



Lowering risk: A humanoid robot being tested at the SMS Hospital in Jaipur on Thursday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Jaipur hospital tries out a serving robot

It uses a tray to ferry food, medicine

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

The Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Government Hospital here is conducting a series of trials on a humanoid robot to check if it could be pressed into service for delivering medicines and food to COVID-19 patients admitted there, allowing doctors and nurses to maintain a safe distance.

A committee of experts, which saw the demonstration on Thursday, will shortly submit its report on a proposal to use the robots to serve the patients in the isolation ward, SMS Hospital's Medical Superintendent D.S. Meena told *The Hindu*. The hospital is the biggest government health facility in the State.

Dr. Meena said that medical and paramedical staff use protective gear like masks and gloves but risks could be further reduced if robots could render some services.

A Jaipur-based entrepreneur, who assembles robots locally, has offered to supply them free of cost to the hos-

pital as part of a corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative to help patients and the staff. The robot sent to the hospital is battery-operated and has a life span of four to five years.

The robot, which uses artificial intelligence and Internet of Things (IoT), has been designed with a tray that can be used for carrying medicines, food and other objects. It can navigate on its own.

'Easily disinfected'

"We will confirm the robot's efficiency in carrying necessary items to the patients... It cannot replace a doctor, but it can significantly reduce the risk of infection," said Dr. Meena. He said the robots could also be easily disinfected and used multiple times inside the high-risk isolation ward.

In addition to the establishment of a fully equipped isolation ward, the SMS Hospital has converted Charak Bhawan on its premises as the coronavirus outpatient department and care unit.

INTERVIEW | SHIN BONG-KIL

'Trace, test, treat model helped S. Korea control virus'

Extensive testing was crucial in preventing spread of COVID-19 without drastic lockdowns, says Ambassador Shin Bong-Kil

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

The Korean Model, a vigorous regime of "trace, test, treat", has shown remarkable results in controlling the spread of the novel coronavirus, without putting a nationwide lockdown in place, says South Korean Ambassador to India Shin Bong-Kil.

What is the latest situation with the COVID-19 pandemic in South Korea?

■ I can say Korea is now in full control of the spread of the disease. The number of new confirmed cases per day has been showing steady decline since hitting a peak at 989 in February to double-digit figures as of mid-March.

I believe, more importantly, that Korea might be the only country that hasn't imposed a lockdown within its territories or even of its international borders.

We have our own strict measures to prevent inflow and outflow of the virus but we are sticking to improving the situation without using drastic measures such as closing off our cities or our borders.

How has this been possible?

■ What we call the 'Korean model' is grounded on concentrated testing of high-risk areas and clusters. Korea found out at the beginning of the spread of the virus that a certain religious cult and its gathering was the cause of a large portion of the spread in a certain area of the country. This group had massive gatherings in a closed-off space. The government listed all members of the group across the country, tracked their whereabouts and conducted tests on a massive scale, leading to the rapid increase in the number of confirmed cases. However, Korea succeeded in identifying and isolating potential cases at a very early stage and finally flattened the curve.

Are there best practices you would like to share?

■ The moment the virus DNA pattern was confirmed in Wuhan, Korean medical teams and bio-companies were able to develop new testing kits with surprising speed. This made it possible for Korea to conduct mass-scale testing of 18,000 cases a day. Anybody in Korea who has symptoms or reasons to be tested can get the test within minutes at 'drive-thru' or 'walk-thru' testing centres and receive the result by text message the very next day. Korea made available over 650 testing centres nationwide.

I understand the need for lockdowns given India's demography and medical infrastructure. However, openness and transparency is important to tackling this situation, and identifying and isolating the core of the spread of the virus with full medical capacity at the earliest possible stage is key.



Anybody in Korea can get the test within minutes at 'drive-thru' or 'walk-thru' centres and receive the result the very next day

This is the essence of the 'Korean model'.

How are India and Korea cooperating and sharing information during this crisis? Has India made specific requests for testing kits/ medical equipment so far?

■ The Korean government has repeatedly communicat-

ed to the Indian government on what is going on in Korea and how we tackle the virus. Though India has not asked for help regarding testing kits or medical equipment, we are always ready to extend a hand. Already, nine Korean companies have received export licenses of testing kits and the Embassy as well as Korean Trade Agency (KOTRA) are willing to facilitate the communication between the Korean companies and those who want to import the kits.

What kind of impact has the virus had on functioning of South Korean companies based in India?

■ Many Korean companies like Samsung, LG, Hyundai and Kia have ambitious plans for India, the biggest emerging market in the world. Samsung - which has the world's largest smartphone factory here in Greater Noida - as well as other companies, were looking to have

greater production and more aggressive strategy to be part of the 'Make In India' policy, but they have been hard-hit with this extraordinary situation. Kia Motors, for example, has been another success story in India by setting up a 3,00,000-unit production plant last year. This year, they were planning to install large facilities for its new small-sized SUV, Sonet, but it is now uncertain if they can move ahead on schedule as engineers and construction experts are unable to receive visas to travel to India.

I hope the Indian government can grant visas to those who have compelling reasons under the condition that health certificates are presented and self-quarantine is enforced. I have often seen crisis turn into opportunities. I believe it is the Indian government's difficult task to efficiently tackle the pandemic while saving the economy.

(For full interview, go to bit.ly/SeoulEnvoyInterview)

Nimmi, doe-eyed star of the 1950s, passes away at 88



Grace and gravitas: Nimmi with Rajendra Kumar in director H.S. Rawail's *Mere Mehboob*. •THE HINDU ARCHIVES

She made her debut in *Barsaat* in a lead role opposite actor-director Raj Kapoor

NAMRATA JOSHI
MUMBAI

Nimmi belonged to an era in Hindi cinema when actresses came with their own distinct *adaa* (style). Acting was all about quicksilver turn of expressions. A raised brow or the quiver of the lips could say it all. Nimmi was known for graceful presence, doe eyes that were a pool of emotions and a voice layered with gravitas.

One of the leading stars of yesteryears, Nimmi passed away in Mumbai on Wednesday at the age of 88.

She was born Nawab Ba-

noo and it was filmmaker-actor Raj Kapoor who gave her the name Nimmi and introduced her on screen. She met him on the sets of Mehboob Khan's *Andaz*, which is when he decided to cast her as the second lead in *Barsaat*. Her debut performance as a naive shepherdess in love with a reckless city slicker went on to define her persona.

Nimmi straddled genres and had a substantial number of hits (a clutch of them with superstar Dilip Kumar) to her credit but could not quite get her due.

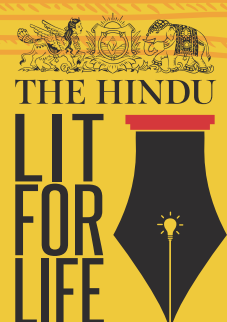
Despite successes like *Aan*, *Deedar*, *Daag*, *Amar*, *Kundun*, *Uran Khatola* and *Basant Bahar*, she didn't get counted in the top league among Meena Kumari, Nargis and Madhubala.

Family friend and music director Madan Mohan's daughter Sangeeta Gupta, who also acted with her in *Bhai Bhai*, remembers her as an educated, well-spoken, sensitive and charming person. "She used to live across Madanji's music room and used to visit quite often," she says.

Nimmi had slipped into

obscurity after the death of her husband Ali Raza. It was a rare interview in 2013 (*Guftagoo with Irfan*) on Rajya Sabha TV that the reclusive star revealed lots of unknown facets about her personal and professional life. Like how at the London premiere of *Aan* she received four Hollywood film offers, including one from none other than Cecil B. DeMille.

Actor Rishi Kapoor tweeted: "RIP. Thank you, Nimmi aunty, for all the blessings and love for *Bobby* on its premiere release. You were part of the RK family."



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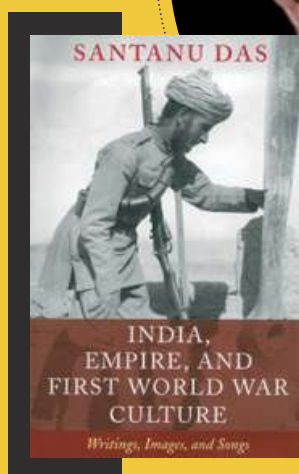


Fiction Mirza Waheed *Tell Her Everything*

Mirza Waheed's *Tell Her Everything* is a compelling novel, both a narrative tour de force and an exploration of a profound existential and moral conundrum... It is an extraordinary work of fiction whose complexity, depth and narrative mastery would be hard to match in contemporary world literature.

Jury- Fiction:

Navtej Sarna - Chairperson; J Devika; Nilanjana Roy; Pradeep Sebastian; Rajeswari Sunder Rajan



Non Fiction Santanu Das *India, Empire, and First World War Culture*

Santanu Das' *India, Empire, and First World War Culture* offers a sensitive exploration of the human dimensions of a major modern war that reshaped global politics and culture in fundamental ways... It helps to re-examine the scholarly and popular imaginations of the First World War which have tended to ignore the involvement of close to over a million Indians in it, and in particular, the tens of thousands among them who lost their lives.

Jury- Non Fiction:

Kamini Mahadevan - Chairperson; Chandan Gowda; Harsh Sethi; Rustom Bharucha; Shiv Visvanathan