migrant workers stranded on the Delhi-Ghaziabad border to their villages, officials said. The decision was taken in view of the current situation on the border with large number of migrant workers assembling near Anand Vihar bus terminus, Haryana Transport Minister Mool Chand Sharma told PTI over phone. The U.P. government had made a request to us to provide nearly 1,000 buses, he said. The buses have been sent from Karnal, Panipat, Sonipat, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Gurugram, Faridabad, Palwal and Nuh, the places in Haryana which are close to the national capital, he said. The buses have been sanitised, drivers and conductors provided masks and hand sanitisers and all other necessary precautions are being taken, he said. --PTI 3.00 PM INDIA Rahul Gandhi writes to PM Modi Expressing solidarity with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India\'s fight against COVID-19, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi asked Mr. Modi to adopt a more "nuanced approach" that factors India\'s complex realities and unique position. Mr. Gandhi argued that a complete lockdown could result in "catastrophic" loss of life as unemployed youth rush back to their villages and endangering the elderly population. In his letter, released by the Congress party hours after the Prime Minister\'s Man Ki Baat, Mr. Gandhi also offered suggestions to deal with the exodus of migrant workers, informal sector and financial institutions as the Congress leader anticipated a further extension of the lockdown. 2.50 PM INDIA Homeless shelters to provide 3 meals a day: HUA Ministry Urban homeless shelters would provide three meals a day to those living in and around the premises to help people cope with the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry officials said. The HUA Ministry secretary, Durga Shanker Mishra, said on Saturday that three meals a day would be provided to around 1 lakh people living in and around 1,500 shelters for the homeless in cities. 2.40 PM INDIA EPF scheme members can now withdraw non-refundable advance The Union Labour and Employment Ministry said that it had notified an amendment to the Employees Provident Scheme (EPF) allowing members to withdraw non-refundable advance amounts in the wake of the . As announced by Finance Minister , the Ministry notified the amendment on March 27, making it effective from March 28. 2.30 PM INDIA 13 lakh railway employees to donate a days salary: Goyal The Railway Ministry will donate 151 crore to PM-CARES fund to help combat the COVID-19 outbreak, Union Railways Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. Following PM @NarendraModi jis call, I, & MoS Suresh Angadi will donate 1 months salary & 13 lakh railway & PSU employees will donate 1 days salary, equal to 151 cr, to PM-CARES fund My grateful thanks to my colleagues & we all pray that our country remains safe and healthy, said Mr. Goyal in a tweet. 2.20 PM INDIA Centre asks States to ensure strict implementation of lockdown In view of the largescale exodus of migrant workers, the Centre has directed the States to enforce strict implementation of the 21-day lockdown and prohibit movement of people across cities and highways. Those who have travelled during the lockdown period will be subjected to a minimum 14-day quarantine in government facilities. Detailed instructions on monitoring of such persons during quarantine have been issued to the States, said the government, adding that the three weeks of strict enforcement was essential to contain the COVID-19 spread. -- Devesh Kumar Pandey 2.15 PM RAJASTHAN One more case in Rajasthan One more COVID-19 positive case has been reported from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan. The 21-year-old man came from Philippines to Delhi on March 18 and travelled to Jhunjhunu by taxi. He was quarantined at home from March 18 to 22 and shifted to a medical quarantine facility on March 23. He developed symptoms on March 26. His sample was collected and sent for testing on March 27. He was tested positive today. Number of patients in Rajasthan is now 56, according to the Medical & Health Department. --Mohammed Iqbal 2.10 PM MAHARASHTRA Maharashtra reduces cost of Shiv Bhojan Thali to 5 from 10 Maharashtra reduced the cost of Shiv Bhojan Thali to 5 from 10. This will be applicable till June 2020 as of now. Shiv Bhojan is the State govt\'s flagship scheme, which gives one full meal at 10 and was launched a month ago. "The scheme will be expanded at every tehsil lever with a target of distributing 1 lakh meals daily to the poor and needy. State will spend Rs 160 crore for the same. "All political parties, including opposition is together in this battle against the coronavirus. "I request to all labourers from different States to not go out. Maharashtra govt. will take care of you. We have started 163 centres for the same. Stay where you are. "Please follow the lockdown. There are still reports that people are coming out. It leads to clash with the police. The situation is nothing less than an emergency. Please follow the orders," CM Uddhav Thackeray said. -- Alok Deshpande 1.35 PM DELHI Stranded workers continue to wait for transport on the Yamuna Expressway Migrant workers of East Uttar Pradesh coming from Delhi and other parts of U.P., stranded on a street in Lucknow as there was no bus to board at the Qaiserbagh bus station. Hundreds of people remained stranded on the Yamuna Expressway on Sunday as migrant workers headed to their homes in Uttar Pradesh, goaded by fears of joblessness and the desire to unite with their families in the midst of the COVID-19 epidemic. 1.30 PM INDIA CBI officials donate one day\'s salary to PM CARES Fund CBI officials have decided to donate their one day\'s salary to Prime Minister\'s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund) to help the Center in its efforts to fight coronavirus in the country. -- Devesh Kumar Pandey 1.00 PM MAHARASHTRA A 40-year-old woman who was suffering from severe chest pain and breathing difficulty died in Mumbai, taking Maharashtras death toll to seven. As of noon, the number of cases in Maharashtra stands at 193. --Jyoti Shelar 12.20 PM J&K Five more test positive in J&K Five more have tested positive in Jammu and Kashmir, taking the total number of cases to 38. Two of the cases are from Srinagar, two from Budgam and one from Baramulla, according to Jammu and Kashmir government spokesperson Rohit Kansal. -- Peerzada Ashiq 12.10 PM INDIA SpiceJet pilot tests positive, staff sent on home quarantine A SpiceJet pilot tested positive for COVID-19, following which the airline says it has asked all staff who came in his contact to undertake self-quarantine for 14 days. The airline said that the last flight undertaken by the pilot was from Chennai to Delhi on March 21, following which he was under self quarantine. According to the airline, the pilot did not operate any international flight in March. 11.30 AM MAHARASHTRA Maharashtra\'s tally surges to 193 positive cases Yet another person in contact with the Sangli family, 23 of whose members had been previously diagnosed for COVID-19, has tested positive for the virus, taking the total tally in the district to 25 even as the State tally shot up to 193 on Sunday with fresh cases being reported from Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur. District authorities said that a total lockdown has been imposed in Islampur tehsil from where 24 of the 25 cases have been reported for the next three days and the town sealed off for a radius 3.5 km from the residence of the persons diagnosed with the virus. 10.50 AM MADHYA PRADESH Five test positive for COVID-19 in Madhya Pradesh, bringing number of confirmed cases to 40 Four men in Indore and a girl in Ujjain tested positive for COVID-19 on Saturday, according to the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore. With this, active cases in Madhya Pradesh have climbed to 38 in Madhya Pradesh. So far, the State has recorded 40 cases, including two who had succumbed to the illness, Men aged 40,48,21 and 38, who contracted the illness, are residents of Indore, while the case in Ujjain is a 17-year-old girl. While all have a contact history, none has a travel history. 11.30 AM WEST BENGAL PM addresses first Mann ki Baat amid COVID-19 lockdown Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the first Mann ki Baat amid the 21-day-long COVID-19 lockdown, on Sunday March 29. Today, there is only one issue that is gripping the world. I apologise to the countrymen and my conscience says you will forgive me. When I look at the poor people, they must be thinking what kind of the Prime Minister is this who has put you through this hardship. Some of you may be unhappy with the lockdown," said PM Modi. "There was only this option. It is a battle for life and death," he added. 10.50 AM INDIA No fuel crisis in India; enough stock of petrol, diesel, LPG available to last lockdown: IOC India, the worlds third largest energy consumer, has enough petrol, diesel and cooking gas (LPG) in stocks to last way beyond the three-week nationwide lockdown as all plants and supply locations are fully operational, Indian Oil Corp (IOC) Chairman Sanjiv Singh said. Mr. Singh said there is no shortage of any fuel in the country and customers should not resort to panic booking of LPG refills. 10.40 AM GUJARAT Gujarat registers 5th death Another death caused by COVID-19 in Ahmedabad has taken the death toll of Gujarat to five. The 47-year-old man was admitted to the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital on Sunday morning. He was suffering from diabetes. With his death, the death toll in Ahmedabad climbs to three. The health department said that the total number of coronavirus infections in the State is currently 58. 10.20 AM MAHARASHTRA Seven new cases detected in Maharashtra Seven more cases of COVID-19 positive patients have been detected in Maharashtra, confirmed the Chief Minister\'s Office on Sunday. Four cases have been confirmed in Mumbai, and one each in Pune, Sangli and Nagpur districts. This brings the total number of cases in the State to 193. 10.15 AM TAMIL NADU The Directorate of Medical Education has postponed the admission process to postgraduate programmes in the State following lockdown due to COVID19. "The publication of merit list and counselling for admission to PG/MDS courses 2020-2021 session stands postponed till further orders," it informed via the website. 10.10 AM JAMMU AND KASHMIR Second death in J&K, 33 positives cases so far Jammu and Kashmir witnessed the second COVID19-inflicted death on Sunday even as 33 have tested positive in the Union Territory so far. There has been an unfortunate demise of another patient in Srinagar in the morning, said J&K spokesman Rohit Kansal. 9.15 AM INDIA Kiren Rijiju donates one-month salary for fight against COVID-19 pandemic Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday donated his one month salary over and above Prime Minister Narendra Modis directive to all BJP MPs to contribute 1-crore from MPLAD funds in the countrys fight against COVID-19 pandemic. PM Narendra Modi ji announced #PMCares Fund to strengthen disaster management capacities and to encourage research on protecting citizens. It accepts micro-donations too. Let us contribute to make India healthier and more prosperous for our future generations. Ive donated my one month salary, Mr. Rijiju wrote on his Facebook page. Also keeping in touch with District Administration and authorized my nodal DC to use my MPLAD funds to purchase emergency medical kits to fight #COVID-19, he added. - PTI 8.45 AM USA Chan Zuckerberg Initiative pledges USD 25M to fund researching COVID-19 treatments The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the philanthropic arm of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan, has announced plans to team up with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to donate $25 million to a research fund exploring possible COVID-19 treatments. Im really proud to share that (The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative is) going to be joining Gates and others to put together something theyre calling the therapeutics accelerator to fight coronavirus, Ms. Chan told CBS This Morning co-host Gayle King. Ms. Chan told Ms. King that their goal is to fund a group to screen all the drugs that we know have potential effects against coronavirus. The contribution from Mr. Zuckerberg and his wife comes after the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched the COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator earlier in March. The initiative started with $125 million in seed funding at its launch. - AP 8.30 AM ITALY Italys death toll tops 10,000, becomes highest in world Italys death toll from the novel coronavirus shot past 10,000 on Saturday with 889 new deaths, the countrys Civil Protection Service said. The toll in Italy, which has suffered more deaths than any other country, now stands at 10,023. An additional 5,974 infections brought to 92,472 the number of people who have official, US infant dies from COVID-19 A U.S. infant has died from the COVID-19 illness, A toddy tapper serves his customer keeping in my social distancing norms, at Nerada Village in Chinthakani mandal of Khammam District on Monday. G.N.Rao According to WHO\'s March 29 update, globally, 30,105 have died and 638,146 tested positive As India is under lockdown for nearly a week now, the government has said the 21-day period will not be extended. The country is seeing a spurt in the number of coronavirus cases, with Gujarat, Punjab and West Bengal reporting deaths. The Hindu has brought out a on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075, 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019-at-gmail.com. The Prime Minister has announced a WhatsApp helpdesk number: 9013151515. Here are the latest updates: 10.15 PM EUROPE Death toll tops 35,000 worldwide, most in Europe More than 35,000 people have died worldwide from the coronavirus pandemic since it emerged late last year in China, most of them in Europe, according to an AFP tally on Monday using official figures. In total, 35,905 people have died, including 26,076 in Europe. Italy has the most deaths with 11,591, following by Spain with 7,340 and China with 3,304. More than 740,00 cases have been officially detected in 183 countries and territories, including at least 408,203 in Europe, almost 150,000 in the United States and Canada with 2,635 deaths and 106,609 cases in Asia with 3,827 deaths. Detected cases likely reflect only a fraction of the real number of infections as many countries are only testing the most serious cases. --AFP 9.05 PM NEW DELHI Delhi govt converts 11 schools into night shelters for migrant workers: Sisodia The Delhi government has converted its eleven schools into night shelters in a bid to help migrant workers stay in the city during the lockdown period, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Monday. The move comes in the wake of mass movement of migrant workers in big cities, including Delhi, to their home states after they were rendered jobless due to the lockdown that was imposed countrywide for checking the spread of coronavirus. In addition to the existing 238 night shelters in the city, the Delhi government converted 11 schools into night shelters to help migrant workers. We have started night shelter facilities at two of our Delhi government schools near Ghazipur and Anand Vihar. We have made arrangements for food and accommodation for all those in need, he said on Twitter. Mr. Sisodia appealed to the poor and migrant workers to utilise food and accommodation facilities provided by the Delhi government. 8.30 PM NEW DELHI 25 new cases in Delhi Twenty-five new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi on Monday, taking the total number of cases to 97, according to the Delhi government. This is the biggest single-day jump in the number of cases in the city so far. Sunday and Saturday had also recorded the biggest single-day jumps till then with 23 and nine new cases, respectively. There have been two deaths due to the disease so far in the city, but there was no death reported on Monday. Though 97 cases of COVID-19 have been reported so far, there are 89 active cases and five people have been discharged. -- Nikhil NEW DELHI 7.50 PM Prime Minister Modi praises Indian Missions India has taken unprecedented and early steps to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and prevent its large outbreak, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tells Indian Missions. Sources said that the Prime Minister showed appreciation for the role played by Indian Missions in taking care of stranded Indians. "Extraordinary times require extraordinary solutions," he says and asks Indian Missions abroad to identify best practices, innovations, scientific breakthroughs to deal with coronavirus. He asks Indian Missions to pay close attention to evolving international political, economic situation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unity, alertness of all Indians would help safeguard countrys future, he says, on fighting the pandemic. PM Modi asks the Missions to publicise newly established PM CARES Fund on COVID-19 to mobilise donations from abroad. - PTI NEW DELHI 7.45 PM The paramilitary forces have directed that live location of all officers and jawans allowed to work from home or on leave should be obtained daily to prevent the spread of COVID-19 after two positive cases were reported among them, officials said on March 30. -PTI MUMBAI 7.40 PM Mamata Banerjee extends insurance cover to health-care professionals West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said the State government will set up a nodal oronavirus (COVID-19) hospital in each of the States 22 districts. She also said an insurance cover of 10 lakh will be extended to those who have been aiding the government in the fight against COVID-19, including health-care professionals, sanitation workers and police personnel. LUCKNOW 7.30 PM 24 new COVID-19 cases in Uttar Pradesh 24 new COVID-19 positive cases have been reported in Uttar Pradesh, taking the total to 96, as per UP Directorate of Health Services. 14 of these cases are reported from Meerut, 7 from Noida, 1 each from Agra, Lucknow and Bulandhshar. 35 people have been put under quarantine in Meerut and 28 in Ghaziabad. One residential society has been locked down at Ghaziabad and a perimeter of 5 kms around this society has been completely sealed off, said the Health Department. Some areas of Meerut city have also been under total lockdown. Seventeen patients have recovered and been discharged in UP so far. The State has so far tested 2,704 samples and put 1,344 under institutional quarantine. - Omar Rashid NEW DELHI 7.15 PM Finance Ministry relaxes expenditure guidelines Finance Ministry relaxes expenditure guidelines for Health, Pharma, Textiles, Consumer Affairs and Civil Aviation Ministries to facilitate procurement and transport of medical supplies and other essential materials for COVID-19 operations. Ministries to submit Contingency Expenditure Plan for COVID-19 relief by April 10. Each of these departments also authorised to spend Rs. 200 crore for this purpose by March 31, and spend up to their entire budget for the first quarter of 2020-21 in April itself, says Finance Ministry notice. - Priscilla Jebaraj PARIS 7.05 PM Global COVID-19 cases top 7,00,000 More than 7,27,080 cases of COVID-19 infection and 34,610 deaths have been recorded in 183 countries and territories since the coronavirus epidemic started in China in December, according to an AFP tally compiled Monday based on official sources. Italy has 10,779 deaths and has recorded 97,689 cases, Spain 7,340 deaths out of 85,195 cases, mainland China 3,304 deaths and 81,470 cases, Iran 2,757 deaths and 41,495 cases and France 2,606 fatalities and 40,174 cases. A Greek woman aged in her 70s became the first person to die of COVID-19 on the Greek Aegean island of Lesbos, where the overcrowded Moria migrant camp is based. - AFP NEW DELHI 7 PM Congress seeks payment pf 70% of wage bill of MSMEs The Congress on Monday asked the Union government to pay 70% of the wage bill of the micro, small and medium (MSME) enterprises for the next three months and make it mandatory for the employers not to retrench their employees for the next six months. LUCKNOW 6.50 PM Doctors, nurses and paramedical staff working with coronavirus patients will be lodged in four 5-star hotels of the capital city of Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Monday. Besides, Avadh Shilp Gram on Shaheed Path and Indira Gandhi Pratishthan have also been prepared as quarantine centres to house those arriving from outside Uttar Pradesh, they said. BENGALURU 6.30 PM \'Send hourly selfies\' All people in home quarantine in Karnataka have been asked to send a selfie with their GPS coordinates every hour to the government of Karnataka. Those who fail to do so will be sent to mass quarantine centres, a press release by the Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar said. - Tanu Kulkarni DATE 6.05 PM Iran\'s death toll climbs by 117 in 24 hours Iran had 117 new COVID-19 deaths in the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 2,757, a Health Ministry spokesman said on Monday, prompting the Middle East\'s worst-hit country to consider tougher curbs on movement. The total number of infections climbed to 41,495. JERUSALEM 6 PM Israeli PM enters quarantine after aide tests positive for COVID-19 Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahus office said on Monday that he will enter quarantine after an aide on Knesset affairs tested positive for coronavirus. BENGALURU 5.50 PM Five new cases reported in Karnataka Five new positive COVID-19 cases have been detected in Karnataka, taking the total number to 88. Four of the cases are primary contacts of the employee pharmaceutical company in Nanjangud in Mysuru who had tested positive earlier this month. All of them are employees of the same company. All are isolated at a designated hospital in Mysuru. Another is a 13-year-old boy, a resident of Tumkur and son of patient number 69. - Tanu Kulkarni TOKYO 5.50 PM Tokyo Olympics rescheduled for July 23 to August 8 in 2021 The Tokyo Olympics will open next year in the same time slot scheduled for this years games. Tokyo organizers said the opening ceremony will take place on July 23, 2021 almost exactly one year after the games were due to start this year. Last week, the IOC and Japanese organizers postponed the Olympics until 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. This years games were scheduled to open on July 24 and close on Aug. 9. But the near exact one-year delay will see the rescheduled closing ceremony on Aug. 8. - PTI AHMEDABAD 5.40 PM Ahmedabad based Torrent Group commits Rs. 50 crore to PM-CARES fund to fight the Coronavirus epidemic. The group also commits Rs. 50 crore for providing free medicines and other medical equipment. - Mahesh Langa CHANDIGARH 5.30 PM An NRI couple test positive in Chandigarh Five fresh confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported in Chandigarh, taking the total to 13, a government official statement said on Monday. Among the five are an NRI couple - 32-year-old male and 32-year-old female - who are residents of Canada. - Vikas Vasudeva LONDON 5.10 PM U.K.\'s Prince Charles \'out of self-isolation and in good health\' British heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles, 71, who had tested positive for coronavirus, is out of self-isolation and is in good health, his spokesman said. Clarence House has confirmed today that, having consulted with his doctor, The Prince of Wales is now out of self-isolation, the spokesman said. - Reuters JAIPUR 4.45 PM Six more test positive in Jodhpur Six more evacuees from Iran test positive for COVID-19 in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. The mother and son of the person earlier found positive in Ramganj area of Jaipur, which has been put under curfew, also test positive. A 40-year-old man, who was an OPD patient in Bhilwara\'s private hospital from where infection spread, also tests COVID-19 positive. The tally in Rajasthan is 69. - Mohammed Iqbal INDORE 4.45 PM Fourth person dies of COVID-19 in Madhya Pradesh A 41-year-old man dies of COVID-19 in Indore, taking the toll owing to the illness to four in Madhya Pradesh, according to Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore. -Sidharth Yadav UTTARAKHAND 4.30 PM Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya on March 30 donated one-month salary to PM-CARES fund and appealed to people to contribute as much as they could to fight the coronavirus outbreak. NEW DELHI 4.15 PM \'We can still fail, if even one person fails to cooperate\' India has reported 39 deaths and cases count has crossed 1000 so far, Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary- Health & Family Welfare tells in a virtual media conference. It has taken 12 days for India to reach 1000 cases, while in several nations has seen even up to 8000 cases in this time period, he adds. We have been able to achieve this because of cooperation of public, our collective preemptive action, social distancing and lockdown, he says. However we are dealing with an infectious disease. We can still fail, if even one person fails to cooperate, he warns. We have given guidelines on how public places ought to be disinfected, he says. 38,442 tests have been conducted so far. 3,501 of were done yesterday. Below 30% of testing capacity, says ICMR Chief Dr. Raman Gangakhedkar. 115 ICMR labs are currently functional. 1,343 were tested in private labs. Percentage of cases showing serious illness very less. Only a "miniscule percentage" of assymptomatics have tested positive for COVID-19, says Mr. Agarawal. He adds, "We should not use the word \'community\' in community transmission. We have to come out of semantics Technically country is experiencing local transmission." "Overzealous employees" were responsible for spraying disinfectant on migrant labourers in Bareilly, no guidelines were issued by health ministry for such action, he says. Mr. Agarwal said \'no comments\' to Cabinet Secretary saying no lockdown beyond April 15. -Jacob Koshy NEW DELHI 4.00 PM Postpone application deadlines for ICAR exam, JNU entrance exam, UGC NET, CSIR NET, NCHM JEE, IGNOU PhD, All India Ayush PG entrance test and management entrance exams by one month, HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank tells National Testing Agency. DEHRADUN 3.50 PM No inter-district movement of people in Uttarakhand on Tuesday The Uttarakhand government has withdrawn its decision of allowing inter-district movement of people within the state on Tuesday following a Union Home Ministry order on strict enforcement of the ongoing lockdown. The state government had earlier decided to allow inter-district movement for a day to help people stranded at different places in the state due to the lockdown. CHENNAI 3.45 PM TN Governor donates Rs. 1 Crore each to PM and CM relief fund Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit has donated Rs one crore each to the Prime Ministers Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund and Chief Ministers Public Relief Fund of Tamil Nadu, the Raj Bhavan said on Monday. The donation made from the Governors Discretionary Grant has been done to assist the Centre and state in their fight to tackle the spread of Coronavirus, the release said. LUCKNOW 3.30 PM UP Shia Waqf Board waives off rentals for 3 months The Uttar Pradesh Shia Central Waqf Board has decided to waive off rentals of all its property for three months starting March 1 in the wake of the coronavirus epidemic. Vice Chancellor Mufti Abdul Qasim Nomani of Deoband-based Durul Uloom has offered to hand over one of the buildings of the theological school to the Uttar Pradesh government to serve as an isolation ward for COVID-19 patients. BHOPAL 3.00 PM Samples of a 38-year-old man from Ujjain who had died while undergoing treatment for chest pain at a hospital on March 27, test positive for COVID-19 today. This takes the toll owing to the illness to three in Madhya Pradesh. - Sidharth Yadav PUNE 2.10 PM Pune records first death as Maharashtra death toll rises to nine he district recorded its first death on Monday after a 52-year-old man who had tested positive for Covid-19 a week ago died at Punes Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital, said authorities as Maharashtras death toll due to the novel coronavirus pandemic rose to nine. The patient, who was admitted to the private hospital on March 22 after testing positive, had a medical history of diabetes and hypertension, said sources. NEW DELHI 1.00 PM 10 RML hospital staff sent to home quarantine Atleast 10 medical staff at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Delhi have been sent into home quarantine after one of them reportedly showed symptoms of COVID-19. Their samples have been sent for testing, a health ministry official said on Monday. PORT BLAIR 12.50 PM Youth tests positive in Andamans A man in his late 20s has tested positive for COVID-19 in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, taking the number of coronavirus positive cases in the Union Territory to 10. He was part of a group of people that had gone to Delhi to attend a religious programme and returned to Port Blair via Kolkata on March 24. - PTI SRINAGAR 12.40 PM Three new COVID-19 cases in Jammu Three more patients have tested positive for the coronavirus in Jammu taking the total number of positive cases in Jammu and Kashmir to 41. "No new cases in Kashmir division on Monday however, three new positive cases were reported from Jammu. The total in J&K is now 41, J&K government spokesman Rohit Kansal. - Peerzada Ashiq NEW DELHI 12.35 PM 200 people from Nizamuddin develop symptoms; area cordoned off Delhi police has cordoned off major part of Nizamuddin area after around 200 people were taken to different hospitals after they developed symptoms of COVID 19. Police has deployed drones in the area to strictly implement lockdown. - Sourabh Trivedi CHENNAI 12.30 PM TN reports 17 new cases in a single day Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said 17 new cases have been reported in the State on a single day, taking the total number of COVID-19 cases to 67. So far, one person has died and five persons (earlier tested positive for COVID-19) have returned home after treatment, he added. Self-quarantine is the only option available for stopping the spread of COVID-19, Mr. Palaniswami said once again appealing people to stay at home. The local bodies have been issuing emergency passes for people to travel during the lockdown. Only for funerals, weddings scheduled well in advance, or emergency medical conditions will be considered special cases for getting emergency passes, he said. - Dennis S. Jesudasan VIJAYAWADA 12.10 PM AP reports two more cases Two persons whose travel history couldnt be traced have contracted the novel coronavirus in Rajamahendravaram and Kakinada of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh on Monday. So far, the State has reported 23 Covid-19 positive cases. 12.00 NOON Don\'t self-medicate, eat home-cooked food: Health Ministry\'s advisory to senior citizens A Health Ministry poster regarding precautions to be taken by the elderly. Stating that the course of tends to be more severe in the case of the elderly population, resulting in higher mortality, the Union Health Ministry has issued a health advisory, listing some dos and donts for reducing the transmission of the virus among the aged section. The advisory said globally, COVID-19 has impacted several lives and is steadily increasing its reach. Click to read the full list of Do\'s and don\'ts NOIDA 11.50 AM A Noida-based fire safety firm is under scanner for withholding information that its MD returned from the U.K. recently. A woman working in this firm, and her husband have tested positive for COVID-19. 11.15 AM Indian-Americans set up helpline to help community members Several eminent Indian-American groups in the United States have raised funds and deployed volunteers to help community members, including first responders, health workers, students and labourers in America and India, which have been majorly affected by the novel outbreak that has infected over 600,000 people globally. 11.00 AM Status at 11 am: Confirmed cases: 1164 Active cases: 1046 Deaths: 30 \*Data compiled from Union Health Ministry and States JAIPUR 11.00 AM One more COVID-19 positive case reported in Rajasthan today. The 41-year-old male resident of Ladakh is an evacuee from Iran, who landed in Jodhpur on March 25. He is admitted at Mathura Das Mathur Government Hospital in Jodhpur. The tally in the State is now 60, according to Medical & Health Department. The Ladakh resident was among the 277 stranded Indians who were brought back from Iran by a special flight on March 25. The evacuees were kept at a wellness centre operated by the Army in Jodhpur. After his samples tested positive at Sampurnanand Medical College in Jodhpur, he has been admitted to Mathura Das Mathur Government Hospital. - Mohammad Iqbal NEW DELHI 10.50 AM 21-day lockdown won\'t be extended People waiting in long queue in front of a medical shop in Thoothukudi on Monday. The Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting tweeted, saying Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba has denied media reports claiming that the government will extend the lockdown. AHMEDABAD 10.40 AM Another death in Gujarat A 45-year-old COVID-19 female patient died in Gujarats Bhavnagar, taking the number of casualties to 6 in Gujarat. Cases of Coronavirus infection jumps to 69 in the State, according to the health department. - Mahesh Langa MUMBAI 10.00 AM Maharashtra COVID-19 tally jumps to 215 The number of COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra climbed to 215 on Monday as 12 more people tested positive for coronavirus in the state, a health official said. Out of the 12 new patients, five are from Pune, three from Mumbai, two from Nagpur, and one each from Kolhapur and Nashik, the official said. So far, eight COVID-19 patients have died in the State. SINGAPORE 9.40 AM Three Indians test positive for COVID-19 in Singapore Three Indians were among the 42 new coronavirus cases reported in Singapore on Sunday, taking the total number of infections in the country to 844, according to the health ministry. The fresh cases take the total number of people infected with the deadly coronavirus in the city-state to 844, it said. The three Indians include a 35-year-old woman with a long-term pass, a 34-year-old man holding the Singapore work pass. Both of them have a travel history to India. A 34-year-old Indian holding Singapore work pass was infected locally. Another 43-year old man, a Singapore permanent resident whose nationality was not listed, is an imported case with a travel history to India. Also, among the latest cases is a 42-year-old Singapore permanent resident who is a nurse at Sengkang General Hospital and has no travel history to the affected countries. BHOPAL 9.30 AM 8 new COVID-19 cases in MP Eight new COVID-19 cases have been found in Madhya Pradesh, taking the total number of coronavirus patients in the state to 47, a senior health official said on Monday. Of the eight new cases, seven were reported from Indore and one from Ujjain, Government Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College Dean Dr Jyoti Bindal told PTI. KOLKATA 9.30 AM West Bengal records its second death West Bengal recorded its second death due to COVID-19 on Monday, when a 44-year-old woman passed away at North Bengal Medical College and Hospital. She passed away early in the morning. We are trying to isolate the doctors and medical staff who treated her. Attempts are also being made to isolate the patients relative who seem to spread across north Bengal, P.K. Deb, principal of the medical college and hospital told The Hindu. CHANDIGARH 8.40 AM Punjab reports second death, positive cases put at 38 Punjab has reported its second death, after a 62-year-old man died at the Government Medical College and Hospital in Amritsar. The deceased, a resident of Moranwali village of district Hoshiarpur, was a contact case of the 70-year-old man, who was the in Punjab and had died on March 18. Vietnam PM asks major cities to prepare for lockdown Vietnam\'s prime minister on Monday asked major cities to prepare for possible lockdowns to stop the spread of coronavirus as the number of confirmed cases in the Southeast Asian country reached nearly 200. TAMIL NADU 10-month-old among eight fresh cases; State tally hits 50 Eight persons, including four from the same family and an infant, tested positive for on Sunday, Health Secretary Beela Rajesh said. All of them had come into contact with two Thai nationals who had also tested positive for the disease. This takes the total number of patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the State to 50. U.S. Donald Trump extends distancing guidelines by 30 days President Donald Trump said on Sunday the peak death rate in the U.S. from the is likely to hit in two weeks as he extended the coronavirus guidelines, including social distancing, until April 30. Assuring his countrymen that he expects the United States to be on its way to recovery by June 1, Trump told reporters at a televised White House news conference that he had to extend the social distancing measures till April 30, based on the advice from his two top public health advisors and members of the White House Task Force on Coronavirus: Dr. Deborah Bix and Dr. Anthony Fauci. New York State nears 1,000 deaths New York States death toll is nearing 1,000, Governor Andrew Cuomo said. The State accounts for more than 40% of coronavirus deaths in the U.S. Also read: The number of disease-related deaths in the State jumped Sunday to 965 from 728 the day before, he said. The vast majority have been in New York City. NEW DELHI ICMR denies community transmission Head of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases at ICMR, Raman Gangakhedkar, said there was no estimate yet of whether the nationwide lockdown now into its had managed to check community transmission. If we all observe the lockdown strictly then theres a chance that we will soon reach the peak number of cases, Dr. Gangakhedkar added. The ICMR continues to maintain that there are no instances of community transmission. NEW DELHI Do not leave Delhi, Kejriwal appeals to migrant workers Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday appealed to migrant workers trying to return to their villages to remain in Delhi and assured them that his government has made all necessary arrangements for their food and shelter., Firefighters spray disinfectant on a residential building at Todhunter Nagar in Saidapet, Chennai, on Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Global death toll tops 40,000. As India is under lockdown for a week now, the government has said the 21-day period will not be extended. The country is seeing a spurt in the number of coronavirus cases, with Gujarat, Punjab, Telangana and West Bengal reporting deaths. Also read has claimed 47 lives in India as of March 31, according to data from the Health Ministry and State governments. As many as 1403 people have tested positive for the coronavirus. The Hindu has brought out a on essential COVID-19 information, in addition to related to the coronavirus pandemic as it unfolded. Here are on your queries about the virus, a list of , and . The new 24/7 national helpline numbers are 1075, 1800-112-545 and 011-23978046. Email: ncov2019-at-gmail.com. The Prime Minister has announced a WhatsApp helpdesk number: 9013151515. Here are the latest updates: 10.20 PM WORLD COUNT World death toll tops 40,000 The coronavirus pandemic has killed more than 40,000 people worldwide with nearly three-quarters of the deaths in Europe, according to an AFP tally on Tuesday using official figures. A total of 40,057 deaths have been recorded across the world, including 29,305 in Europe, with Italy registering 12,428, followed by Spain with 8,189 and China with 3,305. Since the virus emerged in China in December, 803,645 global infections have been confirmed, more than half of them in Europe, which has 440,928.; The United States and Canada has 172,071 cases and 3,243 deaths and Asia has 108,421 cases with 3,882 deaths. 10.10 PM BENGALURU Section 144 extended till April 14 in Karnataka Prohibitory orders in Bengaluru under Section 144 of the CrPC have been extended from March 31 midnight to April 14 in view of the growing number of COVID-19 patients in the State, Bengaluru Police Commissioner Bhaskar Rao said. Mr. Rao noted that it had become imperative to take stringent measures in the jurisdiction of commissionerate of Bengaluru city to prevent the spread of the disease. Those exempted from the lockdown are essential services, defence, police forces,public utilities, electricity, sanitation, APMC Mandis, hospitals and transport of essential services. The Commissioner said all schools and places of worship will remain shut. - PTI 10 PM NEW DELHI Government promulgates Ordinance to give effect to various relief measures related to income tax and GST compliance. - PTI 10 PM JERUSALEM After PM Netanyahu, Israels army chief goes into quarantine The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen Aviv Kochavi, along with two of his senior commanders, went into isolation on Tuesday after a senior commander they came in contact with recently was tested positive for coronavirus, the army said. The development came a day after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his close advisers were placed under quarantine after an aide on parliament affairs tested positive for COVID-19. Lt. Gen Kochavi, along with Home Front Command head Maj. Gen. Tamir Yadai and Operations Directorate Commander Gen. Aharon Haliva, had attended a meeting 10 days ago in which a commander in the reserves, who later tested positive for the virus, participated. - PTI 9.55 PM CHANDIGARH Total cases in Chandigarh rise to 15 Two more COVID-19 cases were reported in Chandigarh, taking the total number of infected persons in the Union Territory to 15, officials said. Of the two, one in a 31-year-man who has no travel history. He contracted the infection from a COVID-19 patient, an official statement said. Another is a 40-year-old city resident who contracted the virus after coming in contact with a person who earlier had tested positive for infection, it said. The city administration has ordered a massive search for contact tracing and quarantine of their contacts, the release said. - PTI 9.50 PM NEW DELHI Indiabulls Group pledges Rs. 21 crore to PM-CARES Fund In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic that has spread across the world, the Indiabulls Group today pledged Rs. 21 crore to the Prime Ministers Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund(PM-CARES Fund), it said in a statement. - PTI 9.30 PM LONDON U.K. reports record 381 coronavirus deaths in 24 hours Britain reported a record daily coronavirus toll of 381 today (March 31), more than double the number of nationwide deaths posted in the previous 24 hours. As of 5 p.m. (1600 GMT) on 30 March, of those hospitalised in the U.K., 1,789 have sadly died, the Health Ministry said on its Twitter page, up from 1,408 on March 30. The patients were aged between 19 and 98, and all but 28 had underlying health conditions, NHS England said in a statement. The countrys previous highest daily toll was 260, recorded on March 28, with the number dropping to 180 on March 30. Some 25,150 people have now tested positive for the virus in Britain, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson, a daily increase of 3,009. - PTI 9 PM LAGOS Lagos in lockdown Africa\'s largest city Lagos appeared deserted after Nigeria locked down its economic hub and shuttered its capital, in the continent\'s latest effort to brake the juggernaut of coronavirus. Businesses were closed, markets abandoned and streets empty as the megacity of 20 million, along with the capital Abuja, shuddered to a halt on the first full day of a two-week shutdown. - AFP 8.30 PM NEW DELHI Enforcement Directorate officials donate one day\'s salary to PM-CARES relief fund. 8.15 PM MUMBAI "State has enough ration supply, trust us," says Uddhav Thackeray "After corona, we will be facing financial crisis. We have to take actions from now itself. We will be giving government employees salaries in instalments. No salary cut is announced," Uddhav Thackeray tells reporters. He says that the decisive phase of the fight against corona was currently on and adds, "If there are foreign travellers who have yet not tested themselves, then they should come forward." "Even if they have travelled to the countries not listed by the Centre, they should come forward to get themselves tested," he appeals. "Avoid drinking cold drinks and cold water. Avoid using AC. This is not a treatment for the virus, but steps to avoid getting infected with cough and cold," Mr. Thackeray says. "I again appeal to private medical practitioners to open their hospitals. Treat all, except those suffering from cough and cold. Government doctors will treat them." "2 lakh labourers are being given food. Over 1,000 centres are opened. Do not move anywhere. Entire country is under a lockdown. There is enough supply of ration with the State. Trust us. There will be no shortage," he says. He apologises for any inconvenience and concludes, "Do not hide any symptoms of cold, cough and fever. Come forward and get treated." - Alok Deshpande 8 PM CHENNAI 50 new cases of COVID-19 in T.N. 50 more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu, taking the total n umber of positive cases in the State to 124. 7.55 PM TIME Assam gets first COVID-19 patient A 52-year-old has tested positive for COVID-19 in Assam. He is Assam\'s first CIOVID-19 patient. He is undergoing treatment at Silchar Medical College. His condition is stable, tweets Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. 7.45 PM RISHIKESH U.S. tourist tests positive for COVID-19 after her return from Rishikesh A U.S. national, who stayed here for several days, tested positive for COVID-19 after her return on March 13, officials said. She posted her health update on a social media post recently, causing concern among officials here as she had come in contact with quite a few people during her stay in a resort here, Narendra Nagar SDM Yukta Mishra said. People who had come in contact with the woman have been identified, she said, adding action is being taken as per treatment protocol of COVID-19. Muni ki Reti police station in-charge Ram Kishore Saklani said the woman had stayed in a resort in Sarai area. - PTI 7.30 PM BIHAR Five new cases in Bihar With five new cases of COVID-19 in Bihar - four from Siwan and one from Gaya - the total number in the State stands at 21. - Amarnath Tewary 7.10 PM NEW DELHI Case registered against Maulana Saad and others of Tableeqi Jamaat Case registered against Maulana Saad and others of Tableeqi Jamaat under Section 3 of Epidemic Disease Act, 1897 read with Sections 269, 270, 271 and 120-B of the Indian Penal Code for violation of government directions given to the management of Markaz of Basti Nizamuddin regarding restriction of social/political/religious gathering and for taking safety measures, including social distancing for prevention and treatment of COVID-19 viral infection. - Saurabh 6.50 PM ISLAMABAD Pakistan Cabinet approves Rs. 1,200 bn relief package as coronavirus cases rise Pakistans Cabinet approved a Rs. 1,200-billion relief package to deal with the growing coronavirus crisis in the country as COVID-19 cases rose sharply, claiming the lives of 25 people and infecting nearly 1,900. The package was unveiled by Prime Minister Imran Khan last week and it was formalised on March 30 by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) in its meeting, chaired by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh. Prime Minister Khan chaired the Cabinet meeting which granted approval to the relief package on March 31, his Advisor on Information Firdous Ashiq Aawan told the media. The Cabinet unanimously approved Rs. 1,200-billion coronavirus relief package with the commitment that it would help defeat the virus, said Awan. - PTI 6.45 PM LUCKNOW 7 new cases detected in U.P. Seven new cases of COVID-19 reported in Uttar Pradesh. Five in Bareilly and one each in Noida and Ghaziabad. Total caases in the State now stand at 103. - Omar Rashid 6.15 PM GUJARAT A COVID-19 patient who died in Bhavnagar last week had attended the Tabligh Jamaat religious congregation. A total of six people had attended it, says Gujarat police. - Mahesh Langa 6.10 PM JAMMU Army assists 36 stranded people in J&Ks Rajouri The Army assisted 36 stranded people including students and labourers with food, water and other essential items in Jammu and Kashmirs Rajouri district, officials said. Amid the ongoing lockdown, 21 casual labourers and two students, who were travelling from Srinagar to Thanamandi via Poshana on old Mughal road were stranded at Dogrian in the district, PRO, Defence said. The Army provided them rations, water, soap, medicines and coronavirus protection kits comprising of masks, gloves and hand sanitisers. - PTI 6 PM NEW DELHI Letters issued to States to trace and quarantine those who visited India for Tabligh activities: MHA Ministry of Home Affairs says around 2,100 foreigners visited India for Tabligh activities since January 1. As on 21 March, 824 dispersed to different parts of the country and as many as 216 of them were staying at Nizamuddin Markaz. Letters have been issued to all States to trace and quarantine them. On March 28, the State police were advised to collect the names of the Indian Tabligh Jamaat workers from the local coordinators, locate them on the ground, get them medically screened and quarantine them. So far, about 2,137 such persons have been identified in different States. - Vijaita Singh 5.50 PM RAIPUR Two COVID-19 patients discharged in Chhattisgarh Two COVID-19 patients, including an elderly man, were discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here in Chhattisgarh following their recovery, hospital authorities said. A 68-year-old man from Raipur and a 33-year-old man from Bhilai in Durg district were discharged from the hospital a week after they tested positive, Dr Karan Peepre, Medical Superintendent, AIIMS, told PTI. The two were admitted to the government-run hospital after they tested positive for the novel coronavirus on March 25, he said. - PTI 5.45 PM CHENNAI T.N. extends property tax, water cess deadlines Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami "requests" landlords to defer the collection of house rents from tenants for March and April to "after two months" in view of the prevailing circumstances. The CM also said deadline for paying property tax and water cess stands extended for three months (until June 30, 2020). - Dennis Jesudasan 5.40 PM NEW DELHI "Officers won\'t be spared for any lapse" Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Nizamuddin congregation: There is no community transmission of coronavirus yet in Delhi. 1,548 people, who attended the religious congregation at Nizamuddin markas (centre), have been evacuated. Of those who attended the gathering, 441 people have been admitted to hospitals while 1,107 have been quarantined. If there is any lapse on part of any officer, he will not be spared. It is wrong to organise large gatherings of people in wake of coronavirus outbreak. Delhi govt has written to L-G Anil Baijal for registering an FIR in connection with the Nizamuddin religious congregation. I appeal to all religious leaders not to do this irrespective of their religion. I will not hesitate to take strict action in such cases where lives of people are put in danger. At this time, we need testing kits, ventilators, personal protective gear. Anyone who wants to donate such equipment is welcome. - PTI 5.30 PM JHARKHAND Jharkhand reports first case of coronavirus after woman tests positive for COVID-19, says official. -PTI 5.15 PM MAHARASHTRA Now, Maharashtra govt says no pay cut, salary to be disbursed in two installments Hours after announcing cut in salaries of all elected representatives, including the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister and all ministers, Maharashtra government has withdrawn it. Instead, the government will be disbursing the March salary in two installments. 5.10 PM ODISHA The Odisha government said that three persons from the State who attended a West in Delhi have been quarantined in government hospitals. Their families have been advised home isolation. Efforts are on to trace some other people who also participated in the said event. --Prafulla Das 5.00 PM INDIA Govt. sanctions 10-crore special fund for CRPF for relief works The Union Home Ministry has granted a special 10-crore fund to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), enabling it undertake relief works for those affected by the , officials said. The fund, as per a March 30 Home Ministry order, accessed by PTI, is meant to procure COVID-19 preventive items. 4.55 PM INDIA Srinagar COVID-19 victim attended Nizamuddin event, travelled widely A Srinagar-based businessman who travelled by air, train and road to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and back to Jammu and Kashmir before he died of COVID-19, raising fears he may have infected many others along the way, officials said. 4.50 PM IRAN Iran\'s death toll from coronavirus climbs to 2,898: Health Ministry Iran\'s death toll from coronavirus has reached 2,898, with 141 deaths in the past 24 hours, Health Ministry spokesman Kianush Jahanpur told state TV on Tuesday, adding that the total number of infections has jumped to 44,606. In the past 24 hours, there have been 3,111 new cases of infected people. Unfortunately, 3,703 of the infected people are in a critical condition, Mr. Jahanpur said. --Reuters 4.40 PM INDIA Mass migration defeats preventive measures: MHA report in SC The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) told the Supreme Court that the 21-day national lockdown was "inevitable" in the face of an "unprecedented global crisis" like COVID-19. The government blamed "fake and misleading" messages on social media about COVID-19 for creating widespread panic, which led to mass "barefoot" journey of migrant workers from cities to their native villages in rural India. "Deliberate or inadvertent fake news and material capable of causing serious panic in the minds of the public is found to be the single most unmanageable hindrance in the management of this challenge... Will set up a separate unit headed by a joint secretary level officer in the health ministry and consisting of eminent specialist doctors from recognised institutions like AIIMS to answer the queries of citizens," MHA\'s 39-page status report assured. --Krishnadas Rajagopal 4.30 PM KERALA Alcohol will now be made available to those experiencing alcohol withdrawal symptoms: Kerala govt. Alcohol will now be made available to those experiencing alcohol withdrawal symptoms, as per the new government order on Monday. The patient has to take an OP ticket at a health centre or a hospital in the government sector and get examined for withdrawal symptoms. When the doctors prescription is shown at an Excise Department office, a pass for a specified quantity of alcohol will be given. 4.10 PM INDIA Increase in cases due to lack of support from people: Health Ministry "There has been an increase in number of cases due to lack of support from people and cases not being apprised of in time," Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agrawal said. "There have been instances of landlords evicting doctors and nurses." "WHO has not given categorical guidance on use of masks. Ministry of Health says it is still examining PSA guidelines on masks. Suitable guidance to be issued soon," Mr. Agrawal added. "21,000 relief camps have been set up and around 6,00,000 have been given shelter and 23 lakh provided food, according to information from States. This is for migrant labourers and the poor and destitute," a Home Ministry spokesperson said. "Situation of migrant labourers is under control." "We have tested 42,788 samples; 4346 were tested yesterday. It is at 36% of our capacity. 399 have been tested in private labs," said Dr. Raman R. Gangakhedkar of ICMR. "There are 3 kinds of strains of Cov-2 circulating in India. There is no evidence so far that the virus would affect Indians any differently than people in other countries," he added. "Those who are not sick or showing symptoms need not wear masks. It depends on risk of exposure." "The cases we are now seeing is from 2 weeks ago because incubation is 14 days. Effect of lockdown can be judged once the effect of old cases are accounted for," Mr. Gangakhedkar further said. --Jacob Koshy 4.05 PM ODISHA Odisha churches resort to live-streaming of worship At a time when religious congregations are seen as places that facilitate faster spread of , churches in Odisha are using technology to make the faithful participate in Sunday worship from remote locations a first in local church history. After the asked the authorities of religious institutions to practice social distancing, Internet-based social media came to the rescue of the church leadership. 4.00 PM INDIA Modified rail coaches to provide 3.2 lakh isolation beds: Indian Railways Further fine-tuning its plans to offer 20,000 coaches converted into isolation wards for coronavirus patients, the Indian Railways said these coaches can accommodate up to 3.2 lakh possible beds. It has also earmarked targets for its 16 zones, with the South Central Railways headquartered at Secunderabad in Telangana leading the pack with 486 coaches being allocated for conversion, followed by Mumbai headquartered Central Railway being allocated 482 coaches. --PTI 3.50 PM INDIA Vodafone Idea offers prepaid validity extension for low-income feature phone subscribers Vodafone Idea on Tuesday announced an extension of validity on prepaid plans availed by low income customers using feature phones till April 17, and 10 talktime credit to help such users stay connected during the lockdown to contain coronavirus pandemic. 3.45 PM TAMIL NADU Maintenance allowance for persons with disabilities to be paid in advance The Tamil Nadu government has announced that the maintenance allowance to persons with disabilities would be paid in advance for two months to beneficiaries. In an official release, the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and Director for Welfare of the Differently Abled, said the advance payment of maintenance allowance for two months would be made to protect the livelihood of persons with disabilities who are already benefiting under this scheme. 3.40 PM INDIA Air India pilots say safety protocols during COVID-19 ops inadequate Air India pilots have expressed concern over flimsy protective gear, inadequate sanitisers, shoddy disinfection procedure as they embark on flights chartered by countries like Germany and the UK to repatriate their citizens stranded in India due to the nationwide lockdown over . 3.30 PM SPAIN Spain registers overnight death toll of 849, highest so far Spain registered 849 fatalities related to coronavirus overnight - the highest number in 24 hours since the epidemic started, although the increase in percentage terms was slightly lower than in the previous days, the Health Ministry said. The death toll rose to 8,189 on Tuesday from 7,340 on Monday, while the number of cases rose to 94,417 on Tuesday from 85,195 on Monday. --Reuters 3.10 PM RAJASTHAN Nine Indians who returned from Iran test positive Nine Indians who returned from Iran recently and were quarantined at the Army wellness centre in Jaisalmer have tested positive for COVID-19, Army sources said. They are among the 17 positive cases detected among evacuees from Iran. Presently, there are 484 people at the Jaisalmer facility. Six evacuees at Jaisalmer facility and one at Jodhpur facility tested positive on Monday. Three more evacuees tested positive to COVID-19 at Jaisalmer today, an Army source said. -- Dinakar Peri 3.00 PM INDIA Use more masks, India\'s top science advisory body recommends India\'s highest science advisory body has recommended the widespread use of masks. The Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor\'s (OPSA) is a key coordinating agency among government scientific bodies and industry to accelerate decisions on dealing with COVID-19. It doesn\'t recommend the use of the health mask or the N95 mask that are expensive, not-reusable and largely used in hospital settings. -- Jacob Koshy 2.50 PM INDIA SC directs govt. to ensure welfare of migrant workers, orders setting up of portal to disseminate information The Supreme Court directed the government to ensure that migrant workers who have been stopped from crossing the inter-State borders are provided food, shelter and medicines in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, through video-conferencing, asked the government to tap community and religious leaders to speak to the migrant workers lodged in shelters. The court asked the government to have trained counsellors talk to the workers. -- Krishnadas Rajagopal 2.45 PM INDIA SpiceJet to cut 10%-30% salary of all employees in March Budget carrier in March, with Chairman Ajay Singh opting for highest 30% trimming in compensation, the airline said in an e-mail communication to the staff. SpiceJet management has decided to implement a pay cut between 10-30 per cent in March across our employee base. Our Chairman and Managing Director (Ajay singh), in fact, has opted for the highest cut of 30 per cent in compensation, the airline said in the communication. --PTI 2.40 PM RAJASTHAN Four new cases in Rajasthan Four more COVID-19 cases have been reported in Rajasthan today, one each from Jaipur, Ajmer, Jhunjhunu and Dungarpur. With this, the number of positive cases in the State has increased to 76. Along with the 17 positive cases among the evacuees from Iran, staying in Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, the overall number is 93. -- Mohammed Iqbal 2.35 PM KARNATAKA 45 from Karnataka participated in Tablighi Jamaat conference As many as 45 from Karnataka participated in the Tablighi Jamaat conference in Nizamuddin West in Delhi. Many people from across the country who or were close contacts of the participants. 2.30 PM TAMIL NADU Siddha concoction goes viral in Tamil Nadu A Siddha concoction called Kabasura Kudineer is in high demand in Tamil Nadu. People are queueing up at Siddha pharmacies and hospitals to buy this medicine after videos went viral that it can prevent novel coronavirus. People crowd at a Siddha clinic inside Government Pentland Hospital, Vellore, to get a herbal concoction called Kabasura Kudineer. While there is no study available to categorically back this claim, Siddha practitioners have been recommending it as a regular preventive medicine to relieve throat pain. The herbal concoction, a mixture of 15 herbs including Nilavembu, Karpooravalli and Lavangam, was suggested as a preventive medicine during the 2015 swine flu outbreak. 2.25 PM MADHYA PRADESH One more case in Madhya Pradesh A person who had returned from London and escaped from quarantine in Indore has tested positive for COVID-19. Cases in Madhya Pradesh climb to 66. He had run away to Bhopal, where he got himself admitted to a hospital, but didn\'t have contact with anyone in the city, said Tarun Kumar Pithode, Bhopal Collector. -- Sidharth Yadav 2.20 PM UTTAR PRADESH UP police book mufti of Bijnor mosque after 8 Indonesians coming from Delhi Jamaat meet found there Five members of a mosque in Bijnor, including the maulvi, have been booked for allegedly hiding information about the presence of Indonesian nationals who had returned after. The 8 foreigners have been put under home quarantine, said a police officer. -- Omar Rashid 2.15 PM TAMIL NADU Food packets distributed among migrant workers Greater Chennai Corporation Zone 7 Police Inspector Vijayaragavan\'s team distributes food packets to migrant labourers from various States, at Menambedu Road, Coramandal, Ambattur Estate on Tuesday, March 31, 2020. 2.10 PM J&K Six new cases in Kashmir Six more COVID-19 cases have been detected in J&K on Tuesday, taking the toll to 55. "Six new positive cases were confirmed in the Kashmir division. All contacts of previous positive cases," said J&K spokesman Rohit Kansal. The fresh cases come a day after 11, including a doctor, tested positive for COVID-19. The doctor contracted the virus at the microbiology division of the Government Medical College, Jammu. --Peerzada Ashiq 2.00 PM PUNJAB Punjab reports fourth death Punjab reported its fourth death due to COVID-19. A 65-year-old patient, a resident of Nayagaon in Ajit Singh Nagar district, who was tested positive for COVID- 19 has died, Deputy Commissioner Girish Dayalan told The Hindu. --Vikas Vasudeva 1.50 PM AP, Telangana tracing people who attended Nizamuddin event After Telangana reported on Monday all of them who had been to the Tablighi Jamaat meet in New Delhi the Telugu states have stepped up the vigil. As many as 70 people who attended the meet have been at Rayalaseema University, while 41 have been sent to isolation ward in Visakhapatnam. Telangana police have to track them down. Authorities on the Telangana-Maharashtra inter-State border on Penganga river on NH 44 in Adilabad district intercepted a lorry carrying 32 passengers in the small hours Tuesday. The passengers, who were headed for their homes in Medipally in Jagtial district were returning from the held at Nizamuddin in New Delhi between March 13 and 15. 1.30 PM INDIA Bharti Enterprises, Petronet LNG and Hero Group commit Rs 100 crore each Petronet LNG, Bharti Enterprises and Hero Group have separately committed Rs 100 crore each to support efforts to combat the COVID-19 in the country. While Petronet LNG said that the entire sum will be contributed to the PM CARES Fund, Bharti Enterprises and Hero Group will put a part of the contribution in the Fund and a part will be spent on other relief efforts. -- Yuthika Bhargava 1.20 PM MADHYA PRADESH 17 new cases in Madhya Pradesh , the most populous city of Madhya Pradesh, with 17 residents testing positive on Tuesday. 44 of the State\'s 65 cases are from Indore. Three have succumbed to the disease in the city. --Sidharth Yadav 1.00 PM DELHI 1,000 evacuated from Nizamuddin centre; sent to hospitals, quarantine facilities Over 1,000 people have been evacuated from a centre in Nizamuddin West in Delhi till Tuesday morning, where a religious conference had attracted participation of people from several States. 12.50 PM G20 Trade Ministers agree to ensure uninterrupted flow of vital medical supplies Trade and investment Ministers of the G-20 group have agreed to ensure fair trade and continued flow of vital medicines as well as other essential goods to tackle . According to a joint statement issued after a video conference, the ministers agreed to support the availability and accessibility of essential medical supplies at affordable prices, on an equitable basis, where they are most needed and will guard against profiteering and unjustified price increases. 12.40 PM MAHARASHTRA Maharashtra govt announces cut in salaries of all elected representatives The of all elected representatives, including Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and all Ministers. The pay cut is by 60% for all elected representatives and by 50% for Class I and II employees. Class III employees are to have 25% salary cut. There will be no cut in salaries of Class IV employees. This pay cut is applicable for the salary of March 2020. This decision has been taken after discussing with representatives of government employee unions, Deputy CM and State Finance Minister Ajit Pawar said. -- Alok Deshpande 12.30 PM DELHI Over 20,000 houses marked home quarantine in Delhi: Lt Governor Over 20,000 houses have been marked as home quarantine by the Delhi government in the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak, Lieutenant Governor (LG) Anil Baijal said. Taking to Twitter, Mr. Baijal said the number of food distribution centres will also be increased to ensure social distancing in the national capital. --PTI 12.15 PM TELANGANA Returnees of Jamaat in New Delhis Nizamuddin stopped at Telangana-Maharashtra border Authorities on the Telangana-Maharashtra inter-State border on Penganga river on NH 44 in Adilabad district intercepted a lorry carrying 32 passengers in the small hours Tuesday. , who were headed for their homes in Medipally in Jagtial district were returning from the held at Nizamuddin in New Delhi between March 13 and 15. 12.15 PM UTTAR PRADESH Ambulance workers in U.P. threaten to halt work Around 16,000 emergency ambulance workers in Uttar Pradesh have threatened to stop work if the company hiring them did not provide them with proper protective gear while handling the cases. They have also demanded that their salary, which is allegedly not paid since January, be immediately released for them to carry out their work. 12.00 PM MAHARASHTRA The total number of cases reported from Maharashtra has climbed to 230. -- Jyoti Shelar 11.50 AM WEST BENGAL Third death in West Bengal due to COVID-19. The patient was a 48-year-old woman from Howrah district who was admitted to Howrah State General Hospital and died late on Monday evening even before the test reports were received by the hospital authorities. "We had got the samples by 12 noon and by later in the evening we confirmed that the patient from Howrah was suffering from COVID019," a doctor at the Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (IPGMER) and SSKM Hospital, a State-run testing facility in Kolkata told The Hindu. -- Shiv Sahay Singh 11.45 AM RAJASTHAN, ASSAM 47 private hospitals in Jaipur reserved for COVID-19 treatment; MoU inked in Assam Scaling up its the , the Rajasthan government has reserved 47 private hospitals, with a total bed capacity of 5,283, in Jaipur district to meet a crisis situation. The hospital buildings will be used as isolation and quarantine centres when needed in urgency, requiring a swift action. 11.40 PM BIHAR Bihar reports another COVID-19 positive case, raising the total number of cases in the State to 16. -- Amarnath Tewary 11.35 PM GUJARAT Three more cases in Gujarat Three more COVID-19 cases have been reported in Gujarat, taking the total toll to 73. So far, there have been six deaths in the State. Five patients have been discharged. Three of them are more than 60 years of age, according to the State Health Department. --Mahesh Langa 11.30 PM MADHYA PRADESH Madhya Pradesh toll touches five as Indore woman dies A 49-year-old woman died of in Indore on Monday, taking the toll to five in Madhya Pradesh, according to the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore. The city recorded two deaths on the same day. The patient, who died at 10.20 p.m. on Monday at the MRTB hospital, had no contact or travel history. Besides, she was suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure, according to a bulletin issued by the college. 11.20 PM MAHARASHTRA 17 new cases in Maharashtra take tally to 225, Buldhana district sealed Maharashtra saw a further surge in positive cases on Tuesday with new cases from Pu, Mumbai and Buldhana taking the States tally to 225. Two more cases were reported from Pune district'