

Lockdown literature

Literature can help us make sense of pandemics and their impact. Here are some must-read books for these frantic times

For the last few months, our lives seem reminiscent of the plots from popular science fiction novels. An unknown deadly virus has wreaked havoc across the globe. Streets wearing a deserted look, people hiding behind masks and throwing suspicious glances at each other have become the new normal. Looks like life has taken a leaf out of a thriller... with things getting stranger each passing day!

And if you are finding it difficult to come to terms with these unforeseen circumstances, books can be a good antidote. They might help you understand what's happening around you and also offer consolation.

Here's a must-read list...



Photo: AFP

My lockdown reading list

Illustrated books:

- ** "The Spooky Shallow Cough" (spookyshallowcough.com)
- ** "The Big Alone" (thebigalone.com)
- ** "The Mystery of the Missing Soap" Geeta Dharmarajan (books.katha.org)

Others:

- ** "The Ickabog" by J.K. Rowling (theickabog.com)
- ** "The Stand" Stephen King
- ** "World War Z" by Max Brooks
- ** "My Side of the Mountain" by Jean Craighead George

"The Last Dog on Earth"

Daniel Ehrenhaft's 2003 novel, "The Last Dog on Earth" is about the unbreakable bond between a 14-year-old boy Logan and his pet dog Jack. The pair struggle to survive in a world where an incurable prion disease infects dogs and makes them unnaturally violent and bloodthirsty. The book accurately portrays public panic and fear during the outbreak.



"The Princess in Black: Case of the Coronavirus"

Shannon and Dean Hales use their popular book character "The Princess in Black" to answer questions kids might have about the coronavirus pandemic. "The Princess in Black" book series is about a princess who also happens to be a superhero. In "The Princess in Black and the Case of the Coronavirus," the Princess in Black gives tips on how to fight the coronavirus, explaining the importance of hand-washing, staying home, and keeping a distance from other people.



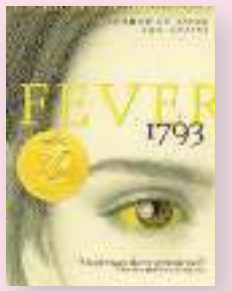
"My Hero is You"

"My Hero is You" offers a way for children and parents to think about the questions the pandemic raises. The story was shaped by more than 1,700 children, parents, caregivers and teachers from 104 countries who took the time to share how they are coping with the challenges of COVID-19. The project was developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.



"Fever 1793"

A 16-year-old Matilda 'Mattie' Cook is separated from her mother as a yellow fever epidemic sweeps the city of Philadelphia in 1793. Mattie is forced to learn to survive on her own in a city turned frantic with disease.



"The Andromeda Strain"

Scientists scramble to tackle an alien micro-organism that poses an unprecedented threat to humanity. Michael Crichton's "The Andromeda Strain" is about a mutating virus that causes fatal blood clots and kills people within two minutes.



CBSE, ICSE exams cancelled

Exams scheduled from July 1-15 cancelled due to the pandemic, Centre and CBSE inform SC; CBSE asked to issue fresh notification clarifying details of Class XII exams

NEW DELHI The Centre and the CBSE Thursday informed the Supreme Court that they have decided to cancel the Class X and XII examinations scheduled from July 1-15 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and they would be conducted later. A bench headed by Justice A. M. Khanwilkar was apprised by the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that a scheme has been formulated to assess the performance of class XII students on the basis of their performance in last examinations.

The top court was also informed that the students will have the liberty to opt either for the examinations to be conducted later, or go with the assessment process based on past performance.

The court was hearing pleas seeking scrapping of remaining exams of Class XII scheduled from July 1-15 in view of increasing number of COVID-19 cases.



TRYING TIMES Students wear masks amid coronavirus fears, as they wait outside Kerala School ahead of their CBSE Class 12 exams, in New Delhi, on March 6, 2020. FILE PHOTO: PTI

A scheme has been formulated to assess the performance of class XII students on the basis of their performance in last examinations.

The court has taken note of the Centre's submission, and asked the CBSE to issue fresh notification clarifying details of Class XII board exams.

Meanwhile, the ICSE board tells the top court that it has also cancelled its Class X and XII board exams with no option of re-examinations. PTI

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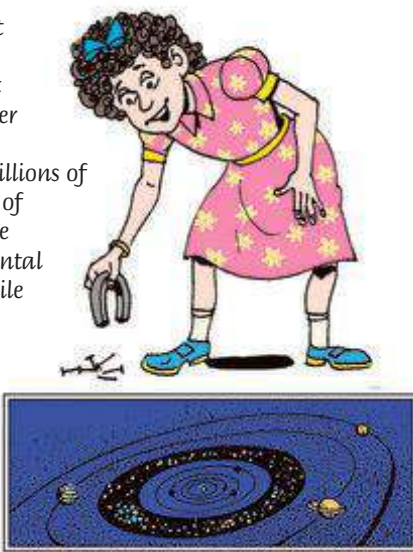
Science as you observe it...

Learn about strong and weak forces and the process of reverse osmosis

Weakest force

A small horseshoe magnet can pick up a pin from the ground. Does this mean that electromagnetic force is greater than the force of gravity?

Electromagnetic force is millions of times stronger than the force of gravity. Gravity, in fact, is the weakest of the four fundamental forces in the Universe. But while the other three forces — electromagnetism and 'strong' and 'weak' nuclear forces — act only on the minute particles that make up atoms, gravity acts on a cosmic scale, holding whole galaxies together.



Dried up grapes

If fresh grapes are put in thick sugar syrup they shrivel up in a few hours. Why?

If two solutions of different concentrations are separated by a semi-permeable membrane (that is, a membrane that allows some substances but not others to pass through), the water from the weaker solution will start moving into the stronger solution. This is the process of osmosis. The flow will continue till the solutions on both sides have the same concentration.

When grapes are put in thick sugar syrup, the skin of the grapes act as a semi-permeable membrane and water from the grapes moves into the sugar syrup. The grapes shrivel up as a result.

(Content provided by Amrita Bharati)



RISING STAR

In La Liga at 15!

Luka Romero, 15, becomes youngest ever Liga player

MADRID Real Mallorca's Luka Romero made history on Wednesday by becoming the youngest player ever to play in La Liga, aged 15 years and 219 days.

After training with Mallorca's senior team for the first time on June 1, Romero, who plays as an attacking midfielder, came on as a substitute in the 83rd minute of his team's 2-0 loss at Real Madrid.

"It was an unforgettable moment," Romero wrote on Twitter after the game.

"Thank you to everyone on the technical staff and at Real Mallorca for giving me this opportunity. I will never forget this day. It was a shame to lose but we keep believing."

Mallorca coach Vicente Moreno was seen talking to Romero before he brought the youngster on as a substitute.

"I tried to just keep him calm," Moreno said.

"I put my hand on his heart and I could tell it was beating very fast, which is normal for a kid of his age. He deserved to play and that's the reason he came on."

"We don't look at age. He has been training well and this seemed the best way to increase his motivation. His a great player and I think in the future he will give us a lot."

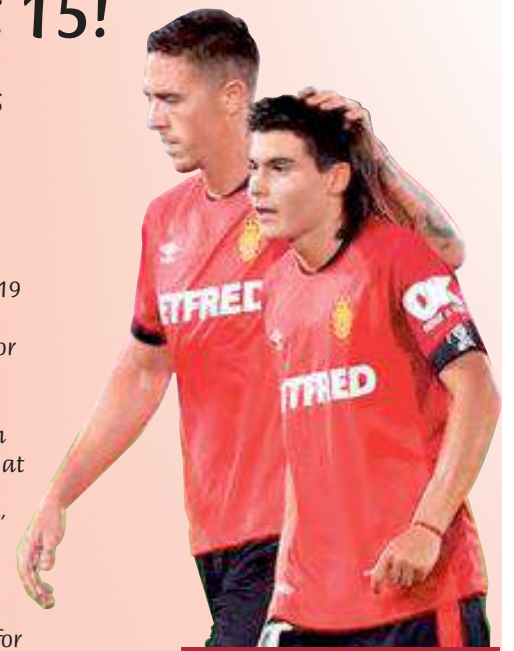


PHOTO: Twitter@laligaen

Romero was born in Mexico and could also play for Spain but his family is Argentinian and he has already represented Argentina at under-15 level.

"My whole family is Argentinian and my dream is to wear the national team's colours," Romero told the Argentinian Football Association in 2018.

Romero also had trials with Barcelona but joined Mallorca in 2011.

He is left-footed and has been likened to Spanish midfielder David Silva by Mallorca's assistant coach Dani Pendin. AFP

Finally, Arjuna award for Sanjita Chanu

NEW DELHI Two-time Commonwealth Games gold-winning weightlifter Sanjita Chanu will finally get the coveted Arjuna award which has been on hold since 2018. A Sports Ministry source confirmed that Chanu will be conferred with the Arjuna award as per a 2018 Delhi High Court order, which directed the selection committee to consider her and keep the decision in a sealed cover to be disclosed only if she was absolved of charges against her. "Sanjita (Chanu) is absolved of all the doping charges by the international federation, so we will have to abide by the Delhi High Court order and consider her for the Arjuna award," the ministry source told PTI.

