

OPINION 6
INDIA'S SUPER SPREADERS

WORLD 9
VIRUS CAN LAST ON FACE MASKS FOR A WEEK, BANKNOTES FOR DAYS: STUDY

VIVICITY 11
RESILIENCE HELPS KIDS FACE NUMEROUS CHALLENGES

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75% Covid victims are men

Of 4,500 cases, 1/3rd Tablighis; highest death toll 30 in a day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Out of every four Covid-19 patients, three are male. The Union Health Ministry revealed this on Monday — on a day when nearly 500 new cases surfaced in India. The highest number of single-day deaths stood at 30 in the last 24 hours taking the total tally to 135 fatalities.

The Government data shows that women seem to be having a greater ability to fight against the infections than men as 73 per cent of the Covid-19 deaths have been reported in men, while 27 per cent of those have been in women.

"Seventy-six per cent of the coronavirus patients in India are men, while, 24 per cent of those are women," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in Union Health Ministry.

More than 4,500 positive cases have been reported in India by late Monday evening. As many as 1,445 cases are related to Tablighi Jamaat, 25,000 workers of whom and their contacts have been quarantined and five Haryana villages where they visited sealed. Globally, nearly 70,000 people have died and over 1.25 million tested positive.

Elderly people remain a high risk population in the country as also across the world. Statistically, 63 per cent of the deaths in India have been reported among people over 60 years age, 30 per cent in the age bracket of 40 to 60 years and 7

per cent victims being below 40 years age. Agarwal said the deceased below 40 years were suffering from the co-morbidities like diabetes, chronic kidney ailments, heart diseases and hypertension.

Further, though 37 per cent deaths are reported from people below 60 years, approximately, 86 per cent of deaths among people with co-morbidities indicate that young people with co-morbidities are also at high risk of COVID-19.

He implied that if elders, because of their old age and co-morbidities were vulnerable so were those in the young age group having such conditions mainly related to lifestyle which results into weak immunity. "While coronavirus is a bigger threat for the elderly, young people with co-morbidities also need to be protected," Agarwal added.

Similar trend was reported in China too where a 2.8 per cent death rate in men while only a 1.7 per cent death rate in women due to COVID-19, according to the data provided by Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

While the number of people infected was almost equal in number, it were the women who had a comparatively more survival rate.

Agarwal emphasised that elders should be protected and every youth has to be careful that they maintain sufficient social distance to not pass



North MCD workers sanitise an identified coronavirus patient's residence in the Model Town area during the ongoing nationwide lockdown in New Delhi on Monday

infection to anyone in the family, particularly the elderly. "We urge social distancing in the long term and all the dos and don'ts followed by everybody in the family," he added.

Clarifying the queries connected with community transmission in the country, the Health Ministry said if at all there is any community transmission, it will alert the people. "Localised community transmission implies that increase in cases was observed

in a particular area. Our action plan is that we should not reach stage 3 (which is the community transmission stage)," he said.

The official also clarified that whenever a drastic increase is observed in the number of cases in an area, the Ministry adopts a containment action plan. "All the districts have been informed to have an action plan on Covid-19, if there are cases or no cases," added Agarwal.

Google Maps to show locations of coronavirus food, shelters in India

New Delhi: Google on Monday said it will now show the locations of food and night shelters on Google Maps in cities across India to help people find these essential services during the lockdown. Google, in a statement, said it is working closely with State and Central Governments.

UP, Telangana favour lockdown extension

KCR seeks PM's nod for 1 week more lockdown, UP feels same

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/HYDERABAD

Uttar Pradesh and Telangana on Friday hinted that the ongoing lockdown could be extended even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the country should be ready for a long "haul" to deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

Appealing Prime Minister Narendra Modi to extend the three-week lockdown beyond April 15, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao on Monday said the nation can recover from the hit that the economy was taking but it can't bring back lives of the people.

"Lockdown is the only weapon that India has given the weak health infrastructure that we have. I propose that the lockdown be extended by at least one or two weeks and a call on opening up can be taken after that," the Chief Minister told the media at Pragathi Bhavan in Hyderabad.

"The lockdown is impacting all sections of society and the economy at large, but the issue of coronavirus is the biggest crisis faced by the mankind and it calls for stern measures," he said.



At the same time, throwing a hint that lockdown in Uttar Pradesh could be extended, a Government spokesman said that it was premature to talk about lifting the lockdown when fresh coronavirus cases are reported across the State. "The number of positives cases of Covid-19 is increasing day by day, hence it is premature to say that lockdown could be lifted after April 14," Additional Chief Secretary Awanish Awasthi said here on Monday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier announced a 21-day lockdown, which ends on April 14. In his interaction with the State Chief Ministers last week, the Prime Minister had suggested that the lockdown could be lifted in a phased manner. Acting on this advice, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had held a meeting with officials asking them to look at the ways and means to lift lockdown in a phased manner so that stranded migrant



workers can reach home without creating a chaos at the highways. Awasthi said the Government is reviewing the situation. "The religious leaders too had suggested that lockdown is the only way to prevent the virus and hence if required it should be extended," he said.

He said that Tablighi Jamaat people were responsible for the rise in the number of positive cases. Of the total 305 cases in the State on Monday, 159 are linked to members of the jammat. He said during the past 24 hours, 27 people were tested positive in which 21 are from the jammat.

"This is a big concern for the Government," he said. "We have identified around 1,600 people of the Tablighi Jamaat till now and quarantined 1,200 of them. Now the administration is tracing the people who came in touch with them besides others who formed the chain," he said.

Tiger habitats in India on alert after tigress found Covid +ve in US

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Zoos and tiger habitats across the country have been put on high alert after a 4-year-old Malayan tigress was found positive for coronavirus at Bronx Zoo in New York in the US. It is said to be the first known infection of the virus in an animal in the United States or anywhere in the world.

Not taking chance, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and Central Zoo Authority (CZA), both statutory bodies under the Union Environment Ministry monitoring tiger reserves and zoos respectively, on Monday issued an advisory to the States asking them to keep tabs on Covid-like respiratory signs of nasal discharge, breathing problems or coughing among the animals.

There are around 2,967 tigers in the wild in 50 tiger reserves and their periphery and another 390 big cats in 145 CZA recognised zoos across the States.



This undated photo provided by the Wildlife Conservation Society shows Nadia, the infected Malayan tiger, at the Bronx Zoo in New York

"On Monday, we directed chief wildlife wardens (CWLWs) of all tiger-bearing States that owing to the communicable and zoonotic nature of the disease,

big cats may be observed for symptoms of Covid-19 to avert the disease in wild tigers," said NTCA member-secretary Anup Kumar Nayak.

Prez, PM, MPs take 30% pay cut for 1 yr

MPLAD funds suspended for 2 years, Opp slams decision

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Monday decided to "temporarily suspend" MPLAD funds for two years and approved an Ordinance to cut 30 per cent of salary and pension of MPs and former MPs. The Opposition slammed the decision to suspend MPLAD scheme and Left parties said the decisions reflected the dire straits of the Indian economy.

Citing the age-old adage that "charity begins at home", Union Minister Prakash Javadekar told the media that President, Prime Minister, Ministers and Governors also decided voluntarily to take salary cut. "The money will go to Consolidated Fund of India," said Javadekar.

There 788 MPs in Parliament (543 in the Lok Sabha and 245 in the Rajya Sabha). The one-year deduction of 30 per cent of the salary could save around ₹60 crore, according to officials. The pension reduction of all the former

MPs will also save around ₹100 crore, they said.

The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conducted through video conferencing.

"The Cabinet approves Ordinance amending the Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954 reducing allowances and pension by 30 per cent w.e.f. April 1, 2020 for a year.

"The President, Vice President, Governors of States have also voluntarily decided to take a pay cut as a social responsibility. The Cabinet approves temporary suspension of MPLADs during 2020-21 and 2021-22 for managing health and adverse impact of outbreak of COVID-19 in the country," said the Government in a statement.

Every MP is allotted ₹5 crore per year in MPLAD fund to undertake constituency specific developmental and emergency works. ₹7,880 crore big fund usages is now suspended for two years, which is

expected to seriously affect the developmental works in constituencies. The MP fund is preferred as it is very hassle free for development and construction works.

Many schools, hospital buildings, equipment in hospitals, and construction of small roads across India were created by using MPLAD funds.

While Home Minister Amit Shah hailed the decisions, the Congress and TMC were quick to oppose the decision to suspend the MPLAD scheme.

"Parliament of the world's largest democracy stands together in these challenging times. I thank all the parties and MPs for their support," said Shah.

While supporting the decision to deduct the salary of MPs, Congress and Trinamool Congress criticised the suspension of MPLADs. The Left parties took a pot shot at Centre and questioned the state of economy of the Modi Government which forced them to take such decision. They also accused the Centre of fudging data.

"Please note that MPLAD fund is meant to execute devel-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the Central Ministers about Covid-19 via video conference in New Delhi on Monday

opmental works in the constituency. Suspending MPLAD fund is a disservice step to the constituents and it will undermine their role and functions," said Congress party's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala.

Senior Congress Ahmed Patel "welcomed" the Cabinet pay cut decision, saying "in difficult times it is necessary that we help citizens".

"As a Member of Parliament, I welcome the Government's decision to cut

the salaries of MPs. In this difficult time, this is the least we can do to help fellow citizens," he tweeted. Senior party leader and former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh went against the party's stand and welcomed the Government's decision on MPLADs.

"I welcome the decision on MPLADs. I have been arguing for long that the approximately ₹7,000 crore given to MPs & MLAs annually for development works should be used as a corpus for

State funding of elections," Ramesh said. CPI-M General Secretary Sitaram Yechury, however, accused the Government of "fudging data", and said it had pushed the economy "steeply downhill" even before Covid-19.

"Transfer of money to the Consolidated Fund of India, instead of being directed towards fighting COVID-19, shows that it is a measure to deal with the economic destruction caused in the past six years," Yechury said.

Bhopal: Total lockdown after 23 cases

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Hours after the Madhya Pradesh state capital reported 23 Covid-19 positive cases simultaneously on Sunday, the city was put under total lockdown since midnight.

Since Monday morning, all shops remained closed in the State capital. No vehicle was allowed on roads and the police restricted every passerby even on foot. Only milk and medical services remained open.

The city reported five fresh cases from the Health department on Monday. The city which has witnessed arrival of large numbers of Tablighi Jamaat members has reported infection among 20 of them on Sunday and another, from Vidisha, tested positive on Monday.

Including senior officials, Principal Secretary Health Pallavi Jain Govil too has tested positive for the virus. The

administration has inputs that the visiting jamaatis came in contact with around 1,000 locals, 300 of whom have been identified and home quarantined while the search is on for remaining 700. It's also believed that vegetable wholesaler Abdul Gaffar and his son Sarfaraz too contracted the infection after getting in touch the jamaatis.

A large numbers of Jamaat members had reached Bhopal and stayed in mosques without informing the administration. The matter came to fore after the Nizamuddin Markaz incident was reported in media.

Of the total 23 patients who reported positive on Sunday included 12 Jamaat members and 11 Health staffers. With this the number of positive cases has surged to 45 in Bhopal on Sunday. After five more health staff tested positive, the number surged to 45 on Monday. The city also reported first death as Naresh Khatik who

was hospitalised three days ago and had tested positive for Covid-19 later on, breathed his last late evening on Sunday. A native of Brahamganj area used to work as a chowkidar with a trader in Bittan Market area. As per the guidelines, the state government has issued list of second line officers in case their superiors fall ill and are not able to discharge duties properly. Several senior officers are working from home.

The Bhopal city has been divided into eight different zones for preventing the spread of the disease and 23 areas have been declared as contentment zone. Barring those engaged in emergency services, no one is allowed to step out of their houses and all transit passes have been suspended. Except for milk parlours, chemist shops and petrol pumps, all other shops have been closed down and kirana and vegetable would be supplied at doorsteps by

municipal corporation and authorised online delivery chains. Those found on the roads without any authorisation would be arrested, the district administration has issued warning. On Monday as well, several locals even roaming inside their colony campuses were offered stringent warning and were asked to take a walk on the terrace instead.

DIG Bhopal Irshad Wali said that as positive cases have risen and lockdown breach were reported on the pretext of kirana and vegetable purchase, the administration has decided to go for total lockdown.

The total number of positive cases have risen to 222 in Madhya Pradesh with six patients have recovered from the virus across the state including two at Bhopal. The Indore is still on the top in terms of positive cases with 135 positive cases. In all, 16 Covid-19 patients have died till now in the state.

PM: Corona a long battle, also opportunity for Make-in-India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While indicating that the country should be ready for a long haul, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday assured that "power of light of 130 crore Indians" as reflected from Sunday night's togetherness has provided enough strength to "all of us" to prepare for "a long battle" against coronavirus pandemic.

"130 crore deshvasiyan ki mahashakti ke mahaprayash se utpann mahaprakash ne deshvasiyan ko ek lambi ladai ke leye taiyar kiya hai," said the Prime Minister addressing the BJP on the occasion of party's foundation day.

Modi said, "Today our aim, mission and determination is one and that is to score victory against coronavirus."



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during the BJP's 40th foundation day in New Delhi on Monday

Modi on Monday asked Union Ministers to prepare plans to fight the economic impact of COVID-19 on war footing and asserted that this crisis is an opportunity to boost the "Make-in-India" initiative and reduce dependence on other countries.

The Prime Minister further said "in this hour of crisis, the responsibility of party workers towards rashtra seva and

manav seva increases more so," and appealed them to carry out five-fold task to battle out the pandemic.

Modi asked party "karyakartas" to help and feed those in need, reaffirm the importance of social distancing and contribute to PM-Care fund amid the coronavirus pandemic that has been impacting the country. He also asked each worker to help 40 people load Arogya app.

"We mark our party's 40th anniversary when India is battling COVID-19.

I appeal to BJP karyakartas to follow the set of guidelines from our party president JP Nadda-ji, help those in need and reaffirm the importance of social distancing. Let's make India COVID-19-free," he tweeted.

CAPSULE

KANIKA RECOVERS FROM COVID-19, DISCHARGED

Lucknow: Kanika Kapoor, the Bollywood singer who caught coronavirus and caused a scare among politicians who met her at a party, was on Monday discharged from hospital, cured of COVID-19. The Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences here let her go after two tests reports came negative, officials said.

MUKESH AMBANI'S NET WORTH DROPS 28%

Mumbai: The net worth of India's richest man Mukesh Ambani dropped 28 per cent or \$300 billion a day for two months to \$48 billion as on March 31 due to the massive correction in stock markets.

NO FRESH COVID-19 CASE FOR 2nd DAY IN NOIDA

Noida: No fresh coronavirus case was reported across Noida and Greater Noida for a second day in a row, with the administration now planning a door-to-door COVID-19 awareness campaign, officials said.

CM hints at lockdown removal

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that there is possibility of the lockdown opening on April 14 in the State.

Rabi procurement may start in the state from April 15. He said that procurement work has to be finished by May 31 as there is less time. Therefore, such a system should be made so that wheat, gram, mustard and lentil crops of farmers can be easily purchased on support price.

Chouhan instructed that maximum procurement centres should be opened in the state. The services of staff of other departments should also be used at these centres as per requirement.

Chouhan said that due to the present Corona crisis, pro-

urement will not be able to start from April 15 at the urban centres of Indore, Bhopal and Ujjain. The Chief Minister was reviewing the preparations for Rabi procurement through video conference on Monday.

Chief Minister has said that this time Rabi procurement work has to be undertaken in the form of a mission due to Corona crisis. Government teams, cooperative societies, labourers, hamals etc. should all work for purchase on support price with total dedication.

Chouhan said that special attention should be taken to ensure that the procurement centres are not crowded. For this it is necessary that farmers are provided information about which day they have to come to the centre to sell the crops through SMS and through

other information channels. Farmers should come to the shopping centre on the same day to sell their crops. Chief Minister Chouhan said that this time around 100 lakh MT wheat and 10 lakh MT gram, lentils and mustard are to be purchased on support price.

Chouhan instructed that all arrangements for procurement centers, bardana, hamal, labourers, transport storage etc. should be made properly. He said that there was a lot of transport problem last year. Chouhan said to ensure better transportation arrangements this time. He said that old transporters whose records are bad, should not be engaged this time.

Principal Secretary Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Sheo Shekhar Shukla informed that due to

non-availability of jute bags, this time the work will be done in PP bags only.

He said that at present we have PP bags available for purchase of 64 lakh MT. Purchasing capacity in silo centers is 9 lakh tonnes. Purchase orders for PP bags have been issued. PP bags are being arranged for the purchase of 115 lakh metric tonnes of Rabi crops in the state.

Shukla said that there were 3545 procurement centers in the state last year, which has been increased to 3813 this year.

Apart from this, new centres were also being opened. The total number of procurement centers will be up to 4000.

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains and other related officers were present in the video conference.

State capital in total lockdown which aims to contain corona more firmly

Earlier orders of opening of petrol pumps on alternate days have been issued

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

State capital went into Total Lockdown on Monday which was aimed to grip more firmly the attempts to contain Coronavirus which has started to spread spirally in the past few days.

From the mid night on Sunday Total lockdown was imposed by the district col-

lector. Except medical stores and dairies all others shops were totally shut according to the orders issued. Earlier orders of opening of petrol pumps on alternate days have been issued.

For buying medicines and milk people are asked to walk to their nearest shop available and using of private vehicle has been strictly banned and in case failing to comply would attract confiscation of vehicles of people using to commute. One member of the family is allowed to do the buying medicines and milk to maintain less gathering of people.

No gathering at the main roads or any other place for any purpose has been banned.

People would use to gather at the time of distribution of foods packets which has been banned completely and administration has taken the responsibility of distribution of foods packets.

People who are found on roads even in the imposed total lockdown would be booked and jailed. The district administration is discussing to set up quarantine centers at the border of the district which is aimed to contain spreading of infection as this is done by several districts like Morena, Indore, Gwalior.

The police and administration officials are making people aware by visiting every nook and corner of the state capital.

MPBSE confirms pending exams of Class 10 and 12 will be held soon

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (MPBSE) has given a confirmation that the pending exams of classes 10 and 12 will be held soon, but only for 19 key subjects.

The Board has released a recent notification on the official website stating that the High School and Higher Secondary Class exams would be conducted only for 19 key subjects which are essential to seek admission in higher education institutes.

The Board has also clarified that the subjects for which the exams would not be held will be scored on the basis of alternative marking scheme which would be notified by the Board later. The exams were earlier postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic, which was a major source of concern for many students and their parents.

The Board has released a detailed notification for the same which can be checked by the students by accessing the official website of the Board.

For class 10 exams of first and second languages will be held. Besides, for class 12 exams of subjects including Biology, Higher Mathematics and Chemistry, Bookkeeping and accountancy and business economics, Sociology, Psychology, economics, geography, political science, drawing and designing, Crop production and horticulture,

Animal husbandry, milk trade and poultry farming and fishery, Still life and design, History of Indian Art, Anatomy Physiology and Health, Element of Science will be held.

Animal husbandry, milk trade and poultry farming and fishery, Still life and design, History of Indian Art, Anatomy Physiology and Health, Element of Science will be held.

MP admin establishes food safety and drug control cell

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

After the lockdown imposed in the State to ensure availability of essentials medicine to the citizens of the state a control cell has been established by Control Food Safety and Drug Administration,

Madhya Pradesh and the helpline number is 0755-2660662 which could help the citizens having trouble in the obtaining medicines and to provide speedy resolution in obtaining medicines.

The helpline control cell has been set up by setting up control room at the state level for dispensing medicine and its aim is to ensure continuous availability of medi-

cines and solve problem related to availability.

By setting this control center a channel has been established in the time of emergency in which people are not allowed to explore options which are very rare and not located within reach of every citizens and for those patients who are suffering from prolong illness medicine are life supporting.

Once the call is received at the control center details of the support regarding medicine and other details of patients is collected and later it is forwarded to nodal officer appointed by district administration and drug inspectors at district level and medicines are provided

at the market price for the citizens.

At the same time, home delivery of medicines is being done at some places according to time and convenience. The supply of medicines is free at the district level from district and government hospitals.

Most of the phone calls on the helpline of the control cell were about providing medicines, for which, since last week, many of the citizens of the state have been provided with medicines at the earliest.

Medicines were made available through, the administration said that there is no crisis of any kind of medicines in the state.



Bhopal Municipal Corporation employees spray disinfectant to sanitise police control room including other offices in the premises during nationwide lockdown in the wake of coronavirus pandemic in Bhopal on Monday. Several police personnel and their family members tested Covid-19 positive in the city. Pioneer photo

28-year-old youth drowns under suspicious circumstances at Khejda

Youth was identified as Ravi Raikwar

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 28-year-old youth drowned under suspicious circumstances at Khejda village when he had gone to take a bath on Sunday; family members have raised suspicious over the death. Berasia police have started investigation.

The youth identified as Ravi Raikwar had gone along with others was not confirmed by the police as he was spotted after he drowned and his body was in the river.

After the body was spotted police were informed and acting swiftly team reached the spot and started investigation. The deceased who is a resident of Vidisha, had gone to take a bath and drowned

after he might have went into deep water but no one witnessed him drowning.

Locals and police with the help of divers later fished out the body. After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and have started further investigation.

The belongings of the deceased were found at the bank of the river but no one was found at the river. Possibility of been killed and then body was pushed in the river to fabricate the death as drowning could not be ruled out said police.

The deceased had gone to the river in the morning and was found dead in the evening. Details of deceased is being investigated. The post mortem report is awaited which could help in revealing the reason behind the death. Family members are yet to record their statements.

Mhow admin takes necessary measures to check spread of corona

PNS ■ MHOW

Mhow administration is taking all necessary measures to check the spread of corona virus covid 19 as lockdown and curfew is prevailing in complete Mhow area.

People don't get shortage of food medicine and milk for this Mhow SDM Abhilash Mishra has designed a website <https://tinyurl.com/vgrojer> highlighting the names and contact number of the grocery medicine and milk suppliers who are giving home delivery of these items after receiving the order on whatsapp.

Mhow police is also moving in entire mhow tehsil area. Additional SP Mhow Amit Tolani has set up a control room for keeping vigil on all the four police station of Mhow area.

Tehsildar Dharendra Parashar SDOP Vinod Sharma TI Mhow Abhay

Nema T I Kishanganj Sashikant Chourasia T I Manpur Aaditya Mishra have formed a check post and barriers at the main entrances of their respective police station area. People from one part of Mhow couldn't go to other part of Mhow.

Some social organisation are also distributing food packets to the poor.

SDM Mhow Abhilash Mishra told

The Pioneer that cooked food is distributed in the nearby areas and administration is distributing raw food material to those area which are at long distance especially in tribal and other villages so they will cook themselves because the cooked food will get stale till the time it reaches to far flung areas.

Mhow MLA UshaThakur is also keeping eye on Mhow People and is helping the people of Mhow in coordination with Mhow administration.

Vivekananda Library calls off book collection launch

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

After the announcement of complete lockdown, the book collection launch at Swami Vivekananda Library is called off. The book collection was all about Children's books of different genres.

This new collection of books included 55 books. After a long period, this collection could be issued on spot, but due to the lockdown of 21 days, imposed after serious outbreak of COVID-19 the launch is called off.

The rescheduling of dates will be done after the situation will come under control. The collection of Mega Children's Books in Swami Vivekananda Library has many such books which are popular reads among students. A lot of books are brand new to this children's collection. And different new series of children's books have been included. For this, it has been included in the collection.

The total number of 55 books are in this collection. This collection includes the series of Mervyn Redpost and the series of Astrics and other new books of Karadi Tales. Swami Vivekananda Library Taking care of its junior members, to increase interest in books, this collection would be brought to the Swami Vivekananda Library.

Manager Yatish Bhatle said that the collection included Holiday Stories author Ruskin Bond, comics, Roald Dahl, The Ghost Road author Charis Kotar and other books. Similarly, children should be encouraged to read books since childhood.

This time a very attractive series is being launched in the library. The latest books of Jarnimo Stilton and Dorc Diaries were included in this collection. Children's membership was also made available in the library so that children can issue books.

Temperature soars to 45 degree Celsius at few places

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

With abrupt weather conditions at very few places in the state day temperatures have soared to 45 degree Celsius on Monday in the state, Khargone recorded the highest day temperature at 45 degree Celsius.

Apart from recording the highest day temperature Khargone witnessed night temperature at 27 degree Celsius.

Except Jabalpur division which recorded rainfall at few places other parts of the state witnessed dry weather conditions with hot and humid conditions.

State capital recorded day temperature at 38 degree Celsius on Monday while night temperature was recorded at 20.2 degree Celsius. The hot and humid weather conditions would prevail and temperatures would be recorded around same levels.

Several regions recorded day temperature above 37 degree Celsius. Among the nearby regions Hoshangabad recorded

day temperature at 41.2 degree Celsius. Damoh, Khandwa and Khajuraho recorded day temperature at 40 degree Celsius. Sagar, Satna, Guna Raisen, Raigarh and Ratlam recorded day temperature at 39 degree Celsius.

The weather conditions would witness normal trend except few regions which are likely to receive thundery activities and rainfall in the next 24 hours and have witnessed heavy shower for brief period in the night on Sunday.

Met department has issued warning of thundery activities and speedy winds in Seoni, Chhindwara, Balaghat, Mandla and Narsinghpur districts. The forecast of light rainfall or thunder showers has been made for Betul, Seoni, Chhindwara, Balaghat, Mandla and Narsinghpur districts.

Significant change in was not recorded in day temperatures in the past two days and gradual change would be witnessed.

Commoners forced to remain indoors

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

As commoners are forced to remain indoors amid Covid-19 scare, those engaged in providing essential services to the public are battling it out in the field even risking their own lives.

One such employee, Pragati Tayde is the talk of the town after her pictures of discharging duty at the power sub-station with six-months-old daughter in the lap have gone viral in social media.

Amid Covid-19 scare, Pragati does not wish to leave behind daughter at home so she brings along the daughter to the sub-station based at Nayapura in Kolar

Amid Covid-19 scare, Pragati does not wish to leave behind daughter at home so she brings along the daughter to the sub-station based at Nayapura in Kolar area. Pragati apart from discharging official duty attentively from 8 am to 4 pm plays an equally able housewife

area. Pragati apart from discharging official duty attentively from 8am to 4pm plays

an equally able housewife. "My duty requires me to remain at work so that houses remain lit and I can't

leave behind daughter at home amid corona threat," said Pragati adding she is also discharging duties like police and health staff in emergency.

The young woman is a testing operator at Nayapura power sub-station and has the duty of informing linemen about the electricity supply faults.

She however ensures that her daughter remains away from electricity equipment and hands her over to colleagues once she steps inside the electricity yard.

The dedicated contractual employee however rues that workers serving on contractual basis also should be covered under insurance.

PRAGATI TAYDE IS THE TALK OF THE TOWN



Devotees of Digambar Jain Community offers prayers in a temple on the occasion of Mahaveer Jayanti during total lockdown in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

TACKLING CORONAVIRUS

Punjab reports 11 more +ve cases, total at 79

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

As other 11 persons were tested positive to COVID-19 in Punjab taking the state's total tally to 79, six of them have participated in the Tablighi Jamaat at New Delhi's Nizamuddin.

Out of the total tested positive on Monday, four cases are reported from SAS Nagar (Mohali) — of which one had attended Tablighi Jamaat while three are the contacts of a positive case in Ludhiana; two cases each were reported from Ludhiana and Fatehgarh Sahib, while one was reported from Kapurthala — all of them attended Tablighi Jamaat. Other positive cases were reported from Ropar where two were tested positive, and one from Amritsar.

So far, the State has recorded seven coronavirus deaths. As late night development, one more Tablighi Jamaat case was reported positive in Jagraon tehsil of Ludhiana district. "Tracing and tackling these participants of Tablighi Jamaat is a very difficult task, especially when you have a non-cooperative infected person," said a senior government official.

Sharing details, the state's special chief secretary, Punjab Disaster Management (COVID-19), Karan Bir Singh

Sidhu said that the person of Chaukiman village of Ludhiana Rural district was admitted in Civil Hospital Ludhiana as COVID-19 suspect on Monday. "His preliminary report of coronavirus has come out as positive. The Gujar Muslim (milk guy), who went to Tablighi Markaz Delhi, is living in a dera outside the village, with his family," he added.

He said that the person "initially denied having gone to Markaz in Delhi. When he was confronted, he disclosed that he had gone to Marqaz, and has now disclosed that four more people from this area have also gone to Delhi Markaz. All of them are being traced now".

Sidhu further pointed that the person had initially told that he remained at home only after coming back from Markaz. "But upon confrontation, he has now disclosed that he did proselytizing work in Ludhiana for 10 days after coming back from Delhi in Preet Nagar Masjid in Ludhiana," he added.

Now, three of the four more people that the person had mentioned have also been traced. While the two are from Chowkimaan village, third is from Kular village, and "they have all been sent to Ludhiana Civil Hospital for further nec-

essary action and testing. The residences and other people around these people have been quarantined". Sidhu added that one more person was from some place in Himachal Pradesh and he is being identified from his call details. Another Tablighi Jamaat attendee was tested positive for COVID-19 in the district taking the total cases in Ludhiana to seven, of which three are related to the Tablighi meet.

As per the official data, there are 468 participants of Tablighi Jamaat from Punjab, of which the state has traced 448, and the process of tracing the remaining 20 is on. Besides, the government is also on job to ascertain how many more attendees of Nizamuddin event are there from the State. Sidhu informed that currently, 416 participants of the Tablighi Jamaat are in Punjab, and the samples of 406 have been collected, of which 11 have tested positive and reports of 276 are negative, while the results for 119 are awaited. "The process of tracking the contacts of the positive cases is going on," said Sidhu.

Besides, two women, who had attended the Tablighi Jamaat congregation, have tested positive for coronavirus in Fatehgarh Sahib district. A 17-year-old boy was previously putting up at a

mosque in Kot Karar Khan village, and was placed under isolation at Civil Hospital, Kapurthala, on Sunday night. In all, 33 jamaatis had been placed under quarantine at Kapurthala. Of these, 21 had been placed under quarantine at two mosques at Kot Karar Khan village.

Ten more jamaatis remained under quarantine at Palahi and one each at Dhaliwal Bet village and Phagwara. The district administration has already sealed Kot Karar Khan village, along with the mosques where the jamaatis have been staying.

"He is originally from Dharavi, Mumbai, and had attended the Delhi Marqaz. He was admitted in isolation ward of Civil Hospital, Kapurthala on Sunday. The village is well-sealed and 14 villages, in 'buffer zone', are sealed," said the government official.

Out of the 33 members of Tablighi Jamaat in Kapurthala, one has tested positive, and the remaining 32 have tested negative. A 30-year-old man — whose father had attended the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in New Delhi — was tested positive for coronavirus in Mohali on Monday. "He is the son of a 60-year-old man, residing in Sector-68, who had tested positive earlier. Two Tablighi Jamaatis are positive,

out of 15 traced and now one primary contact has also tested positive," said Mohali Deputy Commissioner Girish Dayalan.

ROPAR PATIENT'S WIFE, SON TESTED POSITIVE

Two days after a resident of Chatamali village in Ropar tested positive for COVID-19, his 54 years old wife and 16 years old son were tested positive for the disease. The 55-year-old resident from the village was diagnosed with coronavirus on Friday, after he was admitted to Chandigarh's GMCH, Sector 16, on March 31. The man suffers from diabetes and hypertension.

Following this, health authorities sealed villages around Chatamali and collected diagnostic samples of 17 persons, including primary contacts of the patient. The district administration, on late Sunday evening, received reports of 15 persons, out of which the wife and son of Chatamali patient tested positive. Ropar Deputy Commissioner Sonali Giri said that the authorities have alerted a private hospital and Community Health Centre at Kurali as well as Mohali Civil Hospital in Phase VI as the patient had visited these before he was admitted to GMCH-16.

He had also attended a medical check-up camp organized in the village on March 13, where 20 people from abroad, along with doctors from CMC hospital, Ludhiana and Mohali were present.

"We have contacted the 20 people from abroad, and they claimed that they did not suffer from symptoms of any kind," she added. Besides, three family members of an already diagnosed coronavirus patient were also tested positive in Dera Bassi.

SUSPECTED COVID-19 PATIENT DIES IN AMRITSAR

A 65-year-old man, suspected to have had coronavirus, died at Fortis Amritsar on Monday morning. "The COVID-19 infection has not been conclusively confirmed. Jaswinder Singh, retired SE in Municipal Corporation Amritsar, expired today morning in Fortis Amritsar.

He had been admitted to GNDH Amritsar on March 28/29, where he was diagnosed for pneumonia. As he was not improving, he was tested for COVID-19 and reported negative," said Sidhu.

He added that Singh was moved to Fortis on Saturday, where in the preliminary test he reported as positive and he

died on Monday morning. "Another swab has been now obtained and is being tested — not merely for statistical purposes but also for potentially isolating his contacts, including those in the Government Hospital, Amritsar," he added.

MOHALI'S 81-YEAR-OLD, DIABETES AND HYPERTENSION PATIENT, RECOVERS

An 81-year-old woman recovered from COVID-19 and was released from Max hospital in Mohali on Monday.

The woman suffered from diabetes and hypertension. She also had five stents, mostly used to keep coronary arteries open.

Department, five private units have cleared the crucial testing phase on way to delivering the life-saving PPEs, N-95 and N-99 masks, further strengthening the state capability to counter the unprecedented challenge.

"For manufacturing and supply of Protective Personal Equipment (PPEs), Ludhiana firms Shiva Textiles, Swamy Textiles and Shingora have been approved by SITRA, Coimbatore, which are authorized testing laboratories. This is in addition to JCT Fabrics, Phagwara, and Ever shine garments, Ludhiana," said the state Industries Minister Sunder Sham Arora.

TABLIGHI JAMAAT STATUS IN PUNJAB	
Total	: 468
Traced	: 448
Being Traced	: 20
Currently in Punjab	: 416
Samples Collected	: 406
Positive	: 11
Negative	: 276
Results Awaited	: 119

35-yr-old man sets ablaze 50 gunny sacks at a farm in Nazirabad area

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Fuelled over property dispute wheat filled 50 gunny sacks were set ablaze by 35-year-old man at a farm in Nazirabad area late in the night on Sunday.

Police said that the arson was result of fight between two step-sons over property. The two identified as Prabhul and Lakhan had dispute over property for long.

Initially police found that Prabhul went to the farms and set ablaze wheat bags which were of Lakhan Singh and escaped the spot. The locals rushed to the spot and pacified the fire but failed to save around 50 bags which were worth over Rs 1 lakh.

A complaint was lodged by Lakhan Singh with the Nazirabad police regarding the accused Prabhul who went to his farms and set ablaze wheat bags which were set to be sold but were gutted in fire completely. During the investigation police found that the victim and accused are step brothers.

Prabhul is from the first marriage while Lakhan is from the second marriage and they have dispute over property of their father and have been fighting for long. On Saturday the two had a fight which was pacified after the locals intervened but later Prabhul who lives in Baxi went to Lakhan's farm where wheat bags were kept and lit them and escaped the spot.

Based on the complaint after the preliminary investigation police have registered a case under section 435 of the IPC and started investigation. Search for the accused has been started, said police.

State needs equipment to fight corona: CM

Guv holds meeting with CM, senior officials

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren today said that he is expecting more help from the Centre in terms of medical equipment for coronavirus warriors working day and night against COVID-19 in the State.

The CM, after a meeting with Governor Droupadi Murmu and senior officials in the State said that he has apprised the Governor of the situation in the State and the immediate needs of Jharkhand.

"We have had a meeting with the Governor, where we have said that despite being poor and backward state we have made adequate arrangements to fight coronavirus.

The only shortage is of medical equipment for coronavirus warriors and we are not getting adequate assistance for the same. After very late we got thermal scanners, masks, PPE etc and we have asked the Governor to help make it available," he said.

The CM further said that the Governor has assured that she would request the Central government to provide medical equipment such as PPE, ventilators as soon as possible.

Earlier, holding a meeting with CM Hemant Soren and senior officials of the State here on Monday, the Governor said that she would request the President of India for necessary medical equipment for Jharkhand.

She said that the President and Vice President



Governor Droupadi Murmu, Chief Minister Hemant Soren along with senior officials hold a meeting in the wake of coronavirus pandemic in Ranchi on Monday. PNS photo

had asked during video conferencing to apprise them of any assistance to the states to fight against Coronavirus. The governor said that 80 per cent of the people in Jharkhand live in the village. "Initially it did not come to Jharkhand, but currently there have been four cases of infection, of which three are women.

After the lock-down ends, people trapped outside the State will come back home and we need to be prepared in advance for that.

This disaster can be fought by involving volunteers from social organizations and others. Corona virus infection will not spread if people strictly follow social distancing," she added.

The CM informed the Governor that from the Central Government, 5,000 PPE, 100 thermal scanners, 25,000 N-95 masks have been received. He said that the State government is informing the Governor of State about the situation from time to time.

"This is our responsibility. All states have their own internal system. We had intensified efforts to prevent

infection even before the first case of infection came in the State," he added.

"Our Information Center is working round the clock for people trapped outside the State. 15 senior IAS officers have been made nodal officers. So that people trapped outside the state can get help.

About 6.94 lakh people are out of the State, most of them stranded in Maharashtra. The State government has access to 60 to 70 per cent of the people trapped outside. Food is being provided from the panchayat and police station level to all needy people within the state.

Chief Minister Dal Bhat Yojana is operated as before. There is no shortage of food grains in the state. Rs 10,000 each have been made available to all the Mukhiya of Panchayat," said the CM.

The CM also informed the Governor that DCs of all districts have been provided with Rs 50 Lakh each so that no one dies of hunger. The government is also preparing for post lockdown situation when about 5-6 lakh people will come to the State.

Chief Secretary Sukhdeo Singh informed on the occa-

sion that there are four test machines in the State another four machines will soon be set up for COVID-19 tests. "As many as 15,000 test kits are available in the State.

Private hospitals have been tagged for 250 ventilators and 300 additional ventilators are being ordered. The pension amount for the months of March and April has been released. The lifting of Anaj has started till May.

Adequate funds are available in MNREGA. By February 15, 1.73 lakh people from outside came to Jharkhand, out of which 1.45 lakh people have been home-quarantined. A

bout 30,000 home guard jawans and forest guards have been identified in the State, who will be assigned the task as per the requirement," he said.

Director General of Police MV Rao said that the lockdown is being strictly followed.

People are being made aware by not using force. More than 40 cases related to this are being monitored on social media. 25 people have been arrested. Police morale is high.

Punjab Police cracks down on fake news, registers 34 cases, arrests 4

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Cracking down heavily on spread of rumours and panic in the light of COVID-19 crisis, the Punjab Police has registered 34 cases of fake news on social media, while also taking strong action against those targeting a particular community in an attempt to disturb the state's peace.

"As many as 27 of the 34 cases are registered between March 21 and April 6 relating to WhatsApp forwards and misinformation," said the state DGP Dinkar Gupta.

He said that the police is also taking stern action against attempts to use social media to spread communal strife and a sedition case was also registered on Friday against a Ludhiana resident.

Among the prominent cases that have come to light are a Facebook post by a Ludhiana resident, seeking to mislead the people about availability of critical medical equipment, and to spread hatred against the state government. A sedition case has been registered against the person.

Fake Tik Tok videos, unsubstantiated audio messages, forwards of provocative and false news are all under the scanner of the Punjab Police, which is keeping a close eye on all such attempts. DGP had, earlier this month, constituted a special team headed by an ADGP ranked officer to monitor all social media platforms to check any instance of fake news or rumour affecting citizens during lockdown.

Giving details of some of the key cases registered in the last 17 days, the DGP said that five cases have been filed in Sangru and four in Bathinda for crimes relating to spreading fake videos and false audio messages, and creating panic by

spreading fake news on WhatsApp regarding death of a person due to coronavirus, disclosed the DGP.

In Patiala, an FIR was filed for spreading fake news regarding deployment of military, said the DGP, adding that Amritsar Rural Police arrested a Shiv Sena leader for trying to foment communal passions through his Facebook post.

An FIR has been registered in Police Station Qila Lal Singh in district Batala against the Granthi of village Dalam for announcing that milk should not be procured from Gujjar community. In another such instance, a case has been registered in Adampur against a person who claimed to be immune to COVID 19 and asked people to drink water with onion as a cure against the deadly disease.

Three cases of spreading rumours have been filed in Ludhiana, Sri Muktsar Sahib, and Jalandhar with Hoshiarpur, Moga, Fariidkot, Mohali and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar against the state government. A sedition case has been registered against the person.

Reiterating his warning against any attempt to exploit the current crisis by spreading mischievous and unsubstantiated information which can create unnecessary panic and hardship to people, the DGP said that the strictest penal action would be taken against the offenders. Dinkar Gupta also urged the general public not to create panic or unrest through malicious forwards and social media posts.

FIVE UNITS CLEARED TO MAKE CRITICAL PPEs, TWO OTHERS TO SUPPLY N-95 MASKS

Following the persistent efforts of Punjab Industries

Department, five private units have cleared the crucial testing phase on way to delivering the life-saving PPEs, N-95 and N-99 masks, further strengthening the state capability to counter the unprecedented challenge.

"For manufacturing and supply of Protective Personal Equipment (PPEs), Ludhiana firms Shiva Textiles, Swamy Textiles and Shingora have been approved by SITRA, Coimbatore, which are authorized testing laboratories. This is in addition to JCT Fabrics, Phagwara, and Ever shine garments, Ludhiana," said the state Industries Minister Sunder Sham Arora.

For manufacturing of N-95 and N-99 masks, Surgeon Hoshiarpur and Oxyclear have got the go-ahead with two other Ludhiana based firms — Gurkirpa Textiles and Navyug Laminates given permission to supply the PPE fabric.

"The Industries Department is aggressively complementing State Government's efforts by engaging and facilitating textile and technical textile industry to manufacture critical life-saving equipments," he said.

Pertinently, 20 technical textile units have been identified who are manufacturing or capable of manufacturing PPE and masks, and a number of those units are in the process of developing samples of PPE and protective masks which will be sent to the laboratories for testing, the Minister informed.

SIDBI is providing 100 percent project finance loans of up to 50 lakhs, with a five years term and five percent interest rate.

This is being done under their 'SAFE' program which stands for, SIDBI Assistance for Facilitating Emergency Response to Corona virus.



BJP State president VD Sharma pays obeisance to a Rangoli of Bharat Mata on party's symbol lotus to mark the foundation day of Bharatiya Janata Party at party's State headquarters in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

2 'infected' Mumbai hospitals shut

Doctors, nurses corona +ve after coming into contact with accident victim

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a development that exposed chinks in private medical establishments in Maharashtra, the civic authorities have shut down two major private hospitals in Mumbai after several doctors and nurses tested positive for coronavirus over a span of a week, and ordered quarantining of 92 staff members of a Pune hospital after they came in contact with an infected road accident victim.

On Monday when Mumbai recorded four more deaths and 34 positive cases taking the total number of deaths and infected cases in the metropolis to 34 and 492 respectively, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) sealed the Wockhardt Hospital



Medical workers escort a suspected coronavirus patient to get in an ambulance, as he is shifted to an isolation ward for treatment during the nationwide lockdown in Mumbai on Monday. PTI

at Agripdad in south Mumbai, after 26 nurses and three doctors tested positive for Covid-19 during the past one week. Earlier on Wednesday last,

the Jaslok Hospital — acting on the directives of the BMC — stopped new admissions and shut down its outpatient department (OPD) after one of

its staff members tested positive for Covid.

Elsewhere in Pune, at least 92 staff members of DY Patil Hospital, including doctors and nurses, were moved out of the main hospital premises and quarantined in neighbouring on the same premises, after a road accident victim, who was treated at the hospital, tested positive for the pandemic.

The closure of Wockhardt Hospital was triggered by a tweet put by leader of the Opposition in Kerala Assembly Ramesh Chennithala, saying: "Called Maharashtra Health Minister Shri. Rajesh Tope ji @rajeshlope11 seeking urgent intervention to ensure safety of 40 Covid19 positive Malayalee nurses working @ a pvt hospital in Mumbai".

CONNECTING FARMERS WITH MANDIS

Centre may go for 'truck aggregators'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a cue from app-based cab services, the Centre may go in for 'truck aggregators' to connect farmers with mandis.

Modi said that welfare of farmers is of high importance and affirmed that his government would provide all possible help to farmers in the harvesting season.

He also asked the Ministries to prepare a Business Continuity Plan and be ready to fight the economic impact of COVID-19 on war footing.

NBA expresses concern over threat to scribes for Tablighi coverage

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The News Broadcasters Association (NBA) on Monday expressed concern over threats received by anchors and reporters of news channels for their coverage of the role of Tablighi Jamaat in the spread of coronavirus.

been noticed after electronic media recently exposed the role of Tablighi Jamaat in the spread of coronavirus, resulting in a nationwide spurt in the number of positive cases and subsequent deaths.

trends in India on Twitter. "There are videos circulating on social media in which some religious preachers are naming some TV news anchors and threatening attacks on the reporters of those channels.

Tourism Ministry comes to rescue of foreign tourists post lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Tourism Ministry has come to the rescue of a number of foreign tourists including an American, two Costa Ricans and an Australian family stranded in India.



ment within the country/ state and for transfer to home country of such tourists are also being coordinated with the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and with the respective Embassy/ High Commission/Consulate.

secured her a special transit permit to travel to Delhi. She has safely reached her destination and expressed her gratitude for the efforts put in by all the concerned agencies," the Ministry said.

Smart City control rooms now Covid-19 war rooms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The hi-tech integrated command and control centre's (ICCC) in Pune, Surat, Varanasi Bengaluru and Tumakuru, constructed under the Smart Cities Mission, have been converted into Covid-19 war rooms to keep a tight vigil on people's movement, track healthcare workers, ambulances and coronavirus positive cases.

information systems (GIS), tracking healthcare operations at the city's Naidu Infectious Disease Hospital and drawing up a containment plan using heat-mapping technologies.

Geographic information system (GIS) technology is being used to map each case and keep tab on home-quarantined people.

"Using heat-mapping technologies and predictive analytics, the city administration will develop a containment plan and the containment-zones get reflected on the dashboard," officials added.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, which is the nodal agency for the Smart City Mission, said that Pune Smart City Command and Control Centre is using Geospatial Information System for tracking and monitoring the areas and create buffer zones where patients are diagnosed positive with Covid-19.

The Surat Smart City command and control room has published an online dashboard on its municipal website to provide regular updates to the citizens.

These command and control centres were developed under the Smart Cities Mission have so far been used for various municipal functions, including 24-hour water supply projects, property tax collection, traffic management, street lighting, monitoring bus movement and CCTV for security.

Centre asks State Govts to ensure supply of medical oxygen

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the number of positive Covid-19 cases continues to surge across the country, the Centre on Monday asked the State Governments to ensure supply of medical oxygen needed for ventilators to treat critical patients of coronavirus that causes acute respiratory problems.



supplied by the Government. About 16 lakh N95 masks are presently available in the country. This number will increase with the fresh supply of 2 lakh masks" he added.

plied by a Singapore based firm will be available from April 11 with 2 lakhs, followed by 8 lakhs more in a week.

500 NCC cadets deployed in corona fight

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pitching in the national effort to fight coronavirus pandemic, nearly 500 National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets are now deployed on duties like ensuring supply chain management, law and order, and sensitizing local people about the pandemic.

IAF Sergeant tests corona negative

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The IAF Sergeant, who had visited the Nizamuddin area during the time of the Tablighi Jamaat congregation last month, has tested negative for coronavirus in the preliminary tests.

and they all are asymptomatic. But as per procedure all three have been quarantined. The families of the personnel have also been quarantined.

Giving this information here on Monday, officials said the Sergeant was placed in quarantine two days back as a precaution after the Delhi Police found that he had visited Nizamuddin area during the time of the Tablighi Jamaat congregation.

Currently, the IAF is working on skeletal staff with majority working from home due to COVID-19, so the contact list is very limited.

Women stronger against Covid-19 but other factors fail them: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

When it comes to mounting an immune response against Covid-19 infections, women may seem to be a stronger sex as reflected in various data, but, ironically, they bear the brunt of the pandemics in the form of domestic violence and maternal mortality because of disruption of accessibility to vital health and gender-based violence services and social support.

owing to the lack of support amid Coronavirus crisis, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) on Monday said that the present situation could also exacerbate existing financial inequality between men and women.

Among the risk groups she identified are pregnant women who need antenatal care but are unsure whether to attend a clinic, and women in abusive relationships trapped at home during the lockdown.

However, aid organisations working in so-called "weak health systems" - defined by a high maternal mortality ratio (MMR) - are drawing lessons from the 2014-16 Ebola epidemic in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Rising tensions due to economic losses could lead to a spike in domestic violence behind closed doors - during a period when counselling and support services may be stripped back to a minimum.

The organisation also warned of a potential rise in female-genital mutilation, as well as early, child or forced marriages at this time of restricted movement, poor visibility and weakened protection systems.

antenatal and postnatal care, access to modern contraception and emergency contraception, and safe abortion and post-abortion care "to the full extent of the law" in all areas where services are likely to be impacted.

in case breathing complications should arise. Another chief area of concern is the medical frontline, where women make up an estimated 70% of the world's global health and social sector workforce.

5 ultras killed, 5 jawans martyred in J&K ops

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The icy heights of Keran sector in North Kashmir's Kupwara district on Sunday witnessed a hand-to-hand combat between elite Para commandos, belonging to the same unit which had raided terrorist camps across the line of control during September 29, 2016 'surgical strike', with a group of heavily armed terrorists in which all five terrorists, who had sneaked inside the Indian territory few days ago, were eliminated in one of the deadliest operations while all five commandos also laid down their lives.

According to field officers, posted in the region, "It was no less than a repeat of several hand-to-hand combat battles, which Indian soldiers had fought at the peak of Kargil war in 1999 to flush out the Pakistani Army regulars from their well fortified locations.

According to Col Rajesh Kalia, Ministry of Defence Spokesman based in Srinagar, "four soldiers under the command of a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) from one of the most professional Para SF Units were heli dropped near the LoC after information on the infiltrators was received.

An intense hand to hand battle ensued and all five terrorists were eliminated". "In this battle, however, Army lost five of its best soldiers, three on the site and two more succumbed while they were airlifted to a nearby military hospital", Col Kalia added.

The team of elite commandos were led by Subedar Sanjeev Kumar and included Havildar Davendra Singh, Paratrooper Bal Krishan, Paratrooper Amit Kumar and Paratrooper Chhatrapal Singh. Two of them belonged to Himanchal Pradesh, two from Uttarakhand and one commando hailed from Rajasthan.

According to senior Army officers, "the footsteps of the group of infiltrators were first reported in the Zurhama forest area on April 1. Due to extremely difficult terrain and prevailing inclement weather conditions no engagement with the heavily armed group of infiltrators took place. While tight vigil was being maintained and foot patrolling was enhanced to plug the gaps in the region, security forces were mobilised in the area on April 4.

According to defence sources, "early Sunday morning, a small squad consisting of five soldiers started tracking the footsteps and came dangerously close to the cornice-a mass of hardened snow at the edge of a mountain.

According to defence sources, before members of the squad could realise, it broke and they fell in to the frozen nallah close to where the terrorists were hiding.

Despite suffering a free fall, alert commandos engaged hiding terrorists in a hand-to-hand combat and eliminated all of them. According to defence sources, dead bodies of the soldiers and terrorists were found within 2-3 metres of each other and bore marks of bullet injuries clearly indicted fierce gun fight took place between the two groups.

Meanwhile, situation remained tense along the line of control in Poonch sector. According to Jammu based Defence Spokesman, Lt Col Devender Anand, Pakistan army violated ceasefire agreement by initiating small arms firing and shelling with mortars along the LoC in Mankote sub sector of Poonch around 5.15 p.m. He said, the Indian Army retaliated the fire befittingly. On Sunday also, Indian army inflicted heavy damages on the other side of the LoC while targeting notorious Pakistani posts.

Sudden surge in cases baffles TN Govt

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The sudden spurt in the number of corona positive cases in the State has baffled the Tamil Nadu administration. During the last week of March, the State had hardly 60 corona virus cases while Maharashtra and Kerala topped the table. But by April 1, the number of coronavirus cases in Tamil Nadu touched 200 and since then it was an unexpected surge.

By Sunday evening, it was announced by Beela Rajesh that the number of corona cases had crossed the 570 mark making Tamil Nadu the State with the second highest number of corona patients after Maharashtra. It is reported that the Government has ordered a detailed probe to find out the reasons behind the increase in the number of patients.

Out of the 570 patients tested positive for corona, more than 400 are either the returnees of the Tablighi Jamaat congregation held in Delhi or those who came into contact with them. The State administration is on a mission mode to prevent the disease reaching the Stage-3 (community transmission). But law breakers are having a field day in various parts of the State. Virudhunagar and Thoothukudi districts reported shopkeepers openly violating prohibitory orders and selling meat.

Though there is a notion about the poor hygiene of the people of the State, Tamil Nadu has been doing well in waste management and disposal. The health sector too had registered impressive growth with many corporate hospitals opening branches in interior Tamil

Out of the 570 patients tested positive for corona, more than 400 are either the returnees of the Tablighi Jamaat congregation held in Delhi or those who came into contact with them

Nadu. The State is on its way to establish Government medical colleges in all the districts. South India's first All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is fast coming up at Madurai.

Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy convened a media meet on Monday after his interaction with officials (both revenue and police) and appealed to the people to cooperate with government officials to prevent the spreads of the disease.

"We have brought in laws to check the spread of the disease. But it could be implemented only with the cooperation of the people. The police are over worked and they have been instructed to be courteous with the people. Now it is for our people to reciprocate by obeying the guidelines, dos and don'ts," said Palaniswamy.

The video message aired by the Government of Tamil Nadu through news channels has caught the attention of the people. Doctors and nurses appeal to the people of the State to stay at home and not to come out. "It is patient who asks us to save his/her life. This is out turn to request you to stay home and stay safe by not coming out of your houses," says Dr Raghunathan, professor of medicine, in this one-minute message.

TN positive cases climb to 621, Govt to import test kits

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

With 50 more persons testing positive for coronavirus on Monday, the number of patients diagnosed with COVID 19 disease in Tamil Nadu reached 621. This was disclosed by Beela Rajesh, Secretary to the department of health and family welfare on Monday.

The health secretary made it clear in her media briefing that the meeting convened by Chief Minister on Monday morning has decided not to use the terms like Tablighi Jamaat or Nizamuddin religious congregation while giving out the details of the tests held to detect the pandemic. "We will just use terms like travelers or passengers. The Chief Minister was of the view that frequent usage of names like Tablighi Jamaat is discriminatory in nature," she said.

She said out of the 50 persons tested positive on Monday, 48 were those who returned from New Delhi. "We have tested samples of 1475 persons who had come back from Delhi out of which 573 were found to be positive and 855 tested negative. Samples of 47 persons are under process," said Rajesh. She also disclosed that a 57 year old woman who was admitted to a hospital late Sunday night with severe acute respiratory infection breathed her last on Monday. The lady, a relation of one of the travellers who

had attended the Delhi meet, could have contacted the virus from the latter, said the secretary.

The Government has intensified its efforts to check the spread of the virus. "Aggressive containment plans have been drawn out to prevent the virus reaching the stage-3, which could lead to community spread," she said. As part of the Government's all out war on coronavirus, the health department is importing one lakh rapid test kits from China. "These kits are expected to arrive in Chennai on April 9 and will be dispatched to all districts immediately," said Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy while speaking to reporters after an extended meeting with senior government officials and doctors at Chennai on Monday. The rapid tests would begin in the state from April 10 and the results could be known within 30 minutes, he said.

The chief minister said there was no need to panic as the disease was well under control. "We have screened 2,10,538 passengers at airports in Tamil Nadu and of them, 90,541 are under home quarantine. 10,816 persons have completed the 28-day quarantine period," said Palaniswamy. He disclosed that there were 17 testing labs in government and private hospitals and the state government had sought permission for 21 more labs.

Maha: 7 more deaths, +ve cases at 838

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

The coronavirus reached the doorsteps of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday after a tea vendor operating near his private residence at Bandra (E) in north-west Mumbai tested positive for the pandemic, even as seven more persons succumbed to Covid-19 and the 120 fresh infected cases were reported. Confirming that the tea vendor had been infected, a BMC spokesperson said: "The person has been shifted to the nearby HBT Medical College and Dr R N Cooper Hospital".

Acting swiftly, the BMC sealed off the area and began to take immediate steps to insulate the chief minister's private residence "Matoshtri" from the pandemic.

What triggered anxiety among the staff members of the chief minister's office that some security guards of Thackerays used to drink from the tea stall run by the affected vendor.

With no let up in the large number of deaths and fresh infections due to the Coronavirus, the total number of the

pandemic deaths rose to 52 as seven more persons died, while the total infected persons in the state rose to a staggering 838 after 120 more persons tested positive for Covid-19.

Of the fresh deaths, Mumbai accounted four, while one death was reported from Thane, Navi Mumbai and Vasai-Virar. Of the deaths in Mumbai, two took place in Hinduhridaya Samrat Bal Thackeray (HBT) Medical College and Dr R N Cooper Hospital, while one death was reported by private hospitals.

In a tragic development, a 30-year-old woman in her ninth month of pregnancy died at the BMC-run air Hospital on Saturday. Three other deaths - one each belonging to Navi Mumbai, Ambernath in Thane district and another from Virarp-Vasai took place in Mumbai hospitals.

"Out of 17563 laboratory samples, 15808 were negative and 838 have been tested positive for coronavirus until today. 66 patients have been discharged till date after full recovery," a medical bulletin issued by the State Health Department said.

"32,521 people are in home quarantine and 3498 people are in institutional quarantine," the bulletin said.

Meanwhile, the BMC - in its daily bulletin - said that it had surveyed the city's 15 lakh population till date and identified 665 "contacts" which have been referred for testing. "We have also collected 1400 samples through five teams and through this process, 130 patients have tested positive for Covid-19.

"As many as 10968 people had been placed under quarantine. Of them, 3990 people have completed the quarantine period. In all, the BMC has declared 226 areas/buildings as containment zones in the metropolis..

As part of special screening campaign, the BMC has collected 112 swab samples.

In a related development, various nurses' unions and associations -- under the umbrella of Jan Swasthya Abhiyan -- wrote to Mumbai Commissioner Praven Pardeshi on Monday, raising safety concerns faced by nurses while treating the novel coronavirus patients.

J&K positive cases reach 109

PNS ■ JAMMU

With only three patients testing positive in Kashmir division, the total number of Covid-19 cases in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir Monday stood at 109, recording a jump of 57 patients in last five days alone.

From over 50 reported cases by the end of last month, the J&K reached a cumulative tally of 109 cases on April 6, the media bulletin reported.

The Bulletin said that till date 1708 samples have been sent for testing of which 1583 have tested as negative, and 16 reports are awaited till April 06, 2020.

Director SKIMS, Dr AG Ahangar Monday said, out of 283 suspected patients, 238 have been discharged and 24 positive patients who are under treatment are all recovering well.

The Kashmir Valley had



recorded its first case on March 18 when a 67-year-old woman from Khanyar Srinagar tested positive, two days after her arrival from Saudi Arabia after performing Umrah.

As per officials, out of these 109 COVID-19-affected people, 85 are in Kashmir and 18 in Jammu. However, four of them have been discharged—three from Jammu and one from Kashmir while two others succumbed to the disease.

There are 103 active cases—85 in Kashmir and 18 in Jammu.

14 fresh cases were reported on Sunday-five from Baramulla district, two from Budgam and an elderly couple from Shopian besides one each from Ganderbal, Baniapora and Srinagar districts.

Furthermore, till date 35243 travellers and persons in contact with suspected cases have been put under surveillance which include 10556 persons in home quarantine including facilities operated by government, 615 in Hospital Quarantine, 103 in hospital isolation and 17506 under home surveillance. Besides, 6463 persons have completed their 28-day surveillance period. Meanwhile, the district administration in Srinagar Monday sealed Chattabala area of Srinagar after several positive cases reported from the area.

Goa to undertake corona survey: CM

Panaji: The Goa Government will undertake a Statewide survey to trace any potentially suspect coronavirus case, in which all households will be covered, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said on Monday.

The Chief Minister said the survey will start from April 11, so that when the 21-day nationwide lockdown ends on April 14, the coastal State was able to consider the next step to tackle the spread of coronavirus. "The survey over three days and ill be conducted by nearly 7,000 government servants as well as contract workers employed by the state," Sawant told reporters in Panaji.

The survey's objective was to identify foreigners or persons who may have returned to Goa from other states and to identify persons with fever or flu-like symptoms. "The information gathered will be passed on to Public Health Centre personnel concerned, who will then assess the data," the Chief Minister said. "This is a 100 per cent community survey. Everyone in Goa should cooperate," Sawant said. The Chief Minister announced a 20 per cent hike in salaries of health workers as well as sweepers and security guards involved in coronavirus relief work. IANS

Tiff between BJP, Didi on 'politicising corona'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With the BJP Information Technology cell charging the Bengal Government with hiding facts related to corona deaths, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday returned fire saying these were no time to reap political harvests.

Banerjee disclosed the number of Corona infected patients in the State but gave a curt reply to BJP leader Amit Malavya's allegations --- that the Government was fudging the number of corona deaths --- saying "some parties are playing politics in these hours of crisis ... a party's IT cell is using fake news to malign our health department ... at a time when our doctors and health staff are doing their best to fight the disease. This is not the time for

petty politics for which they will get plenty of time later on."

Claiming that she was "not finding faults in what the central government was doing while dealing with the crisis," Banerjee said "they may be more interested in politics by descending on the streets, ringing bells, clanging utensils ... but we are not. We are more interested in serving the people."

Earlier, leaders like Malavya and even Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh questioned the Government was functioning in Bengal saying the "hospitals in the State are under pressure from the Chief Minister who is also the Health Minister to underplay the Corona related deaths."

The BJP IT cell chief wondered as to why the State Government did not come out

with medical bulletins on 2nd, 3rd and 5th April. He also questioned the reason "why the number of Covid-related deaths are missing in the bulletin released on the 4th."

Ghosh said the Government was doing so in order to save the insurance money worth Rs 10 lakh that the Chief Minister has promised in case of any death in the medical fraternity for treating Corona. The Chief Minister has promised an insurance of Rs 10 lakh for the government staff involved in fighting the disease.

Not only the Chief Minister but also other opposition leaders slammed the BJP for politicizing the fight against corona by encouraging its supporters to burst crackers and light candles "as if this is a time to celebrate the crisis... as if they have won

the battle."

While Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh supported bursting of crackers on Sunday night to express solidarity with 'corona warriors' saying "the locked down people were giving vent to their frustration... so there is no harm in it," State Minister Tapas Chatterjee said "in the name of showing solidarity the BJP was getting the people to celebrate its foundation day."

Congress MP Pradip Bhattacharya wondered whether Corona will go by lighting candles and bursting crackers. CPI(M) Legislature Party Leader said Sujan Chakrabarty "efficient tackling of the crisis and not publicity stunt is the need of the hour."

Elsewhere the police arrested 126 people for bursting crackers. Over enthusiastic sup-

porters of Narendra Modi tended to overshoot the Prime Minister's appeal to switch off lights and light up candles only and hit the streets bursting crackers and flying hot air balloons.

Meanwhile, as per the updates made available by the Chief Minister on Monday the number of Corona infected patients in Bengal was 61 while the number of deaths remained at 3 whereas 13 patients have been cured thus far.

There were 6890 people who have been put under government quarantine, the Chief Minister said adding out of the 61 people infected 55 belonged to seven families with foreign travel history.

In a bid to expand the fight against the virus the Government also set up a

"Global Advisory Board for Covid Response Policy to help and advise us on tackling the crisis," Banerjee said adding Nobel Laureate economist Abhijeet Vinayak Banerjee and WHO accredited Dr Swaroop Sarkar had been requested to be a part of the committee.

Elsewhere the State Government on Monday sent 64 people including patients, medical staff and 39 doctors of the Government owned NRS Medical College and Hospital to home quarantine following the death of a suspected corona patient on Saturday night. His pathological samples had been sent for tests.

As a precautionary measure the CCU unit and the male medicine ward of the hospital had been shut down for disinfection works, sources said.

Kerala has succeeded in containing coronavirus: CM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala, said on Monday that 327 persons in the State have been tested positive for coronavirus. Addressing the daily press meeting at Thiruvananthapuram, Vijayan said 122 persons were admitted to various hospitals on Monday.

"There are 266 persons undergoing treatment in various hospitals in the State. We have been successful in containing the spread of the disease. On Monday, nine persons tested positive for corona in Kasargod district. Six out of this nine persons had travelled abroad and would have developed the disease during their trip," the Chief Minister said.

He said more than 1.52 lakh persons in the State have been put under observation. An important information disclosed by Vijayan was that Karnataka Government has agreed to allow non-coronavirus patients from Kasargod district to travel to Mangalore for medical aid. "If the person carried a certificate indicating the name of the hospital in Mangalore where he is planning to get admitted and that he was not suffering from corona virus, the Karnataka Health department officials would allow his passage to the district," said the Chief Minister.

Relations between the two States had reached a flashpoint last week when Karnataka sealed its border with Kerala at Kasargod. This was the fall out of persons

afflicted with corona virus in Kasargod rushing to neighbouring Mangalore for medical aid.

Kasargod, described as Kerala's epicentre of Corona Virus cases, has no speciality hospitals or medical colleges and residents in the district are dependent on Mangalore in Karnataka for their medical needs.

On Sunday, KK Shylaja, Kerala's health minister flagged a team of doctors, nurses and para medical staff from Thiruvananthapuram on deputation to Kasargod to face the medical emergency. Efforts are on by the Government of Kerala and some NRIs to set up super speciality hospitals in the district, said Periyachur Sukumaran, a Government high school teacher in Kasargod.

Data consumption jumps in rural areas during lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Data consumption in rural India on the network of Common Service Centre (CSC) special purpose vehicle (SPV) jumped nearly 100 per cent within a month - especially during the lockdown period. There has also been a high demand of FTTH (Fiber to Home) with more than 3 lakh subscribers registered across 50,000 Gram Panchayats.

CSC e-Governance Services India, which holds the license for providing internet services, recorded an increase in data consumption to 4.7 terabyte (TB) as on March 30 from 2.7 TB on March 10.

"Based on the growth trend, data consumption on the CSC SPV network is estimated to have increased by close to 100 per cent till date," said CSC SPV CEO Dinesh Tyagi.

He said that a major spike in data consumption has been recorded since the time lockdown started.

CSC also provides wifi hotspot in around 25,000 gram panchayats in the name of CSC Wi-fi Choupal services.

According to the CSC data, Wi-Fi Choupal has more than 12 lakh registered subscribers who use this as a supplement to their mobile connection.

"This clearly indicates the high appetite of internet data in rural areas, which in future can be pivotal in bridging Digital Divide and If nurtured with a regular organic feed of educational and informational content rural India can be Digitally Empowered and Transformed," Tyagi noted.

There are more than 60 crore internet users in India and out of this about 29 crore are in rural areas.

UP man gets cough, cold; commits suicide

IANS ■ BANDA (UP)

A 35-year-old man, suffering from cough and cold, committed suicide by hanging himself in Jamalpur village in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh.

The police suspect that he ended his life because of the fear of coronavirus.

According to the brother-in-law of the deceased, Rajendra, the latter had isolated himself in a room after some villagers suspected that he was suffering from corona virus.

"Maybe, he committed suicide due to this. The matter is being probed," a police official said.

CPI seeks all-party meet to discuss crisis

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI on Monday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convene a meeting with all heads of registered political parties at the national and State level to discuss the crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

CPI general secretary D Raja in a letter pointed out that meeting with only floor leaders parties in the Parliament has left out many political parties due to "technicality." The PM is scheduled to interact with floor leaders of political parties with more than five MPs in the Parliament.

"The Government, political parties and all those who matter in shaping the political, economic and social course of the country must come together and put their heads and

efforts together to contain the disaster. In this regard, you have been interacting with the Chief Ministers of the States and other experts.

Now you have decided to have an interaction with the floor leaders of the political parties in Parliament in which some of the important parties are left out on the basis of technicality.

In fact this interaction should have happened during the last days of the last Budget Session of Parliament or immediately after the adjournment of the Session.

"However, our Party is of the view that the initiative taken by you must be followed by holding consultations with the heads of all recognized political parties at National and State level," said Raja.

PAPER WITH PASSION

Masking India

The aftermath of Corona will see many behavioural changes, few might be noticed more than better personal hygiene



Once the Coronavirus passes, there will be innumerable scientific studies about what happened and why some countries dealt with the viral epidemic so much better than others. Some of the questions will have answers to ones that many of us are curious about. Such as how Germany prevented the full impact of the virus when Italy, separated by just a tiny Switzerland in between, was devastated? How could China mysteriously keep the strange Wuhan fever from devastating other major Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shanghai? At the same time, New York City, halfway across the planet from Wuhan, is getting its healthcare system pulverised. Yet, other questions might have simpler answers, such as how come Japan and South Korea prevented the full force of the attack from hitting them (so far)? One answer being offered is the high prevalence of face masks and the overall discipline among the populace in these countries. Indeed, ever since the initial SARS epidemic hit the country 15 years ago, it did not spread to the Western world but ravaged East Asia. The aftermath of those events inspired not just Hollywood movies but also established among its citizens a healthy habit of wearing surgical masks or even simple face masks when they venture outside their homes. Initially, the World Health Organisation (WHO), which has covered itself with all the ignominy during this crisis, had said that only those who displayed symptoms or tested positive had to wear the masks. It had made it clear that healthy people need not wear them. But political leaders across the world were confused and global leaders increasingly ignored the directive of the WHO, which covered up China's mishandling of the outbreak. Wearing masks seems to have become a standard piece of advice being given by Governments to the public. Rightly so, the Indian Government, too, issued an advisory this week, asking all citizens to use "hand-made reusable face cover" when they step outside. The fact appears that wearing masks may not completely prevent the disease but it can considerably reduce its spread. This is a good thing as nations struggle to contain the outbreak. Just like citizens in several east Asian countries have become accustomed to masks in public, so will the general citizenry in India and the rest of the world. And one need not have a top-notch N95 mask, a simple home-made mask, made out of old clothes, would suffice. Given the global shortage of personal protective equipment, we must reserve them first for our medical professionals, who are at the forefront of the COVID-19 infection. Agreed, home-made masks may not be as efficient as N95 but they can reduce transmission significantly.

The genie has left the bottle and we cannot completely stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus until scientists find a preventive vaccine. Nor can we be dependent on hypothetical studies about the hot weather preventing the spread or that those inoculated with the BCG vaccine are more "immune" to the disease. A vaccine might still be a year or more away at the very least and India should not forget the impact the last global pandemic had on its population a century ago. So until a preventive vaccine is developed, wear a mask, wash your hands and maintain general social distancing. This is the least that we can all do in this fight and save each other.

The Bhilwara model

Aggressive door-to-door screening and testing have put the epicentre town of Rajasthan on the road to recovery



Much has been written about how China stifled the Wuhan contagion by aggressive containment and sealing the city so that nobody could leave it, thereby confining and choking the virus in the hotspot. Of course, one wonders why China could not have shown the same military aggression when cases started multiplying, under reported them instead, turned down world virologists and WHO and erred on saving the world a disaster. A bigger success story is of Taiwan next to China, which has had positive cases but deaths in single numbers. That's because it adopted an aggressive protocol since the last week of January, with senior Government officials travelling to China, inspectors keeping a watch on board flights, the Government suspending flights from China and then tracing, isolating, testing, treating and re-testing each citizen with a travel history, monitoring his/her every move. This it topped up with an emergency protocol should there be a flood at anytime. This is perhaps the model that Bhilwara has adapted and applied rigorously to contain the spiral of the disease. Even as the number of Covid-19 cases in India are leaping through the charts, there have been no new cases at Bhilwara, although it was a hotspot with cases spreading from a hospital. The last Coronavirus case in Bhilwara was reported on March 30 when the total positive cases in the district were 26 with two deaths. It is difficult to believe that what was once considered the epicentre of Rajasthan has turned around an intractable situation. The Bhilwara administration acted fast, enforcing a curfew and sealing district borders on March 20, even before the national lockdown. After quarantining the entire hospital staff and patients, it went for aggressive testing, conducting a door-to-door screening of its 28 lakh population to detect any signs of community transmission. It allowed bare essential shops and medical stores to stay open for limited hours while the administration home-delivered ration, fruit and vegetable supplies through local booths. The administration is now contemplating home-delivering milk and medicines so that nobody steps out at all and even cancelling curfew passes. The police are enforcing the curfew through regular patrols. The confinement has minimised the possibility of spread as nobody has been allowed to even walk the streets, leave aside crowding markets. Although it has tested 300 to 400 samples every day, the authorities are planning to ramp that up to 4,000 over the next few days. Not only that, since the samples were being sent to Jaipur, which is about 250 km away and identification took time, the town will have its own testing set-up this weekend. In effect, the entire district is under watch, cut off from the world. And till it is an all-clear, it will continue the rigour.

Perhaps, this is what the Health Ministry is considering as trends clearly establish that 80 per cent of the infection has occurred in 62 districts. And while the lockdown may be eased in low-density parts of the country, the hotspots could be subjected to an aggressive testing and containment protocol along what has come to be known as the Bhilwara model. In fact, India's fight against COVID-19 can only be tackled if it is decentralised down to the unit level and policymakers let specific geographies and local dynamics decide how things could work best at a cluster. The non-pharmaceutical intervention is the best way to contain the crisis given India's non-existent health infrastructure and Bhilwara has shown how to bring the virus out of hiding. The faster we do it, the easier it will be for us to get back on the road to recovery and get the economy going.

India's super spreaders

At a time when the Union and State Governments and institutions are working with the single determination to contain COVID-19, the Tablighi Jamat has turned out to be a spoiler



A SURYA PRAKASH

The latest estimates of the Union Health Ministry indicate that over 35 per cent of the COVID-19 cases that are springing up in the country have their origins in the conference organised by the Tablighi Jamaat, an Islamic evangelical movement, in New Delhi in the second half of March, which was in gross violation of State Government orders. At a time when the Union Government, State Governments and every national institution is working with single-minded determination and focus to contain the pandemic that has affected over a million patients globally and claimed over 50,000 lives, the Tablighi Jamaat has turned out to be a spoiler.

Displaying gross irresponsibility by flouting the orders of the Delhi Government, the Jamaat held a conference of thousands of its members. The congregation continued even as devotees were barred entry in the most popular temples, including the Balaji Temple in Tirupati, the Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai, the Sai Baba temple in Shirdi, the Dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer and the Haji Ali Dargah in Mumbai. Lakhs of other temples, churches and religious places remained closed as per Government orders in their areas.

Also, it is said that probably for the first time after the birth of Christianity, churches around the world will be closed in the week leading up to Easter, which is regarded as the most spiritually enriching week for the faithful. Fr Filipe Neri Ferrao, the Archbishop of Goa, asked the clergy to use technology and livestream church services. It quoted him as saying, "The faithful are dispensed from the obligation of participating in the mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. In order to prevent community transmission of the virus, the faithful are advised not to go for daily mass, unless it is strictly necessary."

If this is so with other faiths, why did the Tablighi Jamaat defy the Government's orders? What do we do with these Muslim clerics, who lack basic civic sense, violate the law and even throw a challenge to the authorities? Also, this writer has seen several videos of Muslims violating the lockdown orders and social distancing norms and congregating in large numbers in *masjids* in different regions in the country in the initial days of the lockdown. This happened because these mullahs pooh-poohed social distancing and virtually laughed at the world that was groaning under the Corona epidemic.

It is now almost two weeks since the authorities suspended prayers in Mecca and Medina. Similarly, several important mosques in India have remained closed. The Kerala Governor, Arif Mohammad Khan, was the other day reciting verses from the *Quran* in which Allah tells the believers not to go to the mosque but to pray from home, when the circumstances are not conducive. Yet, none of this matters to some



Muslim clerics in India, who are hell bent on challenging the system time and again on the specious ground that Islam is under threat (*Islam khatre mein hai*). In fact, this was the theme of the address of the chief of the Tablighi Jamaat, Maulana Muhammad Saad, to his audience at the headquarters of the Jamaat. As per an audio clip of his "sermon" that is in circulation, he asked Muslims to ignore the orders for closure of mosques because there was no better place to be than a mosque.

Second, this Coronavirus scare was a conspiracy to keep Muslims away from each other and to weaken Islam. They should, therefore, not fall a prey to this propaganda. Finally, he declared that there was no better place to die than a mosque. This is absolutely horrendous. It shows that despite his long years of Indian citizenship, nothing in the Indian Constitution, the nation's democratic and fraternal traditions has rubbed off on him. He seems so maladjusted to the nation's secular, liberal traditions that he renders himself unworthy of the citizenship of such a great democracy.

Every word that he has uttered does violence to the core values in the Constitution and to the deep and abiding faith that all of us have in the principles laid down by our nation's founding fathers.

It is indeed ironic that this *maulana*, who delivered this chilling advice to his audience and even said no one can

“
 THOSE WHO VIOLATED THE CURFEW, BEHAVED IRRESPONSIBLY, CONTRACTED THE DISEASE AND SPREAD IT TO OTHERS ARE ONE CATEGORY. BUT THOSE WHO ARE INVOLVED IN THE DIABOLICAL ACT OF DELIBERATELY SPREADING THIS DISEASE SHOULD BE CLASSIFIED AS MASS MURDERERS. WHAT SHOULD BE THE PUNISHMENT FOR ENDANGERING THE LIVES OF MILLIONS?
 ”

escape from the wrath of Allah, has in recent days gone into hiding. It is so sad that all this bombast does not equip him to face the mundane authorities of the Delhi Government.

Meanwhile, JP Nadda, the president of the BJP, rightly exhorted his party colleagues to ensure that the sins of the Tablighi are not pinned on the entire Muslim community. He has advised them to ensure that this does not become a communal flash point. This is very important. We must sift the wheat from the chaff. It is also important that Muslim political leaders must speak up. Unlike the Hindus, who have hordes of objectors in their ranks against fundamentalists and fringe elements, Muslim politicians hesitate to call out those who threaten the nation's secular fabric. They must change tack if they wish to preserve the Constitution that enables politicians of all hues to be elected to public office.

There are trouble-makers like Maulana Saad and some other clerics. If we wish to preserve our Constitution and protect the health of 1,300 million citizens, such people must be dealt with in the most severe manner. Just when we thought we were getting to grips with COVID-19, the *maulana* and other leaders of the Tablighi have triggered a monumental spread of the disease. The Government must send out a strong message that those who play around with the lives of millions of cit-

izens, will be made to pay. The Indian Penal Code (Sections 168-170) deals with persons, who commit nuisance and spread epidemic diseases, but the punishments under these sections are too mild. The Government must go beyond this. Several States, including Delhi, have already invoked the powers vested in them under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.

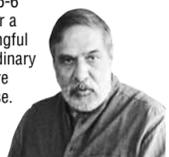
The Delhi Government's regulations required foreigners and persons with travel history to self-quarantine. On March 13, it prohibited assembly or 200 or more people. The Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal, slashed this to 20 on March 19. Each of these orders and regulations have been violated by the Nizamuddin gathering.

But the punishments prescribed in these Acts and even in the National Security Act (NSA) are too inadequate for this dastardly and unpardonable sin. Those who violated the curfew, behaved irresponsibly, contracted the disease and spread it to others are one category. But those who are involved in the diabolical act of deliberately spreading this disease should be classified as mass murderers. What should be the punishment for endangering the lives of millions of people and ensuring the death of hundreds of them? The Indian State needs to ponder over this.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

India should commit 5-6 per cent of its GDP for a stimulus to be meaningful and effective. Extraordinary situation calls for more than ordinary response.



Congress leader —Anand Sharma

I haven't seen my father for three weeks, Nirvaan hasn't seen his father for three weeks. We are scared and we are saying it with full bravery.



Actor —Salman Khan

We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: We will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.



British Monarch —Queen Elizabeth

Tablighi Jamaat leadership should have cancelled their event that led to a spike in COVID-19 cases across the country. The community stands exposed by its deeds.



RSS Joint Gen Secretary —Manmohan Vaidya

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Shun gimmicks

Sir — Addressing the nation via video conference, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made it clear that the Coronavirus threat could only be combatted with the full cooperation of the people, a token demonstration of which, he said, would be to light candles, lamps and mobile torches for nine minutes on April 5 at 9 pm for nine minutes. Many are now wondering, when the world is busy fighting COVID-19 and scientists are trying to make a vaccine, why did we first bang *thalis*, then blow conch shells and then were asked to light candles.

People have always shown solidarity with the Government in times of any national calamity or crisis — be it the devastating 2004 tsunami or the global economic meltdown in 2008 or the massive floods in Uttarakhand in 2013. Even now, millions of migrants, left jobless, have reconciled themselves to the situation. People do not need gimmicks to prove their collective will, India's history is a proof. Countries such as South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore undertook a massive testing programme to identify, isolate and

Politics amid pandemic

Ever since the Prime Minister ordered a complete lockdown of 21 days, the nation has been in a state of utter chaos. While the public has been trying to make sense of the pandemic that is only evolving into something more menacing with every passing day, the Government has been conspicuous by its inability to rein in the confusion that has thrown life completely out of gear. Though the spread of COVID-19 has for the moment pushed any thoughts of an imminent war with our neighbour into the realm of fantasy, it is the preparedness to tackle the virus that has created mayhem.

With the lockdown in place, the Government's emphasis has been on "staying indoors." Attempts at identifying the problems that assail the country during this period of closure and envisaging ways to address them have gone for a toss. Social distancing and the "stay home" dictum by the Prime Minister may sound sweet but the problems associated with this "enforced" confinement have not been paid heed to. By and large, countrymen have been left to bear the brunt of the crisis. With the lockdown in force, food scarcity should have been anticipated and necessary steps to ensure the unhindered supply and distribution of essential goods and services should

treat infected patients and have been successful in containing the virus. The Government must demonstrate its dedication through such actions and not count on banging *thalis* or lighting candles.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee
 Faridabad



have been well thought of and planned. But in many parts of the country, an ineffective public distribution system has brought no solace to harried residents. The massive disruption caused by the lockdown has brought the country on the verge of an unprecedented economic catastrophe. However, it is shocking to have political grandstanding by our leaders eclipsing the humanitarian disaster arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pachu Menon
 Margao

Economic fallout

Sir — Even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy was undergoing turbulence on account of disruptions in trade flows and attenuated growth.

The situation has now been aggravated due to disruptions in demand and supply chain inflicted by the spread of the virus that has forced nations to impose lockdown. Once the pandemic is brought under control, the speed of recovery in the US and China

will be the key factors determining the nature and traction of the global economy. While India is currently focussed in securing the health of its people, we also need to think about the long-term consequences the current lockdown will have on the economy. Apart from providing a safety net to the vulnerable, ensuring job continuity is essential. There's an urgent need to mobilise resources to stimulate the economy.

Mahima Jain
 Guwahati

Deteriorating situation

Sir — The congregation of the Tablighi Jamaat in New Delhi has created adverse conditions in the country. It has also led to the possibility of community transmission of Coronavirus in most States where its members travelled. A blame game has started to evade responsibility. But in these times of crisis, a collaborative approach between the Centre and the States is required.

Sritoma Mukherjee
 Via email

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FIRST COLUMN

An opportunity taken in a crisis

Dictatorship was clearly where Hungarian leader Viktor Orbán was heading — and now he has arrived with the passage of an 'emergency' law



GWYNNE DYER

"Hello, dictator!" said Jean-Claude Juncker cheerily to Hungary's leader, Viktor Orbán, at a European Union summit a couple of years ago. The president of the European Commission was only joking, of course, but it was gallows humour. Dictatorship was clearly where Orbán was heading — and now he has arrived.

Recently the Hungarian Parliament passed a new law, allegedly to deal with the Coronavirus crisis. The law declares a state of emergency and allows Orbán to rule by decree for the duration of the crisis — but it doesn't say when that state of emergency will end. That will be decided by the man who has just been granted supreme power. Orbán's spokesman, Zoltán Kovács, helpfully explained, "Just as in wartime, a state of emergency could extend until the end of hostilities. Today we confront not a military power but are in a war-like state to defend our people against a pandemic the likes of which we have not seen in a century."

"Never waste the opportunity offered by a good crisis," as Machiavelli allegedly said 500 years ago. So is what we are seeing in Hungary now the tip of the iceberg? Will governments in other democracies whose leaders have dictatorial ambitions use the Coronavirus crisis as an excuse to give themselves absolute powers? Will Rodrigo Duterte take "emergency" powers to get around the one-term Filipino presidential limit that obliges him to quit in two years' time? Will Narendra Modi copy Indira Gandhi's 1975 "Emergency" and set up as the "temporary dictator" of India? Will Recep Tayyip Erdogan destroy what remains of Turkey's democracy to save himself if his popularity declines further? For that matter, will Donald Trump use the great wave of American Coronavirus deaths in the coming months and an alleged threat of mass disorder as an excuse for postponing the November election, especially if his prospects for re-election are not looking bright? It's a toss-up with Duterte, who is responsible for so many murders that he can never safely retire. But for the rest, the answer is almost certainly "no."

Both Modi and Erdogan have created solid blocs of religious supporters, who practically guarantee their political futures (at great cost to the unity and future prospects of their respective countries). They don't need to destroy democracy to survive. As for Trump, whose "base" is too narrow to assure him a political victory in November if other elements of his victorious 2016 coalition defect, he doesn't really have the option of cancelling the election. Americans' loyalty to their ancient Constitution is still too strong to let that happen. In any case, Trump probably won't need such extreme measures to hold on to office. He is already re-writing the script so that his heavy responsibility for the silent carnage that awaits the country is erased in the public's mind by his last-minute swerve towards a strong policy of social distancing that averts a much greater loss of life. Hail the saviour!

Which leaves us, then, with the question of why Orbán is going to such political extremes when he already had all the power he could possibly want. He has already fiddled with the Constitution so that his party can win a two-thirds majority of the seats in Parliament on only 44 per cent of the votes.

Hungary is effectively a one-party State and the media and the judges both serve Orbán's Fidesz Party, not the general public. He even had a "state of emergency" in place already, declared in 2016 during the great refugee flood of that year (though none of the refugees came to Hungary) and he has never rescinded it. True, he can now hand out five-year prison sentences to Hungarians who spread "false" information but the courts were already giving his critics multiple shorter sentences if they got too noisy. Why go to this extra trouble when it might even tip the European Union into expelling Hungary as a non-democratic country (although I wouldn't hold my breath on that one)?

I once spent a day with Orbán in Budapest, when we were both much younger men. He was a student leader who had just got famous for defying the Communists with a fiery nationalist speech and I had spent the summer in the Soviet Union interviewing the emerging democratic Opposition. (We were introduced by Hungarian-born philanthropist George Soros, then Orbán's mentor and later a prime target of his rabid anti-Semitism.) We had much to talk about and I enjoyed his company. What struck me, though, was that he really thought like a lawyer. Maybe a radical one and certainly later a corrupt one. But a lawyer by character and by training. So maybe what he's doing now is just tidying up the law. Hungary was already a dictatorship in practice. Now it's also one in theory.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is *Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work*)

STATES HAVE TO STOCK UP ON KEY MEDICAL SUPPLIES THAT THEY'RE RUNNING SHORT OF. THE FEDERAL STOCKPILE IS A BACK-UP FOR THEM.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THERE'S NO WAY THAT WE COULD STOCKPILE IN ANTICIPATION OF A PANDEMIC. BUT THE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING PRECISELY THAT.

—ILLINOIS GOVERNOR JB PRITZKER

Serve up a fresh NFSA

The 80 crore people the Govt currently targets for giving subsidised foodgrain under the Food Security Act includes millions of higher-income beneficiaries who don't deserve it



UTTAM GUPTA

The Finance Minister, Ms Nirmala Sitharaman, announced a ₹1,70,000 crore package under the PM-Gareeb Kalyan Scheme (PMGKS) to address the plight of tens of millions of workers in the "informal" sector affected by COVID-19, on March 26. The most crucial component of this package was giving five kg of rice/wheat per person per month for "free" to around 80 crore people through the public distribution system (PDS), plus one kg of preferred and region-specific choice of pulse per household for three months. To understand the full implications of the relief — estimated to cost about ₹40,000 crore — let us capture the basics of the food security system in India. Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, a quota of five kg of cereals per person per month is made available at a subsidised price of ₹3 per kg rice, ₹2 per kg wheat and ₹1 per kg coarse cereals to 67 per cent of India's population or over 80 crore people. It is a matter of shame that even decades after Independence, when the NFSA was enacted, our rulers still felt that more than 80 crore people were so poor that they needed to be given food at a throwaway price. The belief as embedded in this law (in fact, the prices were mentioned in the Act and were to remain valid for a period of three years from the date of its commencement) also mocks at the official claim that India has achieved big success in bringing a large number of people above the poverty line; that the number of poor people is just about 25 per cent of the population.

Be that as it may, the Government continues to believe that the interest of the poor can be fully safeguarded by not allowing any increase in the price. This is abundantly clear from a statement by Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ram Vilas Paswan in 2017 that, "The Government will not affect any increase in issue prices for foodgrains under the NFSA." This was made at a time when even the Act didn't prevent a hike. True to that commitment, till date, the price remains unchanged. But has this safeguarded the poor? The answer lies in taking cognisance of a vital fact which often gets ignored.

The supplies under NFSA barely cover 50 per cent of a person's requirement which is 10 kg per month, as estimated by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). This forces him/her to buy the balance quantity from the market at a much higher price. Being linked to the cost of procurement, handling and distribution (in case of rice, at least ₹35 per kg), the market price is more than 10 times the subsidised price.

As a consequence, whatever benefit the Government gives by keeping the price low on sale of certain quantity, that is more than offset by their having to pay many times more on purchase of the balance five kg from the market. Thus, for buying 10 kg — being his/her requirement for a month — they have to spend a total of ₹190. The effective price paid by him/her is ₹19 per kg instead of ₹3 per kg — a sense one gets by a plain reading of the NFSA. The underprivileged are also getting hit in another way.

All along, the Government has taken recourse to increasing the Minimum Support Price (MSP). While this is meant to incentivise farmers produce more, this leads to a collateral damage. The increase in MSP leads to increase in the cost of supplying food, which triggers a hike in the mar-



“WHEN SUBSIDISED FOOD IS AVAILABLE AT A FRACTION OF THE MARKET PRICE, THERE IS HUGE INCENTIVE FOR DUBIOUS OPERATORS TO SIPHON OFF. WHEN HANDLING AND DISTRIBUTION COST (BESIDES MSP PAID TO FARMERS) IS REIMBURSED TO AGENCIES ON 'ACTUAL' AS FOOD SUBSIDY, INEFFICIENCY AND INFLATED COST CLAIMS (INCLUDING BOGUS) ARE INEVITABLE. WHEN MILLIONS OF THE RICH/BETTER-OFF ARE ALSO MADE BENEFICIARIES UNDER THE NFSA, SUBSIDY IS BOUND TO BALLOON

ket price, implying that the poor will need to spend more on the quantity bought from the market. The decision of the Government to give five kg of rice/wheat per person per month to 80 crore people for "free" over and above the five kg they are already getting under the NFSA can help remove this anomaly. Having got all of 10 kg at an effective price of ₹1.5 per kg, s/he need not buy any from the market. But this is a mere coincidence (an offshoot of the Corona-crisis); it was never intended as a conscious policy move. In any case, the additional five kg for free is available for three months only. Thereafter, it will be back to square one.

Can the Government consider giving 10 kg per person per month at the subsidised price of ₹1/2/3 per kg? In case it is given to all the 80 crore people, this will be at a huge cost, as then the food subsidy (excess of the cost of supply over the issue price multiplied by total quantum of sale under the NFSA) will increase sharply from an already whopping ₹2,19,000 crore during 2019-20 to ₹2,53,000 crore expected during 2020-21. This is unconscionable.

How can the food requirement of the needy be met in full without entailing additional burden on the exchequer? How can the two objectives be reconciled? What is the way forward?

To get there, we need to recognise that the 80 crore people — the Government currently targets for giving subsidised foodgrain under the NFSA — includes millions of higher-income beneficiaries who don't deserve it. This was duly accepted in early 2015, when a committee headed by Shanta

Kumar, senior BJP leader, recommended a reduction in coverage under the NFSA from the existing 67 per cent to 40 per cent, restricting the eligibility of subsidised food at ₹1/2/3 per kg only to the poorest of the poor under the Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY), plus increasing their entitlement from five kg to seven kg per month and making the rest pay 50 per cent of the MSP paid to farmers. Reduction in coverage by 27 per cent can remove 35 crore people from the scheme. That will release 175 crore kg per month, which can be used to give an additional five kg per month to those under the AAY. The number of families under the AAY being 2.5 crore or 12.5 crore people (five per family), five kg extra for each will consume 62.5 crore kg per month. Even after this, there will be a monthly surplus of 112.5 crore kg or 1.125 million tonnes. In other words, the Government need not undertake distribution of 13.5 million tonnes of grain annually, which will result in corresponding saving in subsidy or ₹43,000 crore annually.

Likewise, an increase in issue price to beneficiaries, other than those under the AAY or 32.5 crore from the existing ₹3 per kg to 50 per cent of the MSP paid to farmers or ₹14 per kg rice, can help reduce subsidy. The savings will be about ₹1,800 crore per month or ₹21,600 crore per annum.

Yet, the Government has not acted upon the recommendations of the panel. Meanwhile, the country continues to be saddled with millions of underfed poor; unsustainable high subsidy; inefficiency in handling and distribution by State agencies; misuse of subsidy and

subsidised food being cornered by millions of undeserving people.

These maladies are germane to the existing dispensation of controls on almost every aspect of the food supply chain. When subsidised food is available at a fraction of the market price, there is huge incentive for dubious operators to siphon off. When handling and distribution cost (besides MSP paid to farmers) is reimbursed to agencies on "actual" as food subsidy, inefficiency and inflated cost claims (including bogus) are inevitable. When millions of the rich/better-off are also made beneficiaries under the NFSA, subsidy is bound to balloon.

The implementation of the committee's package could have made some headway in addressing these maladies but still it would be far from eliminating them as it does not alter the fundamentals of the existing dispensation.

To achieve drastic outcome in terms of higher efficiency and lower cost in handling operations, prevention of misuse and saving in subsidy, there is an urgent need to remove all controls, allow participation of private entities in procurement and distribution and make way for competitive markets. The subsidy should be restricted only to the poor (about 25 per cent of the population) and given directly to the beneficiaries using the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism.

Will the Corona crisis wake the political class from its deep slumber into implementing this reform? Only time will tell.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

Hardly an elevation for a former CJI

Both 'Mr Gogoi' and 'Justice Gogoi' have not broken any law. Still, perhaps Justice Gogoi may have dropped the ball on the way to the Rajya Sabha and allowed the common man to question the independence of the judiciary



ROBIN DAVID

— the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. It is envisaged that the State and the executive are to be separate from the judiciary which is independent. This independence and impartiality is essential for the Supreme Court and the High Courts to direct the Government to enforce the fundamental rights of citizens and order the Government and its functionaries to respect individual liberties.

Liberty, fundamental rights and freedom are essential for existence and the Constitution recognises this. It vests unfettered and independent jurisdiction on the Supreme Court to pass any order in public interest to do complete justice. Independence of the judiciary is an integral part of the Constitution as is expected of a sovereign democratic nation. The power of the apex court to direct the Government is essential in our democracy, considering the immense powers that the Government has. Justice Khanna says that independence of the judiciary is also linked to essential human rights and civil liberties and the rights are needed because

while you want to enable the Government to control the governed, you also want it to control itself.

However, the Government is the biggest litigator in India and about 37 million cases are pending in the District Courts and High Courts. As on March 1, over 60,469 cases were pending in the apex court and according to the Department of Justice in 2017, approximately 46 per cent of the total pending cases in courts pertained to the Government.

The courts are bound to decide millions of cases where the Government is a party. The independence of the judiciary is perceived by the common man by the conduct of the judges. The confidence of the citizens will be diminished if the judges are seen too close to the executive and it is the responsibility of the judges and lawyers to ensure that this trust is not lost.

The CJI's Office is the highest and most respected positions in the judiciary. The importance of this position can be appreciated by the fact that on January 26, 1950, the Chief Justice MK

Kania administered the oath of office to Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India. Later, in 1969 Chief Justice M Hidayatullah was briefly made the President.

In the higher courts when a lawyer becomes a judge, they are referred to as "justice" after that. The judge's oath is to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution and duly, faithfully and to the best of their ability, knowledge and judgment perform the duties of the office without fear or favour, affection or ill-will uphold the Constitution and laws. Disrespect to a judge or court is contempt of court and punishable to protect the dignity of the institution of justice. Under the Constitution, a judge of the Supreme Court is prohibited from practising in any court after retirement. The first Law Commission headed by India's first Attorney-General, MC Setalvad presented a report on Judicial Reforms in 1958. It was recommended that a Supreme Court judge should be totally barred from accepting any employment under the Union or a State after retirement

other than employment as an ad hoc judge of the Supreme Court under Article 128 of the Constitution. The Law Commission also recommended that judges of the Supreme Court should not start chamber practice after retirement. These recommendations have not been implemented. Other Constitutional functionaries such as the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India and members of the Union Public Service Commission are barred from post-retirement employment with the Government. Bureaucrats in the Administrative Services can take up commercial employment after one year, post-retirement, also known as the cooling-off period. In 2014 Chief Justice RM Lodha at his retirement suggested a two-year cooling-off period for Supreme Court Judges after retirement.

Setalvad's recommendation to ban all post-retirement employment makes good sense for the preservation of the independence and dignity of the judiciary. However, it may not be fair to prohibit a retired judge from working. United States (US) Federal judges are

appointed for life or up to when they choose to quit. The Supreme Court judges in the United Kingdom (UK) retire at the age of 70. Considering that the Government is the largest litigant with millions of cases being heard, a cooling-off period of two to three years is called for in the interest of justice.

In Justice Gogoi's defence, by accepting the RS nomination he has not broken any law. And this is not the first time that a retired judge has been elected to the Upper House. Further, being a MP may not be an employment with the Government.

The experience and skills of retired judges in India are a great resource and should not be wasted. Perhaps the questions arising from the issued raised by the nomination of Justice Gogoi will encourage lawmakers to seriously think about the independence of the judiciary and the enhancement of the retirement age of judges from 65 years to 70 years, with a ban on all post-retirement employment. Our judges are extraordinarily hard-working and highly experienced and this wealth of knowledge

would be put to productive use if they are allowed to continue for a few more years beyond the age of 65.

In a recent interview, Justice Gogoi said that he could be addressed either as "Justice Gogoi" or "Mr Gogoi."

Justice Gogoi as CJI held a high position in the order of precedence till November 2019. Now as an MP, he is about 10 to 15 places down in the hierarchy. As the CJI he was protected by the Constitution and respected in accordance with the finest traditions at the Bar. The Judiciary and the Bar consider the CJI to be the head of the family. The Bar, always holds retired justices in high esteem. Coming down the protocol ladder and getting jeered during his oath-taking ceremony in the RS may have hurt the institution of justice. Both Mr Gogoi and Justice Gogoi have not broken any law. Still, perhaps Justice Gogoi may have dropped the ball on the way to the RS and allowed the common man to question the independence of the judiciary.

(The writer is Advocate Partner at Dua Associates)

Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi demitted office in November 2019 and four months later he was nominated by the President under Article 80 of the Constitution as a Member of Parliament (MP). His nomination has raised many questions. Why did Gogoi accept the nomination to the Rajya Sabha (RS)? Did he not decide cases where the Government was a party? Is the judiciary independent? Only an independent judiciary can direct the Government to enforce rights and one of the most important objects of the Constitution is to secure justice to all its citizens.

The State comprises three organs

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

'HARDEST' WEEK AHEAD

British PM hospitalised; more than 1.3 million cases globally, over 72K deaths worldwide; Spain records deaths down for 4th straight day

AFP ■ LONDON

The coronavirus threatened Americans with their hardest week in living memory on Monday and put Britain's Prime Minister in hospital, despite early signs that some of Europe's hardest-hit countries may be turning a corner.

More than 72,000 people have now died worldwide in the epidemic — some 50,000 of them in Europe — and, as the human tragedy continues to escalate, the global economy is plunging into what leaders warn will be a historic recession. More than 1.3 million declared cases have now been registered around the world.

The US surgeon general compared the likely impact of the epidemic in the week ahead to 9/11 or Pearl Harbour and France warned of the worst economic slump since World War II.

In London, Prime Minister Boris Johnson remained in hospital on Monday but was in "good spirits" after being admitted for tests for "persistent" coronavirus symptoms.

"The Prime Minister had a comfortable night in St Thomas' Hospital in London and is in good spirits," Johnson's spokesman said, adding that the 55-year-old British premier remains "under observation". Johnson tested positive for the virus 10 days ago, and despite his hospitalisation his housing minister Robert Jenrick said the leader was still "in charge" of the Government as the country grapples with the continuing crisis.

It was a mixed picture in Europe, where countries already ravaged by deadly COVID-19 outbreaks reported lower numbers of new infections and, in Austria and Italy, began thinking about easing lockdown restrictions.

The new coronavirus has reached almost every corner of

the planet, confining nearly half of humanity to their homes and turning life upside down for billions.

About three quarters of all deaths have been clocked in Europe, and the US now has the most recorded cases of any country — along with a steadily rising death toll.

"This is going to be the hardest and the saddest week of most Americans' lives, quite frankly," US Surgeon General Jerome Adams told Fox News ahead of what is expected to be a tough week for already hard-pressed American healthcare providers.

Italy's daily coronavirus death toll shot up to 636 on Monday, just one day after dropping to its lowest level in over two weeks, the civil protection service said. The number of fatalities had fallen to 525 on Sunday, the lowest since March 19. Italy's total number of deaths officially attributed to COVID-19 rose to 16,523, more than in any other country.

In Spain, nurse Empar Loren said, "The situation is more stable. The number of patients in intensive care is not growing much anymore, and we are starting to discharge quite a few."

Hard-hit Spain recorded deaths down for a fourth straight day on Monday — but still logged 637 fatalities.

At a field hospital set up at a Madrid conference centre, staff applauded whenever a patient was healthy enough to be sent home. The effective mothballing of the global economy is beginning to hit hard with analysts warning millions of jobs will be lost despite unprecedented stimulus programmes.

Germany announced that the Government would guarantee loans for small businesses but France was gloomy, with Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire estimating that the 2020 crunch would be "far beyond" the previous post-1945 worst case.



Despite the gloom, heart-warming examples of humanity around the globe have lifted spirits, with ordinary people doing what they can to help those on the medical front line. In a Barcelona restaurant, chefs flipped burgers to deliver to nurses and doctors.

"When you deliver the food and you see they're happy, that makes us happy and it makes us stronger," said delivery man Daniel Valls.

And in the southern Italian city of Naples, a street artist lowered a "solidarity food basket" from his balcony, holler-

ing: "If you can, put something in. If you can't, take something out." "We started by putting a piece of bread, a bag of pasta, a box of peeled tomatoes," said English-language tutor Teresa Carro, who also lowered a basket.

Around the Globe

CHINA stepped up border control measures on Monday as the number of imported coronavirus cases rose sharply to 951 while the asymptomatic cases also surged, raising fears of a second wave of the COVID-19 infections, mainly from Chinese returning home from abroad despite drastic containment efforts. A health official in Beijing warned that the Chinese capital, Beijing, will probably remain under long-term coronavirus epidemic control.

The trajectory of coronavirus infections in IRAN appears to have started a "gradual" downward trend, the Government said on Monday, but it warned the disease is far from being under control. The COVID-19 outbreak claimed 136 lives in the past 24 hours, bringing Iran's overall death toll to 3,739, health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told a televised news conference. Iran registered 2,274 new cases of infection over the same period, he said, putting the total number at 60,500 across the country.

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP is confronting the most dangerous crisis a US leader has faced this century as the coronavirus spreads and a once-vibrant economy falters. As the turmoil deepens, the choices he makes in the critical weeks ahead will shape his reelection prospects, his legacy and the character of the nation. The early fallout is sobering. In the White House's best-case scenario, more than 1,000,000 Americans will die and millions more will be sickened.

The UNITED STATES on Monday WARNED CHINA not to take advantage of the coronavirus pandemic to exert itself in the South China Sea after Vietnam said Beijing sank a trawler. Amid the global focus on fighting COVID-19, China has ramped up self-described research stations and landed special military aircraft in the dispute-rife sea, according to the State Department.

A MAN who TRIED TO WALK FROM FRANCE TO SPAIN TO BUY CHEAP CIGARETTES WAS RESCUED in the Pyrenees mountains — only to be fined for flouting anti-coronavirus regulations. The man had initially set out by car on Saturday from Perpignan in southern France to La Jonquera in Spain, but was stopped at a checkpoint, and decided to make his way on foot across the mountain range that separates the two countries.



Coronavirus detected in Wuhan in late December: China

PTI ■ BEIJING

The novel coronavirus was first detected in Wuhan in late December where it was listed as "pneumonia of unknown cause", China said on Monday as it published an official timeline of the detection and control of COVID-19 for the first time, amid international criticism of Beijing for its alleged cover-up.

Since the coronavirus outbreak, the pandemic has killed 3,331 people with the number

of infections rising to 81,708 by Sunday, China's National Health Commission (NHC) said on Monday.

A total of 1,299 patients are still being treated, while 77,078 patients have been discharged after recovery, it said.

The deadly COVID-19 has spread rapidly throughout the world, killing 70,590 people and infecting more than 1.2 million across over 180 countries and territories, according to Johns Hopkins University data. In late last December, the

Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in central China's Hubei Province detected cases of "pneumonia of unknown cause", state-run Xinhua news agency reported, citing the timeline document.

On December 30, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issued an urgent notification to medical institutions under its jurisdiction, ordering efforts to appropriately treat patients with pneumonia of unknown cause, it said.



Tigress tests +ve in US' zoo

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Nadia, a 4-year-old female Malayan tiger at the popular Bronx Zoo here has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, probably infected by an asymptomatic employee, in what is believed to be the first known case of an animal infected with COVID-19 in the US, raising new questions about human-to-animal transmission of the deadly virus.

The tigress, her sister Azul, two Amur tigers and three African lions had developed a dry cough late last month with decrease in appetite, said the Wildlife Conservation Society, which manages the zoo.

Nadia, along with other

big cats, is thought to have been infected by the zoo keeper who has not been identified, it said in a statement on Sunday, adding that all the animals are expected to recover.

"Though they have experienced some decrease in appetite, the cats at the Bronx Zoo are otherwise doing well under veterinary care and are bright, alert, and interactive with their keepers," the CNN quoted the zoo as saying.

"It is not known how this disease will develop in big cats since different species can react differently to novel infections, but we will continue to monitor them closely and anticipate full recoveries," it said.

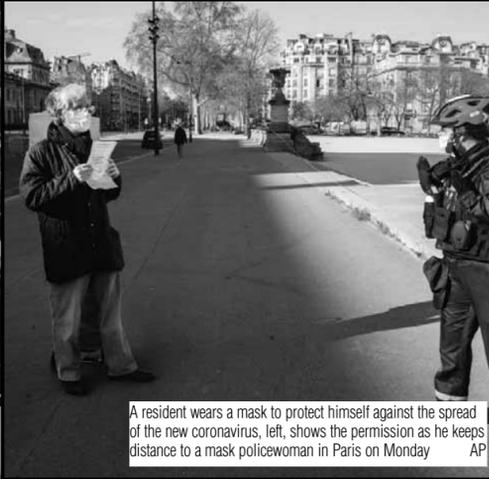
The test result has stunned

zoo officials. "I couldn't believe it," zoo director Jim Breheny said.

The coronavirus, first detected in humans in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year, is believed to have spread from animals to humans, and a handful of animals, including two dogs, have tested positive in Hong Kong.

The pandemic has been driven by human-to-human transmission, but the infection of Nadia raises new questions about human-to-animal transmission.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), no other animals at the zoo are showing symptoms.



A resident wears a mask to protect himself against the spread of the new coronavirus, left, shows the permission as he keeps distance to a mask policewoman in Paris on Monday AP

Scientists link air pollution and COVID-19 mortality in Italy

IANS ■ LONDON

An environmental researcher from Aarhus University in Denmark and health researchers from Italy have claimed there could be a link between the high mortality rate seen in northern Italy and the level of air pollution in the same region.

Environmental scientist Dario Caro from Department of Environmental Science, and two health researchers, Professor Bruno Frediani and Dr Edoardo Conticini from the University of Siena in Italy found yet another

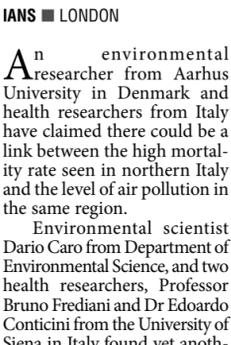
small piece in the puzzle of understanding the deadly disease that has killed nearly 16,000 in the country.

They focused on examining why the mortality rate is up to 12 per cent in the northern part of Italy while it is only approx 4.5 per cent in the rest of the country. In research project published in the scientific journal Environmental Pollution, they demonstrated a probable correlation between air pollution and mortality in two of the worst affected regions in northern Italy: Lombardy and Emilia Romagna.

The population of the northern Italian regions lives in a higher level of air pollution, and this may lead to a number of complications for patients with COVID-19 in the regions, simply because their bodies may have already been weakened by the accumulated exposure to air pollution when they contract the disease. "There are several factors affecting the course of patients' illness, and all over the world we're finding links and explanations of what is important. It's very important to stress that our results are not a counter-argument to the findings already made," said Caro.

"Our considerations must not let us neglect other factors responsible of the high lethality recorded: important co-factors such as the elevated medium age of the Italian population, the wide differences among Italian regional health systems, ICUs capacity and how the infects and deaths has been reported have had a paramount role in the lethality of SARS-CoV-2, presumably also more than pollution itself," he explained.

The two northern Italian regions are among the most air-polluted regions in Europe.



COUNTRY	TOTAL CASES	TOTAL DEATHS
USA	3,52,160	10,369
Spain	1,35,032	13,169
Italy	1,32,547	16,523
Germany	1,01,178	1,612
France	98,010	8,911
China	81,708	3,331
Iran	60,500	3,739
UK	51,608	5,373



The empty forecourt outside Terminal 3 at London's Heathrow Airport on Monday AP

Debate heats up over using an anti-malaria drug for COVID-19

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump and members of his administration are growing emphatic in promoting an anti-malaria drug not yet officially approved for fighting COVID-19, even though scientists say more testing is needed before it's proven safe and effective against the virus.

Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro promoted the drug, hydroxychloroquine, in a television interview Monday, a day after Trump publicly put his faith in the drug to lesson the toll of the coronavirus pandemic.

"What do I know, I'm not a doctor," Trump told reporters Sunday. "But I have

common sense."

The administration's promotion of the drug comes after a heated Situation Room meeting of the White House's coronavirus task force on Saturday, in which Navarro challenged the top US. Infectious disease expert Dr Anthony Fauci over his concerns about recommending the drug based only on unscientific anecdotal evidence.

Navarro, who has no formal medical training, erupted at Fauci, raising his voice and claiming that the reports of studies he collected were enough to recommend the drug widely, according to a person familiar with the exchange who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the

Situation Room blow-up.

Fauci has repeatedly said that current studies provide only anecdotal findings that the drug works. Navarro told CNN on Monday, "I would have two words for you: 'second opinion.'" Hydroxychloroquine is officially approved for treating malaria, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, but not COVID-19. Small, preliminary studies have suggested it might help prevent the new coronavirus from entering cells and possibly help patients clear the virus sooner.

Two reports gave mixed results. A series of 11 patients in France found that an antibiotic-malaria drug combo did not improve how fast patients cleared the virus or their symptoms.



Police arrest doctors demanding facilities and prevention kits to attend coronavirus patients in Quetta, Pakistan on Monday AP

Japan PM proposes state of emergency over virus, \$1-trillion stimulus

AFP ■ TOKYO

Japan's Prime Minister on Monday proposed a state of emergency for several major regions seeing a sharp rise in coronavirus cases, as well as a stimulus package worth \$1 trillion to cushion the impact on the world's third-biggest economy.

The official declaration of the state of emergency would likely come as soon as Tuesday, Shinzo Abe told reporters, as the country grapples with a recent spike in coronavirus cases, especially in the capital Tokyo. "Currently, we are seeing rapid increases of new infections particularly in urban areas like Tokyo and Osaka," said Abe.

The declaration hands regional governors the power to ask residents to stay inside, seek the closure of businesses that attract large crowds and commandeer land and buildings for medical purposes.

But it falls far short of the sort of lockdown measures imposed in parts of Europe, where police have patrolled the streets and fined offenders.



"We envision, for a period of about one month, that we will ask further cooperation of the Japanese people to reduce person-to-person contacts that lead to infections," said Abe.

The measure does not include legal powers to enforce requests for people to stay inside, or punishments for people who fail to do so. "In Japan, even if we declare a state of emergency, we will not close cities as seen in foreign countries. Experts have told us that there is no need for such a step," said Abe.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Virus can last on face masks for a week, banknotes for days: Study

PTI ■ BEIJING



COVID-19 virus can stick to stainless steel and plastic surfaces for up to four days, and to the outer layer of a face mask for a week, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post (SCMP) reported on Monday.

The report, published in The Lancet journal, adds to a growing body of research about the stability of SARS-CoV-2 — as the novel coronavirus is formally known — and what can be done to prevent its transmission. "SARS-CoV-2 can be highly stable in a favourable environment, but it is also susceptible to standard disinfection methods," said the researchers, including Leo Poon Litman and Malik Peiris, both from HKU's School of Public Health. The researchers tested how

long the virus could remain infectious at room temperature on a variety of surfaces. On printing and tissue paper it lasted less than three hours, while on treated wood and cloth, it had disappeared by the second day. On glass and banknotes, the virus was still evident on the second day, but had gone by the fourth, while on stainless steel and plastic it was present for between four and seven days. "Strikingly," the researchers said, there was still a detectable level of infection on the outer

layer of a surgical face mask after seven days. "This is exactly why it is very important if you are wearing a surgical mask you don't touch the outside of the mask," Peiris said. "Because you can contaminate your hands and if you touch your eyes you could be transferring the virus to your eyes," he was quoted by SCMP. On all surfaces, the concentration of the virus reduced quite rapidly over time, the study said. The researchers said that the results did "not

necessarily reflect the potential to pick up the virus from casual contact," as the presence of the virus in the study was detected by laboratory tools, not fingers and hands as would be the case in everyday life. A study by American researchers on the environmental stability of the coronavirus published last month in the journal Nature also concluded that it can remain infectious on some surfaces for days. They found the virus was present on plastic and steel for up

to 72 hours, but did not last more than four hours on copper or 24 hours on cardboard. The findings from HKU add to the conversation about public health and hygiene, and what kinds of precautions people should take when bringing items like groceries into their homes. Poon said hand washing remains at the top of the list, and it was theoretically possible for tins of food to carry enough live virus to cause an infection, but that the exact risk is yet to be established.

"If you want to protect yourself just maintain good hygiene, wash your hands often and try not to touch your face, your mouth or nose without cleaning first," he said. People who were particularly concerned might prefer to leave non-perishable items in their shopping bags in the kitchen for a day before handling them, he said. "That would reduce the viral concentration a lot. But the most important message is wash your hands," he said.

IMF encouraged by recovery in China, but pandemic could resurge

Washington: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Monday cited limited but encouraging signs of recovery in China, the first country to suffer the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic, but said it could not rule out a resurgence of the pandemic in China and elsewhere. In a blog, top IMF economists said the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus had pushed the world into a recession that would be worse than the global financial crisis, and called for a global, coordinated health and economic policy response. "The economic damage is mounting across all countries, tracking the sharp rise in

new infections and containment measures put in place by Governments," the IMF experts wrote. The total confirmed cases of COVID-19 around the world jumped to more than 1,288,000, with 70,600 deaths reported, according to a Reuters tally. China was seeing a modest improvement in its purchasing manager surveys (PMIs) after sharp declines early in the year, and daily satellite data on nitrogen dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere - a proxy for industrial and transport activity - showed a gradual decline in containment measures, the IMF experts wrote. "The recovery in China, albeit limited, is

encouraging, suggesting that containment measures can succeed in controlling the epidemic and pave the way for a resumption of economic activity," the authors wrote. "But there is huge uncertainty about the future path of the pandemic and a resurgence of its spread in China and other countries cannot be ruled out," they added. European countries such as Italy, Spain, and France were now in acute phases of the outbreak, followed by the United States, while the epidemic appeared to be just beginning in many emerging market and developing economies. Agencies

France heading for worst recession since WWII: Minister

Paris: France is likely to see its deepest recession since the end of World War II this year because of the coronavirus crisis, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire warned on Monday. "The worst growth figure in France since 1945 was -2.2 per cent in 2009, after the financial crisis of 2008. We will probably be very far beyond -2.2 per cent" this year, Le Maire told a Senate panel. "It's an indication of the amplitude of the economic shock we're facing," he said. France imposed a nationwide stay-at-home order from March 17 after shuttering all nonessential businesses. Officials have said the lockdown will last until at least

Stock markets rebound on easing virus crisis but oil dips

London: Asian and European equity markets rebounded Monday as some of the world's worst-hit countries reported falling death rates, providing much-needed hope in the battle against coronavirus, but oil prices sank after a meeting of top producers was delayed. While deadly COVID-19 continues its deadly sweep across the planet, with more than 1.25 million now declared infected and nearly 70,000 dead, news out of Europe that the rise of fatalities was easing has lifted spirits on trading floors. Italy reported its lowest daily death toll in two weeks,

while Spanish officials said deaths fell for the third straight day and France reported its lowest daily toll in a week. In early afternoon eurozone deals, Frankfurt stocks rallied 4.5 percent, Paris won 3.7 percent, Madrid gained 3.0 percent and Milan added 3.2 percent. "European markets are trading higher because investors are shrugging off the pessimism," said AvaTrade analyst Naem Aslam. "They are focused on more optimistic things: the slowing death rate caused by coronavirus. Italy, Spain, France, and Germany have all seen declining numbers." London jumped

2.1 percent nearing midday, with gains capped by news that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was hospitalised for precautionary tests after suffering "persistent" coronavirus symptoms for ten days. The pound however rose as officials insisted that Johnson was "still very much in charge of the government". Elsewhere, South Korea saw the fewest new cases in six weeks, Australian new infections were also dropping and Donald Trump said the US was showing signs of stabilising, despite the number of cases there passing 335,000 — the highest in the world. AFP

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Mukesh Ambani's net worth drops 28% to \$48 bn in 2 months

PTI ■ MUMBAI

COVID-19IMPACT

The net worth of India's richest man Mukesh Ambani dropped 28 per cent or USD 300 million a day for two months to USD 48 billion as on March 31 due to the massive correction in stock markets, a report said on Monday. The chairman and managing director of the diversified Reliance Industries saw his wealth decline by USD 19 billion in February-March period, taking his global ranking down eight places to 17th, the Hurun Global Rich List said. Other Indian businessmen who have seen a major drop in wealth include Gautam Adani whose wealth eroded by USD 6 billion or 37 per cent, HCL Technologies' Shiv Nadar (USD 5 billion or 26 per cent) and banker Uday Kotak (USD 4 billion or 28 per cent), it said. All the three have dropped

off the top 100 list, leaving Ambani as the only Indian in the league. The Indian market has corrected by 25 per cent in the last two months as the economic costs and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on companies led to a sell off across the world. "India's top entrepreneurs have been hit by a 26 per cent drop in the stock markets and a 5.2 per cent drop in the value of the rupee compared with the US Dollar. For Mukesh Ambani, it has been a perfect storm, with his wealth down 28 per cent," Hurun Report India Managing Director Anas Rahman said. Ambani is the second biggest wealth loser globally, after French fashion giant LVMH's chief executive Bernard Arnault, whose wealth

dropped by 28 per cent or USD 30 billion to USD 77 billion. Berkshire Hathaway's Warren Buffet also lost USD 19 billion of wealth in the last two months, to USD 83 billion, making it a smaller fall in percentage terms at 19 per cent, the report said. With hospitality coming under intense pressure due to the pandemic, shared economy platform Oyo Rooms' Ritesh Agarwal is "no more a billionaire", the rich list said. Others in the top-10 list of wealth losers also include Carlos Slim Helu & family, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Page, Sergey Brin and Michael Bloomberg, it said. Amazon's Jeff Bezos continues to be the richest man in the world with a net worth of USD 131 billion, which has slid only by 9 per cent during the



last two months and is followed by Bill Gates with a fortune of USD 91 billion (down 14 per cent), Buffet and Arnault. Chinese billionaires were among the few gainers in the last two months, and included

promoters of video conferencing and pork meat producing companies, it said. While India lost three rankings in the top-100 rankings, China added six billionaires in the league, it said.

Reliance Life Sciences to roll out confirmatory tests for Covid-19: RIL Chairman

New Delhi: Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani has announced that Reliance Life Sciences has developed its own confirmatory tests for COVID-19 which are available to all RIL employees on priority and will soon be rolled out in the community. In an internal note on Saturday, Ambani informed about the comprehensive COVID-19 tracking and treatment facility for all RIL staff and their dependents. He also announced that Reliance Life Sciences has developed its own confirmatory tests for COVID-19 which are available to all RIL employ-

ees on priority and will soon be rolled out in the community. RIL's company-wide online Symptoms Checker was available to all Reliance employees and family members and will soon be rolled out to its wider community in Mumbai and India. He advised staff to continue to practise safe social distancing, report daily on the RIL's company-wide online Symptoms Checker to track health of all staff and their dependents, to use the in-house technology platforms for virtual care and, most importantly, to stay positive, productive, and optimistic through these times. IANS

Petrol sales shrink 17.6%, diesel 26% in March as lockdown wipes demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's petrol sales shrank by 17.6 per cent and diesel demand tanked nearly 26 per cent in March as the economy froze under the nationwide lockdown announced to check the spread of COVID-19. Also, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) sales fell by 31.6 per cent as flights got suspended alongside the shutting of businesses and most vehicular traffic going off-road. Petrol sales dropped to 1.943 million tonnes in March sold in the same month in 2019, according to provisional industry demand numbers. Diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country, saw demand contract by 25.9 per cent to 4.982 million tonnes. Similarly, ATF sales fell to 4,63,000 tonnes. The only fuel that showed growth was LPG as households rushed to book refills for stocking during the three-week lockdown period. LPG sales rose 1.9 per cent to 2.286 million tonnes in March. These are provisional numbers for the three public sector oil marketing companies — Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL). Actual March numbers after including sales by private sector firms would be announced in the next few days. Industry officials said the pattern in fuel consumption is likely to continue in April as the lockdown is to last till mid of the month and there are indications that part restrictions will continue even after the lockdown is lifted. Petrol and diesel sales in April are one-third of what they were a year back, they said adding demand is expected to pick up when the lockdown is lifted and restrictions on public transport lifted.

Economic recovery to take at least 2-3 quarters: PE funds

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The situation during the ongoing COVID-19 will be grim and the recovery thereafter will also take time as private equity experts fear that more people will die from hunger than pandemic in India most people under estimating the gravity and period of impact, which at the very least will take two to three quarters. At a private equity webinar, Shailendra Singh, Managing Director at Sequoia Capital flagged that fear that more people will die from hunger than pandemic in India. He added that most people are under estimating gravity and the period of impact, which will be the at the very least two to three quarters. Singh said they are asking every portfolio co to re validate the 5 critical assumptions their business hinges on. "You will be surprised that how many of them have actually changed/could change in long run (Zivame)," he added. They have also advised companies to look at adjacent markets or alternative business models. Singh said that economic Recovery will not start before Q3/Q4 of this financial year. Most countries will move manufacturing towards domestic markets especially in healthcare & R&D and reliance on China will go down. Anuj Ranjan of Brookfield said that cycles are inevitable, it will come back but will take time. After 9/11, no-one thought they would ever get on a plane again. But they did and it was much stronger than before, but in 22 months. Air travel started but the security changed forever.

Tariff hike to buoy wireless telcos' revenue in March qtr; full impact expected in Q1FY21

New Delhi: Revenue and EBITDA for wireless telecom service providers are expected to improve sequentially during March quarter 2019-20 fuelled by tariff hike in December, but the full impact is likely only in first quarter of the current fiscal when majority users come for recharge, according to Axis Capital. Axis Capital, in its recent report outlining Q4FY20 preview, has also anticipated a soft quarter for infrastructure providers, impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. The report said Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel are expected to benefit from the price hike as well as subscriber addition, while subscriber loss is expected to continue for

Vodafone Idea. "We expect revenue and Earnings before Interest, Tax Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for wireless service providers to improve led by tariff hike taken in December 2019, though the full impact is expected only in Q1FY21 when most users come for recharge," it said. The report, dated April 3, added that EBITDA will "benefit from pass-through of the price hike with margin improvement in the range of 20 basis points (bps) quarter on quarter (QoQ) to 80 bps QoQ for Indian wireless business." On infrastructure providers, it said Bharti Infratel, is expected to have a muted quarter with modest tenancy addition. PTI

Banks to witness spike in credit costs, non-performing assets in 2020

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Banks in the country are likely to witness a spike in their non-performing assets ratio by 1.9 per cent and credit cost ratios by 130 basis point in 2020, following the economic slowdown on account of COVID-19 crisis, says a report. In its report titled "For Asia-Pacific Banks, COVID-19 Crisis Could Add USD 300 Billion To Credit Costs" S&P Global Ratings said, it expects the non-performing assets (NPA) ratio for the Chinese banking sector to increase by about 2 per cent in 2020, and credit losses, to increase by about 100 basis points. On India, the report said "the NPA ratio in India is likely to fare similarly to China's (1.9 per cent vs 2 per cent) but

the credit costs ratios could be worse, increasing by about 130 basis points," the rating agency's credit analyst Gavin Gunning said in the report. Gunning said there are concerns that the coronavirus will spread faster, further, and for longer. "This will deepen the economic pain we already anticipate for 2020. Financing conditions may likewise sour as investors become more risk averse. This would hit bank credit," he said. The report noted that an additional USD 300 billion spike in lenders' credit costs and a USD 600 billion increase in (NPAs) will occur in 2020 due to the adverse impact of coronavirus pandemic. While banks are not as exposed as the corporate sector during the initial stage of

MTNL pays March salary, looks at resolving debt now

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned telecom firm SMTNL has cleared all pending salaries till March and is now looking to resolve debt issues through asset monetisation, a top company official said on Monday. Meanwhile, BSNL has cleared salary of employees due till February and is yet to make payment for the month of March, an another official told PTI. MTNL has seen reduction of over 60 per cent wage load post voluntary retirement of 14,378 employees that left it with the workforce of around 4,000 in Delhi and Mumbai. According to official data, MTNL has a debt of around ₹20,000 crore.

COVID-19 pulls India's service sector activity into contraction mode

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: India's services sector activity contracted during March as the COVID-19 pandemic dented demand, particularly in overseas markets, while public health measures aimed at stemming the outbreak curtailed discretionary spending, a monthly survey said on Monday. The IHS Markit India Services Business Activity Index was at 49.3 in March, down from February's 85-month high of 57.5, as the new coronavirus pandemic pulled the service sector into contraction. The headline figure fell by over 8 points, undoing the strong gains in growth momentum seen throughout 2019, the survey said. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction. PTI

Moody's: G20 economies likely to contract in H1 2020

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: As the coronavirus crisis severely impacts the global economy, a report by Moody's Investor Service said that the economies of G20 countries may witness a contraction in the first half of 2020. The forecast gains significance as G20 comprises of the world's largest advanced and emerging economies representing over two-third of the world population. India also is a member of the group. The other members of the G20 are the US, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey and the European Union. The report noted that the economic effect of the pandemic includes impact on demand, supply disruption and shock to the financial markets. The Moody's report said: "The global economy will experience an unprecedented shock in the first half of 2020." PTI

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PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED (See Section 82 Cr.P.C.) Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused lady Khairu Nisha @ Sheela, W/o Shri Chunu, R/o H.No. C-23, Phace-1, Metro Vihar Holambi Kalan, New Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 395/16 U/S 33 Delhi Excise Act, PS Kotwali, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Khairu Nisha @ Sheela can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Khairu Nisha @ Sheela has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused lady Khairu Nisha @ Sheela of case FIR No. 395/19 U/S 33 Delhi Excise Act, PS Kotwali, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 16.05.20. By Order Ms. Prigya Gupta Metropolitan Magistrate-08 Central Room No. 272, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi DP/139/NW/20

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Hasan, S/o Jhhuman, R/o Gali No. 3, Gurjar Chowk, Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi also at A-232, Gali No. 4, Rajeev Nagar, Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 321/2019 U/S 356/379/411/34 IPC, P.S. Adarsh Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Hasan cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Hasan has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Hasan of FIR No. 321/2019 U/S 356/379/411/34 IPC, P.S. Adarsh Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 30.05.2020. By Order Ms. Rashmi Gupta, Metropolitan Magistrate-06, Room No. 320, Third Floor, North District Courts Rohini, Delhi DP/140/NW/20(Court Matter)

Trend Glazer

Short film on Coronavirus

Amid the Coronavirus pandemic, a slew of celebrities, including AMITABH BACHCHAN, RAJINIKANTH, CHIRANJEEVI, PRIYANKA CHOPRA, RANBIR KAPOOR and ALIA BHATT among many others, have come together to create awareness about COVID-19 through a short film, titled *Family*.

Conceptualised and virtually directed by Prasoon Pandey in collaboration with Big B, the film will show that staying at home, staying safe, maintaining hygiene, working from home and maintaining social distancing can be productive and should be taken in one's stride.

Family will be premiered across Sony Network on Monday at 9 pm.



'It is not only Corona that we are tackling. We are also dealing with something much bigger that's affecting the world economy, the food that people are getting, our daily wage earners and just everyone. But we're in this together. So I think the best thing we can do right now is just be at home, be safe and keep donating.'

—Jacqueline Fernandez

Actor MUGDHA GODSE says that lockdown has given us time to reboot ourselves.



Talking about daily wage earners, she said, "Once this lockdown is over, the economy is going to topple and there is going to be a huge recession. Many companies are going to have backlog and things are going to change. I don't know the exact ratio but it's going to hit the market severely. I do agree daily wagers are suffering now but once everything is stable, I am sure the government will take care of them. There are also many NGOs which are coming forward and doing the needful. The economy will need time."

'My time in India was unforgettable'

Hollywood star CHRIS HEMSWORTH says he was "incredibly excited" about coming to India to celebrate his forthcoming Netflix film *Extraction*.

The actor was scheduled to reach Mumbai on March 16 to promote the film that has been shot in India. The tour was called off due to Coronavirus pandemic.

In a *desi* way, Hemsworth sent his love to India in a video, "Namaste India! Chris here, all the way from Australia. As you may have heard, I was incredibly excited to come to India and celebrate this film where it was filmed. My time in India during production was unforgettable and I was looking forward to returning," he said. The film releases on April 26.



MUSICAL NOSTALGIA

Singer, composer and multi-instrumentalist RAGHAV SACHAR pays tribute to his favourite video game, Super Mario Brothers, in his signature style. By AYUSHI SHARMA

Can you recall those days when engaging with Super Mario's adventures, typically in the fictional mushroom kingdom, after school was our prime entertainment? Mario was often joined by his brother Luigi, and occasionally by other characters. The player runs and jumps across platforms as well as atop enemies in various levels of the game. For sure, by now the 90s kids must have pictured every bit of the video game, right up to the dragon and rescuing the kidnapped princess Peach from the primary antagonist, Bowser.

Undoubtedly, Super Mario has been one of the most influential games for multiple generations. And singer, composer and multi-instrumentalist Raghav Sachar has paid a tribute to it in his signature style where he is dressed as Mario and Luigi. The main instruments used are the alto, soprano and tenor saxophones along with some other woodwind instruments like piccolo and flute. The trumpet adds bass, and all of this is blended in with electronic instruments like the guitar, seaboard and the keytar.

How did you first conceptualise it? What was the idea behind?

I always wanted to create my own rendition of the Super Mario Brothers theme as it was such an amazing melody. It had a lot of nostalgic value for me and, I am sure, for every child born in the 80s and the 90s. The idea was to do my best to showcase the variety of instruments that I play to emphasize the different stages and melodies of the game. To take things a notch further, I am even dressed up like Mario and Luigi playing various instruments in the video. I wanted the audio to sound larger than life and ended up creating a massive wind symphony of the music. It's my tribute to the makers of the game and the creator of the theme who composed it only with 8bit sound as that was the only thing available then.

Since Mario was a video game of the 90s primarily, do you aim to cater to that age group only? If not, how do you think rest of the audience will relate to it?

Mario has been developed over the years and a new cooler version is available for the millennials to play. It does not have the same theme though but they might be able to relate to the character. However, it will hold a lot more nostalgic value for the people who have played the original game because my rendition is a tribute to that version. I hope that the youngsters and musicians see my video from the point of view of a musical extravaganza.

You have used various instruments for this composition. How difficult was it to synchronise them together so that one doesn't overshadow the other?

I have recorded over 100 audio tracks and featured 11 different instruments. It was crucial that I identify which section would feature which instrument in the foreground. Since it is a wind symphony, woodwinds like saxophones and flute along with trumpet (brass) take centre stage with drums and percussion keeping the energy alive and electric instruments giving the modern vibe. Synchronising all the instruments was very difficult. Mixing and mastering 100 live tracks and making everything heard at the right place was tiring and cumbersome. I would do a mix and hear it on



various systems like my car, headphones, small speakers and more. It took many attempts and days before I was satisfied with the final video.

What is peculiar about the video that you have created?

The most peculiar thing would be that the game is a part of the video. I wanted it to evoke that feeling of nostalgia among viewers when they hear and

watch it. The editing process took ages because finding the right clips and then inserting the sound effects of the game along with multiple other screens of me playing so many different instruments was a huge task. The process of creating this audio and video took more than six months, which is the longest that I have taken to create anything so far.

You do a lot of film tracks often, how is your creative process for them different from the songs for albums?

Private albums and single are an artistes' true calling because he/she is not directed to create it. Creation of Mario has been a passion project for me and it took much more time than I had initially anticipated purely because it's musically very challenging and complicated.

Film work is very different and is very 'agenda' oriented. The makers always need a 'HIT', which frankly no music director can confirm 100 per cent. I feel when you approach music from a commercial point of view, rather than a creative point of view, there's a lot of imbalance and the process is more mechanical rather being organic and intuitive.

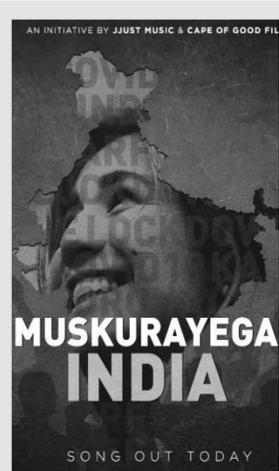
Most of the industries are suffering because of the pandemic. Do you think the music industry is affected as the songs are already online?

This is an unprecedented situation that no one had foreseen. Frankly no one has any answers to what's going on and when will it end. The industries worldwide have been hit and it will take a really long time for all of us to bounce back to our regular routines and for the fear to go away. Music as an industry has the highest demand during this time. In fact, it can easily be classified under essentials because people rely on it to relax themselves, meditate, feel spiritual, reinforce love, experience heartbreak and become positive in their overall outlook towards life. Creating music and releasing it is not as difficult if you are a producer like me who pretty much is self sufficient. If I want any singer to record on my audio, then I can send files to them via internet and mostly everyone who is engaged in making music has a small setup at home. It is also easier to release audio tracks without videos because it can literally be done from home and does not require manpower. We don't do that as much in India because every artiste wants a video to go along with the audio and that costs a lot more money and time while involving many more people.

Is there a specific reason you planned to release it now amid this global crisis? Do you think it will affect its viewership?

This track was supposed to release in March with a big press conference and a performance on various instruments by me for the media to capture. Initially, I wanted to wait and release it after the lockdown but then when I realised that there is uncertainty about how long we will be stuck like this, I decided to entertain the audience while they have fewer distractions. I think it will be a very uplifting video for many and I am expecting huge viewership because the game is not limited to India. It was a huge success worldwide and there are many communities who love Mario. I wish the circumstances were different but life still goes on...

WHEN YOU APPROACH MUSIC FROM A COMMERCIAL POINT OF VIEW RATHER THAN CREATIVE, THERE'S A LOT OF IMBALANCE. THE PROCESS IS MORE MECHANICAL RATHER THAN BEING ORGANIC AND INTUITIVE



NEW ANTHEM OF HOPE

Music heals." This would definitely sound like an old saying but that's the symphony that the nation needs now to win the Coronavirus battle. With this thought, some eminent Bollywood names have come together to bring about positivity and contribute towards a nationwide initiative through *Muskurayega India*. It's a special track, released yesterday, which aims to give strength to Indians in these testing times.

Actor Akshay Kumar took to social media and shared the poster. He wrote, "At a time like this when our days are clouded with uncertainty and life has come to a standstill, bringing you a song of hope."

Jacky Bhagnani also announced about the song. He said, "Phir hogi subah, phir jagmagayega India. Hum sab agar saath dein, toh jeet jayega India. #MuskurayegaIndia."

He added, "This song is a humble tribute to bring smiles to the faces of all Indians. I personally felt the only thing that helps in times of uncertainty is hope so we came up with this song. A big thank you to all our friends who helped us bring this together. All proceeds from this song will go into supporting the central and state governments' efforts to fight the virus. This is just a small tribute to the spirit of our country, to the power of 1.3 billion Indians."

Hinting at the silver lining, the song marks the coming together of the film fraternity for a cause.

Commenting on the same, Akshay shared, "With the help of this song, we want the people to be certain of one thing — everything will go back to usual. All we need is a united stand against COVID-19. Aur phir Muskurayega India!" Curated by Jacky's music label Jjust Music and composed and sung by the talented Vishal Mishra, *Muskurayega India*'s lyrics have been penned by Kaushal Kishore. The anthem is being presented by Cape of Good films and Jacky Bhagnani.

Other names like Tiger Shroff, Taapsee Pannu, Vicky Kaushal, Bhumi Pednekar, Kartik Aaryan, Kriti Sanon, Ayushmann Khurrana, Kiara Advani, Rajkumar Rao, Sidharth Malhotra, Rakulpreet Singh, Shikhar Dhawan and Ananya Pandey have also been a part of the song.

Glow at home

Here are a few tips from experts on how to take care of your skin and hair amid the pandemic.

By TEAM VIVA

The fallout of the Coronavirus pandemic is a quarantine lifestyle which also means parlours that have downed shutters. Our skin and hair are bearing the brunt. Therefore, right from using cleanser, face masks to hair oil, it is very important to take charge of your skin and hair as less physical activity and extra sleep hours can result in dullness. Utilise the gift of time that this global crisis has bestowed on you to the fullest. Pamper your skin, experiment with hair colours and see what suits you the best.

It's the best time to indulge in self-care and beauty practices as we are all sitting at home. The plus point is that there is no stress of rushing to work and no excess pollution. You could just sit in your pajamas with an oily and messy hairdo and a refreshing face mask, while working on your laptop. Imagine what rejuvenating effects it will have on your skin if you follow the regime daily.

Dr Blossom Kochhar, founder of Blossom Kochhar Aroma Magic and chairperson of Blossom Kochhar Group of Companies, suggests that people must use this little extra time to be productive, instead of lazing around. Bollywood celebrities like Anushka Sharma were recently seen giving her husband Virat Kohli a haircut while Taapsee Pannu experimented with her hair colour and haircut. You can do it too.

Here are a few easy tips from experts to take care of your skin and hair at home.

THAT PERFECT FACE GLOW

Eating healthy, working out, staying happy are some of the ways to achieve that perfect glow. "Climb stairs for 10 minutes. This is a good workout. If you like to dance, then dance to a song in the room. This will keep your hair and skin healthy. Be active for at least 20 minutes each in the morning, afternoon and evening. This also helps in the circulation of antioxidants in the body," says Aashmeen Munjaal, beauty expert and owner of Star Salon n Academy.

Amid this lockdown, it is very important to have a routine and divide time equally for exercise and other physical activities. "The key is to follow a routine of using cleanser, toner and moisturiser everyday. This will help the body follow a pattern," says Vedika Sharma, founder of Mantra Herbal.

STAY HYDRATED AND BANISH PROCESSED FOOD

Processed food is not good for the skin. It affects both the body and skin negatively, especially when physical activities are reduced. The less processed the food, the better it is. Aashmeen says, "Unprocessed, fresh food will strengthen your immune system

ALOE VERA GEL HAND HACKS:

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsp of shea butter
- 2 tbsp of aloe vera gel
- 2 tbsp of grape seed oil
- 1 tbsp of Vitamin E oil
- 2 tbsp of arrow root powder
- 4 to 5 drops of vanilla essential oil

METHOD:

- Using a hand mixer, mix the shea butter for a few minutes till it is fluffy.
- Then add the grape seed oil and vitamin E oil.
- Stir for a few minutes until all the ingredients are well blended.
- Add the arrowroot powder a little at a time and mix it in until it's a smooth paste.
- Then add the aloe vera gel. Mix it a bit more until it feels like a fluffy, soft lotion.
- Keep it in a small mason jar or transfer it to a small glass jar.
- Apply as often as you want.

DIY recipe by Vedika Sharma, founder of Mantra Herbal



TONING MASK:

- Prepare a paste of one beaten egg white.
- Add one tablespoon yoghurt and fuller's earth (*mullani mitti*).
- Apply on your face until it dries up.
- Rinse off with clean water.
- Repeat twice a week.

DIY recipe by Dr Blossom Kochhar, founder of Blossom Kochhar Aroma Magic

and also help in producing antioxidants, which are very important at this time. Drink fruit juice and coconut water. Eat fresh vegetables, fruits and salads." Light food with fewer spices and a healthy soup are good for skin and body. Staying hydrated is the common solution for all the skin, hair or body problems. Vedika says, "It is extremely important to have clean and

healthy eating habits during this time. We should keep ourselves hydrated at all times and drink about three litres of water every day. We should also hydrate our hands and moisturise them often as they get dry and dehydrated due to frequent washing and sanitising."

SWITCH TO NATURAL INGREDIENTS

It is always better to use natural products for skin care instead of readymade cosmetic products. This time is the time to find the skin and hair care ingredients in your kitchen best suited to your needs.

Aashmeen says, "You can follow my tried and tested recipe. You will need a cucumber, tomato and a potato. Wash and grind all these. You can make its ice cubes and apply one cube daily. A tray will last for a week for the whole family. This will keep the skin glowing. At this time, when you are not able to

go to the parlour, adopt this method to make your skin glow." Dr Blossom too is in favour of digging into the kitchen for self care. "Personally, the reason why I feel it is the best time is because I can use things from my kitchen which are really fantastic and are filled with minerals and vitamins. Natural ingredients have no substitutes."

Even for hair care we should use natural things like curd. "Do not use detergent-based shampoos and regularly massage your scalp for naturally shining hair," says Dr Blossom.

KILL THAT DEAD SKIN

The season is changing and there are higher chances of dead cells accumulating on the surface of your skin leading to dull skin. Though we usually use an exfoliator to remove dead skin cells, here is a face pack by Aashmeen for different skin type. "For dead skin, add half teaspoon each of semolina and bran and mix with a teaspoon of gram flour to make the skin glow. If the skin is oily, then add rose water to this mixture. If the skin is normal, then mix with curd and if your skin remains very dry, make a pack with mustard oil. Vary the ingredients according to your skin type while keeping the gram flour, semolina and bran constant. Apply and leave for sometime. Remove the pack by moving your hands in circular motion. Keep moistening the pack by adding water in between. It helps in improving the blood circulation, makes the skin glow and also gets rid of dead skin."



BE AT HOME, BE SAFE:
JACQUELINE
-P 10

RESILIENCE HELPS KIDS FACE NUMEROUS CHALLENGES

Resilience is being able to bounce back from stress, challenge, tragedy, trauma or adversity. When children are resilient, they are braver, more curious, more adaptable, and more able to extend their reach into the world, says **TEAM VIVA**



All children are capable of extraordinary things. There is no happiness gene, no success gene, and no 'doer of extraordinary things' gene. The potential for happiness and greatness lies in all of them, and will mean different things to different kids. We can't change that they will face challenges along the way. What we can do is give them the skills so these challenges are never able to break them. We can build their resilience.

Resilience is being able to bounce back from stress, challenge, tragedy, trauma or adversity. When children are resilient, they are braver, more curious, more adaptable, and more able to extend their reach into the world.

Building resilience really comes through the development of social and emotional skills, which include coping skills. These are the same skills that will help children deal with stress, so it follows that building resilience will really help kids deal with stress.

When teaching social and emotional skills it can be useful to draw on some of the actual stressors that children are facing in their real worlds. Children who may feel helpless can be empowered by helping others. Engage your child in age-appropriate volunteer work, or ask for assistance yourself with some

task that he or she can master. At school, brainstorm with children about ways they can help others.

While it is important to stick to routines, endlessly worrying can be counter-productive. Teach your child how to focus on something besides what's worrying him.

Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling, whether it be news, the Internet or overheard conversations, and make sure your child takes a break from those things if they trouble her. Although schools are being held accountable for performance on standardized tests, build in unstructured time during the school day to allow children to be creative.

Make yourself a good example, and teach your child the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest.

Make sure your child has time to have fun, and make sure that your child hasn't scheduled every moment of his or her life with no "down time" to relax. Caring for oneself and even having fun will help your child stay balanced and better deal with stressful times. Teach your child to set reasonable goals and then to move toward them one step at a time. Moving toward that goal even if it's a tiny step and receiving praise for doing so will focus your child on what he or she has accomplished rather than on

Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling, whether it be news, the Internet or overheard conversations, and make sure your child takes a break from those things if they trouble her. Although schools are being held accountable for performance on standardised tests, build in unstructured time during the school day to allow children to be creative



what hasn't been accomplished, and can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges. At school, break down large assignments into small, achievable goals for younger children, and for older children, acknowledge accomplishments on the way to larger goals.

Even when your child is facing very painful events, help him look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Although your child may be too young to consider a long-term look

on his own, help him or her see that there is a future beyond the current situation and that the future can be good. An optimistic and positive outlook enables your child to see the good things in life and keep going even in the hardest times. In school, use history to show that life moves on after bad events.

Watch your children for signs of fear and anxiety they may not be able to put into words. Have your children become extra clingy, needing more hugs and kisses than usual? Have your children started wetting

the bed or sucking their thumb after you thought they had outgrown that behavior? They may be feeling the pressure of what is going on in the world around them. Use play to help your children express their fears and encourage them to use art or pretend games to express what they may not be able to put into words. Your attitude as a parent impacts on their ability to bounce back from some of the difficulties they face. Make sure you model a 'you can do it' attitude for your child when he meets some of life's curve balls. It's important to note that children can appear resilient on the outside but not actually be resilient. They may have learned to behave in ways that are acceptable to the adults around them. Sometimes, these children can go under the radar in a school or community setting.

Resilience and stress are closely connected. We all experience a range of stressors in our day-to-day lives and children are no exception to this. There is also quite a bit of variability in what individuals find stressful - what is stressful to one may not be stressful for others. The ability to cope with stress will depend on the degree of stress, the supports or buffers that are protective, and the type and helpfulness of coping skills children have developed.

But, it doesn't mean a child is

less resilient just because they are experiencing stress. Learning to manage stressful times can be part of the ongoing education process of becoming more resilient. Sometimes, we are able to predict stress, such as a transition to and from primary school. We know that it helps to reduce children's stress and build their resilience when we work to prepare them for change.

Resilience partly comes from factors internal to the child. A resilient child has social and emotional competencies for their age that help them to name their feelings, manage their emotions, be aware of other people, solve problems, and make good decisions.

A child's unique temperament or personality will have some bearing on this. Some children learn social and emotional skills quite easily, whereas other children require more support. Certain children are more easily upset or distressed than others when confronted by a difficulty.

Schools, as social and learning environments, provide many opportunities for children to confront and learn to deal effectively with the many day-to-day stressors that arise.

A planned and strategic approach to this work can help children develop skills and gain a sense of connectedness, and really acts as a protective factor.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

“People have this habit of writing me off every now and then but it does not affect me,” says veteran wrestler Sushil Kumar, quashing talk of retirement and insisting that postponement of Tokyo Olympics has given him a very good shot at qualifying for his fourth Games.

The 36-year-old was struggling to make cut for Olympics, postponed to 2021. The showpiece, originally scheduled for July-August this year, was expected to be a swansong for veterans such as Sushil and tennis ace Leander Paes. But the one-year delay seems to have caused a change of plans.

Set to turn 37 next month, Sushil said, “I am not going anywhere as of now. I have got more time and more time means better preparation.”

Making a comeback at the 2019 World Championship, Sushil showed glimpses of the form that made him look invincible in his prime before he lost steam and made an early exit.

That disappointment is, however, already behind him.

“Wrestling is such a sport that if you manage to remain injury-free, practice well, set a target and work on that, you can have a shot at your goal,” said Sushil, the only Indian to win two Olympic medals.

“I am still practising twice a day. Obviously I am not hitting the mat but I am trying to be in shape and God willing, I will be able to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics,” he added.

Sushil competes in the 74kg category in which India is yet to lock quota. Will he be able to beat the slowing reflexes?

“People were saying similar things in 2011. I know how to handle this. It’s my

NOT OVER YET

Unfazed by people’s opinion Sushil preparing for 2021 Tokyo Games



Sushil Kumar (in red) attempts to drag down his opponent during 2019 World Wrestling Championship match in Nur-Sultan

PTI/File Picture

daily job to manage it.”

Sushil was referring to doubts cast in 2011 over his ability to repeat his Beijing’s Bronze medal-winning show at the 2012 London Games. However, he ended up winning a Silver in London.

The delay in Olympics has also brought Sushil’s old foe Narsingh Yadav into the equation since his four-year doping ban will be over in July, making him eligible to take a shot at Oly qualification. The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has already said it will allow Narsingh to make a comeback.

Narsingh was preferred over Sushil for the 2016 Games but it all ended in disaster when the former failed a dope test. Sushil’s demand for a trial was turned down by the federation as well as the Delhi High Court and he was even accused, without a shred of evidence, of sabotaging Narsingh in some quarters.

When asked about possibility of a face off, Sushil said, “We will see when the time comes. What can I say now about this.”

Jitender Kumar is also doing a decent job as he recently won a Bronze in 74kg at the Asian Championship.

Sushil, it seems, does not consider any of the compatriots his real rivals.

When asked about the competition he is likely to face from fellow Indians, he said, “If you think small, you will achieve nothing. I am thinking about the international wrestlers, who are my likely rivals.”

“Like there is one Uzbekistan guy, who won Asian Games Gold (Bekzod Abdurakhmonov). He is really good, my preparations are keeping in mind these wrestlers.”

“I am keeping an eye on everyone. I am analysing everyone. If I think about the small targets, it won’t lead me anywhere,” he signed off.

If there is a bad ball, it must be hit: Shafali

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

She might be all of 16, but India’s latest cricketing sensation Shafali Verma means business. Going into the World T20 in Australia as a youngster in the Indian team filled with heavyweights like Harmanpreet Kaur and Smriti Mandhana, Shafali stamped her authority to even rise to the top of the T20 rankings for batswomen during the tournament. But she says the journey has just begun.

After winning accolades for her performance in the World T20, Shafali said that the road ahead will only get steeper and she will look to rise to every challenge that comes her way in taking the women’s team to becoming world beaters.

“Just didn’t go our way that day. But sports is all about winning and losing. There will be other opportunities that will go our way. What happened we cannot change, but what will happen is in our hands and we will not leave any stone unturned as we look to be the best in the business,” she said.

But what about her own scintillating show that won her applause from present as well as former cricketers? She says the trophy would have felt much better.

“My job is to go out there and score runs and put India in an advantageous position. It obviously feels good when people appreciate your performance, but the trophy in the hand would have felt so much better,” she rued.

For a youngster to say this after scoring 163 runs in 5 games at a strike-rate of 158.25 says a lot about how she puts team performance over individual glory.

Speaking about the team, Shafali says that this unit doesn’t believe in any senior-junior divide and that helps. “You know, there is nothing like seniors will speak and junior have to listen or things like those. It is a very relaxed atmosphere and in fact not just seniors like Harmanpreet Kaur or Smriti Mandhana, everyone is looking to push the other the extra mile. And we have a really amazing coach in WV Raman sir,” she said.

“The best part about Raman sir is that he always has solutions ready and helps out whenever we are stuck. If there is an issue I am facing, I can always go up to him and get clarity on how to work my way out. He just has a brilliant mind and can easily instil confidence.”

So what was the general discussion when she went out to open with another explosive batswoman like Mandhana? For Shafali, it is all about playing one’s natural game.

“We would keep it simple. If there is a bad ball, it must be hit and there is no two ways about it. So, when I get a bad ball, I hit it and same works for her. And when we get a good ball, we try and steal a single out of it. Nothing beats staying true to your game. Trying to curb your natural instincts don’t work I feel,” she pointed.

Having won hearts with her performance in her maiden World T20, what is her next goal? For Shafali, the only goal is to win. “Win more games for India. I should be able to put India in a position of strength when I go out to bat. The goal will always be to contribute to India’s success,” she signed off.



Dhoni owns Malinga in IPL battles: Styris



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former New Zealand all-rounder Scott Styris believes the IPL rivalry between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians pits the game’s best finisher, M S Dhoni, against the best death bowler, Lasith Malinga, in which the former India captain owns the veteran Sri Lankan.

Super Kings have made 8 finals in 10 editions they have played in and Mumbai five in 12 editions, having won four out of those summit clashes.

“It’s about consistency, CSK have never missed the final series, have won

the most knockout matches, it’s the expectation and reliance on these IPL teams to produce Indian players and CSK has produced the most uncapped players for India and it’s a real desire that they have to continue to develop players in that regard,” Styris told *Star Sports*.

“It’s about the best finisher in the game against the best finisher bowler. Dhoni vs Malinga, and Dhoni owns Malinga,” he said.

Chennai may be the most consistent side in IPL history but of late Mumbai Indians have managed to gain an upper hand, feels

former India cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar.

Reigning champions Mumbai Indians have won the IPL four times and Chennai Super Kings thrice.

“...When we look at winning percentage, which is a good way of looking at teams, a good winning record, CSK is right up there, but of late, there’s been a surge by Mumbai Indians coming through the ranks, winning titles as well,” Manjrekar told *Star Sports*.

“Mumbai Indians have won 4, CSK has won 3 but they have played less IPL (they were banned for two seasons). When you look at that, Mumbai Indians is emerging as a team that is threatening CSK in the last few years, they have actually been the better team than CSK, couple of IPL titles to MI.”

Mumbai had pipped Super Kings in the final of the previous edition.

“When MI come to the final, they tend to win it, CSK not as much. When you look at the entire IPL, CSK go first, but of late, may be Mumbai Indians have a slight edge.”

India’s win in Aus because of Smith, Warner absence: Waqar

PTI ■ KARACHI

Former Pakistan captain Waqar Younis feels that India’s Test series victory in Australia back in 2018-19 could be largely attributed to the absence of Steve Smith and David Warner from a team that was already reeling due to the after effects of ball-tampering controversy.

The legendary fast bowler, who is also the bowling coach of Pakistan team was speaking in context of his country not being able to win even one Test match since 1995.

“I am not trying to take away any credit from India, they played well and they are a very good side. But yes at same time when they won in Australia, there is no doubt that Australian cricket was going through a turmoil and there were problems in their dressing room. And they were without Steve Smith and David Warner,” Waqar said during a video conference.

Waqar himself is not sure as to what has been the reason behind Pakistan’s failure *Down Under*.

“I really don’t know why we have not won Tests their all these years. At times, we went there with top bowling



Aus Test skipper Tim Paine chats with Indian captain Virat Kohli

cricket.com.au

attacks yet lost. To me it was a case of when the bowling worked the batting didn’t put up enough runs or when the batters put up enough runs the bowlers didn’t come

through,” Waqar said.

For example the tour of 1999, when the bowling attack had Waqar himself, the iconic Wasim Akram, fiery Shoaib Akhtar, along with all-

Some former cricket stars and officials of cricket boards have said that the game can resume slowly and matches can be held in front of empty stadiums with the proper precautions in place for teams, officials and other ground staff.

“I think maybe in five or six months’ time. When things are under control around the world and we get back some normalcy in life, we can think about match-

es behind closed doors,” the former fast bowler said.

“At some stage we need to think about these choices but not this month or next month...The situation is not right for any cricket activities,” he added.

PTI

Waqar not in favour of cricket in empty stadiums

KARACHI: Pakistan bowling coach Waqar Younis said he is not in favour of cricket resuming before empty stadiums amid the COVID-19 pandemic as he feels the desperate plan would end up creating more problems. “No I don’t agree with this suggestion that cricket activities should resume soon even before empty stadiums,” he said during a video conference with journalists.



FC Bayern Munich players practice at the club’s training ground on Monday AP

Bavarians resume training

AFP ■ BERLIN

Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich resumed training on Monday for the first time since the German league was suspended due to coronavirus but the players were put through their paces in small groups and maintained social distancing measures.

Keeping at least 1.5 metres from each other, players including captain Manuel Neuer, Robert Lewandowski and Thomas Mueller trained together for the first time since the Bundesliga was halted on March 13.

“It was a very unusual feeling to hold a training session in small groups, but it was also nice to see the boys in person again,” said Neuer after Bayern had previously held training sessions online.

After arriving at staggered times to limit contact — with no greeting hugs or handshakes — the 21-man squad was split into five groups, each containing a maximum of five players.

When they changed, the players were kept four metres apart in the changing rooms at the club’s state-of-the-art training complex in southern

Germany.

On the pitch, Bayern’s stars were careful to keep their distance from each other and there were no challenges or tackles.

Once training was over, the players left to shower at home, where they ate food provided by the club in lunch boxes.

Bayern asked fans to stay away from the Saebener Strasse complex, where hundreds of supporters usually turn up to see their heroes.

Other clubs also cautiously resumed training Monday, after the league’s ban on doing so until April 5 passed, amid hopes the league will resume in early May.

Bayern are four points clear in the Bundesliga table.

At the training ground of their closest rivals Borussia Dortmund, the players also did not shower or eat on site after a session that focused on running and shooting.

The only clubs in Germany’s top flight not planning group training this week are Freiburg, whose players continue to work individually, and Werder Bremen, where the city’s senate still prevents training in groups.

कोरोना योद्धाओं को प्रणाम

सुरक्षा उनकी जो कर रहे हैं हमारी सुरक्षा

कोरोना से संघर्ष में जुटे योद्धाओं की सुरक्षा

भारत सरकार द्वारा कोविड-19 से लड़ने वाले सभी स्वास्थ्यकर्मियों का 50 लाख रुपये का बीमा कर दिया गया है।

मध्यप्रदेश शासन द्वारा स्वास्थ्य विभाग के अलावा राजस्व, पुलिस, नगरीय विकास आदि विभागों के कोरोना के विरुद्ध संघर्ष कर रहे जांबाजों को भी 50 लाख रुपये की सुरक्षा।

शिवराज सिंह चौहान
मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

सुरक्षित हैं हम, क्योंकि लड़ रहे हैं आप

D-11005/20

मध्यप्रदेश जनसम्पर्क द्वारा जारी

आवकनम्न : स.प्र. माध्यम/2020