

WORLD 7
 NEW YORK RECORDS 562 DEATHS IN SINGLE DAY

MONEY 8
 'ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN INDIA TO BE SMOOTHER, FASTER'

SPORT 10
 FIFA POSTPONE U-17 WOMEN'S WC IN INDIA



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USUAL SUSPECTS
 SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Lockdown saboteurs lack common sense

Nearly every English-language newspaper this Saturday morning has at least one sombre piece warning readers to not go overboard with their reactions. That is always good advice, whether dealing with anger, sadness or happiness. Controlling emotions — the proverbial stiff upper lip — was something that was drilled into those of us who went to schools that modelled themselves on the English public schools. We were never meant to cry — at least not in public; even happiness had to be regulated in its expression; and despondency was invariably greeted with the advice to cheer up and get on with whatever we were doing.

Why, in an age when political correctness has banished the notion of self-restraint from our value system, are we suddenly being advised to get a grip on our feelings? The answer is obvious. For the past 10 days or even more, most law-abiding citizens of India have physically withdrawn from the outside world both for self-preservation and as an act of social responsibility. Those who are experts in the field of public health all over the world have advised us that the only effective way to contain the coronavirus pandemic is social distancing. Each one of us have adjusted our lives drastically, cancelling long-standing plans and disrupting our social and professional lives. Owners of small businesses and the self-employed are living nervously, not knowing whether their lives will ever be the same again. Those in employment are dreading pay cuts or, worse, redundancy. As for casual workers living a marginal existence away from home, their troubles and sadness have been so vividly documented in the media.

Why is everyone going through such an enormous amount of personal inconvenience? Why is the world order being turned upside down? It is because we are confronted with a dreaded disease with no cure in sight. The young are known to be able to cope with COVID-19 better, particularly if they have no other complications. But for the over-60s, the vulnerability is particularly high. In Italy, the average age of the 14,600 or so who have died from coronavirus is 79.5 years. Worse, no one is very sure how long this international crisis will last. The uncertainty is killing.

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soap and carrying small bottles of hand sanitisers. Yes, precaution and faith in God is what is keeping India going. It is at such a time that the Tablighi Jamaat has entered the scene. As of last Friday night, the convention hosted by this so-called religious organisation has resulted in 647 coronavirus cases in 14 States from Kashmir to the Andaman Islands. This is probably an underestimate because many of those attended haven't been traced. Then there are states such as West Bengal that has not been forthcoming with any details.

What can be said with certainty is that the best plans by the Government to flatten the curve and reverse the process of coronavirus spread has suffered a setback because of the Tablighi Jamaat. I can understand if people had quite accidentally strayed into a gathering and, in the process, got themselves infected. This has happened with health workers, doctors and policemen who have been infected as a result of their official duties.

The ones who came from far and wide to Delhi's West Nizamuddin, a congested Muslim ghetto, to imbibe religious scholarship went there fully aware that the gathering was against all the guidelines issued by the Delhi Government to protect citizens. Most important, the gathering had people who had flown in from overseas and are known to be high risk. By every yardstick, the gathering in Nizamuddin was criminally irresponsible.

People are angry not merely because Government guidelines were violated in a pre-meditated manner but that the organisers were brazen in their defiance, choosing to put out the message that they somehow had divine protection against coronavirus. Now they have gone and spread the disease all over India and continue to be defiant. Those who have been sent to quarantine centres have misbehaved with nurses and doctors. Others who have been traced by the authorities have engineered attacks on doctors and health workers by mobs. Still others are absconding and doing their bit to spread coronavirus across India.

People are angry because what is clear a public health issue have been projected as an issue of religious identity. There are reports from all over India that Muslim localities are defiantly not observing social distancing and continuing life as usual. In the border districts of West Bengal, it would seem that the writ of the Government of India does not run.

People have a right to be not merely angry but furious at the sheer irresponsibility of it all. The behaviour of those who choose to pretend that coronavirus is not their concern are, in effect, helping the enemy in a war. They deserve to be treated as hostile elements.

But instead of getting livid over these rotten apples in the basket of India, our great secular intellectuals are saying we should be restrained in our reactions. Turning the other cheek and showering forgiveness to people who know not what they are doing is good stuff for elevated souls. Unfortunately, it will take some persuasion for people who have a patriotic aversion to saboteurs. This isn't communalism; it is common sense.

30% corona cases linked to Tablighis

Govt figures put number below 3K, but realtime data claims 3,500 +ve cases; 601 new cases; death toll at 68

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As coronavirus cases continued to swell in the country, adding 400-500 patients a day since Wednesday, the Centre on Saturday again linked the rise to the Tablighi Jamaat members congregating in Delhi's Nizamuddin Markaz in mid-March, saying they alone contributed 30 per cent of the total cases.

The Ministry of Health said total number of cases as on Saturday morning stood below 3,000, including 68 death and 601 new cases reported over the last 24 hours.

"Till now there are 2,902 positive cases in India. 601 positive cases have been reported since Friday, 12 deaths also reported on Friday, taking the total to 68. One eighty three people have recovered/discharged," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Ministry.

But according to the total of figures collected from States, the overall numbers of positive cases stood at 3,510 by 8.30 pm on Saturday. Maharashtra stood at the peak 537 positive cases, including 47 new. It was followed by Tamil Nadu with 485 positive cases, including 74 new. With 59 new cases, Delhi was on the third spot.

The national Capital has overall 445 positive cases. Kerala with 304 positive cases, 11 of them new was placed fourth. Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan had more than 200 cases each.



Attendees of the Tablighi congregation in Delhi's Nizamuddin area board an ambulance for mandatory COVID-19 tests, in Agartala on Saturday

Meanwhile, Dharavi in Mumbai reported two more cases of coronavirus, taking the total number of positive cases in the area to five.

Agarwal said 1,023 coronavirus cases in 17 States were related to the Jamaat's congregation. "Around 30 per cent of the total cases are related to the religious congregation so far. We need to understand that we are as strong as the weakest link," he said.

Punya Salila Srivastava, Joint Secretary in the Home Affairs Ministry, said through

a massive coordinated effort around 22,000 Tablighis and their contacts have been quarantined.

All issues related to the ongoing lockdown are being monitored by a 24x7 control room of the Ministry of Home Affairs here, she said, adding that about 200 personnel from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Central Armed Police Forces are linked to it on the ground level.

The officer said all measures to implement the three-week nationwide lockdown, set to end on April 14, have been effective till now and the supply of essential goods and services has been "satisfactory".

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla has written to States and Union Territories to ensure that the supply chain of essential items is not obstructed during the lockdown period, she said.

The first installment of ₹11,092 crore under the State disaster response fund was released by the MHA on Friday. States can utilise this money for ensuring aid to migrant workers and other calamity-related work, she said.

States and UTs are running relief camps for migrant workers and other needy people in coordination with NGOs and other community groups, she added.

India bucks global trend, 42% cases from 21-40-yr group

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Contrary to the global trend where elderly are said to be the most vulnerable to Covid-19, in India it is the young people who are bearing the brunt of the deadly disease. At least 42 per cent of the total positive cases reported so far are in the age group of 21-40. People above 60 years accounted for only 17 per cent of the cases.

"We have done the age profile analysis of Covid-19 cases in India. We found that 9 per cent of positive cases are in between 0-20 years, 42 per cent cases are in the age group of 21-40, 33 per cent in 41-60 and 17 per cent in the people above 60 years of age," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

However, in contrast, as situation prevails at present, most of the fatalities reported in India are from the higher age group.

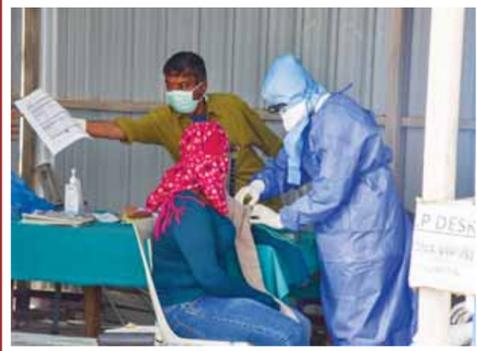
People above 60 account for 17%; fatalities highest among elderly

Around 1.15 million people from across the world are infected with the virus which has claimed 60,428 lives since the first case of Covid-19 was reported in December last year from Wuhan in China. So far, 2,36,095 have recovered.

"As far as deaths are concerned, we have noticed that advanced age and co-morbidities such as diabetes, kidney and cardiac ailments played an important role in deaths," said Agarwal.

"We are battling with this on a day-to-day basis. Still, the case doubling rate in India is lesser than others," he added.

Turn to Page 4



CRPF boss among 200 advised for home quarantine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a CMO of CRPF has a found Covid-19 positive and isolated besides eight others officers were quarantined, the paramilitary, in a proactive measure, has now mapped a detailed list of about 200 personnel, including DG CRPF, who were traced to have contacts with the quarantined personnel. All the 200 such personnel, including top official, have been advised self/home quarantine, and are accordingly observing the same as a precautionary measure.

The list of the contact tracing includes CRPF DG AP Maheshwari and senior security Adviser of MHA K Vijay Kumar, along with others. Detailed report on P5

4 HIZBUL TERRORISTS KILLED IN KULGAM

Jammu: A joint team of security forces on Saturday eliminated four terrorists, belonging to Hizbul Mujahideen, in a clean operation in Kulgam district of Jammu & Kashmir. The group of terrorists were chiefly responsible for targeting civilians in the area, official sources said.

3 MAOISTS GUNNED DOWN IN J'KHAND ENCOUNTER

Chaitanya: Three members of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) were gunned down in an encounter with security personnel in West Singhbhum district on Saturday. P4

FLIGHT BOOKING OPEN FROM APRIL 15: AIRASIA

Mumbai: AirAsia India said bookings for its flights are open from April 15, but it is open to any change in case DGCA issues fresh directives on the issue.

THE SCORE

- The number of coronavirus cases stood at 445 in Delhi but the situation was under control and there was no community transmission, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Saturday. There were 40 cases of local transmission while a majority of other patients either had foreign travel history or they were recently evacuated from Nizamuddin Markaz, he said
- Eight people have tested positive for the novel coronavirus in Noida, taking number of cases due to the pandemic in Gautam Buddha Nagar district to 58, officials said on Saturday
- More than 1,130,204 cases of infection, including 60,457 deaths, have been reported in 190 countries and territories around the world since the virus first emerged in China in December
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India and the US have decided to "deploy the full strength of the India-US partnership" to fight COVID-19 that has infected over a million persons globally and killed more than 60,000. Modi said this after "an extensive conversation with President Trump"
- Researchers have found that an anti-parasitic drug already available around the world can kill the novel coronavirus grown in cell cultures within 48 hours, an advance that may lead to the development and trial of a new clinical therapy for COVID-19 P7



U-turn on domicile order: Govt tries to win hearts & minds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre's decision to reverse its Tuesday night order notifying a new domicile status for Jammu & Kashmir reflects a realisation that it needed to take political parties together for maintaining long-term normalcy in the Union Territory.

As per the latest order, all jobs in Jammu & Kashmir will be for those who stayed in the area for at least 15 years.

The Centre was forced to withdraw its order following angry response from Jammu & Kashmir-based political parties, including National Conference (NC), People's Democratic Party (PDP) and newly formed Jammu & Kashmir Apni Party.

The State unit of the BJP too had briefed top brass of the party after receiving brick bats from common masses over ignoring their genuine concerns while drafting the rules defining the domicile status and granting reservation in jobs meant only for fourth

class employees. An official said that swift response from the Centre was meant to win hearts and minds of the people of Jammu & Kashmir especially at a time when the Centre has already initiated political process with the setting up of delimitation commission.

"Any person who fulfils the following conditions shall be a domicile of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for the purposes of appointment to any post under the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir," said the revised notification titled as Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order-2020.

"...no person shall be eligible for appointment to any post unless he is a domicile of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir," the amended Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralisation and Recruitment) Act, which is a part of the notification, said.

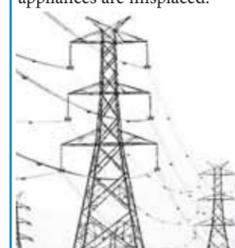
Turn to Page 4

Grid failure fear during blackout solidarity misplaced: Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid concerns raised by several Opposition leaders, including former Power Minister Jairam Ramesh, that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a 9-minute blackout at 9 pm on April 5 could result in a grid collapse, the Ministry of Power on Saturday said the apprehensions that this may cause instability in grid and voltage fluctuation harming electrical appliances are misplaced.

Saturday said the apprehensions that this may cause instability in grid and voltage fluctuation harming electrical appliances are misplaced.



Clearing the air over a possible power grid collapse, the Power Ministry said there is no call to switch off street lights or appliances in homes like TV, refrigerators, air conditioners and only lights should be switched off for 9 minutes.

The lights in hospitals and other essential services will remain on. The clarification came after several news reports claimed that the Prime Minister's appeal for a 9-minute blackout would result in power grid collapse and would take time to restore power across the nation.

Ramesh, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, and Maharashtra Energy Minister Nitin Raut have expressed concern that the PM's call could lead to a multi-State grid collapse and result in blackout in the entire country.

Turn to Page 4

Now, Ministry releases DIY guide for masks Advises face cover for those living in dense populated areas

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

KEEP COVID-19 AT BAY

Homemade reusable face covers only reduce the chances of inhaling droplets still in the air from an infected person, they do not give full protection. Homemade reusable face covers must be washed and cleaned each day, as instructed. Reuse without washing should never be done. Never share your face cover with anyone. Social distancing must still be maintained. Remember to wash your hands frequently with soap for 20 seconds

Contrary to its earlier assertion that not everyone is required to wear masks as the primary focus is on social distancing, the Union Health Ministry on Saturday came out with a detailed advisory recommending home-made cloth mask for all and even laid out a pictorial "Do It Yourself (DIY)" guide.

It attributed the latest move of homemade face cover for the general public, excluding medical staff/health workers, to the benefits that certain countries have claimed due to its usage.

lated areas or in crowded markets, as per the advisory which comes amid rising number of coronavirus cases as well as rush among people for masks, aggravating a shortage of the item among medical personnel who need them the most.

The Ministry said that people who are not suffering from medical conditions or having breathing difficulties may use the handmade reusable face cover.

"Certain countries have claimed benefits of home-made face cover for the general public. Such homemade face cover is a good method for maintaining personal hygiene. Such usage certainly will help in maintaining overall hygienic health conditions.

"Therefore, it is suggested that such people who are not suffering from medical condi-

tions or having breathing difficulties may use the handmade reusable face cover, particularly when they step out of their house. This will help in protecting the community at large," it said.

"This face cover is not recommended for either health workers or those working with or in contact with COVID-19 patients or are patients themselves as these categories of people are required to wear specified protective gear."

The advisory says the face covers could be made out of clean cloth available at home, which needs to be thoroughly cleaned and washed before a face cover is stitched.

Turn to Page 4

'I have never regretted my decisions'

DEBINA BONNERJEE who plays Mallika in Sony Sab's Aladdin Naam Toh Suna Hoga speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about what made her take up the role, challenges and how it was hilarious to act with Gurmeet to begin with

■ What is your role in Aladdin Naam Toh Suna Hoga?

I play Mallika, who is the creator of djinn and the lamp. She is the one who has created all the djinns.

■ What attracted you to play the role?

The dimensions of the character ofcourse. It is a very larger than life and humongous character. Mallika is the lead antagonist, it is like the whole show is on one side and Mallika single-handedly on the other. She stands tall. Moreover, the show is also well-established so there were no reasons for me to turn down the project.

■ From Mayavi to now Aladdin, how has the journey been?

It has been an excellent one. Throughout my journey, I followed God's instinct more than mine. There was a time when I auditioned for a few projects and I took the ones that got finalised first instead of taking the chance of waiting for the other ones thinking that they might be better. There were times when I was a part of a couple of projects at the same time but I have never regretted my decisions that 'oh I should have waited for other things to happen'. And in return whatever project I took back then turned out well for me. I believed that it was God's will, therefore I never questioned my decisions.

■ How easy or difficult was it for you to be a part of this industry?

I wouldn't say it was easy or difficult. Acting just happened with me. No one in my family belong to the field and hence, I had no one who could have guided me for my better back then. I only had a dream, that of being an actor. I kept on believing in it so much so that I developed the etiquette of an



actor —body language and others. And that didn't make sense to many people back then. I remember when I was in Class VIII, my teacher scolded for me behaving like a heroine. I had a mixed feeling then — bad because I felt it was humiliating and good because I thought that people have started to believe that I have the qualities of an actor and can become one, even though I had no clue of what the field used to be like.

Then after some time, I took part in certain competitions, looked for work in the newspaper and eventually it happened and I came into the industry. One changed led to the other. I have always managed to be as hardworking as I was before, I never felt saturated and never took anything casually. Even when I was in the most comfortable of positions, I had tried to evolve and be where I am today. So it wasn't easy at all. Now when I see people who are enamoured by our lifestyle and profession come into this industry but it is not the way how things work. They are not persistent enough, may be they are for the initial two years but then it gets lost. However, my husband (Gurmeet Choudhary) and I both have worked extremely hard all our lives. We

have always motivated each other to improve our skills.

■ You and Gurmeet are one of the power couples of the industry. What keeps the relationship so fresh?

It is because we are best friends first. And one can never get bored of their friend. Also we have set our individualistic priorities right, it is not as if one of us have kept that aside. The other day someone was telling me that people should give space to their partners. That's what made me think that do we give space to each other and the answer was instantly a yes. Take for example if I am out with my friends that includes only girls and if Gurmeet is free and is getting bored at home then I ask him to join us and he never says no and vice versa. We have that level of understanding and there is no hard core role that my time is my time. Also, we are each others' first priority and everything else comes second. This is what keeps us going.

■ You both have worked together on various shows. How easy or difficult was that?

Initially, it was difficult to work. We got to work together on our first break — *Ramayan* and even *Mayavi*. We used to laugh a lot. I found it hilarious to act together. Then gradually we started having lot of expectations from each other, we advised each other too. Then after some time, we got to work together for a film on a digital space and we realised how both of us have evolved as actors as well as human beings by working together. We were matured and stopped expecting from each other, in terms of work. The equation had changed over the years for us as actors and that was great.

■ What is there in the pipeline?

Currently I am focusing solely on *Aladdin...* and there is a film — *Shubho Bijoy* that I have done with Gurmeet. It will release soon.

Plan Your Stay At Home Sunday

To beat all the Coronavirus blues, Disney+Hotstar is set to offer an unmatched entertainment experience for families with the world's best superhero movies, unrivalled animated films, popular kids programming, recently released Bollywood blockbusters, exclusive Hotstar Specials shows, unlimited live sporting action, and much more. Subscribers of Disney+ Hotstar Premium will now be able to explore the world of great entertainment including critically acclaimed Disney+ Originals. Here's a list of 10 must-watch shows and movies.



The Mandalorian: After the fall of the Galactic Empire, lawlessness has spread throughout the galaxy. A lone gunfighter makes his way through the outer reaches, earning his keep as bounty hunter

High School Musical: The Series: Thirteen years after *High School Musical* was filmed at East High, the drama department is putting together a bold new production: *High School Musical: The Musical* and this time the lyrics are on screen, so you can sing along in every episode

The World According to Jeff Goldblum: Jeff Goldblum pulls the thread of a deceptively familiar object to unravel a world of astonishing connections with fascinating sciences and history. Through the prism of his witty mind, nothing is at it seems.



Lady and the Tramp: A timeless re-telling of the 1955 animated classic, *Lady* — a pampered American Cocker Spanier and *Tramp* — a tough but lovable stray, embark on an unexpected adventure and despite their difference, come to understand the value of home.

Togo: In the winter of 1925, a champion dogsled trainer and his lead sled dog, Togo, embark on an exhilarating journey across the treacherous terrain of the Alaskan tundra to help transport an antitoxin serum to a small town.

Encore: Executive producer Kristen Bell reunites

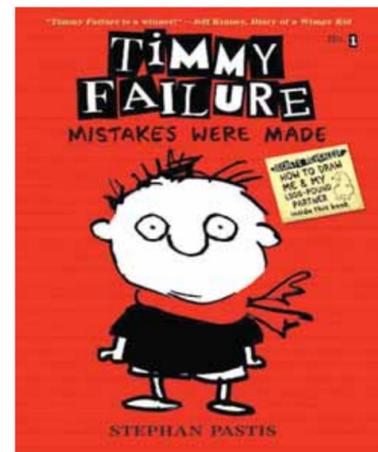
former high school classmates from around the U.S. to re-stage the musicals of their youth, years after the originally performed them.

Disney's Fairy Tale Weddings: A behind-the-scenes look at the magical weddings the one-of-a-kind engagements that take place at Disney Destinations around the globe including Walt Disney World, Disneyland and Disney Cruise Lines.

The Imagineering Story: Leslie Iwerks leads the viewers on a journey behind the curtains of Walt Disney Imagineering, the little-known design and development centre of The Walt Disney Company, to discover what it takes to create Disney theme parks around the world.

Diary of a Future President: Elena is on a path to become the President of the United States, but for now, she has to navigate through middle school with the help of her family and friend while documenting the pivotal highs and lows of her journey in the trusty diary

Timmy Failure: Mistakes Were Made: Timmy Failure follows the hilarious exploits of our quirky, deadpan hero, Timmy Failure, who along with his 1500-pound polar bear partner Total Failure Inc. a Portland detective agency.



TELLYTALE

MANIT GOES AN EXTRA MILE



Ever since *Kundali Bhagya* was launched, the show has been the most loved Indian television show. The stellar cast including the likes of Dheeraj Dhoopar (Karan), Shaddha Arya (Preeti), Manit Joura (Rishab), Anjum Fakih (Shrishti), Sanjay Gagnani (Prithvi) and Abhishek Kapur (Sameer), are being appreciated by one and all. However, looks like everyone's love for Manit is going to grow by leaps and bounds after hearing about what he has been up to during this COVID-19 lockdown.

In such difficult times when the whole country is locked down courtesy COVID-19, the *Kundali Bhagya* actor is trying to give back to the world in his own little and humble way. Manit Joura has come out in support of man's best friend, dogs. He loves canines and hence, he is going the extra mile for them. In association with Animals Matter To Me (AMTM), the actor has been feeding the stray dogs and with immense safety as instructed by the Government. In fact, they have taken permission from the Mumbai police to be able to go around the city for the same. In crucial times like these, when the horror of getting affected by the virus haunts everyone and keeps them indoors, he has shown immense courage and selflessness for the ones in need, who cannot even speak, and are often neglected.

When asked about the initiative, Manit shared: "Animals are as much a part of our society as we are! Domesticated animals have lived around humans all their lives and are mostly fed by them. In fact, dogs have forever been a man's best friend. However, the nationwide lockdown has rendered them confused, unfed, and thus, hungry and in this hour of need, I believe, we must show up for them. I'm so grateful that AMTM understood the cruciality of the situation and supported the cause. I wish we could do this on a larger scale, only if we were not victim to such critical situations."

The dog lover in Manit could not help but say: "It's our duty to look after these animals in the times of need. I would go bonkers if Bella (his dog) is subject to anything of this sort. Being the parent of my beautiful Irish Setter, Bella has taught me so much compassion and empathy. And I wish

we all could have the same for the stray dogs who have always been around us. I do hope everybody is safe and staying indoors and is doing their bit to help the society in their own ways."

KINSHUK CELEBRATES QUIET B'DAY

Every year, birthdays remind us to be grateful about the past year of our life and the next year that is about to begin. With varied people having their own unique ways to celebrate birthdays, we totally love to know how celebrities spend their special day. *RadhaKrishn* fame actor Kinshuk Vaidya who will turn a year older today, is having a quiet birthday due to the coronavirus lockdown.

Kinshuk mentioned: "In the light of



social distancing, it is going to be a quiet birthday celebration for me this year. However, I am looking forward to spending the day with my parents and grandmother. I'm sure my friends are planning something special for me over video calls."

Kinshuk will soon be seen in *Star Bharat RadhaKrishn* — *Krishn Arjun Gatha* where he will be seen essaying the role of Arjun.

AKANKSHA'S LOVE FOR SUNGLASSES



Everyone around you would be obsessing over an accessory which they cant get enough of. It can be anything from earrings, necklaces, bracelets to belts, shoes. The stunning Akanksha Puri who plays the role of Parvati in Sony Entertainment Television's *Vighnaharta Ganesh* has a

special love for sunglasses. She has more than two dozen sunglasses and loves collecting them. She believes that they are not only a necessity but also a great style statement which can automatically uplift your attire.

The ones who love sunglasses have a variety of sunglasses to choose from such as cat eye, aviator, oval and many more. Women and men both are going gala over the choices they have got in Sunglasses. One of them is Akanksha Puri she is fascinated with sunglasses. She makes sure she has at least two sunglasses in her bag whenever she goes out. She also takes much care of them and has especially bought sprays for cleaning her sunglasses. Akanksha makes sure she has sunglasses for all her attires and occasion from gym, to lunches, beaches and more.

Akanksha expressed her love for sunglasses and said: "People have their choices, some collect coins, some have an affinity for bags, while some are fond of collecting stamps. Likewise, I am sunglasses lover. I am a huge sunglasses hoarder and believe that in today's times sunglasses are like a necessity not only it protects your eyes but is also symbol of style as well. My friends and family member keep gifting me sunglasses as they know how much I am obsessed with them."

MEERA SPENDS TIME READING BOOKS



Meera Deosthale, who is currently playing the character of Vidya in *Colors* eponymous show, has often spoken about her love for reading. However, given her hectic shoot schedule, the actress never got enough time to do so. Now that the entire country is under lockdown, Meera finally gets to spend some quality time reading her favourite books and the ones that were on her wishlist.

Commenting on her obsession for books Meera said: "I have always been very outspoken about my obsession and love for books. During my free time at home, I am making the most of the opportunity and spending my time reading. I am catching up on books by some of my favourite authors that I wasn't able to read because of back to back shoots. The best part about reading books is that you always learn something new that you would have never known otherwise. I hope everyone's finding themselves while staying home and staying safe."

Timeless classics for lockdown

To beat COVID-19 blues and give a feel of the good old days, several shows like *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat* and *Shaktimaan* are being re-telecast. MUSBA HASHMI tells you why they are still in demand

The silver lining in the grey clouds of the Coronavirus pandemic is that it has brought families closer. So much so that DD National found it the right time to go back in time and bring back all the family dramas or to be precise classics that had people glued to their sets. Back in the 80s and 90s, it was an era when people would eagerly wait for their favourite shows. It was nothing short of a festivity and *puja* for some when they would do *aarti* of the TV sets as soon as *Ramayan* was aired.

From mythological shows like *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* to fantasy ones like *Alif Laila*, to dramas like *Circus* to superheroes series like *Shaktimaan*, there's something for everyone to watch during this lockdown and keep them entertained.

Nitish Bhardwaj, who played Lord Krishna in *Mahabharat*, says that the reason why the millennials too are glued to their TV screens in the re-telecast of these shows is because of curiosity.

"The millennials are wondering why their parents were praising these serials so much, what is there that makes them stand out. This curiosity has attracted the attention of the younger generation towards the re-telecast," he says.

Another reason is that the storyline is relevant even today and hence fresh. "The value systems and the drama of human relationships in these serials is relevant for all times. The human conflict and struggle has in fact increased over the last 30 years and this makes *Mahabharat* even more identifiable," Bhardwaj tells you.

There is a difference, he says, in the shows that were made then and now. "People nowadays call their shows factory-line 'soaps' whereas our shows were and still are 'designer products' which cater to both classes and masses," he adds.

Mukesh Khanna, who played Shaktimaan says that good work remains good even if you watch it after 30 years down the line. "Gold will always remain gold, no matter after how long you dig it. That was a period of creativity. You name any show from those days and it is still as good. Shows now have lost essence. One reason for this may be the daily telecast," he says.

He tells you that the re-telecast



of these shows was next to impossible but now that it has happened, it is time to cheer up. "Back then, when *Mahabharat* used to come on TV, everyone was hooked to their screens and it looked like a curfew situation on the roads. Then with the emergence of more and more channels, the variety of content increased manifold. It looked impossible that these shows will ever come back because of the varied taste of the audience. I could have never imagined that there will be a time when the whole country will sit and watch *Mahabharat* or for that matter *Shaktimaan* again. But it happened and whoever came up with this idea to relive the 90s should be appreciated.

This will not only beat the boredom of the 21-day lockdown but will also instill in people the value of relationships that was



Mukesh Khanna as Shaktimaan

slowly being lost. Moreover, the younger generation will get a taste of their culture and tradition which is the need of the hour," Khanna tells you.

Khanna hopes that the re-telecast of such shows will bring about a change in the TV industry and that makers would now start coming up with concept that will stay relevant even after three decades years.

"I hope that this change will come and the makers will realise that the audience wants something fresh but it will depend on how long the lockdown period stays. People have the tendency to forget what they learnt once they come out of that phase. People should stop repeating content and think of newer concepts. One track is copied by multiple shows and as a result, 80 per cent has low TRPs," he says.

Apart from the fact that technology has evolved, Khanna hasn't see any positive change in the TV industry. "All these years, I feel that TV has degraded a lot. Yes, not to mention there are a lot of people who are working extremely hard, the otherwise quality of things have degraded. People have started twisting history. They want to give a modern twist to everything which can't and shouldn't happen because then it doesn't showcase our culture. The essence gets lost. Not everything can be modernised especially mythological shows. This is the reason why many such shows failed to leave a mark," he says and gives a hint that the audience will get to see *Shaktimaan Season 2*, bigger and better soon.

59 fresh positive cases, total rises to 445

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 59 fresh Covid-19 cases on Saturday and the total number of cases in the national Capital has gone up to 445. Anticipating the increase in the number of patients and more pressure on the doctors and the paramedics, the Delhi Government on Saturday wrote to the Union Government for the urgent supply of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for doctors treating Corona patients.

Explaining the situation in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that Delhi is at the local transmission stage and situation looks under control.

Citing health bullet in report, Kejriwal said that Corona cases in Delhi were at 445 with 59 new cases in 24 hours and local transmission

cases was stable at 40. We have been successful in containing the community spread of Corona in Delhi; Out of 6 deaths, 3 were from Markaz, 5 of them were above 60 years and suffering from other major diseases," Kejriwal said.

"Among all the patients who have Coronavirus around 11 are in ICU and five are on ventilators. we can say that this is the local transmission and not community transmission. In community transmission, people do not get to know from whom they are getting affected but right now no such situation has occurred in Delhi. We have found 2,300 people from the Markaz Nizamuddin. Among these people, 500 are admitted to various hospitals and around 1,800 are in quarantine. We are testing all the 500 people because they have various symptoms and all of



them may be suffering from coronavirus which means the number of COVID-19 positive cases in Delhi will increase. But I want to reiterate that this is not community transmission so there is nothing to worry

yet," he added. He said that till now Delhi has witnessed six deaths due to coronavirus. "Among these six people five were above 60 and one person was 36-year-old. Among these six people, three

were from Markaz. Among these six people, five people had other serious diseases. One person had liver disease, one person had sugar, two persons had a respiratory disease and one person had heart

disease. I want to request all the senior citizens who are above 55 or 60 years that you should be very very cautious about the situation and do not go outside. All the senior citizens are very precious us and I do not want any of them to suffer. I will also request the people who have serious diseases to be very cautious because Coronavirus can be lethal for them," Kejriwal said further.

"Right now I have to priorities number one is to ensure that there should not be any community spread of Coronavirus and the second one is if somebody is affected by Coronavirus then the person should get the best treatment and no death should happen in Delhi. I am personally monitoring the situation in Delhi and I have every record of the persons who are affected by the Coronavirus. We will

ensure the best health facility and treatment to these patients in Delhi," said Kejriwal.

Delhi Government has distributed lunch to around 6,63,928 people and dinner to around 6,78,544 people.

"The Delhi Government has the arrangement to feed more than 10,00,00 people. I am happy to say that many NGOs and religious organisations are also distributing food to needy people. This is the time to show humanity to the people and feeding hungry people is always good work. I will request everyone to ensure that not a single person in Delhi should stay hungry," he added further.

The Delhi Government has also started ration supply. As per the Government data, from Friday onwards nearly 40 to 50,000 people have already registered for

ration services. These are the people who are not having ration cards.

"I will request others also to register soon. I will request the people who know how to handle internet and computer to help these poor people to register. All these people will get 5 kgs of free ration," Kejriwal said.

He also said, "Recently due to the Nizamuddin incident and as Delhi already has many foreign patients the number of coronavirus patients have suddenly increased. Right now we urgently need PPE kits and we have already written to the Central Government about it. I do not want the doctors and nurses to work without the protective gear but the centre is yet to provide us with these kits. I will request the Centre to provide us with PPE kits urgently."

Utilise lockdown time, CM, Sisodia message to parents, children

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister on Saturday interacted with parents in a session on 'Parenting' in the Time of Corona. During the session, Kejriwal and Sisodia both answered questioned posed by children and parents on COVID-19

Urging parents to utilise this time with children to the maximum, Sisodia who is also Education Minister in Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Cabinet, said Parents need to be sensitive about this situation and monitor what their children are exposed to in these times.

Kejriwal asked parents to understand the gravity of the situation and explain this to the children is crucial for the parents. "Parents should set an example for their children by those in need around us," he said. According to data available with Directorate of Education (DoE), 44 Lakh students in Delhi are studying in Government, private and corporations schools.

The interaction was joined by the Director of Education Vinay Bhushan and CEO of Meraki Foundation, Seemant Dhadwal.

Kejriwal and Sisodia took questions on COVID-19 and its gravity, and urged parents to take a positive approach and explain to their children sensitively about the gravity of the situation.

Initiating the session, Sisodia said, "If we talk about Delhi, 44 lakh students are studying in Delhi schools

including MCD, private and Government schools. As a result of the lockdown, children are at home. It is very important to understand how to sail through these tough times. The aim is to effectively utilise our time at homes during the isolation, and that is why we are holding this discussion on "Parenting in the Time of corona."

Introducing the session to the audience, Kejriwal said, "We had to close down schools for the last 15-20 days, due to the extraordinary situation that has arisen worldwide. The only way that we can save ourselves from the virus is by following social distancing norms, staying away from other people and ceasing contact with others. Considering the gravity of the situation and to ensure good health of you and your children, we had to shut down schools 15-20 days back."

"Children are energetic, they want to go out and play, but all their activities have stopped because of the lockdown. I can understand that they must be having questions on Coronavirus and the lockdown. Following our announcement yesterday on 'Parenting in the times of Corona' broadcast, we have got interesting questions from the parents and children," said Kejriwal.

Quoting a question from a parent on the COVID-19, he said, "A 5-year-old girl has asked her mother, if we were all are going to die. Children are innocent, and it is natural for them to have all these questions. We will try to address these questions that children have and those that parents have as well. We will also extend this program

further and conduct this session on a regular basis with various experts. Our motive is to change this time of crisis into an opportunity. Everyone is so busy in their lives that we do not get time to sit and have a conversation with our children, even in summer vacations during school when parents are usually working all the time. This is the time when everybody is at home, and parents and children can spend quality time with each other. I hope that by the end of this program parents will be able to know how to constructively engage their children in activities and conversations during these times of the lockdown."

Bhushan, DoE said, "Children are asking questions on the reasons for the lockdown, and then posing questions on why they can not go out to play and meet their friends. Parents are unable to understand how to answer these questions. I would like CM Arvind Kejriwal to say something on this."

CM Arvind Kejriwal said, "Parents must be explaining to their children about Coronavirus, and how dangerous this new virus is. The parents should explain to their children that this virus is contagious and spreads through direct contact. The first way through which the virus can enter if a person coughs or sneezes close to him. The second way is somebody covering their mouth and nose with their hands while coughing and sneezing and touching some surface, and then touching that surface and touching your face and mouth again.

DJB employees to donate one-day salary to CM's relief fund

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Jal Board (DJB) employees have decided to donate their one-day salary to Chief Minister's Relief Fund in order to support the Delhi Government fight against coronavirus. With the announcement, the DJB has become the first among the State Government's departments to declare their support to fight the Corona outbreak.

Delhi Jal Board (DJB) Vice-Chairman Raghav Chadha said that all the staff of the civic body has decided to contribute unconditionally to contribute one-day salary for the noble cause.

"Everyone at @DelhiJalBoard has unanimously decided to donate one day's salary to Chief Minister Relief Fund in the wake of Covid-19 epidemic. This is a humble effort to support Delhi government's fight against coronavirus under the leadership of CM @ArvindKejriwal," Chadha tweeted.

"With the contribution of one day salary, an amount of nearly ₹2 crore will be trans-

ferred to Chief Minister's relief fund on behalf of DJB family. My grateful thanks to my colleagues at @DelhiJalBoard for this humanitarian gesture," he said in another tweet.

"To extend every possible help that can be provided to the society is the need of the hour. My grateful thanks to my colleagues and we all pray for the safety and well-being of all citizens," he said.

Chadha said that the Delhi government under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is making all possible efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus in the state and ensure people face the least difficulty during the lockdown.

"DJB is working round the clock to ensure uninterrupted supply of water and unhindered sewerage services during the lockdown, he added. Praising healthcare professionals, Chadha said "We all are being inspired from our frontline heroes - from our doctors, nurses and healthcare workers to those who are ensuring the supply of essential services in challenging times,"

MEA to consider evacuation of stranded foreigners

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has decided to examine request of some of the countries requesting evacuation of their nationals who are stranded in different parts of the country following the nationwide lockdown measures announced by Prime Minister last month.

However, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) said that it will follow Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for releasing quarantine persons.

The move came after the Government of India received several such requests from foreign countries for evacuation of their nationals from India.

The DDMA of the Delhi Government in a statement said that some of the protocol would be observed before taking any decision. "The chartered flight would be arranged by the concerned foreign Government in consultation with the Ministry of Civil Aviation (Government of India) and prior to departure, the foreign national would be

screened for COVID-19 symptoms as per the standard health protocol," it said.

"Only those foreign national would be allowed to leave who are asymptomatic for COVID-19. In case of symptomatic person, the future course of treatment would be followed as per the standard health protocol," it said.

The DDMA further said that the local transportation arrangements from the place of stay of the foreign national to the point of embarkation would be arranged by the local embassy or consulate of the respective foreign Government.

With a view to preventing spread of COVID-19 and as a measure of abundant precaution, persons returning from foreign locations after February 15 had been quarantined in government arranged facilities. In respect of these persons, the some protocol would be observed after completion of the specified mandatory quarantine period, it said in a statement.

The government will follow Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the process. "Person

testing negatives for COVID-19 would be released as per standard health protocol from the said quarantine facility. However, this will not apply to a group, where even one person tests positive for COVID-19.

These persons, who will be tested negative, are expected to return to their homes or to the homes of their families, relatives and friends or to other places shelter like hotels etc by making their own transport arrangements, it said, adding that the transit pass for movement of vehicle being used by such person would be issued by the District Magistrate of the district concerned where they have been quarantined.

As part of precautionary measure, such persons would home quarantine themselves for a further period of 14 days as per standard protocol after returning to their destination, it added.

The DDMA also said that details of person released from quarantine, along with their destination, will be shared with the concerned State/UT Government for necessary follow up.

NDMC conducts intensive sanitation drive in market areas

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak, the health department of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) conducted an intensive sanitation drive in market areas. The civic body on Saturday sanitised the market areas such as Yashawant Place, Sarojini Nagar, Khanna market, Lodhi Colony, Khan Market, Pandara market, Connaught place and Shanker market using disinfectant on shoulder mounted Knapsack pumps and vehicle mounted pumps.

A senior NDMC official said that special focus is being given to disinfect public places

like Mother Dairy milk, Safal Vegetable, taxi and bus stands, public toilet units, NDMC buildings etc.

"Residential areas and public buildings are also being focused extensively and horticulture tankers with hypochlorite solution have been deployed in NDMC area for disinfection of Residential areas and clusters. Besides, regular sanitization of NDMC waste collection vehicles and transfer station is also being carried out," he said.

NDMC has ensured adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) like Gloves and Masks to its Safai Karamcharis, the official said.

Avoid flying kites near power lines: Delhi Transco

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Transco Limited (DTL) has asked people not to fly kites near electrical installations and high tension lines in the national interest, saying the practice is causing tripping and outages across the national capital.

DTL is working round the clock to ensure uninterrupted power supply in the city but during the last two days a few tripping in the transmission lines witnessed after it came in contact with a metal coated manija in east Delhi areas such as Geeta Colony and Patparganj. Since it takes a



long time in physically locating the entangled kite and removing it, therefore it may take time in restoration of power supply, it said in a statement.

"It took around one hour in restoring the line in Geeta Colony that affected around 20 MW load. While, a total load of 86 MW was also affected in

Patparganj. Though the power supply was restored within 20 minutes by transferring the load to the other circuits and transformers, however it took around one hour in restoration of affected lines," it added.

The DTL further said that electricity is an essential service and any disturbance in the transmission network may result in power cut for a long duration.

Besides, the continuity and operations of other major essential services (such as water supply, hospitals, milk plants etc) also depends upon uninterrupted power supply," it added.

Notice to Tablighi Jamaat chief, 7 others for defying lockdown

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has sent notice to Tablighi Jamaat leader Maulana Saad Kandhalvi and seven others after a First Information Report (FIR) against Kandhalvi and seven others for holding a religious congregation at Southeast Delhi's Nizamuddin Markaz allegedly in violation of the lockdown orders and not maintaining social distancing to contain the spread of coronavirus. The Delhi Police's Crime Branch wrote to Saad and others on March 31, seeking the details under Section 91 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

According to notice which contains 26 questions, police had asked them to submit details of name, address, registration details of the organisation, details of its office bearers, details of income tax returns filed by Markaz for the last three years, PAN numbers, bank account numbers and bank statements for the last one year of the organisation.

"A list of employees working for the organisation (Markaz), number of religious gatherings organised by it from January 1, 2019, a map plan of the premises was also sought and details whether CCTV cameras are installed in the premises have also been sought," the Crime Branch had stated in their notice. "A copy of the permission sought from police or any other authorities, if any, for holding a religious gathering in the premises



es. Details of audio-visual recording made by or in possession of any person who attended the gathering have also been sought. Details of people — both Indian and foreigners — who arrived at the Markaz after March 12 and their health conditions have also been demanded," the notice further stated.

Police has also asked them to submit details of people and volunteers who were on duty at the premises and details of curfew passes issued to any person.

The FIR was registered on Tuesday at Crime Branch police station on the complaint of Station House Officer of Nizamuddin police station.

According to FIR, the Delhi Police contacted the authorities of Markaz on March 21 and reminded them of the government order that prohibited any political or religious gathering of more than 50 people.

"One Mufti Shahzad was informed about the situation arising due to COVID-19 and was asked to take immediate action for preventing the spread of the disease. He was directed to send the foreign devotees back to their respective countries and other Indian persons to their respective cities, the FIR stated.

addicts are taking advantage of such situation and just to fulfill their addiction needs now they are breaking into liquor shops," said Aditya Okhade, a resident.

The liquor shops are closed in city after the lockdown was imposed across the country in wake of coronavirus outbreak.

Rly to start PCET for goods' nonstop supply

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Railways has decided to run several long distance Parcel Cargo Express Special Trains' (PCET) in a time-bound manner to provide seamless transportation facilities for movement of goods to different parts of the country. These special trains will help in delivering items of daily needs during the lockdown period necessitated due to the deadly Coronavirus outbreak in India.

These special trains will be run between Yeshwantpur to Hazrat Nizamuddin and Bazzra Terminus to Ludhiana. To meet the requirements of key infrastructure sectors



during the nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19, Indian Railways has been fulfilling its commitment to ensure availability of important raw material and fuel through its freight services.

"During the situation of

lockdown, Indian Railways staff deployed at various good sheds, stations and control offices continued working with full devotion to ensure that the supply of essential items for these critical sectors does not get affected. Due to relentless

operations of Railways, all power plants and petroleum depots have proper stock with them despite lockdown," the railway said in a statement.

It said that during last 12 days from 23rd March to 3rd April 2020, Railways loaded and carried 2,50,020 wagons of coal, and 17742 wagons of petroleum products (One wagon contains 58-60 ton consignment). Details are as follows:

To monitor the uninterrupted movement of materials fuelling the power, transport and infrastructure sectors and other essential commodities over Indian Railways, an emergency freight control centre is working in the Ministry of

Railways. Freight movement is being closely monitored by officials at very senior level," it said.

Indian Railways along with Ministry of Home affairs is keeping in touch with state Governments to sort out any such operational issue if they arise.

Meanwhile, all divisions and workshops of Northern Railways are working 24x7 to fight against COVID-19. In its continuation efforts to fight against the Coronavirus, it has manufactured 1,673 liters of hand sanitizer, 9,036 face masks, 241 coveralls besides converting 174 coaches into isolation wards.

India's S Asian offer hits China's Covid narrative

Washington: India's offer of a regional South Asian response to tackle the coronavirus pandemic has been an effective counter to China's attempts to change the narrative on the deadly disease, according to an American think-tank expert.

Aparna Pande, Director of the India Initiative at the Hudson Institute, made the remarks on Friday during an online discussion on China's attempts to change the narrative on COVID-19 and how countries in the world are responding to the major health crisis.

"China has pushed a charm offensive in South Asia both through offering medical teams, sending test kits and protective equipment and offering to build hospitals. However, the results have been a mixed bag," Pande said.

India's offer of a regional South Asian response has been an effective counter to Beijing's attempts to change the narrative, she said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 13 proposed formulation of a joint strategy by the SAARC nations to fight the coronavirus, a suggestion promptly backed by all member states, barring Pakistan.

Calling on the SAARC members to set an example for the world, Modi reached out to the eight-member regional grouping and hosted a video conference among the leaders to chalk out a strong strategy to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

According to Pande, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are heavily dependent on Chinese largesse, especially under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and have been the most open to and reciprocated Beijing's charms.

For Pakistan, strategic relations with China take priority over everything else, including the health of its own people, she said.

Pakistan refused to evacuate its citizens, especially students from Wuhan, the epicentre of the coronavirus infection, when the pandemic broke out and, like Iran, did not suspend flights to and from China, she noted.

Further, Pakistani officials including a former ambassador to the UN and the Prime Minister's Scientific Advisor are "peddling conspiracy theories about the origins of the virus, blaming the US and the UK and absolving China of any responsibility," Pande said.

Sri Lanka, she noted, "has gone ahead and signed a 10-year loan of USD 500 million with China Development Bank to help the country mitigate the financial impact of the crisis."

India "while avoiding open criticism of China, has sought to counter any Chinese charm offensive by seeking a coordinated regional response through building quarantine shelters in Maldives and Nepal and the SAARC COVID fund to which India has contributed USD 10 million and other countries offered money and aid as well.

"India also has 2 naval ships ready to be deployed to any country that needs assistance in the region," she noted.

There is a vast difference between India and China's responses as would be between a democracy and an autocratic country, the Hudson scholar said. Lack of proper and detailed planning before imposing a nation-wide lockdown in India have created problems, she added.

"However, it can be blamed on lack of planning, not malevolent intent. The state did not anticipate the migrant crisis and so struggled for a few days to deal with it. However, it is not just India, many countries are facing challenges keeping people under lockdown," Pande said.

"So, it should be easier to understand the problems facing the world's largest democracy, a country of 1.3 billion people, as it seeks to keep people indoors, curtail the spread and avoid burdening its weak healthcare infrastructure," she said.

"For countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan — that were deep in China's grasp — Beijing's grip will be strengthened. For those like Maldives, Nepal, and Bangladesh this will actually strengthen ties with India and wariness of close ties with China or aid from China and I think here India's offer of a South Asian response, aid and technical assistance has helped strengthen those bonds," Pande added. **PTI**

ICMR issues advisory for rapid antibody-based blood tests for virus

New Delhi: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Saturday issued an advisory to start rapid antibody based blood tests for COVID-19 in areas reporting clusters and in large migration gatherings or evacuee centres.

The decision for recommending these tests was taken at an emergency meeting of the National Task Force held recently.

The move comes in the wake of the country reporting 3072 COVID-19 cases including 75 deaths so far.

The results of antibody tests similar to blood tests are available in 15-30 minutes.

"Cases of influenza-like illness to be monitored in health facilities. Any surge in cases to be monitored and brought to the notice of surveillance officer/CMO for additional investigation," the advisory said.

As a matter of abundant precautions, all symptomatic persons with influenza-like illness should be advised home quarantine for 14 days. At facility level, symptomatic individuals with influenza-like illness to be tested using rapid antibody tests, the apex health research body said in its advisory.

If antibody test comes out negative, then if warranted, it

can be confirmed by real-time RT-PCR using throat/nasal swab.

At present, the government uses the RT-PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests to detect the coronavirus from samples of throat or nasal swab of people with symptoms or high-risk individuals who might have come in contact with a positive patient.

RT-PCR negative indicates the likelihood of a non-COVID-19 influenza-like illness while RT-PCR positive means it is a confirmed case and action as per protocol should be initiated for isolation, treatment and contact tracing, the advisory stated.

If the antibody test comes

out to be positive, there has to be a clinical assessment and treatment in hospital or isolation as per protocol.

Action as per protocol should be initiated for contact tracing.

"If symptoms worsen, refer to designated COVID-19 hospitals. When home quarantine is not feasible, consider facility-based quarantine," the advisory stated.

It also listed some general guidelines according to which healthcare workers doing the rapid antibody test should use gloves, mask, and head covers.

Healthcare workers collecting throat/nasal swab should follow standard national infection control guidelines,

it said.

The rapid antibody tests approved by US-FDA/CE-IVD or non-CE-IVD validated by ICMR-NIV with marketing approval by DCGI should be used.

In order to ensure that all such cases are monitored and necessary action is initiated with respect to infectious disease management, details of all test results shall be uploaded in ICMR portal.

"All such organisations are duty bound to register themselves to ICMR portal and upload the data in real-time. Failure to do so, they will be held liable to action under Disaster Management Act, 2005," the advisory stated.

Dont' consume or spit tobacco products: ICMR

New Delhi: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) appealed to the people on Saturday not to consume and spit smokeless tobacco in public places.

The apex health research body said chewing smokeless tobacco products (gutka, pan masala with tobacco, pan and other chewing tobacco products) and areca nut (supari) increases the production of saliva, followed by a very strong urge to spit.

"Spitting in public places could enhance the spread of the COVID-19 virus," the ICMR said. "In view of the increasing danger of COVID-19 pandemic, it is an appeal to the general public to refrain from consuming the smokeless tobacco products and spitting in public places during the COVID epidemic." **PTI**

Virus claims 6 more lives in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The coronavirus crisis deepened in Maharashtra on Saturday as the pandemic claimed six more lives taking the total number of deaths to 32 and 154 more persons tested positive for COVID-19 in various parts of the State.

On a day when the total number of infected persons rose to a staggering 635, the state health authorities confirmed the death of six more persons due to Covid-19.

Mumbai continued to bear the maximum brunt of the coronavirus on Saturday, as the pandemic claimed four more lives taking the total number of COVID-19 deaths to 22 and the total number of infected cases

rose to a staggering 330.

Of the remaining two dead, one succumbed to pandemic at Mumbra in Thane, while another died at Amravati in eastern Maharashtra.

Apart from having been tested for COVID-19, three of those — whose deaths were reported during the day — had comorbidities and one suffered from age-related risk factors.

Those who died in Mumbai on Friday after having tested positive for Coronavirus comprised: a 53-year-old male patient, who died of severe respiratory illness at KEM Hospital, 67-year-old male who died of respiratory failure at the KEM Hospital had diabetes, a 43-year-old who died at the Nair Hospital of res-

piratory failure had ischemic heart disease, diabetes & chronic lung disease and a 80-year-old man who died of respiratory failure at the KEM Hospital, had been admitted for fever and breathlessness.

Of the remaining deaths, a 57-year-old man from Mumbra died at the KEM Hospital on Saturday morning, while a 47-year-old man died at the district civil hospital at Amravati.

7 TABLIGHIS FROM MAHA TEST POSITIVE

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Seven persons among those people from Maharashtra, who attended Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi's Nizamuddin last month, have so far tested positive for coronavirus.

"Of the persons who have undergone COVID-19 tests, seven have tested positive for the pandemic. The infected persons comprised two per-

sons each from Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad and Ahmednagar, while one person is from Hingoli in eastern Maharashtra," official sources said here on Saturday.

Of the 1400 people from Maharashtra who had attended the Nizamuddin event, 1033 have so far been identified. "As many as 738 people have been quarantined," the sources said.

10 fresh virus cases reported in Gzb

Ghaziabad (UP): Ten fresh COVID-19 cases were reported in the last 24 hours here taking the total number of cases in the district to 23, a health official said on Saturday.

Of the total cases, three persons have been discharged after recovering from the disease.

Meanwhile, a three-kilometre radius around Jama Masjid of Malipada area in Masuri town here was cordoned off by district officials as some residents were suspected to have COVID-19.

Deputy Collector Prashant Tiwari has been deputed as the officer in-charge to strictly enforce the orders with movement of vehicles and public not allowed till further orders.

In case any loiterer is found

flouting the orders, the person would be booked under Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code.

Ghaziabad District Magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey said permission for movement would be granted only in exceptional cases.

As many as 102 people, who came in close contact with the coronavirus positive persons, have been home quarantined so far. Of the 428 samples that were sent for testing, 280 people were diagnosed negative while the rest of the reports are still awaited, Chief Medical Officer Dr NK Gupta said.

A total of 234 positive cases have been reported across the state till now, officials said. **PTI**

Woman found positive for coronavirus after death

Hyderabad: A woman at a village near here was found positive for coronavirus after death prompting the authorities to take up measures on a large scale to contain the spread of the virus.

The woman had complained of sore throat on March 31 and she consulted a Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP) locally, who was allegedly functioning from the premises of a dental clinic, official sources said on Saturday.

The RMP administered saline and sent her away, they said.

She consulted a doctor at Mahabubnagar later who allegedly performed endoscopy though she was suffering from sore throat, they said.

He had referred her to the

state-run Osmania General Hospital in Hyderabad where she was admitted, they said.

She passed away while undergoing treatment.

Suspecting her ill-health, doctors there sent her samples for a coronavirus test.

Her test result, which was received on Friday, was found positive for coronavirus, according to Ranga Reddy district Collector Amoy Kumar.

The woman, who reportedly did not go out of her village, is suspected to have contracted the infection from some workers from Bihar who were staying on her premises, the sources said.

The Bihar workers had travelled by train in which some persons who participated in a religious congregation in

Delhi had also reportedly travelled.

The four Bihar workers have been sent to the state-run Gandhi hospital in the city for coronavirus test the results of which are awaited.

Official sources said the administration has quarantined her family members and all those who handled her corpse.

The village residents have been advised home quarantine and those having symptoms like cough and fever have been sent for COVID-19 testing, they said.

The sources added that cases have been booked against the RMP, the doctor at Mahabubnagar and the dentist (who allowed his clinic premises to be used by the RMP) for their alleged negligence. **PTI**



A municipal worker fumigates a residential area during a lockdown to prevent the spread of new coronavirus in Prayagraj, India on Saturday

U-turn on domicile order...

From Page 1

Government officials and BJP leaders are tightlipped on this fiasco, while many Hindu hardliners in the Jammu blamed the Centre and the BJP for the U-turn in just two days. Section of State BJP leaders had flagged the issue before the party high command in private and sighted numerous examples of unrest among large sections of society including unemployed youth awaiting filling up of 50,000 vacancies.

The NC in statement said that the reversal order is just "cosmetic" urging "Delhi must stop saying around with J&K." The PDP accused the BJP of playing dangerous games in the Valley in its bid to change the demography.

"The way in which the Union Government proclaimed a new job and domicile policy for the erstwhile State now clearly indicates people at the helm of affairs in New Delhi are dealing with Jammu & Kashmir very casually and without application of mind," said the PDP.

"It's high time the people of J&K get to decide the laws that will govern them rather than being subjected to the whims and fancies of the Centre where orders are issued in the morning and changes to the same order issued in the evening. Restore statehood, conduct elections," said Omar Abdullah.

Omar again tweeted: "Delhi made a mistake notifying the domicile rules during this time of crisis & I made a mistake getting sucked into this debate at a time when it's wrong to let politics distract from the #COVID19 fight. I haven't spoken my mind about 5/8/2019 yet but I will when this is over."

In the April 1 notification, the jobs were reserved only up to group 4 in the Government, which is equivalent to the rank of constable in police parlance and multi-tasking staff in Government offices.

Under the domicile law, anyone who has resided for 15 years in Jammu & Kashmir or has studied for seven years and appeared in Class 10 and Class 12 examinations in an educational institution located in the Union Territory is a domicile. Anyone who is registered as a migrant by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) will also be deemed to be a domicile. The children of all-India services personnel, who have served there for 10 years, also come under the category.

Others who can be deemed to be a domicile include the children of those Central Government officials, all-India services officers, officials of PSU and autonomous bodies of the Central Government, public sector banks, officials of statutory bodies, Central university officials and those of recognised research institutes of the Central Government, who have served in Jammu & Kashmir for 10 years.

MP: Man claims cops beat father to death during Dhar lockdown

Dhar (MP): The family of a 65-year-old man in Dhar in Madhya Pradesh claimed he died of a police beating during lockdown on Saturday when he was out to buy essentials, a charge denied by officials.

Tigu Budhya died in Gurji village under Dhamnod police station limits, 50 kilometres from the district headquarters, after police hit him, said his son Raju.

Refuting the allegations, Superintendent of Police Adityapratap Singh said, "We got information that a man was lying on the street. We rushed him to hospital where he died."

"My father was beaten to death by the police between

6:30-7am. He had gone to buy essentials. My brother-in-law has said police came in vehicles and thrashed my father," Raju told reporters. Singh said the incident was being probed and a team of doctors was conducting post mortem to find out the cause of death. Meanwhile, local Congress MLA Panchilal Meda said the incident was unfortunate and police should not have acted in this manner. "His body had marks of assault by sticks. I request the district collector to conduct the deceased's examination by a team of government doctors and a local doctor. The guilty should be punished." **PTI**

3 Maoists gunned down in encounter in J'khand

Chaibasa (Jharkhand): Three members of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) were gunned down in an encounter with security personnel in West Singhbhum district here on Saturday, police said.

A team comprising CRPF 94 Battalion personnel and Khunti district police launched an operation around 7 am following a tip-off that members of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) had assembled in forests near Chirungreda village, Superintendent of Police Indrajeet Mahata said.

The Maoists opened fire at the security personnel, who gunned down three Naxalites in retaliatory action, he said.

Police recovered their bodies and seized rifles, bullets and ammunition from the spot, he added.

Mahata said a few other members of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) managed to flee.

In another incident, a group of Maoists detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) near a house in Dholabani village of the district around 12.45 am on Saturday, police said.

Security personnel reached the spot shortly after the blast. Seeing them, the Naxalites fled, a police officer said.

However, before escaping to nearby forests, the ultras shot at a friend of the owner of the house near which the IED exploded. He had informed the police about the incident, he said.

According to the officer, the injured man is undergoing treatment at MGM Hospital in Jamshedpur and his condition is stated to be critical.

Three motorcycles parked near the house were gutted after they caught fire due to the blast, he said.

Further investigation into the incident is underway, the police said. **PTI**

Now, Ministry releases DIY guide for masks

From Page 1

"The face cover should be prepared in such a manner that it can cover the mouth and nose completely and can be tied over the face easily". It is advised that two sets of such face covers be made so that one can be washed while the other is used.

"Hand washing would still remain essential criteria and hand should be washed before wearing the face cover. Such face covers should also not be thrown anywhere but kept safely, washed properly with soap and hot water and dried properly before they are used," the guideline said.

EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. RE/KKK/EST/OHE/ RPUR-JMP, dated: 04.04.2020. Open tender is invited by Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, BGP, Railway Electrification, Danapur for the following work: **Name of work and its location:** Open tender for Design, supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 25KV, 50Hz, Single Phase, AC Electrification Work including OHE & provision of lighting arrangement inside tunnel in new double line section from Ratanpur-Jamalpur of Malda Division of Eastern Railway under RE project Danapur, Total 5.35 RKM/9 TKM. **Approximate cost of the work:** ₹ 3.21,91,416.59. **Earnest money to be deposited:** ₹ 3,11,000. **Date & time for submission of the tender and opening of tender:** Last date of submission up to 14.00 hrs. on 30.04.2020 and opened at 15.30 hrs. on 30.04.2020. **Website particular where complete details of tender can be seen:** www.treps.gov.in **Date & time for downloading tender document:** From 04.04.2020 to 30.04.2020 (Up to 14.00 hrs. on 30.04.2020). **Validity of offer:** 60 days from the date of opening of tender. (MISC-02/2020-21)

Tender Notices are also available at website: www.e.r.indianrailways.gov.in/www.treps.gov.in

India bucks global...

From Page 1

According to a paper published in Lancet Infectious Diseases, the Covid-19 kills an estimated 13.4 per cent of patients in the 80 plus age group, compared to 1.25 per cent of those in their 50s and 0.3 per cent of those in their 40s.

The sharpest divide came at age 70. Although 4 per cent of patients in their 60s died, more than twice that, or 8.6 per cent, of those in their 70s died, Neil Ferguson of Imperial College London and his colleagues estimated in the paper, based on the global data.

However, experts say that even if the young get infected, their survival rate is much higher in India, like in Italy and France where elders deaths were comparatively higher.

"As things stand, India has a very young population. Its median age is 28.4 years. The actual data runs somewhat like this: 44.7 per cent of the population is below 25 years of

age and 41.24 per cent of the population is in the age group of 25-54 years. So altogether, more than 85 per cent of India's population is below 54 years of age.

"Based on the data as analysed for France, Italy and Iran, India's young are likely to act as a bulwark against the virus. It seems likely that this shall keep the death rates very, very, low indeed. India, with its young population coupled with the lockdown, shall come out of the crisis sooner and better than many European nations.

"This does not mean that the infection rates shall necessarily be low. We may get fairly high infection rates. I must also mention that there is no reliable data for infection rates at the global level. What seems clear is that the death rates for India shall be very low and to my mind that is the most important parameter that should be used to gauge the situation," said Dinesh Singh, former Vice Chancellor, Delhi University and a mathematician.

Grid failure fear during blackout solidarity misplaced: Minister

From Page 1

In a series of tweets, the Ministry said some apprehensions have been expressed that this may cause instability in the grid and fluctuation in voltage which may harm the electrical appliances. "These apprehensions are misplaced. The Indian electricity grid is robust, stable and adequate arrangements and protocols are in place to handle the variation in demand," it said.

In a letter to State Governments, the Ministry of Power said the appeal of the PM is to voluntarily switch off only the lights at 9:00 pm on Sunday and an immediate surge at 9:09 pm could cause the electrical grid to crash. So

lights or appliances like TVs, refrigerators and ACs in homes. The lights in hospitals and all other essential services like public utilities, municipal services, offices, police stations, manufacturing facilities, etc will remain on," it said.

According to the Power Ministry data, the maximum power demand in the country stood at 1,25,817 megawatt (MW) on April 2, 2020, almost 20 per cent lower than April 2, 2019 of 1,68,326 MW.

Earlier in a tweet, Tharoor said, "An unprecedented drop in electricity demand at 9 pm on Sunday and an immediate surge at 9:09 pm could cause the electrical grid to crash. So

electricity boards are contemplating load shedding from 8 pm and staggered return to normal after 9.09 pm. One more thing the PM did not think about!"

India's peak power demand at best is about 170 gigawatt (GW). However, due to lockdown, the demand has fallen by more than 20 per cent and it currently hovers around 120-130 GW.

Of this, household barely comprises 10-12 per cent. Officials believe a sudden drop and rise after nine-minute shutdown won't cause disruption as it's already prepared to manage up to 15 GW fluctuation.

CRPF CMO +ve, DG among 200 advised home quarantine

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After a Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of CRPF was found Covid-19 positive and isolated and eight other officers were quarantined, the paramilitary, in a proactive measure, has now mapped a detailed list of about 200 Force personnel, including DG CRPF himself, who were traced to have contacts with the quarantined personnel. All the 200 such personnel, including top officials, have been advised self/home quarantine and are accordingly observing the protocols as a precautionary measure.

The list of the contact tracing including CRPF DG AP Maheshwari and Senior Security Advisor of MHA K Vijay Kumar have been advised home quarantine or quarantine at CRPF facilities till the test reports are out. However, these top officials have not exhibited any symptoms of the novel coronavirus, top CRPF officials said.

At least three Inspectors General, whose wards returned from foreign countries, have also been quarantined as a precautionary measure. Former CRPF DG Vikram Srivastava has also been self-quarantined as a preventive measure.

The CRPF chief, who has himself subjected to home quarantine, is supervising the work of the Force from home. While Maheshwari is currently free from any Covid-19 symptoms, he is undergoing the quarantine drill as a precautionary measure, officials said.

A CRPF spokesperson said,



"A CRPF officer has tested positive for COVID-19. All personnel in contact with the officer have been quarantined. The DG CRPF had an indirect contact with the officer. As per protocol, DG is observing quarantine."

"We will win together. The only Mantra is social distancing. To all of us let this be the religion as well as spirituality of the day. Save oneself to save others. Save humanity," Maheshwari has tweeted tagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi, PMO, HMO India and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Liaison Officer and Assistant Commandant of CRPF P Raja, who had been quarantined after Chief Medical Officer Dr Deepak was tested Covid-19 positive, is being tested for novel coronavirus. Raja's swab samples have been sent for testing to a laboratory. The 200 CRPF personnel sent on home quarantine were traced to be in contact with Raja and further course of measures will be taken after test reports of Raja,

top CRPF officials said.

Those quarantined include OPD patients attended by Dr Manish Kumar, SMO at RK Puram here, admitted patients in CRPF hospital at RK Puram, personnel who were in contact with a driver of 178 Battalion who was attached with Covid-19 positive CMO Dr Deepak, personnel in contact with another driver of 139 Battalion who was attached with Dr Manish, personnel who were in contact with quarantined Transit Officers Mess personnel Raj Kumar Paswan of 122 Battalion, and Medical/Paramedical staff of composite hospital of CRPF at RK Puram.

Another list of officials quarantined includes those who were in contact with Assistant Commandant P Raja, Liaison Officer of Senior Security Advisor of Union Home Ministry K Vijay Kumar who is a former CRPF chief. This list also includes IG (Operations) of Chhattisgarh, Section Officer to DG, DIG (Operations) Sukma, Assistant Commandant P Martin Raju,

Govt OK's five-phased corona containment plan

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

With coronavirus cases rising by hundreds and deaths multiplying with each passing day, the Government on Saturday came out with a five-phased 'containment plan for larger outbreaks' on the perception that current Covid-19 spread mimics the H1N1 pandemic of 2009.

"This suggests that while the spread of COVID-19 in our population could be high, it's unlikely that it will be uniformly affecting all parts of the country. This calls for differential approach to different regions of the country, while mounting a strong containment effort in hot spots," said the document that visualises five different step-wise scenarios in case of any such outbreaks in the country.

It begins with travel-related cases reported in India followed by local transmission of COVID-19, large outbreaks amenable to containment, wide-spread community transmission of COVID-19 disease and finally to the point, if or

when India becomes endemic for the deadly disease. The Government current strategy is focussed on these five points aiming to combat the deadly disease.

So far, the virus has killed over 80 people and infected over 3000 in the country. Large number of cases has been reported from Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

"Large scale measures to contain COVID-19 over large territories have been tried in China," notes the document prepared by the Union Health Ministry.

In India also, clusters have appeared in multiple States, particularly Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka, Telangana and UT of Ladakh while 211 districts are now reporting COVID-19 cases and the risk of further spread remains very high, as per the document.

Current estimates of the incubation period of COVID

➤ Epidemiology Coronaviruses belong to a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats, bats, etc. Rarely, animal corona viruses may evolve and jump species to infect people and then spread between people as witnessed during the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS, 2003) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS, 2014).

➤ In humans, the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 can occur via respiratory secretions (directly through droplets from coughing or sneezing, or indirectly through contaminated objects or surfaces as well as close contacts).

➤ Most common symptoms include fever, fatigue, dry cough and breathing difficulty. Upper respiratory tract symptoms like sore throat, rhinorrhoea, and gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhoea and nausea/vomiting are seen in about 20% of cases.

range from 2-14 days, and these estimates will be refined as more data become available.

Strategic approach for scenario include travel related cases reported from India which focuses on early detection through universal screening of all International passengers at Points of Entries (PoEs) and tracking travellers in the community who have travelled from affected coun-

tries.

Talking about the possibility of local transmission of COVID-2019 disease, which so far the Government has denied, the document said that local transmission will lead to clustering of cases in time and space, epidemiologically linked to a travel related case or a positive case that has links to a travel related case. The cluster containment strat-

egy will be extensive contact tracing and active search for cases in containment zone, testing all suspect cases and high risk contacts, as per the document.

"Geographic quarantine and containment strategy proposes defining the area of operation, active surveillance for cases and contacts in the identified geographic zone and expanding laboratory capacity for testing all suspect cases, high risk contacts and SARI cases. Implementation of social distancing measures with strict perimeter control and providing chemoprophylaxis with Hydroxychloroquine to all asymptomatic healthcare workers and asymptomatic household contacts of laboratory confirmed cases has been further course of action."

However, if the containment plan is not able to contain the outbreak and large numbers of cases start appearing, then a decision will need to be taken by State administration to abandon the containment plan and start on mitigation activities, it stated.

Shops of agri machinery, spare parts to remain open during lockdown



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has allowed shops of agricultural machinery and its spare parts to remain open during the nationwide lockdown. Repair shops for trucks on highways have also been included in that list. The Union Home Ministry issued the 4th Addendum to the guidelines issued regarding lockdown, to exempt shops of agricultural machinery and its spare parts.

"Shops of Agricultural machinery, its spare parts (including its supply chain) and repairs to remain open. Tea industry, including plantations, with a maximum of 50 per cent workers were also exempted, in an order by the MHA.

The fourth addendum issued by union home secretary Ajay Bhalla exempted shops for truck repairs on highways, preferably at fuel pumps as well as the tea industry, including plantations with maximum 50 per cent workers.



The MHA said that social distancing and proper hygiene practices must be ensured in each of these activities

The MHA said that social distancing and proper hygiene practices must be ensured in each of these activities.

The decision seems to have been taken in view of the urgent need for trucks to ply normally, given they carry most of the essentials including vegetables and grains. India is amid a nationwide shutdown for 21 days where all services are suspended save few essentials.

This extreme decision was necessitated in wake of the outbreak of Covid-19 in India.

India, US to fight COVID-19 together: PM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that India and the US have decided to "deploy the full strength of the India-US partnership" to fight COVID-19 that has infected over a million persons globally and killed more than 60,000.

Modi said this after "an extensive conversation with President Trump".

In a tweet, PM Modi wrote, "Had an extensive telephone conversation with President @realDonaldTrump. We had a good discussion, and agreed to deploy the full strength of the India-US partnership to fight COVID-19."

In India, which is into its 11th day of the 21-day lockdown, the pandemic positive cases stand at over 3,000 with the dead count at 75 while the US is undergoing a far severe coronavirus attack with the positive cases breaching the 2.75 lakh mark and the death toll standing at nearly 7,500.

In terms of positive cases, the US has the most in the world while fatalities-wise it has surpassed China, the origin of coronavirus and is behind Spain and Italy.

ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST CORONA

Modi reviews countrywide preparedness

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chairing a joint meeting of the Empowered Groups constituted for planning and ensuring implementation of COVID-19 response activities in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reviewed the countrywide preparedness regarding availability of hospitals, proper isolation and quarantine facilities as well as disease surveillance, testing and critical care training.

He also directed the concerned groups and officials to ensure sufficient production, procurement and availability of all essential medical equipment such as PPEs, masks, gloves and ventilators, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) stated in a series of tweets.

The Government has constituted 11 different Empowered Groups, under the Disaster Management Act, to suggest measures to ramp up healthcare, put the economy back on track and reduce the misery of people as quickly as possible post 21-day lockdown imposed to contain the Coronavirus pandemic.

Each group has a senior representative from the PMO and the Cabinet Secretariat to ensure seamless coordination and is being empowered to formulate plans and to take all necessary steps for their time-bound implementation.

The Empowered Group on Medical Emergency and Management Plan is headed by

SHGs make 1.32 cr face masks

New Delhi: Nearly 66,000 members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in 24 States covering 399 districts of the country under the Ministry of Rural Development's National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) have so far made 1.32 crore face masks, the Government said on Saturday.

NITI Aayog member Dr V Paul, while the Group on Availability of Hospitals, Disease Surveillance and Testing and Critical Care Training work under the Chairmanship of Environment Secretary C K Mishra.

The Empowered Group on ensuring the availability of essential medical equipment, production Procurement, Import and Distribution is headed by Pharmaceuticals Secretary P D Vaghela, while the Group on augmenting Human Resources and Capacity Building is under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Secretary Arun Panda. Drinking Water Secretary Parameswaran Iyer leads the Group on Facilitating Supply Chain and Logistics Management for availability of necessary items.

CEO NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant heads the Group on coordinating with the private sector.

PM to videoconference with floor leaders of various political parties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the three-week lockdown continues and may not be eased at one go, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with floor leaders of various political parties via a video link on April 8.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said the Prime Minister will interact with floor leaders of all those parties which have more than five MPs in both houses of Parliament on April 8 at 11 am.

Covid-19 and countrywide lockdown are likely to be discussed during the meeting.

This will be the prime minister's first interaction with opposition leaders after the lockdown amid criticism that the former has not taken the latter in confidence and not informed about the state of medical and other contingencies.

The Group on Economic and Welfare measures functions under Economic Affairs Secretary while Atanu Chakraborty and Information and Broadcasting Secretary Ravi Mittal heads the Group on

Keeping in mind the norms for social distancing and travel restrictions, the much-coveted meeting will be conducted through a video conference.

Many opposition leaders have been asking for an all-party meeting with the Prime Minister on the pandemic wanting to have the first-hand information on the steps to cope with the crisis which may not end too soon in time.

In the meeting, Government officials said that the Prime Minister will seek suggestions from different parties on the future road map to contain the deadly virus. The meeting will start at 11am with Modi's opening remarks in which he will appraise the party leaders of the steps his government has taken so far.

The meeting will also be an opportunity to build a broad political consensus on India's fight against Covid-19, accord-

ing to officials.

Besides Modi, union home minister Amit Shah, defence minister Rajnath Singh, parliamentary affairs minister and Leader of the Rajya Sabha, Thawar Chand Gehlot are also expected to be present.

Meanwhile, BJP's vice-president Jay Panda has dismissed Congress charges of government not being ready to deal with the crisis which has claimed 75 lives and the numbers of those positive reaching 3,000 in the country as of today. Panda said all the suggestion made by the state governments have been implemented by the Prime Minister and that "Prime Minister is coordinating with the states run by the opposition parties".

Pointing to a survey, the BJP leader said "83 per cent of people have expressed confidence with PM's leadership during the ongoing crisis".

Information, Communication and Public Awareness.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) Secretary Ajay Sawhney helms the Group on Technology and Data

Management, HRD Secretary Amit Khare heads the panel on Public Grievances while Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla leads the Empowered Group constituted on Strategic issues relating to Lockdown.

DRDO designs full-body disinfection chamber to fight virus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Focusing on in-house solutions to fight coronavirus pandemic, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has designed a full-body disinfection chamber called Personnel Sanitisation Enclosure. This walk-through enclosure is designed for personnel decontamination, one person at a time. The DRDO is already manufacturing and supplying sanitisers and masks to the Delhi Police while the Navy has manufactured handheld temperature gun at a cost of ₹1,000 which is much less than the ones available in the market. The DRDO has also developed portable sanitisation spray which can be used to spraying disinfectant.

Giving details about the latest endeavour, defence ministry officials said here on Saturday the portable system is equipped with sanitiser



and soap dispenser. The decontamination is started using a foot pedal at the entry. On entering the chamber, electrically operated pump creates a disinfectant mist of hypochlorite chloride for disinfecting. The mist spray is calibrated for an operation of 25 seconds and stops automatically indicating completion of operation. As per procedure, personnel undergoing disinfection will need to keep their eyes closed while inside the chamber.

Moreover, the system consists of roof mounted and bottom tanks with a total of 700 litres' capacity.

Approximately 650 personnel can pass through the chamber for disinfection until the refill is required. The system has see-through glass panels on side walls for monitoring purpose and is fitted with lights for illumination during night time operations. A separate operator cabin is provided to monitor overall operations.

The system has been manufactured with the help of M/s Dass Hitachi Ltd, Ghaziabad, within a time span of four days. This system can be used for disinfection of personnel at the areas of controlled ingress and egress such as entry and exit to hospitals, malls, office buildings and critical installations.

Earlier, the DRDO also developed face protection mask for health care professionals handling COVID-19 patients. Its light weight construction makes it convenient for comfortable wear for long duration.

This design uses commonly available A4 size Over-Head Projection (OHP) film for face protection. The holding frame is manufactured using Fused Deposition Modeling (3D printing). Polyactic Acid filament is used for 3D printing of the frame. This thermoplastic is derived from renewable resources such as corn starch or sugarcane and is biodegradable.

The face mask will be mass

produced using injection moulding technique for volume production. Nearly 100 face shields are being produced daily and provided to PGIMER, Chandigarh. Similarly, 100 are produced and handed over to ESIC, Hyderabad.

A demand of 10,000 masks been received from PGIMER and ESIC Hospitals, they said.

In the continuing quest for developing indigenous solutions to combat the pandemic, the DRDO is ready with technologies for sanitising areas of different sizes. The Centre for Fire Explosive & Environment Safety (CFEES), Delhi has developed two configurations of sanitising equipment. These are spinoffs from technologies developed for fire suppression applications.

The CFEES, Delhi with the help of its industry partner has developed portable sanitisation equipment for spraying decontamination solution consisting of one per cent

Be careful on April 5 while lighting diyas or candles, Army urges public

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army on Saturday came out with an advisory for general public asking people to be careful on April 5 while lighting diyas or candles.

Hypochlorite (HYPO) solution for sanitisation of suspected area.

The portable system can be mounted as a backpack and can be carried by the operations personnel.

The application areas can

"Use soap to wash your hands and not alcohol-based sanitisers prior to lighting," it said. There have been cases of people suffering burn injuries due to use of sanitiser and then coming into contact with fire. Recently, a 44-year-old Rewari

include hospital reception, doctor chambers, office spaces dealing with general public, corridors, pathways, metro and railway stations, bus stations, etc.

The Centre with the help of its industry partner has also developed a higher capacity which is carried on a trolley. The system incorporates low pressure single fluid (disinfectant liquid) technology generating very fine mist. It is capable of disinfecting upto 3,000

(Haryana) man suffered 35 per cent burn injuries when he accidentally came into contact with fire in his kitchen while cleaning household items with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Doctors have also advised caution in its usage.

square metre area. It has a tank capacity of 50 litres and has a lancing (throw) distance of 12-15 metres.

This is useful for disinfecting hospitals, malls, airports, metro stations, isolation areas, quarantine centres and high risk residential areas.

Two of these systems are being provided to Delhi Police for immediate use. These can be made available to other agencies with the help of industry partners.

Guj: 7 more Tablighis identified, quarantined

IANS ■ GANDHINAGAR

The Gujarat police on Saturday identified and quarantined 7 more persons from the Tablighi Jamaat, who returned from Delhi's Nizamuddin after the lockdown came into force. All are from Navsari.

So far 110 such persons have been quarantined in Gujarat since Friday.

"We have identified and quarantined 7 more persons from the Tablighi Jamaat, who returned from Nizamuddin in Delhi after the nationwide lockdown was imposed. The procedure of medical check-up and quarantine is being carried out right now," said Shivanand Jha, Directorate General of Police (DGP).

"Yesterday we had identified and quarantined 103 persons from the Jamaat. Two of them were found positive and one of them died," said Jha. "The police have lodged four complaints against 10 such Tablighis for violating the lockdown provisions. Two case are in Botad, one is in Bhavnagar and one has been registered in Navsari. We request all such persons to come forward," said Jha.

K'taka BJP MP slams Tablighis for spreading it

IANS ■ BENGALURU

Alarmed over the growing number of Tablighi Jamaat returnees testing COVID-19 positive, Shobha Karandlaje, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Karnataka, on Saturday accused them of spreading coronavirus across the country.

"Several Tablighi Jamaat members who attended a congregation at the Nizamuddin Markhaz in Delhi in March fled to other parts of the country, carrying and spreading coronavirus. Many have tested positive," Karandlaje said at Chikkamagaluru, about 250 km from here.

Of the hundreds of Tablighis who attended the 3-day event on March 13-15, as many as 600, including around 250 from Karnataka, have tested positive and been quarantined.

Terming the Tablighis as "corona jehadis" for staying put at their centre and not reporting to authorities for testing, the BJP lawmaker said one community was not cooperating with the government in fighting the pandemic.

"Some of the community members attacked women health workers in Bengaluru's northern suburb on April 2 when they went to check if

Several Tablighi Jamaat members who attended a congregation at the Nizamuddin Markhaz in Delhi in March fled to other parts of the country, carrying and spreading coronavirus. Many have tested positive," Karandlaje said

Of the hundreds of Tablighis who attended the 3-day event on March 13-15, as many as 600, including around 250 from Karnataka, have tested positive and been quarantined

One of the returnees, however, died early this week at Sira in the Tumakuru district, about 70 km northwest from here

Tablighi returnees had taken the test," she said.

Of the 391 Tablighi returnees, around 200 were tested. 13 of them have tested positive and the remaining 187 negative.

One of the returnees, however, died early this week at Sira in the Tumakuru district, about 70 km northwest from here.

Five members of the community were arrested for allegedly assaulting health workers, under the mistaken identity that they were enumerators for the National Register of Census (NRC).

Tamil Nadu positive cases jumps to 485

State Govt asks to study why Markaz returnees afflicted with this pandemic

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

With the number of patients testing positive for coronavirus reaching 485 by Saturday evening in Tamil Nadu, the State Government has asked the Chennai office of the National Institute of Epidemiology to undertake a study on why the returnees from the congregation at Nizamuddin were afflicted with this pandemic.

This was stated by Beela Rajesh, secretary to the department of health and family welfare while addressing the daily media briefing on Saturday. She said 74 persons tested positive on Saturday alone. "Out of the 485 persons tested positive for coronavirus in the State, 422 are either Nizamuddin returnees or people with whom they had interacted. There are only 63 persons who tested positive for corona virus who do not have anything to do with the religious congregation," said the health secretary.

Despite the sudden spurt in the number of corona positive cases in the State, Tamil Nadu is still in Stage -2 of the disease and the administration has launched all-out containment activities to control and check the situation from vitiating further, she said.

"By Sunday, all medical colleges in the State would have set up the testing facilities which is expected to bring down the time taken for testing the corona virus attack. More than 29 lakh people in the State had been screened since the outbreak of the disease," said Rajesh.

She said the State was on the alert from January 18 onwards and all passengers reaching the airports in Tamil Nadu had been screened and tested. This is one of the reasons for Tamil Nadu effectively controlling the corona virus spread. But the Tablighi Jamaat conference and subsequent developments had

contributed in upsetting our work. Now we are in a State of medical emergency," said Rajesh.

She asked the people not to panic and to observe strictly the social distance rules. "All senior citizens with history of blood pressure and sugar are asked to undergo tests for the same in the changed situation," said the health secretary.

In Chennai, the civic administration along with the department of health officials have identified 'eight hotspot clusters' in the city where multiple corona virus cases have been identified. The civic officials along with police sealed the entry and exit points to all these clusters to prevent the movement of vehicles as well as unauthorised persons.

Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy, who is the overall commander of the fight against the pandemic asked the people to strictly adhere to the social distance and not to come out of the houses unless it is an emergency. "We have given full authority to the police to take legal action against those who wander around the metro," he said in a video message. The Chief Minister also disclosed that cash assistance of ₹1,000 would be provided to each of the rice ration card holders in the State and this amount would be delivered at the doorsteps itself by Government staff so that people need not come out of the houses and stand in queues.

MK Stalin, leader of the Opposition who is also the president of the DMK asked party cadres to stop all political activities and engage themselves in helping the administration to fight the corona virus. Interestingly, Jayanthi Natarajan, former union minister and Congress leader said in a TV programme that she too would cooperate with the Centre and State Government in eradicating coronavirus cases.

In 4 days, 900 people return home after quarantine in J&K

Srinagar: 900 people have been allowed to go home during the last four days after completion of the quarantine period in J&K, officials said here on Saturday.

Another batch of 290 persons who had been placed under quarantine in different hotels of Srinagar city after their arrival from outside, were allowed to go home on Saturday.

These people belong to different places in the Valley and

the authorities provided them transport up to the district headquarters of their places of domicile.

Authorities have thanked these people for the cooperation they extended during the quarantine period.

Those leaving for their homes on Saturday expressed gratitude to the authorities for giving them free lodging, food and other facilities during the period they remained in quarantine, officials added. IANS

Search on for 2,000 contact persons of +ve cases in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

With total number of coronavirus positive cases inching closer to 100 in Jammu & Kashmir, the Government agencies are slogging on ground zero to track down each one of the 2000 contact persons of positive cases. So far over 1000 cases have been tracked down and efforts are on reach out to majority of these cases as they run the risk of spreading the virus in different pockets of J&K.

On Saturday, highest number of seventeen (17) cases tested positive, 14 from Kashmir division and 3 from Jammu division.

According to official sources, 92 cases have so far tested positive in J&K while total number of active cases stood at 86. Four

patients have been discharged from the hospital after they recovered fully and two deaths have been reported from Kashmir division. According to the daily bulletin released by the health department, test reports of 55 patients were still awaited.

According to official sources, around 86 patients with high viral load have been isolated in the different covid hospitals in both Srinagar and Jammu and being taken care of.

Out of 17 fresh cases, three positive cases were reported from Narsoo, in Udhampur district. According to Rohit Kansal, spokesman of Jammu & Kashmir Government, "the reported cases were all contacts of a positive patient from Udhampur with travel history abroad".

Jamaat attendee falls for free, tasty food!

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The season of coronavirus or COVID 19 is not about fear, anxiety and tension alone. The pandemic has a lighter side too. An interaction with Government staff working round-the-clock for corona virus detection and to trace the persons suspected of carrying the virus brought out some interesting facts. It has the potential to send one in splits notwithstanding the tiresome work being put up by the team of officials.

It all began with the Markaz Nizamuddin congregation and in the backdrop of reports that 1500 delegates from Tamil Nadu attended the international conclave held to re-energise the Tablighi Jamaat operations in India.

The Chennai Corporation officials and the Domestic Breeding Checkers zeroed in on a returnee from the Nizamuddin meet and went to examine the per-

son on March 23. He is a resident of Korukkupet, an area dominated by the community to which the man belongs.

The members of his house and some of the neighbours told the officials that the suspect was not there and he has gone to a relation's house outside the city. The officials believed what they told and went back.

But when they were told again by the family members on March 28 and 31 that the man has not returned, the officials smelled a rat and sought the help of local police. The local police in Chennai has their own "intelligence agents" who informed them that the person whom they are looking for was present in his house and was in hiding. The corporation officials with the assistance of in the local police barged into the residence in the wee hours of Friday only to be welcomed by the man they were searching for!

"Though he was reluctant to agree that he was the same person whom we were looking for, the man finally came round and accompanied us to the Stalnely Medical College for tests. He was tested positive and was admitted to the hospital for treatment. He had reservations in getting admitted to the hospital but the menu of the delicacies served free of cost for the patients did him in. Till he is found negative, the man would be provided with Idli, Pongal, chutney and sambar for breakfast, egg biriyani for lunch and dinner, tea/coffee and snacks in the evening," said one of the officials.

Once they admitted the man in the isolation ward, the officials rushed to Korukkupet to quarantine the entire street and are in the process of examining all the people in the neighbourhood. "Though he gave us enough headache, our modus operandi to

make him fall in line and his passion for food made up for all our efforts," said the health official.

City of Chennai and the Old Mahabalipuram Highway (also known as IT highway because of the number of IT majors in this stretch) wore a deserted look on Saturday as vehicles and persons stayed off the roads. Sriperumbudur, the hub of automobile giants and engineering companies resembled a ghost city with no vehicles or persons coming out in the open. Trade bodies said that the industrial hub is losing ₹2,500 crore per day because of the lock down. Liquor is the most sought after commodity in Tamil Nadu as in neighbouring Kerala. The entire liquor stock in Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) retail counters are being shifted to secured marriage halls in the State to save the 'stuff' from the preying eyes of spirit bandits.

Cong slams Kerala Govt for goof-up on Centre's coronavirus guidelines

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

As the total number of persons tested positive for coronavirus crossed the 255 mark in Kerala by Saturday evening, a widely respected Congress leader, PT Thomas, who is also a member of the State's Legislative Assembly, has accused the LDF Government of goofing up the directive issued by the Centre on February 26 to check the spread of the pandemic.

"The Kerala Government's callous attitude towards the guidelines resulted in some of the travelers from Britain, Italy and West Asian countries who reached the Cochin International Airport hoodwinking the health officials and succeeded in coming out of the airport. These passengers were all carriers of Corona virus and many persons who interacted with them ended up as corona patients" Thomas told The Pioneer on Saturday. The law maker said that this happened after the March 16 press briefing by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan who had claimed that Kerala was well fortified against corona virus.

Thomas' statement comes at a time when Kerala has 295 confirmed corona virus cases and 251 were undergoing treatment for the same in various hospitals as on Friday evening. He said the health system in Kerala which was once the envy of other States is in total disarray now because of the callousness of the powers that be (read Pinarayi Vijayan-led CPI(M) Government). "Though I had pointed out that the State flouted the guidelines issued by the Centre on February 26, I was shouted down by the hangers-on around the Chief Minister. They pose as the supporters of the Chief Minister but they are spoiling his name and reputation through their deeds," said Thomas.

The Congress leader pointed out to

Television images of Pinarayi Vijayan being placed along with Chinese President and South Korean Prime Minister with claims that he is the one and only leader from this part of the world who leads the war against Corona effectively.

He also disclosed that there were many instances of violation of the medical protocol issued by the World Health Organization and the Centre. "A public servant in Idukki who tested positive was admitted to hospital. But he was not discharged despite him testing negative for corona virus in two successive tests.

Though the district medical board had agreed to discharge him, authorities in the State capital ordered against it. He was discharged from the hospital only on Friday evening following a public uproar. It is with pain I point out that in Kerala all decisions are being taken by political authorities and not based on guidelines formulated by WHO or the health experts," said Thomas who also sent a letter to the chief minister.

In yet another shocking incident, the Government issued the order to quarantine health department officials who were on duty at Cochin airport during March 19 to 24 only on March 29 and that too after it found that two officials tested positive. "Certain passengers who reached Cochin from abroad were allowed to go scot-free without any tests and this is the main reason for the sudden spurt in the number of corona virus patients in Kerala," said Thomas.

He also said that the local media was working as Public Relations consultants for the chief minister. "There is a limit for sycophancy. But in the case of Vijayan, I do have doubts about the intentions of those who make these social media posts," said Thomas, who himself is a journalist-turned-politician.

Mumbai Port hospital 50-bed arrangement for corona patients

TN RAGHUNATH ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) Hospital has started a new 50 bed arrangement for treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Called the COVID-19 Hospital, the newly started facility has been kept separate from the Non-COVID-19 hospital. "Two separate isolation wards have also been started- one for COVID-19 (suspect) isolation ward with its own ICU and another for COVID-19 (positive) isolation ward with its separate ICU," a news release by a Ministry of Shipping said here on Saturday.

As part of arrangements to deal with COVID-19, screening is done at the new gate and each hospital has its own entrance, its own reception, its own casualty, ICU, wards etc. Also, PPE suits have been made compulsory in COVID-19 hospitals of MbPT and Special SOPs defined for separation of patients.

According to the release, MbPT has also started quarantine wards at three locations namely, Dhanvantari Building in MbPT Hospital, Nadkarni Park Welfare Centre, Wadala, and CMC Building inside Indira Docks for keeping the suspected persons.

MbPT has also tied up with Sailors' Home, Wadi Bunder (500 beds) for use as quarantine facility. "We have also established tie up between Municipal Corporation and a Cruise Vessel having accommodation for 2000 persons on board to serve as floating quarantine facility. Further, vacant flats in the residential quarters in the vicinity of Port Trust Hospital readied for accommodating the isolation cases/staff on emergency duty," the Ministry release said.

Certain steps taken by MbPT to ramp up the fight against COVID-19 include: masks and gloves compulsory even in non COVID-19 hospitals. "All necessary equipment like PPE, Mask, Gloves and Medicines purchased in large quantity. Even seven new ventilators procured. Telemedicine facilities provided for all patients through all hospital departments. Dispensing of medicines to patients through tie up with Wellness Pharmacy outlets spread all over the State," the release added.

4 HM terrorists killed in Kulgam

Jammu: A joint team of security forces on Saturday eliminated four terrorists, belonging to pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen terror outfit, in a clean operation in Kulgam district of Jammu & Kashmir. The group of terrorists were chiefly responsible for targeting civilians in the area, official sources said.

Police spokesman in a statement said, "A Hizbul Mujahideen group of terrorists was killing civilians over the last 12 days. Four such killings were done by them in south Kashmir. Police were able to track them down and an operation was launched this morning by the police, security forces, army in which three of them have been neutralised," a police spokesperson said. The body of the fourth terrorist was recovered by the police while clearing the debris of the house, demolished during the operation.

According to police, the slain terrorists were local residents of the area and three of them have been identified as Aijaz Ahmad Naikoo, Shahid Sadik Malik, Aadil Ahmad Thakor. PNS

Kerala: Now, postman to deliver money on doorstep

Thiruvananthapuram: The Postmaster General has informed the Kerala Government that his department will now take up the task of delivering money to people's homes, provided the bank account is linked to Aadhaar.

This has been welcomed by the Kerala government which has given the green signal for this new operation, which will see fewer people approaching banks or ATMs to withdraw money.

All the people who want to avail of this service will have to inform their local post office about the amount of money which they want to be delivered to their homes.

Once this is done, the post office will entrust the task of delivering the money to the postman who will bring it to their homes, after ensuring the person has the required funds in his bank account and that it is linked to Aadhaar. IANS

State ready to house, feed 5 lakh migrants: Maha CM

TN RAGHUNATH ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said here on Saturday that there was no need for migrant labourers to return to their respective States, as the State Government had arrangements to house and feed 5 lakh migrants in various parts of the State.

Addressing the people across the State through social media, the Chief Minister said: "We have taken responsibility to look after the migrant labourers from other States. We have made free arrangements for their stay, two meals and one breakfast and medicines. Hence, there is no need for migrants to go anywhere." "I am also requesting the

Maharashtrians stranded in any other State to stay put there. If you are in difficulty, please call the Chief Minister's office for assistance," Uddhav said.

The Chief Minister warned that his Government would initiate legal action against the anti-social elements who were trying to drive a wedge in the society taking advantage of the current situation in the state. Uddhav said that in order to prevent crowds, the State Government would not permit celebrations of any festival or any event to be organised by people from any religion or political party and sports organisation.

"We are fighting the pandemic in a united manner and

we will not allow anyone to foil our efforts," he said.

"You have no alternative. Please sit at home and ensure that there are no crowds at public place. There are no better weapons than determination and self-confidence. With these weapons, we will definitely win the war against coronavirus," Uddhav said.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence that the State Government had traced and quarantined nearly 100 per cent of people who had attended Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi's Nizamuddin last month.

"In case someone has not been as yet, the people should themselves come forward and undergo tests and treatment," he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify to the public that vide deed of assignment dated June 27, 2019, Eurocos Cosmetic GmbH of the address Zeppellinallee 47, 60487 Frankfurt am Main, Germany has assigned their entire right, title and interest in India and to the below mentioned trade mark, without goodwill of the business in the goods in respect of which the said trade mark is registered to HUGO BOSS Trade Mark Management GmbH & Co. KG of the address Dieselstrasse 12, D-72555 Metzingen, Germany.

Trade Mark : BOSS AQUA
Application/Registration number : 766732
Application date : 21/08/1997
Registration date : 28/02/2006
Class & Goods : Class 3: toiletries and fragrances, namely eau de toilette, after shave lotion, after shave balm, shower and bath gel, body lotion and personal deodorant included in class 3

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO THE RECORDAL OF ASSIGNMENT, YOU MAY FILE YOUR OBJECTION WITH REGISTRAR OF TRADE MARKS, TRADE MARKS REGISTRY, MUMBAI (mumpr.tmr@nic.in) WITHIN 30 DAYS AND PRIOR TO 5th of APRIL, 2020

Place : New Delhi
 Date : 05.04.2020
Lall & Sethi - Advocates
 D-17, South Extn - II, New Delhi - 110049

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 01 UBL 2020-21 Dt.01.04.2020

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders (IREPS) for the following works:

Sl. Name of Works Approx. Value

1) Hubballi Division: Rs.1,85,73,542/-

Subwork-1-Maintenance and repairs to the Lawn and Garden at Londa-Vasco-da-Gama section (ADEN/Castle Rock jurisdiction) for period of 2 years. Subwork-2-Maintenance and repairs to the Lawn and Garden at Londa-Miraj section (ADEN/Belagavi jurisdiction) for period of 2 years.

2) Hubballi Division: Rs.5,14,71,608.86

1) Londa-Vasco-da-Gama Section: Proposed rebuilding of bridge by insertion of new precast RCC boxes duly inserting it by RH Girder method for Br.No.122 at km 38/200-300 at DSD Yard. 2) Londa-Vasco-da-Gama Section: Proposed rebuilding of bridge by insertion of new precast RCC boxes duly inserting it by RH Girder method for Br.No.188 at km 59/300-400 at KM Yard. 3) Londa-Miraj section: Proposed rebuilding of bridge by insertion of new precast RCC boxes duly inserting it by RH Girder method for Br.No.75 at km 62/5/400-500 between Sambre-Sulebhavi Stations.

3) Hubballi Division: Rs.1,26,73,685/-

Construction of 500KVA compact substation at Vasco-De-Gama Railway Station (Construction of SSE/Power/Vasco-da-Gama office building with sub-station building at Vasco Railway station).

4) Hubballi Division: Rs.59,47,426/-

Subwork-I: Repairs to class Room, Sr.DSC/Hubballi Chamber and Toilet at Sr. DSC/RPF/Office at Hubballi. Subwork-II: Hubballi: Repairs to roof by providing Galvanized sheets in SWRM Union office. Subwork-III: Hubballi : Repairs at Divisional office canteen at Hubballi. Subwork-IV: Hubballi : Repairs of Principle Director Audit Office in OLD GM office at Hubballi.

5) Hubballi Division: Rs.1,35,51,741/-

Hubballi Repairs to flooring, brightening of building and compound wall, aluminum partition, polishing doors and gardening at Rail Southa Hubballi.

6) Hubballi Division: Rs.1,94,99,791/-

Hubballi-Londa section: Provision of RDSO Standard Foot Over Bridge with Ramp at Alanav station Yard (3.0m x 28m).

7) Hubballi Division: Rs.4,66,40,440/-

TRR(S) with Flash Butt Welding of 52kg (90/72 UTS) class-II or class-I Rails/including USFD testing of welded joints conforming to IR manual for Flash Butt Welding using Contractor's self propelled Rails-cum-road Mobile FBW plants in Alanav - Ambewadi section of Hubli Division in the jurisdiction of South Western Railway.

8) Hubballi Division: Rs.2,13,58,999/-

Provision of 400 mtrs. IRS type cover over platform on PF-1 and PF-2/3 of Alanav station.

9) Hubballi Division: Rs.1,36,57,648/-

Development of Garden and plantation of trees (10,500) at Gadag-Alnavar section (ADEN/Central/Hubballi jurisdiction) with maintenance for period of 24 months.

10) Hubballi Division: Rs.1,20,39,169/-

TRR(P) - 4.30Km & TSR(P)-1.00Km between Hosapete-Ballari section and TRR(P)-0.60Km & TSR(P) - 0.30Km between Toranagallu - Ranjapura section on Major bridge approaches.

11) Hubballi Division: Rs.1,47,53,995/-

Assistance for USFD testing on Track as well as assisting transporting of Machinery over the Hubballi Division for a period of 24 months.

12) Hubballi Division: Rs.90,84,402/-

Daily Repairs and Maintenance of rail nager and New Vidhyaranya nager staff colonies at Hubli for a period of 24 months.

Last date for submission of bids: Item No. 1-6 29.04.2020 at 11.00 Hrs. & Item No. 7-12 30.04.2020 at 11.00 Hrs.

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager (Works)

South Western Railway, Hubballi

PUB/03/AAV/PRV/SWR/2020-21

GLOBAL VIRUS DEATH TOLL CROSSES 60,000

AFP ■ PARIS
The coronavirus pandemic has killed over 60,000 people worldwide, nearly three quarters of them in Europe, since it emerged in China in December, according to a tally compiled by AFP at 1330 GMT Saturday from official sources.

A total of 60,457 deaths have been recorded, including 44,132 in Europe, the continent worst hit by the virus. The official tallies probably reflect only a fraction of the actual number of cases.

With 14,681 deaths, Italy is the country with the highest death toll, followed by Spain (11,744), the United States (7,159), France (6,507) and Britain (4,313).

Since COVID-19 first emerged, 1,130,204 cases have been declared officially in the world, with more than half of them in Europe (610,846).

There have been 290,219 in the United States and Canada (7,325 deaths between them) and 115,777 cases in Asia (4,124 deaths).



A woman wearing a face mask to protect against the new coronavirus looks at vegetables at the Tajrish traditional bazaar in northern Tehran, Iran on Saturday AP

New York records 562 deaths in single day

New York: The New York State reported its highest number of 562 COVID-19 deaths in a single day, with a person dying almost every two-and-a-half minutes, as Governor Andrew Cuomo allowed redistribution of ventilators and protective gear to hospitals with greater need.

Coronavirus cases in the state, the epicenter of the pandemic in the US, crossed 100,000 and it recorded the highest increase in the number of deaths from the virus in a single day between April 2 and 3, Cuomo said.

The death toll in the state now stands at 2,935, an increase of 562 deaths in just one day, Cuomo said. "The curve continues to go

up," Cuomo said while addressing reporters on Friday. The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the state now stand at 102,863, nearly half of all COVID-19 infections in the US, where the tally has reached 277,953. New York City alone has 56,289 coronavirus patients.

Cuomo also gave a grim assessment of the rising number of casualties, saying the state witnessed the "highest single increase in the number of deaths since we started."

More than 7,000 people have died in the US, and 1,867 in the New York City alone, according to Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Centre.

"More people in New York died from the virus in the last 24 hours than in the first 27 days of March. The state's death toll has nearly doubled in the last three days," The New York Times said.

The Governor also expressed anger over the short supply of essential medical equipment for healthcare professionals to help them deal with the surge in the cases across the state and the country.

He said personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gowns and face shields are in short supply in New York as they are across the country and there is need for companies to make these materials. **PTI**

5-year-old boy dies of virus in UK, toll reaches 4,313

London: A 5-year-old boy with pre-existing underlying health issues is the UK's youngest COVID-19 victim as the country's death toll in the coronavirus pandemic rose by 708 in 24 hours to hit 4,313 on Saturday.

UK Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove revealed the latest death toll during the daily Downing Street briefing, during which he reiterated the government's plea for the public to continue to strictly observe social distancing over what is set to be a pleasant weekend.

"If we weigh up an hour or two outside and weigh it against the lives of those we love and the lives of those on the NHS (National Health Service) frontline, then it should be clear, I hope to all that we should follow the advice," said Gove.

"The sun might be out, but that doesn't mean you should be out," Stephen Powis, NHS England's National Medical Director said.

A statement from the NHS on the latest deaths in England

said that patients were aged between five years and 104 years old.

The latest figures emerged as police forces across the UK put on extra patrols in parks and outdoor areas, amid fears that large numbers of people will be tempted to go outside and break social distancing rules in the warmer weather.

During the daily briefing, Gove also announced that hundreds of ventilators were being manufactured in the UK every day and more had been sourced from abroad, including Germany and Switzerland and a batch of 300 invasive ventilators from China arrived on Saturday.

"I'd like to thank the Chinese government for their support in securing that capacity," he said. He said a partnership between University College London (UCL) and Mercedes Benz has produced a new "non-invasive" ventilator, which has been clinically approved. The partnership has already produced 250, which will rise to 1,000 a day by next week. **PTI**

B'desh sees highest single-day jump in virus cases, extends shutdown to Apr 11

Dhaka: Bangladesh on Saturday extended the nationwide transport shutdown till April 11 as the country recorded its biggest single-day increase of COVID-19 cases with nine new positive tests, taking the country's total to 70.

The country reported two more deaths from the novel coronavirus, taking the total number of fatalities to eight, according to data released by the health directorate on Saturday.

One of deceased was 90-year-old and the other was 68 and both had histories of heart disease and stroke respectively, Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) Director Meerjady Sabrina Flora told a virtual media briefing here.

The tally of infections increase to 70 after nine more people, including two children aged under 10, tested positive in the last 24 hours. **PTI**

This is the biggest jump in positive tests over a 24-hour period since Bangladesh announced its first cases on March 8. The total number of recovered patients is 30.

The authorities collected 553 samples from across the country in the last 24 hours and tested 434, Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, said in an online briefing. **PTI**

CHINESE EXPLORERS START EVEREST CLIMB AMID VIRUS PANDEMIC: REPORT

Beijing: A group of Chinese mountaineers has begun an expedition on Mount Everest as China limped back to normalcy after the coronavirus outbreak. The site, however, remains closed to foreign climbers.

The highest peak of the world stands on the border of China and Nepal and can be climbed from both sides. China has closed its side to foreign climbers while Nepal has cancelled all expeditions in response to Covid-19. Only Chinese climbers are permitted this

spring season because of the pandemic, operators told the BBC. China has suspended foreign expeditions on the north side of 8,848-meter Mount Everest in Tibet during the spring climbing season of 2020 due to the global spread of the coronavirus. The Tibet Mountaineering Association (TMA) announced during the second week of March that while China has made great progress in containing the coronavirus disease, its rapid global spread still brings uncertainty and danger. **PTI**

95 police officers, 46 medical staff died in fight against virus in China: Media

Beijing: Ninety-five Chinese police officers and 46 medical workers died in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, State-run media reported on Saturday, revealing for the first time the casualties of the frontline officials fighting the battle against the global health crisis.

The revelation of the casualties came as China on Saturday held a national memorial for the martyrs and victims of the coronavirus outbreak. China has reported 81,639

confirmed COVID-19 cases and 3,326 deaths, majority of them from epicentre Hubei province and its capital Wuhan, where the deadly virus originated late last year.

As of Thursday, a total of 60 frontline police officers and 35 auxiliary police officers had sacrificed their lives at the frontline of the battle, official media here quoted the Chinese Ministry of Public Security.

As of March 15, at least 46 medical workers have sacrificed

their lives during the battle by risking infection, over-work or accidents state-run Global Times reported.

Earlier, Chinese officials said over 3,000 medical workers have contracted the virus. China has deployed 42,000 medical workers in Hubei and built 14 makeshift hospitals to accommodate surging cases.

Hubei province has so far reported 67,803 confirmed cases, including 50,008 in Wuhan. **PTI**

Spain shut till April 25 Deaths down for second straight day at 809

Madrid: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced on Saturday the extension of the country's lockdown until April 25 in order to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"The cabinet on Tuesday will again ask for authorisation from parliament to extend for a second time the state of alert until Saturday April 25 at midnight," Sanchez said in a televised speech.

"With the utmost caution, we believe that this is the time that our health system needs to recover," he said. **AFP**

Hospitals, in particular the intensive care units, have been overwhelmed by an influx of coronavirus patients.

The total number of fatalities in the country stands at 11,744, second only to Italy. The number of new Spanish cases also slowed to 7,026, taking the total to 124,736.

A nationwide 15-day state of emergency was first announced on March 14 barring people from leaving home except for essential outings such as buying food or seeking medical care. **AFP**

Madrid: Spain recorded a second successive daily drop in coronavirus-related deaths with 809 fatalities, according to official figures published on Saturday. The number of deaths in Spain peaked on Thursday at 950. The total number of deaths in Spain now stands at 11,744, second only to Italy. The number of new cases in Spain also slowed with 7,026 taking the total to 124,736. **AFP**

Italy's doctors look for help from sleek new robots

Varese (Italy): The shiny new robots gently check the pulses of highly infectious patients on life support in the Italian epicentre of COVID-19.

The doctors and nurses love them because they also help save their own lives.

Italians have seen the world around them turn unrecognisable from the various lockdowns and social distancing measures used to fight the new coronavirus outbreak. **PTI**

But little appears to have changed as they see dozens of doctors and nurses die while trying to save the tens of thousands of patients who have suddenly ended up in hospitals across Italy's pandemic-hit north.

The country's medical association said on Friday that at least 70 medics have died from various causes since Italy recorded the first official COVID-19 death on February 21.

The fear is that an overwhelmingly majority of the 70 would still be alive today had they been better protected against the coronavirus.

This helps explain why the doctors are nurses in a hospital near Italy's mountainous border with Switzerland are laughing behind their face-masks while posing for photos with their new robot friends.

The Varese hospital has received six of the sleek and slightly human looking machines on wheels. **AFP**

Pak lawmaker writes to UN chief to probe if virus man-made and trace its origin

Islamabad: A Pakistani lawmaker has appealed to the United Nations to form a commission to probe if coronavirus is a man-made or a naturally grown virus and also trace its origin, according to a media report.

The motormouth former Pakistani interior minister, Rehman Malik, in a letter to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, suggested that the proposed commission on COVID-19 under the UN Convention on Biological Weapons, 1975 might comprise of virologists, scientists, professors, researchers, analysts and experts in the fields of microbiology and virology, the Dawn News reported.

Making the letter public at

a press conference through a video link, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Senator Malik said the commission should present its report to the UN secretary general in three months, and give recommendations to prevent future breakouts of such viruses, and international standards for coordination in case of a breakout. The COVID-19, which originated in China's Wuhan city, has so far killed 59,456 people worldwide and infected more than 1,122,320 in 190 countries. For the proposed UN commission on COVID-19, Malik has proposed seven 'terms of references' to the UN secretary general. These include accurate identification of the geo-location of the COVID-19's origin, identification of areas with

zero patient, discovery as to why the behaviour, intensity and fertility rate of COVID-19 varies from country to country, investigation whether it is a man-made or naturally-grown virus and examination of the allegations of transportation of the virus from one place to other destinations in the world, as a 'biological warfare tactics'.

He said the deadly coronavirus pandemic had stirred up the worst global crisis since World War II, the daily said. "Many claims, speculations, conspiracy theories and misinformation about the disease have found their way into the international print and electronic media, blurring distinction between real and fake news," he said. **PTI**

Pak records 2,700 virus cases, Punjab crosses 1,000-mark

Islamabad: Pakistan's coronavirus cases rose to 2,708 on Saturday with the number of patients in the Punjab province, which accounts for more than half of the country's total population, crossing the 1,000-mark.

According to the National Health Services, COVID-19 has so far claimed 40 lives, while 130 patients have recovered.

Punjab — the hotspot of the viral infection in Pakistan — reported a total of 1,072 cases, followed by Sindh at 839, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 343, Balochistan 175, Gilgit-Baltistan 193, Islamabad 75 and 11 cases in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The viral infection in the country is rapidly spreading,

despite hectic efforts by the government to curtail it, officials said.

On Friday, the World Bank has approved USD 200 million in aid to Pakistan to help deal with the impact of the novel coronavirus.

According to Radio Pakistan, the project titled "Pandemic Response Effectiveness in Pakistan", will support the government to prepare and respond to the disease and strengthen national systems for public health preparedness.

Asserting that no one was sure how long the COVID-19 pandemic would last, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday announced a massive package to the construction sector to restart economy. **PTI**



People walk along the banks of the river Rhine in Cologne, Germany on Saturday AP

Front-line medical staff deaths grow, highlight virus risks

Rome: Air raid sirens sounded across China and flags flew at half staff in tribute on Saturday to victims of the coronavirus pandemic, including the health care "martyrs" who have died fighting to save others.

With the highest number of infections in Europe and their hospitals overwhelmed, Spain and Italy struggled to protect medical staff on the front lines of the outbreak, while 17 medics in Egypt's main cancer hospital tested positive for the virus.

As the number of infections has grown to more than 1.1 million worldwide, health care systems are straining under the surge of patients and lack of medical equipment like ventilators as well as protective masks and gloves, giving rise to growing concerns about the exposure of hospital personnel. Italy and Spain, with com-



Medical staff in full protective gear work in a hospital setting. AP

25,000 and nearly a quarter-million infections, have reported a high percentage of infections among health care workers.

Carlo Palermo, head of Italy's hospital doctors' union, fought tears as he told reporters in Rome of the physical risks and psychological trauma the outbreak is causing, noting reports that two nurses had committed suicide.

"It's an indescribable condi-

tion of stress. Unbearable," he said. "I can understand those who look death in the eye every day, who are on the front lines, who work with someone who maybe is infected, then a few days later you see him in the ICU or die." U.S. President Donald Trump announced late Friday he would prevent the export of N95 protective masks and surgical gloves to ensure they are available in the U.S. - prompting neighboring

Canada's prime minister to respond that cross-border aid goes well beyond supplies.

"I think of the thousands of nurses who cross the bridge in Windsor to work in the Detroit medical system every day," Justin Trudeau said. "These are things Americans rely on." The number of people infected in the U.S. has now exceeded a quarter-million, with the death toll climbing past 7,000. New York state alone accounts for more than 2,900 dead, an increase of over 560 in just one day. Most of the dead are in New York City, where hospitals are swamped with patients.

World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned African leaders of an "imminent surge" in coronavirus cases on the continent, urging them to open humanitarian corridors to allow the delivery of badly

needed medical supplies.

More than half of Africa's 54 countries have closed air, land and sea borders to prevent the virus' spread but that has delayed aid shipments. Virus cases in Africa are now over 7,700, and the head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has warned some nations will have more than 10,000 cases by the end of April.

In the Philippines, Sen. Richard Gordon, who is also head of the local Red Cross, said lockdown measures have meant millions of poor families are unable to fulfill basic needs.

"A lot of people are hungry. They're asking for milk, they're asking for diapers. They say it's not going fast enough," Gordon said, threatening to have local officials arrested if they steal from government aid for dirt-poor families. **AP**

Anti-parasitic drug kills virus in lab grown cells: Study

Melbourne: Researchers have found that an anti-parasitic drug already available around the world can kill the novel coronavirus grown in cell cultures within 48 hours, an advance that may lead to the development and trial of a new clinical therapy for COVID-19.

According to the study, published in the journal Antiviral Research, the drug, Ivermectin, stopped the virus, SARS-CoV-2, from growing in cell culture within 48 hours.

"We found that even a single dose could essentially remove all viral RNA by 48 hours and that even at 24 hours there was a really significant reduction in it," said study co-author Kylie Wagstaff from Monash University in

Australia.

The scientists said Ivermectin is an approved anti-parasitic drug that has also been shown to be effective in vitro against a broad range of viruses including HIV, Dengue, Influenza and Zika virus.

However, Wagstaff cautioned that the tests conducted in the study were in vitro and that trials needed to be carried out in people.

"Ivermectin is very widely used and seen as a safe drug. We need to figure out now whether the dosage you can use it at in humans will be effective - that's the next step," Wagstaff said.

"In times when we're having a global pandemic and there isn't an approved treatment, if we had a compound

that was already available around the world then that might help people sooner," she said.

Although the mechanism by which Ivermectin works on the virus is not known, the scientists said it is likely, based on its action in other viruses, that it works to stop the virus 'dampening down' the host cells' ability to clear it.

"As the virologist who was part of the team who were first to isolate and share SARS-CoV2 outside of China in January 2020, I am excited about the prospect of Ivermectin being used as a potential drug against COVID-19," said Leon Caly, study co-author from the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Australia. **PTI**

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

7L jobs gone in 14 days, worst yet to come in US

IANS ■ WASHINGTON

The worst stage of coronavirus pandemic became visible in the US when the Donald Trump Government reported that employers cut over 7 lakh jobs in the first two weeks of March — close to the May 2009 financial crisis peak of 8,00,000 job losses.

Most of the job losses were reported from restaurants and bars, followed by retailers. It was the first decline in payrolls since September 2010, CNBC reported. The unemployment rate rose to 4.4 per cent — from 3.5 per cent — the first job decline in a decade, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on Friday.

The Labor report, however, doesn't capture "the nearly 10 million laid-off and furloughed Americans who filed initial jobless claims in the past two weeks as much of the nation's economy was shut down to contain the spread of the virus". According to a USA Today report, that's because Labor's survey was conducted the week ending March 14, before most states ordered residents to stay at home and nonessential businesses — such as restaurants, movie theaters and most stores — to close. It means the job loss num-

Trump recommends Americans wear face masks in public

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

All Americans should cover their faces with scarves or homemade cloth masks when they leave their homes as part of the desperate efforts to curb the massive spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the country, President Donald Trump has suggested.

Citing the latest recommendations from the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Trump, who has decided not to wear a mask, urged people to wear face coverings like scarves or homemade cloth masks, and to keep medical-grade masks available for the health workers who are struggling to contain the growing number of COVID-19 cases.

The guidelines issued by the CDC, the Government's public health advisory agency, came as the US reported more than 1,100 deaths in a single day — the highest total for a 24-hour period anywhere in the world.

Senior officials at the CDC told the White House this week that stronger guidelines were necessary to prevent the virus from spreading between asymptomatic people, US media reported.

The US has so far confirmed 278,458 cases of Covid-19 and more than 7,100 deaths. New York state remains the worst hit area, with nearly 3,000 deaths.

The deadly coronavirus has so far infected over 1,131,000 people and claimed the lives of over 59,800 people across the world, according to latest figures from the Johns Hopkins University.

Until now, health authorities here said that only the sick, or those caring for patients of coronavirus, should wear masks, but newer studies suggest that covering up one's face is important to prevent inadvertent transmission.



the CDC, the Government's public health advisory agency, came as the US reported more than 1,100 deaths in a single day — the highest total for a 24-hour period anywhere in the world.

Gabon bans eating of pangolin and bats amid pandemic

AFP ■ LIBREVILLE

Gabon on Friday banned the sale and eating of bats and pangolins, which are suspected of sparking the novel coronavirus in China where they are highly prized in traditional medicine.

President Ali Bongo Ondimba also announced the government was planning to lock down the capital Libreville and unveiled an emergency package for those hard hit by the pandemic.

The novel coronavirus is believed to have come from bats, but researchers think it might have spread to humans via another mammal.

Pangolins are critically endangered and have long been protected, but they are sold in the markets of the capital Libreville, as are bats, and their meat is popular.

The water and forest ministry said the novel coronavirus was a "combination of two different viruses, one close to bats and the other closer to pangolins", and claimed to be quoting a scientific study published in Nature.

Gabon has declared 21 COVID-19 infections, but none from animals, the ministry said. "A similar decision was taken by the authorities when our country was affected by the Ebola virus — a ban on eating primates," Forestry Minister Lee White said.

The national parks agency ANPN announced in mid-March that tourists would no longer be allowed to interact with great apes to avoid any risk of contamination by the coronavirus.

The pangolin, the world's most heavily trafficked mammal, also called the scaly anteater, is believed to have possibly been a vector in the leap of the novel coronavirus from animal to human at a market in China's Wuhan city last year.



the central African nation is 88 per cent covered in forest and hunting and bush meat have long been a way of life.

OPEC, allies to seek response to coronavirus pandemic

AFP ■ LONDON

OPEC and its allies are due to discuss oil production cuts next week following US President Donald Trump's claim that leading producers Russia and Saudi Arabia will slash output to boost tumbling prices.

The meeting was originally expected to be held via video conference on Monday, but now looks likely to be pushed back to "take place later in the week," said a source close to OPEC, who asked not to be named.

On Thursday, kingpin exporter Saudi Arabia called for an urgent meeting of OPEC and other countries to "stabilise the oil market" following a phone call between Trump and Saudi Crown Prince and de facto leader Mohammed bin Salman.

Oil prices have tumbled since the beginning of the year due the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic — which has weighed heavily on economies and demand — and a price war between OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia and Russia, the key player in OPEC+.

The two countries failed to agree further output cuts at a meeting at the Vienna-based Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) last month, leading Riyadh to open the oil taps to flood the market.

OPEC+ member Azerbaijan's Energy Ministry said in a press release that next week's meeting would aim to discuss the adoption of a "new declaration of cooperation".

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Moscow was prepared to discuss "a reduction in the volume of about 10 million barrels a day, a little less, maybe a little more." "I believe that it is necessary to combine efforts in order to balance the market and reduce production," Putin said.

According to a Russian source cited by the TASS news agency Friday, US officials have been invited to take part in the meeting. Trump surprised investors on Thursday by tweeting: "I expect & hope" Riyadh and Moscow will be cutting back "approximately 10 Million Barrels, and maybe substantially more".

"Could be as high as 15 Million Barrels," he added in a subsequent post. Oil prices — which hit 18-year lows earlier this week — rallied sharply following Trump's statements, marking a record rise in a day's trading on Thursday.

On Friday, Brent stood at \$34.11, up 14 percent, and WTI at \$28.34, up 12 percent.

However, a deal "at this stage seems more like speculation than something likely to happen quickly," warned Carlo Alberto De Casa of ActivTrades.

'Economic recovery to be smoother, faster in India'

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

UNCTAD in its latest report on Covid-19 impact on developing countries has predicted that the major economies to be least exposed to recession would be India and China.

Once the Covid-19 pandemic ebbs, the course of economic recovery in India will be smoother and faster than that of many advanced countries, according to KPMG.

UNCTAD in its latest report on Covid-19 impact on developing countries has predicted that the major economies to be least exposed to recession would be China and India.

KPMG has said that steps taken to prevent the spread of the virus, such as the lockdown, have brought the economic activity to a standstill and could impact both consumption and investment.

The abrupt halt in urban activity could lead to a steep fall in consumption of non-essential goods. In this scenario, India's growth will fall to 4-4.5 per cent.

In the third scenario, if there is proliferation within India and lockdowns get extended coupled with a global recession, it will be a double whammy for the Indian economy. India's growth will fall under 3 per cent in this scenario as a prolonged slowdown would exacerbate economic troubles.

However, experts also pointed out that to show higher GDP growth in revised numbers recently, the government has reduced the base in the previous year.

In that case, the government should have revised and lowered GDP growth for previous year. So, projections are taking place as per official numbers. It is now not the question whether government numbers are right. The historical government numbers are incorrect now, experts said.

I-T dept allows more time to individuals to file TDS exemption forms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department has allowed individuals to submit Form 15G and 15H for the current fiscal after June 30 for claiming exemption from TDS on interest income to mitigate the hardship of people amid the Covid-19 crisis.

Forms 15G and 15H are filed by persons whose incomes are below the taxable threshold, to seek exemption from TDS on interest income.

These forms are usually submitted by taxpayers to banks and financial institutions in April. In an order, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said the 15G and 15H forms submitted last fiscal will remain valid till June 30, 2020, since the Covid-19 pandemic has caused severe disruption in the normal working of almost all sectors of the economy, including banks and other institutions.

Explained: Here's how power system will be managed during lights-out today

New Delhi: A 9-minute lights-out by most of households on Sunday evening can potentially collapse the grid due to sudden drop and then a quick surge after the event. But to manage the dramatic changes in electricity and its impact on the grid, the government has drawn an elaborate plan to manage it. Following are the broad plan of action.

Electrical appliances such as AC, fans, TVs, refrigerators are not supposed to be switched off and only household lights are to be switched off from 9 pm to 9.09 pm on Sunday.

Also, lights in all essential services, including hospitals, police stations and manufacturing facilities as well as street lights are not to be switched off.

These two steps will ensure sizeable household demand continues irrespective of lights-out. Power System Operation Corp Ltd — the agency responsible for managing the grid — has mapped all India lighting load and estimated such demand at 12-13 gigawatts (out of a total consumption of 125-126 GW).

Unlike normal operation, this reduction in load of 12-13 GW would happen in 2-4 minutes and recover nine minutes later — within 2-4 minutes. This sharp reduction in load and recovery, which is unprecedented, will need to be handled through hydro and gas resources. The drop in load and subsequent rise will be managed by using hydro and gas generators that require the least amount of time for ramp up.

All regional entities have been advised to maintain their interchange with the grid as per schedule. Distribution companies have been advised to avoid any feeder switching operation from 20:00 to 22:00 hrs.

Also, control room staff at national and all regional/state load centres will be strengthened and grids will be closely monitored to tackle any contingency. State load distribution centres have asked distribution companies to ensure that substations and housing society/residential apartments' main supply is not switched off at feeder / mains level.

During the evening peak hours — 18:10 to 20:00 hrs — hydro generation will be reduced and conserved for providing flexibility during 21:00 hrs event. During this time, thermal and gas generation will be scheduled in a manner so as to manage the peak.

Cyber security agency cautions against fake PM-CARES UPI IDs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The national cyber security agency has alerted donors against fake 'UPI IDs' for a special fund launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. In an advisory issued on Saturday, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) said it has "tracked several fake UPI IDs which are similar to the UPI ID used by the 'Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM-CARES) Fund'".

CERT-In is the country's nodal agency to guard cyber space. The advisory identified some of the fake UPI IDs in circulation such as pmcares@pnb, pmcares@yesbank, pmcares@ybl, pmcares@upi, pmcares@sbi and pmcares@icici.

Metro Railway provides food, basic facilities to workers

Kolkata: Metro Railway Authorities have taken several initiatives to provide different basic facilities to workers including contract labourers staying at work site of Noapara-Barasat via Biman Bandar Metro Extension Project. Arrangements have been made to provide meals to these workers regularly.

Groceries, food items and LPG cylinders in adequate amount have been provided at the site for that.

Masks, alcohol based sanitizers and soaps have also been provided to the workers and they have been encouraged to wash their hands frequently in order to stop the spread of COVID-19. They have also been encouraged to follow the government's guidelines to stop spread of this deadly virus.

Social distancing and cleanliness are being maintained at this site camp very strictly. Water tank and RO based water plants have been installed for maintaining personal hygiene at this site camp. Separate room has also been identified as Isolation Room for anyone found with symptoms of cold, cough and fever.



spread of this deadly virus. Social distancing and cleanliness are being maintained at this site camp very strictly. Water tank and RO based water plants have been installed for maintaining personal hygiene at this site camp.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified deadbody of male **Age : Approx. 70 years, Height : 5'5", Complexion : Wheatish, Build : Thin, Face : Long, wearing blue colour shirt and grey colour pant, was found dead on 22.03.2020 at Hanuman Mandir, Yamuna Bazar, Kashmere Gate, Delhi.** In this regard a DD No. 10-A dated 22.03.2020 u/s 174 Cr.P.C. has been lodged at P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this found person may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO : P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi
Tel. No. 011-23968730

UJVN Limited
H.O.: 'UJJWAL', Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehrabad-248006
Telephone: 0135-2763808; Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SG025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

e-Tender Notice

Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil), MB-1, Maneri (Uttarkashi) invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender are given below:

Tender No	02/EE(Civil)/MB-1/Maneri/2020-21
Name of work	Painting work of Tilioti Power House at Uttarkashi.
Estimated Cost	Rs. 27,07,731.45 (Excluding GST)
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 67,700.00
Tender Fee	Rs. 2360.00 (Including GST)
Date & time of availability of bid document on website	04-04-2020 from 17:00 Hrs
Last date & time of submission of bids on website	25-04-2020 upto 17:00 Hrs
Last date & time of submission of hard copies of bids	27-04-2020 upto 15:00 Hrs
Date & time of opening of bids on website (Part-I)	28-04-2020 at 11:00 Hrs

For fuller & further detail, kindly visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"

पत्रांक: 196 दिनांक: 03.04.2020 **E.E (Civil), MB-1, Maneri**

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

(See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Karan S/o Shukhdev Mehato R/o 379, Aadarsh Nagar, Sabzi Mandi Azadpur, Delhi** have committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in a **FIR No. 297/18, u/s 356/379 /511 IPC, PS Kotwali, Delhi** and it have been returned to a warrants of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Karan** could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Karan** have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused persons **Karan of FIR No. 297/18, u/s 356/379 /511 IPC, PS Kotwali, Delhi** is required to appear in the court to answer the said complaint on or before **21.05.2020**.

By order
Ms. Prigya Gupta
Ld. Metropolitan Magistrate,
Central, Room No. 21,
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

SHO
P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi
Ph. No. 011-23968641
Fax : 011-24368639

DP/140/N/2020

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person about 35 years of age whose name, residence and family is unknown had been found dead at pusta under Metro Line Yamuna Khadar, Kashmere Gate, Delhi. In this regard a vide has been registered with **DD No: 14-A u/s 174 Cr.PC dated 23.03.2020 at P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:
Sex: Male, **Age:** about 35 years, **Height:** 5'7", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin **Wearing:** Red colour shirt and grey colour pant.

If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/Kashmere Gate, Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639

SHO
P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi
Ph. No. 011-23968730

DP/163/N/2020



PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SECTION 82 Cr.Pc.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused person **Shahjad, S/o Hasibul Rahman R/o Village Azad Nagar, P.S. Arariya Kot, Dist. Arariya, Bihar** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 71/17 u/s 27/61/85 NDPS Act, P.S. Kotwali, New Delhi** it has been returned to warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused person **Shahjad**, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Shahjad**, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Shahjad**, **FIR No. 71/17 u/s 27/61/85 NDPS Act, P.S. Kotwali, New Delhi** is required to appear before the court on or before **27.05.2020**.

By order
Ms. Prigya Gupta
MM-08, Room No. 272
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/134/N/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING FEMALE

General public is hereby informed that this female namely **Priyanka D/o Mehinder Pal R/o O-188 Sector-01, DSIIDC, Bawana, Delhi** **Age : 24 years, Height : 5'4", Face : Round, Complexion : Fair, Build : Strong, wearing grey colour suit and chappal in feet, has been missing since 05.03.2020 at about 01:00 P.M. from the area of P.S. Bawana, Delhi.** In this regard DD No. 27-A dated 06.03.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Bawana, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing female may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Fax: 24368639,
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

SHO : P.S. Bawana, Delhi
Ph. : 011-27752534,
27751949

DP/129/N/2020



Breathe@47

Amid the COVID-19 lockdown, rising cases and deaths, one thing that the citizens can take heart is the improved air quality index which is down to less than 50 in many parts of the country, a number that had stood at 222 a couple of months back in Delhi-NCR. SHALINI SAKSENA speaks with experts to tell you more



Azure sky as seen from Connaught Place during the ongoing lockdown in New Delhi

Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

Back in the 70s, 80s and even 90s, there was a time when azure sky was a norm. Then everything changed. Globalisation opened doors and the almost empty roads and no traffic snarls soon became a thing of the past. Soon the air quality index was touching 1,000 and beyond and many people ended up with several breathing problems.

Cut to March 25, 2020. Clear blue skies, a smattering of stars in the night sky and a clear view of the Capital for miles on end from the roof top without the usual haze is what Delhiites are waking up to since the lockdown. While the circumstances that have led to the present situation is extremely unfortunate given that the number of COVID-19 cases as of April 4, 2020 stands at 3,474 and deaths at 91, there are a few numbers that are falling and people can take heart from it and breathe easy due to improved air quality.

According to a data by SAFAR (March 30, 2020), the Capital has seen a reduction of 63 per cent in NOx and 49 per cent fall in PM2.5. Mumbai too witnessed a decrease in numbers — NOx 57 per cent down and PM2.5 down by 53 per cent. Pune: NOx stands at reduced percentage of 55 and PM2.5 at 38 per cent.

According to Anumita Roychoudhary, associate director general at the Centre for Science and Environment, the overall air pollution levels have dropped sharply after the lockdown because vehicles, factories, construction has stopped. “We don’t want to depend on this kind of emergency to bring this change. But this crisis has proved that if health risk perception can provoke emergency response it can galvanise far reaching changes. Collective community action during this pandemic has forced us to reinvent solutions to reduce our vulnerability to toxic risk. We have made massive lifestyle adjustments to practice social distancing,” Roychoudhary says.

She tells you that whether this crisis induced change can throw up long-term solutions to air pollution is a question that we need to address. This means that we have to make systemic changes to institutionalise some of the emergency responses in terms of maximising potential of digital world to alter the concept of workplace, scale up public transport options to reduce vehicle miles travelled and personal vehicle numbers, roll out electric mobility to move towards zero emissions, ensure zero tolerance for non-compliance with emissions control regulations and standards, among others, only then post pandemic period can gain from this short term breather from emergency action.

“Health risk associated with the ongoing

air pollution problem also needs emergency response. There are concerns that during post pandemic period, it will be business as usual and pollution will go out of control once again. But people need to understand that air pollution kills 1.2 million people and makes many more ill annually. This requires similar emergency response and public support for strong action. This pandemic has also brought to light the evidence that air pollution increases vulnerability to pandemic because poor air pollution has already compromised lungs and overall health of people. It is important to deepen awareness and public understanding of this connection and overall health risk associated with air pollution to build the momentum for hard action. We need strong and sustained action across regions and give our national clean air programme effective teeth,” Roychoudhary says.

Environmentalist BS Vohra tells you that the reduced AQI levels has one message to give. “It was all manmade. It was our fault that we allowed polluted industries to function and we allowed vehicular pollution to reach levels that people in Delhi were choked. Nature has given us a strong message — when we try and correct the wrong — when we stop things that create pollution — things change for the better,” Vohra says.

Also, there is now no scope of ambiguity. “Today, we know the exact reason for the high AQI levels. Earlier, there were many studies that threw up different readings on what was contributing to the air pollution. Now, we know the real reason. We are being told that the mistake was ours and we need to take corrective action,” Vohra tells you.

He paints a dismal picture if we don’t learn the lesson this lockdown has taught us. “First, the lockdown was not something that human did to combat air pollution. It was forced due to COVID-19. The improved AQI doesn’t mean man has done something. If the virus has not been there, things would be as it was before. There would have been no improvement in AQI levels. Second, there is going to be no long-term impact. If today, the lockdown is opened, it would not take more than a fortnight for things to be back to what they were. The AQI is going to shoot up once again if we allow the industries to work at the same pace and just as many vehicles to ply on the roads,” Vohra says.

Dr Gufran Beig, chief project scientist, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology tells you that they have put up data of the last two years to compare the NOx levels and PM 2.5 in the four SAFAR cities —

PEOPLE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT AIR POLLUTION KILLS 1.2 MILLION PEOPLE AND MAKES MANY MORE ILL ANNUALLY. THIS REQUIRES SIMILAR EMERGENCY RESPONSE. THIS PANDEMIC HAS ALSO BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE EVIDENCE THAT AIR POLLUTION INCREASES VULNERABILITY TO PANDEMIC BECAUSE POOR AIR HAS ALREADY COMPROMISED LUNGS AND OVERALL HEALTH OF PEOPLE — ANUMITA ROYCHOUDHARY

Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad. “This lockdown has given us chance to validate inventory emission levels. Once we are back to normal, we will be in a position to combat pollution levels. It is unfortunate that COVID-19 has forced this situation on us but it has made it possible for us to correct the earlier findings and provided us an opportunity to set our priorities right for the future,” Beig explains.

Besides the AQI, another pressing question staring at us is whether this will have an impact on the climate. Beig tells you that when one studies climate, one looks at a long-term impact. He tells you that it is early days but some ongoing international studies suggest that there may be changes. “Some changes are taking place in the air circulation leading to faster recovery of the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere. But these are early days to reach any concrete conclusions for now,” Beig says.

Prarthana Borah, India director, Clean Air Asia, that propagates reduced economic activity as a strategy for reduced air pollution, tells you that what is encouraging is that sectors will now think of reorganising activities to benefit air quality and use new technology like virtual platforms to replace existing ways of work, travel and conducting business which may lead to a positive impact on air quality.

“We don’t need something as drastic as the fear of death from a pandemic caused by a virus as a solution to air pollution. We must try to understand that while air quality has improved it has improved due to the complete absence of economic activity be it traffic — road, rail, air, stopping of construction and industry and any other polluting activity. This can never have a long-term impact as we can’t envisage a world of no economic activity. In the last week, PM2.5 was as low as 35 and PM 10 between 55 and 70. This means while it is not as good as the WHO standards, we are capable of having a baseline that meets the national ambient AQ standards. This will guide the process of targets we need to set for ourselves with increased economic activity and how much of this increase matches with achieving the 20-30 per cent decrease in air pollution levels we want to achieve,” Borah opines.

She tells you that it is easy to maintain the present AQI levels once things are back to normal. “What we need is to figure out the right way to reduce our negative impact on the environment. For this we need regulations that limit our activities. We need to set targets and then work on restricting or improving economic activity by introducing the right technologies that will continue to restrict air pollution. Once

these quantitative figures are in place it will be easier to work on developmental work that prioritise clean air targets. However, there is also a danger that priorities post COVID-19 will be different and many other pressing issues like air pollution and climate change may take a back seat. We can already see this in the postponement of the 2020 COP Climate talks. The same may be with air as cities will be battling with COVID-19 recovery and it may take some time for them to start talking about air,” Borah says.

The lockdown has left its mark on wildlife as well. There are several videos on social media doing the rounds where people have filmed a civet in Kerala, deer in Haridwar, Nilgai roaming the deserted streets of Noida, leopard spotted in Chandigarh and a pod of dolphins spotted along the seashores of Mumbai. There are many who believe that since humans are now confined to their homes, this is Nature’s way of claiming what was its territory.

According to Dr Ravi Chellam, CEO, Metastrang Foundation & director of Mission Secretariat, National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-being, this is one of way of viewing it.

“It does tell us about the remarkable resilience of Nature to come back if we give it the slimmest of opportunity. It is time that we humans recognise, accept and work with the fact that we are part of Nature and it is the foundation for our existence and development. There is a price to pay for destroying Nature and the cost will always be higher than any projected economic benefit. Even places like Chernobyl which was abandoned after the nuclear disaster became a thriving wildlife habitat. Nature is very resilient and when given an opportunity it would try to re-colonise and make a comeback,” Chellam says.

Pawan Sharma, founder of Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare, based out of Mumbai agrees with Chellam and tells you that one can say that is partially true that Nature’s way to take back what was rightly its.

“There is need to co-exist with the animals. Till now they co-existed with us, now it is our turn to give back. What we are witnessing that had led to the lockdown is the damage human intervention can do. Nature has its way to balance itself out. We had only read it in books but today we are living it. It is time to slow down. In our quest to develop we are destroying Nature but development and conservation needs to go hand-in-hand. Animals don’t understand manmade boundaries. Man has encroached on their habitat and damaged it. Since there is no disturbance now, animals are curious and are out exploring,”

Sharma says.

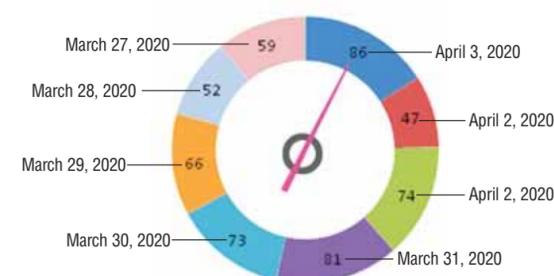
Chellam is quick to point out that reports of wild animals roaming the streets need to be viewed in the right perspective. “Even before the lockdown it was not unusual to see lions, leopards, elephants, gaur, rhino, many species of deer and antelopes including nilgai and black-buck, many other smaller mammals like jackals, mongoose, many reptile species including monitor lizards, different species of snakes, many species of birds including large ones like Sarus cranes, either on or by Indian roads. These sightings were when things were normal. With the lockdown, human presence and disturbance has gone down drastically and hence we are getting to see these animals much more frequently and also more often during day time,” Chellam explains. There are several reasons why these animals are in the cities to begin with.

First, many of these animals live around cities and their habitat may be fragmented by the city and hence they would be using the city for passage from one part of their habitat to another which would have been difficult when there was traffic and human presence. It should not be forgotten that it is we humans who have settled in wildlife habitats and in some sense, we are the intruders and not the animals. Second, could be that the city offers resources, primarily food (mostly in the form of garbage and food plants in our gardens and parks), domestic animals including dogs and pigs and water. It is also important to understand that these animals haven’t settled in the urban areas. They are only using it for some time.

Chellam sees a way forward. “It is absolutely crucial that humanity learns the right collective lessons from this pandemic. It would be a huge mistake to revert to business as usual once the worst of the pandemic is over or a vaccine is developed. If we continue to develop in ways that destroy Nature and pollute the environment and without compassion for all fellow human beings, such tragedies are only bound to be repeated. We have to recognise that we live in an inter-connected world not just with citizens of other countries but equally if not more importantly with Nature and all species that occur in the wild. We need to completely re-prioritise and invest more in restoration of Nature and functional ecosystems, basic but very essential needs of all people like health, sanitation, adequate nutrition, safe housing and education instead of grandiose infrastructure projects and the military. The re-prioritised development model will enable much greater levels of equity, much more sustainable development and build resilience,” he tells you.

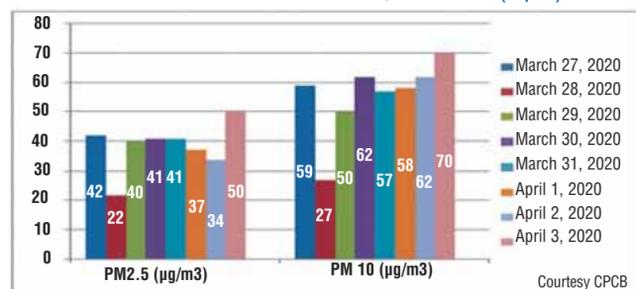
FACTFILE

AQI levels At RK Puram, New Delhi (4 pm)



Courtesy CPCB

Particulate matter At RK Puram, New Delhi (4 pm)

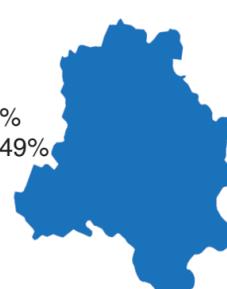


Courtesy CPCB

Graphics: Satish C Jakkhmoia

Delhi Reduction

Nox = 60%
PM2.5 = 49%



Mumbai Reduction

Nox = 57%
PM2.5 = 53%



FIFA postpone U-17 Women's WC in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup to be held in India in November was on Saturday postponed by football's governing body due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic across the globe.

The women's age group showpiece was to be held at five venues in the country — Kolkata, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Ahmedabad and Navi Mumbai — from November 2-21.

The tournament was to be competed among 16 teams, with hosts India being automatic qualifiers. It was to be India's maiden appearance in the U-17 Women's World Cup.

The decision was taken by the FIFA-Confederations working group which was recently established by the Bureau of the FIFA Council to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The working group recommended the Bureau of FIFA Council to "postpone the FIFA Under-20 Women's World Cup Panama/Costa Rica 2020 — originally scheduled for August/September 2020 — and the FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 — originally scheduled for November 2020."

"New dates will be identified," FIFA said in a statement.

It was also decided "to create a sub-working group on the women's international match calendar to consider potential changes to the calendar and dates of postponed FIFA final tournaments".

The All India Football Federation said the postponement was on expected lines.

"Just like other sports events which were postponed due to this dreaded disease, it (postponement of U-17 World Cup) was to happen. We have to accept the decision," AIFC General Secretary Kushal Das said. "The qualifying events in Europe



Precious Uzoaru Dede instructs Indian goalkeeper during team's practice session



IFT/Twitter

and Africa and other confederations are yet to be held and so the decision was on expected lines."

He said the tournament will most likely be held next year.

The working group of the world body which took the decision includes the FIFA administration and Secretary Generals and top executives from all confederations.

It unanimously approved a series of recommendations following its first meeting, which was organised

via conference late on Friday.

While the tournament itself is five months away but only the qualifying event for Asia has been held so far from which from which Japan and North Korea have made the cut.

Five remaining qualifying events — that of Africa, Europe, Oceania, South America, and Central, North America and Caribbean — have not been held due to the global health crisis which has affected more than a million people.

The official schedule of the tournament was announced in February and Navi Mumbai was to host the final.

The Local Organising Committee (LOC) said it supported the decision though it was looking forward to host the tournament in November as scheduled.

"We agree that this has been made with the highest regard for public health, and the participating teams, host cities, staff and visiting

'Tough decision to shelve, but in best interest'

KOLKATA: The postponement of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup will not derail preparations for the tournament as the country is still committed to "delivering a memorable" meet whenever it is possible, Roma Khanna, the tournament director of Local Organising Committee, said. "We were, of course, looking forward to the tournament but everyone understands the current situation and has been supportive," Roma said.

"The fact that three of the venues (Kolkata, Navi Mumbai, Guwahati) have already hosted a FIFA tournament in the past helps and the other venues seem on track. Everyone is committed to ensuring that this does not impact us much and we move ahead with our planning and deliver a memorable U-17 Women's World Cup in India," she said.

She added that the LOC will work with FIFA to chalk out alternate dates best suited to host the tournament in India which has previously hosted the U-17 Men's World Cup which was won by England.

fans, and keeps the best interests of everyone in mind," the LOC said in a statement.

"For us at the moment, the primary concern is the health and well being of every stakeholder involved in the tournament. We don't want to take any risk that is detrimental to our community before it is clear



"We shall work with FIFA to look at alternate dates best suited to host the tournament in India. At present, in collaboration with FIFA, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Hosting States, national and international health authorities, we are constantly monitoring the situation regarding COVID-19 in India."

"We are in regular touch with FIFA and all the other concerned stakeholders. Three of the venues (Guwahati, Kolkata and Navi Mumbai) hosted the FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2017 and already meet

the majority of FIFA requirements. The two new venues, Ahmedabad and Bhubaneswar, also have the basic infrastructure ready. We also already had one round of FIFA inspections in November at all five of these venues, which went really well.

"It is a tough decision but it is in the best interest of everyone especially the players. As I have said before, the safety of the players, fans and all the other stakeholders is of utmost importance to us. We look forward to hosting a spectacular FIFA U-17 Women's WC in the near future," she concluded. **IANS**



Cummins glad being vice-captain under Paine

MELBOURNE: Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins feels nice about skipper Tim Paine rating him as one of the contenders for future Test captaincy but says the topic is just a moot point as the wicket-keeper is still playing.

Discussions about who should lead Australia whenever the 35-year-old Paine retires are ongoing. Former captain Steve Smith's leadership ban has also expired.

Earlier this week, Paine named Smith, Cummins, Travis Head, Alex Carey and Marnus Labuschagne among those who could take up the captaincy.

Former skipper Michael Clarke has long been pushing for Cummins — the current vice-captain — to lead the national side.

"It's nice to hear, (I) don't think it makes me want it more or less. I'm glad being a vice-captain underneath him that I get that nod. He's brilliant," Cummins was quoted as saying by *cricket.Com.Au*.

"Like I've said a hundred times before, I kind of feel it's not quite right talking about captaincy now when we've got someone like Paine and Finch (limited-overs captain Aaron Finch) doing great jobs. We'll see down the track, but at the moment it's bit of a moot point."

The 26-year-old Cummins, who has taken 143 wickets from 30 Tests since making his debut in 2011, is expected to top Cricket Australia's contract list for 2020-21 whenever it is announced, underlining his importance in Justin Langer's team.

The 26-year-old has become the most resilient member of the attack after an injury-plagued start to his career. He was appointed one of Paine's deputies last year, but currently has no captaincy experience at the domestic level. "In the perfect world, your first experience of being captain — say Australian captain, you've (already) had quite a bit of experience leading and you know exactly what it entails," he said.

"But things don't always work out as exactly as you planned." **PTI**

KP proposes condensed IPL without fans

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The COVID-19 pandemic may have indefinitely stalled all sporting activities but former England captain Kevin Pietersen still "truly believes" the 13th edition of IPL should happen the moment there is a window of opportunity.

He proposed a "condensed" league behind closed doors for one of cricket's biggest money-spinners, adding the fans shouldn't be risked.

"Let's say July/August is the earliest, I do truly believe the IPL should happen. I do believe it is the kick-start to the cricket season. I think every single player around the world is desperate to play the IPL," Pietersen said.

The former star batsman expressed his thoughts on *Star Sports* show *Cricket Connected*.

The IPL is important not just for players and franchises, but also for the people working behind the scenes, and this was not lost on Pietersen.

"There could be a way in



Kevin Pietersen in conversation with Sanjay Manjrekar and Scott Styris during Star Sports Cricket Connected show on Saturday

which to get some money into the franchise, into the economy by having a situation where you use maybe three venues which are completely closed to fans and the players can still go out and play the tournament in three weeks or in four weeks.

"So, it's a more condensed tournament in three venues which we know are safe, which we know are secure," he said.

Agreeing with Pietersen, former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar spoke on the impor-

tance of organising the IPL.

"The moment we get clearances from all the authorities that matter, the IPL should happen, only because it will kick start the economy because when you talk about the IPL it's not just about the Mumbai Indians, or a Dhoni or a Virat Kohli, there are a lot of people who are making their livelihood through the IPL," he said.

Recently, Rajasthan Royals' executive chairman Manoj Badale had said that a "short-

BCCI in constant touch with foreign Boards

NEW DELHI: Even as the fate of the 13th edition of the IPL hangs in balance, both BCCI as well as the IPL franchises are keeping fingers crossed in order to have a full season of the cash-rich league. And a major player in this scenario is the foreign boards as an IPL without the foreign players wouldn't be the carnival it is. So, even as the country fights the pandemic, BCCI has been keeping foreign boards in the loop with regards to developments.

Speaking about it, a BCCI official said that the foreign boards like Cricket Australia and the ECB and Cricket South Africa among others have all been constantly updated on the scenario and the directives of the government with regards to fighting COVID-19.

"While various options have been discussed like a closed-door tournament, or a curtailed one, it is almost clear that everyone wants foreign players to be a part of the IPL and that is one of the major highlights of the tournament. So, we have been constantly updating the boards of the situation here and the directives that are being issued by the health department as well as the government in the fight against coronavirus."

"In fact, it is a two-way process as international border lockdown is also an aspect that needs to be kept in mind because at the end of the day whenever the IPL does happen, the foreign players need to fly in," the official pointed. **IANS**

England cricketers volunteer salary reduction

LONDON (AFP): England cricketers, both men and women, have volunteered pay cuts and donated 500,000 pounds as contribution towards the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The cricketers' gesture comes after the England and Wales Cricket Board had proposed a 20 percent cut in the players' salaries. The ECB was waiting for a response from the representatives at the Professional Cricketers' Association.

The donation of 500,000 pounds is equivalent to a 20 percent reduction in the salaries of men's cricketers while the women volunteered for a pay cut in their April, May and June salaries.

"Following a meeting of all of the England men's centrally contracted cricketers, the players have agreed to make an initial donation of £0.5m to the ECB and to selected good causes," read a statement from the players.

"The precise details of the charitable donation will be decided over the next week by the players. This contribution is the equivalent of all of the England centrally contracted players taking a 20% reduction in their monthly retainers for the next three months."



Rohit, Warner world's best T20 openers: Moody



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former all-rounder Tom Moody on Saturday picked India's Rohit Sharma and fellow Australian David Warner as best opening batsmen in T20 cricket.

Moody is also a well-known coach and commentator.

In a question and answer session, the 54-year-old also picked Chennai Super Kings as his favourite IPL team and M S

Dhoni favourite captain.

"Tough call, but I would be more than happy with @davidwarner31 And @ImRo45 (Rohit)," Moody wrote on his *Twitter* page when asked about the best opening batsmen in T20s.

There is abundance of cricketers in India but amongst the emerging ones, Moody feels Shubman Gill "stands out". Gill has played two ODIs for India and has also made the Test team but is yet to get a game.

Moody, who has coached multiple IPL teams, believes New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson is blessed with the best cricketing brain and Ravindra Jadeja is his favourite Indian fielder.

Asked about his favourite Indian cricketer, Moody picked skipper Virat Kohli.

Stay indoors and fight battle for your country: Pujara

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Batting long comes naturally to Cheteshwar Pujara and now he wants his fellow Indians to do the same by staying at home as "the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic can only be won by being indoors".

Pujara was one of the elite Indian sportspersons who attended the video call held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday to discuss ways to fight the coronavirus.

"The Prime Minister wanted us to pass on the fighting spirit of a sportsperson to the general public. Sportspersons do inspire to fight," Pujara said.

"Every single person is a soldier at the moment. If you stay indoors, you are fighting the battle for your own country. There



has to be a collective effort else we can't win this," said India's Test batting mainstay.

After helping Saurashtra win their maiden Ranji Trophy title last month, little did he know that he would be spending all his time at home. Pujara is enjoying the "forced" break and most of his time goes into entertaining his two-year-old daughter.

The closest he has got to a "hit in the nets" is by playing with a plastic bat.

But a gym at home means he is not compromising on his fitness.

"I usually take everything in a positive way. Sometimes you need to take a break as a sportsperson and there can't be a better time. We just won the Ranji and it is the right time to take three to four weeks off."

"Luckily I have a gym at home. With gym, I can still do my strength sessions, cycling and

running. I also do yoga which helps a lot," said Pujara.

He was supposed to play county cricket in the UK but that too has been postponed at least till May 28 and faces a cancellation.

Considering the current circumstances, Pujara might have to wait till the Australia tour starting November to play his first competitive game since the Ranji Trophy final. But he is prepared for any eventuality.

"I would still have some first-class games before the Australia tour. I am prepared for anything. This is the time when we can't just be thinking about sporting events. First, we have to win this battle against coronavirus," he said.

"We just need to make sure the virus is contained and things get back to normal. After that we can talk about the game."

PCB want to host ICC event to cover losses



PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) want the International Cricket Council (ICC) to award them the hosting rights of a major event in lieu of the financial losses suffered due to India's refusal to play a bilateral series against them.

PCB Chief Executive Wasim Khan asserted that Pakistan is prepared to host a major ICC event sometime in 2023.

"I don't think hosting international cricket is now such a big issue for Pakistan as the security situation has improved now," Khan said.

"The fact that we have logistically hosted the entire Pakistan Super League in Pakistan and also teams like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh for Test matches besides other smaller events and series shows we are capable of hosting a big ICC event."

Khan said that if Pakistan gets

a major ICC event it would make sense as it has suffered lot of financial losses due to India's refusal to play matches in India or Pakistan for some years now and also because there appears to be no chance of any Indo-Pakistan series taking place in the near future.

"There appears to be little chance of India and Pakistan playing and we have already suffered losses in millions of dollars."

He said that the chief executives

No salary cut for Pak players

LAHORE: The world has come to a standstill due to the coronavirus outbreak and that has led to all sporting events across the globe either being cancelled or suspended. While federations have started asking sportspersons to take pay cuts, the Pakistan Cricket Board just like BCCI has made it clear that there will be no pay cuts at present.

A PCB official said that while the current situation is being monitored, there will be no pay cuts in the current financial year

of cricket Boards will have a video conference with the ICC to discuss World T20 Cup, Asia Cup and World Test Championship.

"There is no doubt that because of the coronavirus pandemic every board is facing a big challenge to reduce their financial losses as

which runs till June 30 for the Pakistan board.

"Our financial year runs from July 1 to June 30. All player contracts (central and domestic) are till 30 June. There will be no salary cuts in the 2019-20 financial year. We have put in place systems to ensure that monthly salaries are paid on time and without delay. The PCB is monitoring the situation in the country closely as it evolves and will amend its policy when appropriate," the official said. **IANS**

much as they can. We are all in the same boat. We have similar interests. When this conference is held we will be discussing future measures."

Khan said the aim is to prepare an alternate plan whenever cricket resumes.

Dhoni leads Jaffer's all-time ODI XI



NEW DELHI: Former India opener Wasim Jaffer has picked M.S. Dhoni as captain of his all-time ODI XI.

Jaffer had recently revealed that all Dhoni wanted when he started off for India captaining the team to the 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 50-over World Cup and is touted to be

the most successful captain to lead the Men in Blue.

In his all-time ODI team, Jaffer picked four Indian batsmen — Sachin Tendulkar, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Dhoni who was also chosen as wicketkeeper. However, no Indian bowler could make a cut to Jaffer's team.

Jaffer, who recently retired from all forms of cricket, also picked West Indies legend Sir Vivian Richards, South Africa's AB de Villiers and 2019 World Cup hero Ben Stokes in the batting line-up.

Jaffer picked Wasim Akram as the all-rounder, Shane Warne or Saqlain Mushtaq as his spinner, West Indies seamer Joel Garner and Australia legend Glenn McGrath as his pacers.

The 42-year-old, surprisingly, picked Australia's two-time World Cup winning captain Ricky Ponting as the 12th man. **IANS**

Verma prepares to maintain form, focus till 2021 Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
 Cup Gold medalist Verma said. The 30-year-old Verma is confined to his home in Chandigarh at the moment, but his mind is in a Gurgaon paying guesthouse, where his training tools, including SCATT, are awaiting his return from what was supposed to be a short two-three-day trip to his parents' place.
 SCATT is an advanced equipment, involving sensors, and used by top shooters to keep track of their progress while training both indoors and outdoors.
 The lockdown meant compromise with his training. He is happy to be home but for a shooter who prefers to practice through the year, Verma is finding spending time without his equipment "odd".

Abhishek Verma says maintaining focus and form till the Tokyo Olympics, postponed to next year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be a huge challenge, but one that he is equipped to take on.
 The ongoing nationwide lockdown has halted training schedules of all the sports persons.
 And the ensuing postponement of the quadrennial Games may threaten to disturb his focus a bit.
 "Hitting the peak and then maintaining it, maintaining my concentration and focus is going to be challenging. Though it gives us more time but one year is a lot of time," two-time World



"Hitting the peak and then maintaining it, maintaining my concentration and focus is going to be challenging. Though it gives us more time but one year is a lot of time"

"I like to practice 365 days a year but right now I am able to do only dry practice. When I came home, the plan was to only stay for two-three days, but then the lockdown was announced and I got stuck here. "But there is no other way at the moment given the situa-

tion. I can only hope that things normalise and I am able to go back and start practising again. "Definitely, it will be different now that the Olympics have been postponed. It's not easy to maintain the focus and form. So I will concentrate on maintaining my form and focus till the Games," the double World Cup Gold medalist said.
 In the absence of his key equipment, Verma's training is restricted to dry practice, simulation, exercises, yoga and meditation.
 Verma had secured an Olympic quota place by winning the 10m air pistol Gold medal at the Beijing World Cup in April last year, before winning another yellow metal in the same event at the Rio World Cup in August-September.



Rai builds muscles to retain shape for his third Oly

PTI ■ KOLKATA
 Amid the nationwide lockdown, veteran Indian archer Tarundeep Rai is busy building shoulder muscles at the Army Sports Institute in Pune, which he believes will keep him in shape for Tokyo Olympics.

The postponement of the Tokyo Games was a bitter pill to swallow for the two-time World Championship Silver medalist as he will get one year older when he takes the field for his third Olympics.
 "For me, the postponement of Olympics means I will get older by one year, so it will be a new challenge," the 36-year-old said.

He has been forced to change his training due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic and his daily routine now is to search YouTube for videos on "how to build shoulder muscles" and train at the gym for long hours.

"It's a big risk to go to the trainers, so YouTube is the constant company now. I follow some channels and pick some videos," Rai, who competed in 2004 Athens Olympics and 2012 London Games, said.
 "Now I'm not shooting that much. It's more of dry shooting practice so that the body is tuned to bow and arrows," the 2010 Asian Games individual Silver medalist said.

Rai, along with India national team captain Anu Das and his Army colleague Pravin Jadhav, had clinched quota place for

the men's team while winning a Silver at the World Championships at Den Bosch in the Netherlands last year.
 The trio was placed in the top-three in the trials to pick the Indian squad for Tokyo Games when the COVID-19 pandemic brought to a halt to all the sporting activities.

"No doubt I've a bit ahead in terms of experience, but the real challenge will be to stay fit and compete with the rising young talents. In this one year, many 20 to 22-year-olds will come up and compete for a place in the team. I think by building shoulder muscles, I will be able to withstand the challenges ahead," he said.

Rai hopes the current situation will normalise in about three months and when the season resumes, he will again pick up his bow and arrows.

"I estimate an off-season of minimum six months due to the extraordinary circumstances. So, I will work hard at the gym for three months and then recovery will follow. It would help me personally. I've made my schedule that way."

He said one positive aspect of the postponement of Tokyo Games is that India's chances of winning an elusive Olympic medal in archery will improve.
 "But there's a positive side to it (postponement). There will be competition and we will make a strong team for the Olympics and hopefully the women's team will also qualify, giving us good hope for a medal next year," he said.

SAI, HI officials draw plans for next 16 months

NEW DELHI (PTI) The Sports Authority of India on Saturday held a meeting with Hockey India officials and national team coaches via a video conference and drew a roadmap for the next 16 months leading up to the Tokyo Olympics.

SAI plans to hold meetings with presidents, secretary generals, high performance directors, head coaches and chief executives of all National Sports Federations to reassess their long-term plans, qualification scenarios and strategies to align with the Olympics.

In that direction, SAI director general Sandip Pradhan and other officials held a meeting with Hockey India representatives, which included its chief executive officer, executive director, high performance director David John and the men's and women's teams' chief coaches, Graham Reid and Sjoerd Marijne.

Various modalities pertaining to the sport, including the teams' training, domestic competition structure and foreign exposure, were discussed.

According to a statement from the SAI, a number of viable solutions and alternatives to the earlier planned strategy were deliberated upon in view of the ongoing lockdown.

Also discussed were options such as training under quarantine (physical and psychological aspects) and possible restricted cross-border movement once the lockdown is lifted.

The men's team chief coach Reid expressed confidence about their Olympic preparations.

"We had a very productive meeting and discussed the planning process for the next 16 months. We informed SAI that the team and staff are being well cared for, while in strict quarantine," Reid said.

"We discussed various scenarios and await decisions as to when we can re-start full training. We also agreed to remain as flexible as possible with the aim of being ready to go as soon as international competition recommences."

National women's team chief coach Marijne agreed with Reid and said the meeting was a very productive one.

"We had a positive discussion about the state of affairs and we indicated our preferences once the situation improves and as soon as more is known about the possibilities in the future."

"We also mentioned about our preference about players staying in national camps during domestic tournaments in order to avoid injuries in the lead up to the Olympics next year," the Spanish coach said.

"I particularly liked the pro-activeness of SAI and Hockey India and I am very optimistic about our preparations for the Tokyo Olympics. I think it is good that we are thinking about the positives and way forward."

Akram, Gough raise funds to fight pandemic

PTI ■ LONDON

Renowned cricketers Wasim Akram and Darren Gough have joined other sporting greats such as Jack Nicklaus and Michael Phelps in auctioning their items of memorabilia and help raise funds for the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Legendary Pakistani fast bowler Akram and England's former star pacer Gough are among the latest cricketing personalities attempting to combat the challenges posed by the unprecedented global health crisis.

According to athletesrelief.org, Gough and



Akram have promised items of memorabilia to be auctioned on behalf of the Centre for Disaster Philanthropy who have set up a COVID-19 Response Fund. Akram, Pakistan's highest

wicket-taker in both Test and ODI cricket, has pledged a signed bat and ball while Gough, England's second-highest wicket-taker in ODI cricket, has pledged a signed ball.

While Akram's bat and ball have raised \$150, Gough's signed ball has attracted \$50.

Stars from other sports involved in the fundraising include Nicklaus, Mike Tyson, Nick Faldo, Rory McIlroy, Martina Hingis, Stephen Curry and Phelps, among others.

Multiple Olympic Gold medalist America swimmer Phelps, whose signed swimsuit has helped raised \$1490, said, "In order to give back during this

challenging time, I am donating a 'game worn' suit cap and goggles to athletesrelief.org."

At \$41350 for his signed football, former American National Football League (NFL) star Rob Gronkowski raised the maximum amount.

Akram and Gough joined a long list of cricketers who have made efforts to help out during the crisis, including Jos Buttler, who is auctioning the shirt he was wearing when England won the World Cup last year.

England women's captain Heather Knight has signed up as NHS volunteer, while Sam Curran has launched a fundraising campaign.

Belgian federation in UEFA talks over end to its season



AFP ■ BRUSSELS

The Belgian Football Association (URBSFA) announced on Saturday that it is working with UEFA toward a "constructive" solution regarding the premature end to the Belgian championship.

On Thursday, the Belgian Pro League recommended that the season be declared finished due to the coronavirus pandemic with the present table accepted as final. It became the first European league to propose such a measure, though others could follow.

On Friday, the governing body of European foot-

ball (UEFA), in a joint statement with the European Club Association and the European Leagues, warned that "abandoning domestic competitions is, at this stage, premature and not justified".

UEFA threatened to ban all teams from European competitions next season if they did not complete their league season.

The URBSFA released a statement on Saturday saying that its president, Mehdi Bayat, had spoken to the president of the governing body of European football, Aleksander Ceferin.

The statement did not specify the nature of this "jointly" negotiated solu-

tion, saying only that the Belgian association would present the UEFA executive committee with its "recommendations for stopping its championship".

The Pro League board's voted unanimously on Thursday to advise its general assembly not to resume the 2019-2020 first division campaign.

Club Brugge, who are 15 points clear with 11 matches to play, would become Belgian champions.

The AGM is expected to ratify this decision on 15 April but its board will present the proposal to UEFA's executive committee.

The Belgian federation, which will also present its recommendations and aims to "preserve Belgium's European places in the 2020-2021 season", said the statement.

The statement also reminded UEFA that it had called for solidarity within European football during the coronavirus crisis and said Bayat had "advocated a flexible approach to this concept, which allows the specific circumstances of each league to be taken into account."

'L'pool deserve to be given PL title'



IAN S ■ LONDON

Former Manchester United striker Dimitar Berbatov said that the 2019/20 Premier League title should be awarded to arch-rivals Liverpool if the season cannot get underway.

The Premier League is currently under indefinite suspension as the United Kingdom grapples with the coronavirus pandemic. Liverpool were hurtling towards a first league title in three decades before the suspension and have a 25-point lead at the top of the table with nine games left. They hence need two more wins to confirm the title.

"People are suggesting to give the title to Liverpool, and honestly they deserve it the way they had been playing, nobody was going to catch them," Berbatov, who scored 56 goals in four seasons at United told *Betfair*.

"With the way they play their games, the football they produced and how far they are in front, they fully deserve the title this season."

The Premier League said in a statement on Friday that it is looking to finish the remaining league and cup matches. However, any return "will only be with the full support of the Government and when medical guidance allows."

Casemiro not thinking about winning La Liga

IAN S ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Real Madrid's Brazilian midfielder Casemiro said that he is not thinking about winning the Champions League or La Liga titles this season as the world grapples with the coronavirus outbreak.

In a video call with young fans, coordinated by global charity *Save The Children*, Casemiro said on Friday that football paled into insignificance compared to the pandemic, which has claimed the lives of more than 60K people worldwide.

"Do we want to win the league? We definitely want to win La Liga and we want to win the Champions League," the 28-year-old said.

"But I'm not thinking about winning La Liga, I'm thinking about winning the fight against the coronavirus. I think if everyone does their part, that's the most important thing. It's a tough time for everyone. We need to win the match against the coronavirus."

Real Madrid are currently second in Spain's La Liga



Luka Modric, Sergio Ramos, Toni Kroos and Casemiro during Real Madrid's practice session. Casemiro/Twitter

Zinedine Zidane's men are due to meet Manchester City in the second leg of their Champions League round of 16 tie, having lost the first encounter 2-1 at the Bernabeu.

All major football competitions in Europe have been suspended indefinitely as part of efforts to stop the spread of the virus.

"It's a difficult time for everybody," Casemiro said. "We have to do our part by staying at home. Everyone has to help out and follow the rules," he added.

Anand, Humpy to play online exhibition event to raise funds

CHENNAI: Former world champion Viswanathan Anand and five other leading Indian players will compete in an online chess exhibition on April 11 to raise funds for country's fight against COVID-19.

The Indians will take on players from across the world on the portal chess.com.

Apart from Anand, India No 2 Vidit S Gujrathi, P Harikrishna, Baskaran Adhiban (all Grandmasters) and the country's top two women players-Koneru Humpy and Dronavalli Harika will compete on 20-board event.

The event will be streamed live on chess.com/tv, where all donations made will be sent to the PM's CARES Fund. Anand, who is stuck in Germany owing to the travel restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, tweeted: "Please support the Indian Chess Community's support towards Covid 19 relief."

To participate in the event, players must have a *Chess.com* blitz or FIDE standard rating of under 2000 and will be required to make a donation during the registration process.

A guaranteed game against Anand requires a minimum donation of \$150. However, a \$25 registration fetches the chance to play any two of the six Indian stars (one of whom may be Anand).

Just five spots are left to play against Anand. Besides, the three biggest donors will get to play against Anand on additional boards during the live stream on chess.com/tv.



Indian superstars @vishy54theking, @viditichess, @HariChess @adhibanchess @HarikaDronavalli @koneruhumpy to offer charity simul on 11th April, 2020 to support the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund.

CONCACAF Nations League finals postponed

AFP ■ MIAMI

The CONCACAF Nations League finals scheduled to be staged in Texas in June have been postponed indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic, the region's governing body said.

CONCACAF, the ruling body for football in North America, Central America and the Caribbean, said the four-team finals would take place at a date to be determined.

The finals had been scheduled for June 4 and June 7 in Houston and Dallas.



As we continue to assess our competitions scheduled to be played in the coming months, the welfare of everyone involved in football across our region remains our first priority," CONCACAF said in a statement.

"Given the ongoing public health situation, and following consultation with FIFA regarding the international football calendar, we have made the decision to suspend the CONCACAF Nations League Finals."

Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico and the United States had been due to take part in the finals.

Langer backs cricket behind closed doors

AFP ■ LONDON

Australia coach Justin Langer believes resuming cricket behind closed doors when it is safe to do so will have "great value" for the public, deprived of action by the coronavirus shutdown.

Like almost the entire sporting schedule around the world, cricket has been halted by the pandemic, with no return date set in stone.

One of the options being mooted is to have the sport resume after restrictions have been lifted, but in empty stadiums.

"When you started off playing cricket, when you were under age, there's no crowds there," he told *BBC Radio*. "You played it because you loved playing the game, you loved playing with your mates and you loved playing the game."

"For the love of the game, and for still being able to entertain people through TV sets or radio, then there's value in (playing behind closed doors)."

"Yes it's different, but we'll never, ever, ever take for granted how lucky we are ever again."

Thailand, Malaysia banned from weightlifting at Tokyo Olympics

IAN S ■ BUDAPEST

Thailand and Malaysia have been banned from sending weightlifters to the Tokyo Olympics. The International Weightlifting Federation said in its statement on Saturday that the Thai Amateur Weightlifting Association (TAWA) has been suspended for three years, while

the Malaysian Weightlifting Federation (MWF) has been given a one-year ban.

In its decision, the Independent Member Federation Sanctions Panel (IMFSP), which issued the bans to the two federations, said the bans would apply whenever the Games take place.

Additionally, the Thai federation has also been fined \$200,000,

half of which "shall be used by IWF to offset IWF costs already incurred in connection with the TAWA matter and for additional IWF testing of TAWA athletes", the panel said.

The Thailand federation had already withdrawn from the Tokyo Olympics voluntarily after nine of its weightlifters were caught for doping violations at the

2018 World Championships.

The IMFSP said that both the TAWA and MWF were informed of the bans on Wednesday and have 21 days to appeal in the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

The two countries thus join Egypt in being banned from the Olympics while Colombia and Romania await their decisions.

'Negative roles were for brilliant actors'

■ **Tell us about your character Himmat Singh in Special OPS?**

He is a chief analyst with RAW. He is the brain behind all the strategies and plans. He has to deal with his personal and professional life without one affecting the other. He is an interesting character in all. He tries to be as fair as possible with his team.

■ **What made you take up the role?**

Neeraj Pandey, Sheetal Bhatia and I have known each other for the longest of time. Neeraj's writing are very exclusive and he has a skewed way of looking at a scene. Whenever he writes the screenplay, it will surprise you everytime. At the same time he has got great sense of humour even at the darkest of situations. He has a special flair for writing and that makes it all the more interesting. Another reason was when I read the script for the first time, I was about to just read the first episode but I read the complete series in

one go. The story was that interesting and gripping. The man behind the machine and the machine itself were extremely good and was the reason for me to say yes.

■ **How did Naseem happen?**

It was my debut. I used to do theatres a lot those days. The film happened with me because Mak (Makrand Deshpande) thought that I was the best actor back then. We used to do our rehearsals together. One fine day he told me 'come lets meet Saeed Akhtar Mirza (writer-director of the film)'. He saw me and suddenly the role of that religious fundamentalist came about and I was casted for that.

■ **How easy or tough was the way ahead?**

It is like any other profession. Ups and downs do happen, but that's not a matter to worry about. I also did TV when it was not like what it's today. We used to do small films and one hour episodes. The journey was good. It was a time when people believed if you are a brilliant actor then you can only do negative roles. We started from there. One thing that we maintained was persistence and every thing went well.

■ **What are the things that you look out for before taking up a project?**

I don't compartmentalise it. It is just like an attraction to the project. The moment I feel like I have to do this, I go for it. At the same time, I am at a

CHALLENGING IS A WORD USED BY THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE THE CAPABILITY OR CAPACITY OF DOING IT. I SEE THINGS AS INTERESTING OR DISINTERESTING. I HAVE DONE A LOT OF INTERESTING STUFF ALONG WITH UNINTERESTING ONES TOO. IT'S BEEN A JOURNEY AND IT COMES WITH TWISTS AND TURNS

stage when I have a lot of substantial stuff to do and not something which I am over-qualified for. So this is one thing that I look for rest everything falls in place.

■ **A role that came close to you or the ones that was most challenging?**

I find these questions very difficult to answer, I am not that narrow minded as an actor. Everything that I have done is equally close to my heart. As for challenging, there is nothing as such. Challenging is a word used by those who don't have the capability or capacity of doing it. I see things as interesting or uninteresting. And I have done a lot of interesting stuff along with uninteresting ones too. It's been a journey and journey can't be unidirectional. There are always twists and turns, the same has been for me. I too have seen ups and downs, but at the end of it I can sum it up by saying 'no complaints'.

■ **A project that you were apprehensive about but it came out well.**

Nothing as such. I don't usually jump into something without knowing what it is. There are many projects otherwise where I thought this particular script has good potential to make it big and I got involved with it but it didn't turn out well. You can't do much about these things. You can just only go with good intention about it as an actor and how will it turn out depends on the destiny of the project.

■ **Is it hard to cope with such disappointments?**

Initially, I used to feel flustered when a project didn't do well or like I expected. But then I realised the best way to live an artist's life is to dispassionately passionate about things. By this I mean, I am extremely passionate when I am working but the moment the last day is over I become dispassionate about it. I don't hold on to the longing of it because that is beyond my control. After I have completed shooting, I would look at it like any other and not like the one who have been a part of it.

It makes life easier, if I would continue hanging upon it then I would have been landed in a mental asylum by now. (laughs)

■ **How do you define acting? What is your approach towards it?**

I am a simulator. I simulate things and make it as believable as possible, that's my intent when I am acting. I try and make things so believable that I can even work if sci-fi movie. Many people indulge in realism talks but realism is a myth. The moment you have editing process, realism can't exist because you are jumping in time. Realism happens in real time. If you will look for it, you can't make sci-fi movie. Take for example *Avatar*, it is a sci-fi movie but it is extremely believable. It should be in a way where one can feel, touch and smell the characters. That has been my motto.

Talktime KAY KAY MENON

He is one gem of an actor and what makes him so is his down-to-earth nature and not to mention natural acting skills. He speaks with Musba Hashmi about his debut and how he is dispassionately passionate about his pro-

New wave of tattoos

MUSBA HASHMI speaks with tattoo artist LOKESH VERMA about the audible body art that is trending and how the idea hit him

While tattoos have been here for a while but what is taking the industry by storm today are the sound wave or audio tattoos. Yes, you read that right. Tattoos that have a voice and can be heard. Hard to believe? Meet Lokesh Verma, founder of Devilz Tattoos who is making it come true.

"This is a new technology in India. The tattoo industry was static for so many years with no inventions but now with these dynamic sound wave tattoos we are taking the industry a step further. What we mean by this, is you can hear a sound from your tattoo, it's not the simple static tattoo any more," he says. Verma may be the first and the only one in India to have adapted this technology but it is originally an American idea.

"This was in trend in the US two years back. However, it has only been a year since I brought the concept here. Initially, there were not many takers. But slowly it caught the attention of the people. And in the last few months this technology was acknowledged by people and more and more people are getting it done. Till now, we have inked around 80 people with sound wave tattoos," Verma tells you who a few minutes back was busy inking another customer but comes out to tell you more about this new trend.

As complicated it may sound, the process is quite easy. The client is asked to record a five to 30 second sound clip of anything that they want to cherish. It may be their baby's first cry or their dog's voice or even a message from their loved ones who are no more. Then a sound wave is created out of it using various softwares and put out on paper.

"Once the visual of the sound wave has been created, we take a print out of it and then ink it on our client's body line by line. Once it is inked, we upload the picture of the sound wave on our website. People can scan it using the sound wave app on their mobiles and hear the audio message in it as many times as they want. It is



A sound wave tattoo

just like the way QR codes work, you scan something and it redirects you to another site," he tells you.

A year, when Verma came to know about this technology, it attracted him and he made his mind to know more about the art.

"I am always looking to bring something new in the field. When I got to know about this, I knew that this is something that I have to bring to my country. I started doing my research and read a lot about it. I knew that such a technology would require a lot of specialisation. Before executing the idea, I did many trials to see how it would work. I used skin pads to test it and only when we were successful I decided to do it on people," Verma says who inks these tattoos with his team of experts. It didn't take too long for Verma or for that matter his team to excel in the skill, all thanks to his 17 years of experience in the industry.

Like any other person who is step-



Lokesh Verma

I was a bit apprehensive about introducing the concept because the lines of the sound wave are intricate and there is no room for error. Even if a single line is incorrect, the tattoo will not work

ping into uncharted waters. Verma too was apprehensive about the idea.

"Initially, I was a bit apprehensive about introducing the concept because the lines of the sound wave are intricate. There is no room for even the slightest of error in such tattoos. If a single line is not correctly made because the artist is inexperienced, the sound wave will become crooked and the tattoo will not work. This needs specialisation in line work and the artist should have super steady hands to draw the lines. It is not like the usual tattoos where if something goes wrong, you can just shade and fix it. Each and every line of the sound wave has to be precise," he says. The cost of the tattoo starts at ₹15,000 for a clip of five seconds.

There is a reason why people are opting for these tattoos. "One is able to keep the loved ones near you and heard their voice even if they are hundreds of miles away. My wife got our baby's voice inked when he was two years old. She was never interested in

tattoos but this was something she couldn't resist," he tells you.

Mostly married couples and people with young children, who are 35 to 45 years of age go for this because they can keep that commitment.

Though the tattoo industry has come a long way but the mindset of people still has to change. "There is a need for change in the mindset when it comes to getting a tattoo. Many are apprehensive before getting one and seek for help from family and friends. When someone gather enough courage to walk into the tattoo studio they are so confused that they ask their friends for help. People have to start taking their own decisions. Having said that, one change that I have seen is that earlier people used to go for random designs because tattoo was something new and they just wanted to get one. Now people have started putting thoughts behind their tattoos. They tend to express their faith or attitude towards life through them," Verma tells you. His first tattoo was that of a devil's face he inked on his father.

There's a story here. "I came into this profession because I was fond of tattoos but back then there were not many studios and the ones that were there were expensive. I thought why not buy a machine myself as it will cost less and I can make as many tattoos as I want. I bought the machine but was too scared to try it on myself so I walked up to my father and asked if he would be interested in getting inked. I was surprised when he agreed. I made a random design, which he still has on his hand — a devil's face. It went pretty well and that gave me confidence to make more designs and taking this up as a career. This is how I started Devilz Tattoo," he tells you.

Verma, of course, is a celebrity of sorts. People seek him out for his quality work. "Back in 2008, Remo D' Souza was the first celebrity to visit my studio. He was in Delhi-NCR for a shoot and that's when he came to my studio to get inked," he tells you.

'Doing SOTY 2 opened my eyes'

Youtuber HARSH BENIWAL, who has recently done Who's Your Daddy, to be aired on ZEE5 and ALTBalaji, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his latest project, experience of doing a film and challenges faced



Youtuber HARSH BENIWAL, who has recently done *Who's Your Daddy*, to be aired on ZEE5 and ALTBalaji, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his latest project, experience of doing a film and challenges faced

◆ **How did your journey in the entertainment industry begin?**

I had not planned how to go about it but it all began back in 2015. I always wanted to entertain. When I was in school, college and with family and friends I would always crack jokes and became the centre of attention. I started making videos and make a second vine ad put it on my page which got replies from friends. But then slowly people started commenting. People shared memes on Instagram which I used to put. By 2016, I had a million followers on Insta. Then there was a boom in Internet and today I have more than eight million subscribers on my YouTube channel.

◆ **Was it tough to get noticed on YouTube?**

Initially, I was under the impression that there was no point in putting video here. I had Insta fans but the people on this platform are different from YouTube users who have far more patience. But I asked my team member to start putting videos on the YouTube. A friend told me that the channel was doing well. I started putting longer videos here. I can't say it was easy, nor can I say that it was tough. All I can say is that I had loads of fun. It was slow process to garner that kind of attention.

◆ **How was the experience of doing the movies?**

Student of the Year (SOTY) 2 was amazing. I had never such a huge crew. I never knew how things worked. What different things were for? I didn't know what assistant director did. The movie has taught me so many things that I use on my channel. Take spot *dadas*. I had heard of them but never realised what their work was. *Tiger bhai* (Shroff) was standing next me so I thought the man holding the umbrella was for him. But then he moved away but this man continued to hold the umbrella over my head. It was then I realised he was doing it for me. It felt so amazing. I got to learn so much including how to face the camera from Tiger Shroff.

◆ **Tell us about your latest project — Who's Your Daddy?**

It is a web series. It is an amazing story set in Delhi. It is about relationships. First, when I was a kid and my relationship with my father and then with my son. Second, my relationship with my grandmother. Third, my relationship with my friends. Then there is a love angle and my relationship with her. When I read the script, I loved it and laughed a lot. It has been written so well.

◆ **What made you say yes to it?**

I am very particular when it comes to content. Even when I create content I don't go ahead unless I am convinced with it. When I was offered the role, I took it up on just listening to the narration. It was much later that I read the screenplay. People know I do comedy, here I have gone a step ahead. People will see me romancing, crying and even getting angry. I wanted to show my fans different facets of myself.

◆ **You have around 8 million subscribers. What makes your fans come to your channel?**

I do my best to try and give as much time to them as possible. I reply to their comments. But I rarely have time for my family so it is not always possible to be constantly in touch with them. However, I try to do as much as I can and meet them in person and talk to them.

◆ **What are the challenges to ensure you stay where you are?**

It was not as if I have had to face many. I just love doing what I am doing. When I was doing the web series I have had to shoot round the clock and loved every moment of it. I never feel that my professional life has put up any roadblocks till now and hopefully it will be so in the future as well. Yes, schooling was a challenge.

Pets are man's best friend

COVID-19 have had us confined to our homes leading to lockdown blues. During this time, your pet can be a source of much needed joy and strength

Could you have imagined being locked-down in your home because of a global epidemic? Bizarre as it sounds, this blockbuster movie scenario has come to pass, and we all find ourselves trapped in our homes, unable to move out or even interact with anyone from the outside world.

This situation has caused a surprising amount of frustration to humans across the world, with many plummeting into depression and states of despondency. And, as we all know, since there is a mind-body connect, staying mentally strong goes a long way in keeping your immunity up, and your defences strong against the disease. So, if you are caring for a cat, dog or any other animals, here's how they're helping you stay on top of things.

Mental strength means physical strength: It is a proven fact that families, or individuals, with pets are emotionally and mentally healthier than people who don't have pets. This means you are less likely to suffer from depression, or other kinds of mental and emotional problems that could bring your immunity down. Having a pet has therefore



made you physically more resilient to any kind of disease, including viral infections.

A reason to go on: For people who do fall sick with the virus, or any other disease, resilience has a lot to do with wanting to get better and get back to life. Those of us who have had pets will vouch that better emotional ties with those around us puts us in the correct frame of mind for recovery. Since our relationship with our cats and dogs is more unconditional, and uncomplicated than how we relate to most humans, having a pet means we're more inclined to recover faster and return to caring for them.

Good company: The long-term benefits of having a pet aside are that those of us with pets to care for are not likely to succumb to boredom, depression and unhealthy habits like binge-eating, not exercising, or binging on our gadgets. Not only do our pets keep us on our toes, because we build healthier mental neurons while interacting with our pets, our general disposition is more productive and proactive while being home-bound, thanks for the fur balls in our lives.

The writer is Devanshi Shah, Founder-CEO, PetConnect

MYTHS BUSTED

Myth 1: Dogs can spread the Covid-19 virus

Fact: According to the WHO, there is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 in the form that it appears in humans can spread onto companion animals or, for that matter, can an animals spread the virus to humans.

Myth 2: So pets can skip the hygiene protocols

Fact: A senior vet at the American vet charity PSDA says the hygiene protocols even for pets is still important. For instance, if your pet in taken out, it could bring back the virus through its paws, which can

contaminate your home for humans. So don't skip sanitising them.

Myth 3: Since dogs or cats can't spread the virus, they can be around patients with COVID-19

Fact: It is not recommended. Not so much for the sake of the pets as much for the patient who may be recovering from the virus. Their immunity would be low at such a point, so it's actually a good idea to keep both animals and humans away from them since animals may carry bacteria or germs from being taken outdoors.

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Article 370: A fresh perspective

Bashir Assad's new book provides a refreshing narrative of the actual situation obtaining in Kashmir

2



4

Be ready to combat evil forces

Let us brave the situation by exercising all the care and caution as suggested by the experts. This too shall pass

Obviously social media has had a massive impact on the fame game, but not in a positive way. But it can be for some — Margot Robbie



Children react in different ways due to lack of ample sleep or even excess of sleep impacting their health, writes KERRY BAJAJ, as she shares tips on how to ensure that your baby or child is able to sleep peacefully during a time when anxiety is running high in the family due to Coronavirus lockdown



SLEEP IN THE TIMES OF CORONA

Before the coronavirus lockdown, did you ever think your house could be capable of so much multi-tasking? My house is now a one-room schoolhouse, an office, a gym, a restaurant that's turning out three meals a day, a messy art studio, a global pandemic monitoring station, and the place where our family relaxes and sleeps.

Speaking of sleep, I've never been so grateful that my kids have an early bedtime — 7 pm and 8 pm for the 4 and 5-year-old — and happily sleep through the night. As a sleep consultant, I've been speaking to many parents about how to navigate this challenging time. I've always preached that ensuring a good night's sleep is a precious gift for our children, and I believe it now more than ever. Here's why:

- Sleep is a powerful immune-booster. Both adults and children that are sleep-deprived are more susceptible to illness. Without sufficient sleep, your body produces fewer cytokines, which is a protein that targets infection.
- Sleep supports our emotional health. Sleep is a mood-booster, and acts as a soothing balm for our emotional balance. Much-needed at the moment.
- Sleep is crucial for all aspects of our physical health, from cardiovascular to metabolic to respiratory to immune system.

As Matthew Walker says in *Why We Sleep*, "Sleep is the single most effective thing we can do to reset our brain and body health each day."

Here's my guidance on how to ensure your baby or child is able to sleep peacefully during a time when anxiety is surely running high in the family.

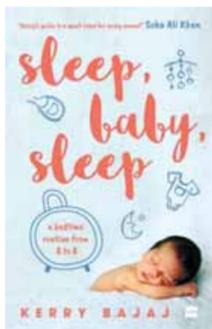
THE DAYTIME SCHEDULE

The hundreds of parenting decisions we make during the day will impact our children's night sleep.

Anchor. As I say in *Sleep, Baby, Sleep*, routine is like a magic wand for parents to keep their babies happy, healthy and secure. But let's face it — our young children have nowhere to go and no pressing deadlines. Yet we can still create a predictable routine, which provides a sense of normalcy and safety. For my two daughters, I've put a focus on creating "anchors" in our day, points of stability in the ocean of free play. After breakfast, we do our math lesson. While eating lunch, we listen to a storytelling podcast (*Listen & Play* by the BBC). In the afternoon, we work on phonics. In the late afternoon, we call the grandparents. Before dinner, my husband does physical exercise with the girls. These are the predictable touchpoints that they can count on every single day. There's no need to be rigid, but having a daily rhythm with anchors gives children a sense of security.

Exercise. Our stir-crazy little kiddos need physical activity — and lots of it! Movement is great for releasing endorphins and will help our children to sleep well at night. Even when stuck inside, we have options — you can have a dance party, water play in a small kiddie pool or bathtub, Cosmic Kids Yoga, or hopscotch, relay race or frog jumps in the hallway. I've even seen videos of kids biking, roller skating and skateboarding inside the house. Be creative! Get the kids up and moving at least 3 times a day — and join them, because it's a good stress-buster for you, too!

Screentime. As soon as the WHO declared a global pandemic, I decided that my strict stance on screentime could be relaxed during these weeks at home. My kids don't



nap anymore, and we all need downtime. Every day after lunch, we pull the curtains, turn off the lights, snuggle up under blankets and "go to the zoo." Meaning we visit the Cincinnati Zoo Home Safari via their Facebook page. Hanging out with the hippos and porcupines is soothing, sweet and educational. If you're juggling cooking, cleaning, laundry, work, and homeschooling — choose a nice programme (*I love Daniel Tiger* for toddlers) and give some guilt-free screentime. Since we have a set time for screens, the kids aren't bugging me to watch videos the rest of the day, which is an added bonus.

Note: please don't use screentime for the 2 hours before bedtime, because it may be too stimulating and interfere with a good night's sleep.

THE BEDTIME SCHEDULE

Many families that I consult with have trouble setting a bedtime routine because they have family functions, weddings, and travel. Since all of that is off the table, it's a perfect time to establish an age-appropriate bedtime for your little one.

Early to Bed. Babies and young children need 11 to 12 hours of continuous night sleep. This means that if your baby wakes up at 7 am, bedtime should be between 7 and 8 pm. Sleep is essential for your child's mood, growth, development and immunity. To shift your child's bedtime earlier, I recommend pulling the curtains and turning off the bright overhead lights after sunset. Create a bedtime routine. It can be simple — dinner, bath, books, bed. Write it down on a piece of paper, let your child decorate the bedtime chart, and hang it on the wall in their bedroom.

Comfy, Cozy Bedtime. I always encourage clients to think of bedtime as the best part of the day, rather than a power struggle. Cuddle up with your child, read books, sing a lullaby or say a prayer. In order for your child to relax enough to "let go" of the day and fall asleep, they should feel secure and connected. Every night I ask my daughters what they want to dream about (it's often cake and unicorns) and then I spritz them with imaginary "dream spray." This puts happy thoughts into their minds about sleep.

White Noise. I recommend white noise to every parent that wants their baby or child to sleep better. White noise provides a soothing rumbling backdrop for sleep and helps drown out the household noises. Especially these days when you may be taking late-night conference calls from the living room, play some white noise for

your child. The easiest way to try it is by downloading a free app (such as *Sleep Pillow*) on your phone or tablet.

Will your child get "addicted" to white noise? This is a common question and the answer is no! If you want to wean off of white noise in the future, you can simply reduce the volume for a few days.

Sleep Training. I spoke with a mom of twins who has let go of her domestic helpers during quarantine, has a job in banking that has converted to work-from-home because of coronavirus, and is exhausted from the night wakings that used to be handled by a nanny. Her elderly mother is attending to one twin, and she is attending to another and they are both up twice at night, for as long as an hour each time. For babies over 6 months, you can do sleep training and proactively shape the sleep patterns so you don't have so many night wakings. In my book *Sleep, Baby, Sleep*, you will get the complete guidance to help your baby sleep through the night. In the book, I also cover newborn sleep, baby sleep, toddler sleep and nap schedules for age 0 to 4 years.

SOOTHING THEIR WORRIES

It's mission critical to be mindful of what we're saying in front of the kids. Our children will surely struggle with sleeping peacefully if we are exposing them to too much talk and worry about coronavirus.

Turn Off the TV. Put the TV news on a 21-day lockdown. There is absolutely no reason to expose your child to sensational and scary news reporting. If it's terrifying for you as an adult, then please protect your child. Also, don't talk on the phone about the gory details of coronavirus in front of your kids. They are always listening and absorbing what you say on the phone. Remember, the beauty of having an early bedtime is that you can watch the news and make your phone calls at night.

Invite Questions. I've given simple and honest explanations about coronavirus and the lockdown to my kids. Since their world has drastically changed from school, playdates and sports to 24/7 at home, I do check in with them once a day. I simply ask "do you have any questions for me?" Most of the time they don't, but they know that the lines of communication are open. They know it's safe to have questions. If we can help our children process their concerns in the day, they will better be able to relax and surrender to sleep at night.

Manage Your Own Triggers. To help your child's anxiety, you have to manage your own.

For me, that means having an extra loaf of bread and the freezer and an ample supply of chocolate. It means not looking at Whatsapp while I'm playing with the kids because the news is too triggering. It means talking to a friend when I'm feeling scared or anxious so I can work through it, but not in front of the kids. It means focusing on what I can control — staying home, washing my hands. And letting go of what I can't control — the actions of others, how long this will last.

Empowering Messages. Since the kids understood from their school friends that coronavirus is a big, scary thing, I have focused on what our family is doing to stay healthy. They know that children are mostly not getting sick from coronavirus, but I'm sure they're scared about their parents getting sick. I tell the kids — I eat healthy food, I exercise, I take vitamin C and I sleep well. I'm strong and healthy. I've assured them that if I do get sick for a few days, my body will fight the virus and bounce back.

Honour Ambiguity. We are on a 21-day lockdown, but there is no guarantee that it will end there. This is an ambiguous situation. Please don't get your heart set on having freedom on April 15 and then feel crushed if it doesn't happen. When my 5-year-old asks how long we'll be at home, I tell her the truth — I don't know. It may be 21 days, or it may be 100 days. You may also want to consider the possibility that this could be a long road ahead, so that you'll also be able to emotionally support your children in the weeks ahead.

Love Them Up. I tell the kids every single day that I love being at home with them. That this is such a special time for our family to be together. That there is no one I'd rather be stuck home with. You may be spread thin and stressed out of your mind, but don't underestimate what a gift it is for your children to have bonus time with their parents.

So there you have it — create a flow for your daytime routine, enjoy cozy bedtime snuggles, and protect your child from nonstop coronavirus conversation. In doing so, we can create a virtuous cycle where our kids feel good during the day and sleep peacefully at night, thus boosting their physical and emotional resilience. For all the essential workers on the front lines of this crisis, endless thanks for your service. For all the rest, please stay home, stay safe, take care of each other and wash those hands!

The writer is an American sleep consultant living in Mumbai. She is a holistic nutritionist and author of book Sleep, Baby, Sleep, published by HarperCollins

BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN THAT ARE SLEEP-DEPRIVED ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ILLNESS. WITHOUT SUFFICIENT SLEEP, YOUR BODY PRODUCES FEWER CYTOKINES, WHICH IS A PROTEIN THAT TARGETS INFECTION



SO PLEASE, OH PLEASE, WE BEG, WE PRAY, GO THROW YOUR TV SET AWAY, AND IN ITS PLACE YOU CAN INSTALL A LOVELY BOOKSHELF ON THE WALL
— ROALD DAHL

Bashir Assad's new book provides a refreshing narrative of the actual situation obtaining in Kashmir, not touched upon otherwise by the so-called Kashmir experts, writes PROF K WARIKOO

Article 370: A fresh perspective

Bashir Assad, the Kashmiri writer has come out with yet another interesting and insightful study of Kashmir following the abrogation of Article 370. To quote Bashir, he has brought out the "bitter truth following his inner voice" underscoring the Islamisation and Pakistanisation of narratives in Kashmir. And he blames the political leadership in Kashmir which remains "mired in conservatism and short-sightedness around Muslimness" for the troubled situation. Competing schools of Islamist extremism have sway in Kashmir with the local political leaders, intellectuals, media, social and cultural activists, lawyers, businessmen, employees etc. spearheading the Islamist extremist movement. Being witness to the steep decline of the unique Kashmiri culture, Assad calls upon the silent majority of Kashmiri Muslims "not to be carried away by the frenzies of the extremists who thrive on violence".

As regards the decision of the Indian parliament to revoke Article 370 and reorganise the J&K State into two UTs of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, the international community has by and large viewed this decision as India's internal affair, with the exception of Pakistan and its ardent supporters—China, Turkey and Malaysia. However, there has been concern over the restrictions imposed in the State following this decision. So far as the local response to this historic decision is concerned, Assad is right in his analysis that in north Kashmir (excepting Sopore and Rafiabad belt in Baramulla district which is dominated by Jamaat-e-Islami), the local people have remained peaceful. And the new narrative of the Indian Government revolving around empowerment, investment and development (EID) has found resonance among the people in rural Kashmir, Gujjars and Bakarwals, Paharis, Kupwara, Handwara, Gurez and most of the Jammu region.

In case of south Kashmir, Jamaat-e-Islami has been influential in Kulgam, Tral, Pulwama, Bijbehara, Anantnag, Kokernag, Doru and Pahalgam and that gets reflected in the different political response and incidents of violence there. In central Kashmir, Srinagar city remains the hotbed of separatist nerve centre of Pakistani narrative being parroted by the political elite, intelligentsia, academia, journalists and civil society.

Coming back to Article 370, Assad believes that the idea behind this Article was to allow the unique Kashmiri identity



based on composite culture, social harmony and brotherhood to flourish. This very foundation of Kashmiriyat collapsed with the ethnic cleansing and forced exodus of the entire indigenous minority community of Kashmiri Pandits in January 1990 and thereafter. The Pandits continue to live in forced exile for the past 30 years now. And there is no prospect of their return to their homes, as all their landed properties, houses, business and educational establishments and even the temples have been occupied in an organized manner. And with the digitisation of land revenue records going on in full swing in Kashmir, all these properties are being conveniently transferred in the names of their illegal occupiers. Here it would be pertinent to mention that all through the past 75 years, the successive State governments have legalised the settlement of non-Kashmiri Muslims in the State. Over 26,000 Afghan Pashtuns were provided land and State citizenship in 1950s at Gutli Bagh, Ganderbal. Similarly over 650 Tibetan Muslim families were provided land and State citizenship in Hari

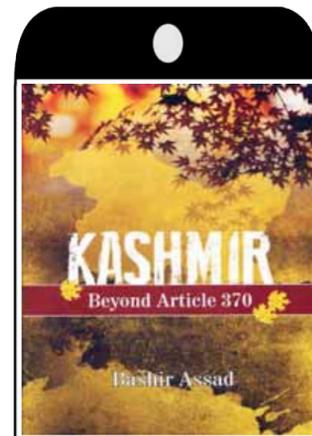
Parbat area in Srinagar around 1959-60. And after 1970s, one has been noticing the ingress and silent settlement of radical Muslims belonging to *Allah Wale* group from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar etc., who set up their shops and captured the local mosques. So much so, over 800 local Kashmiri Muslim Imams were silently replaced by these radical fire-brand non-local Muslims who contributed a lot in radicalising the Kashmiri Muslim society by weaning them away from the local *Sufi-Rishi* tradition of Islam. Assad has been honest in pointing out that most of the Kashmiri Muslim employees who would shift to Jammu during the annual Durbar move, have purchased land or houses in Jammu particularly during the past decade or so. This is in quite contrast to the fact that none of the Hindu employees shifting from Jammu to Srinagar during the Durbar move, have ever purchased in any land or house in Kashmir. One may add that thousands of acres of forest and *nazool* land has been occupied by influential Kashmiri Muslims and Gujjars/Bakarwals, which was subse-

quently regularised by Farroq Abdullah and GN Azad governments under the Roshni Act. All this has been done to change the demographic character of Jammu region into a Muslim majority one, so that the narrative of Muslim and separatist politics is extended to Jammu region as well.

Assad makes yet another valid point stating that the NC government under Chief Ministership of Farooq Abdullah (1996-2002) rebuilt the "completely collapsed infrastructure including hundreds of bridges, schools, hospitals, shrines and government buildings." Yet the NC and its leadership never highlighted these achievements in their 2002 election campaign. Instead their election plank was the restoration of autonomy. Here one would recall how the NC stalwart Mirza Afzal Beg would during his election campaign in 1977 flaunt a piece of rock salt (of Pak origin), and a green handkerchief (*rumal*) in order to emotionally blackmail the local Muslim population. Assad is emphatic in saying that both the "NC and PDP used Article 370 for winning elections. They only complained about

the erosion of authority when out of power. For them, Article 370 was laying golden eggs." The abrogation of Article 370 once again brought the think tanks, NGOs, human rights groups, media etc. to the fore, with the local political class propagating "soft separatism". The problem is compounded because the "political family fiefdom has taken deep roots in Kashmir. And this political kinship survives in the conflict, with both the separatist and mainstream political elites being the conflict profiteers". So the challenge for the Government of India is to make peace more profitable for these political elites than the conflict.

Assad argues that the increasing Pakistanisation and Islamisation of the Kashmiri narrative, actually prompted the Modi government to abrogate Article 370. He blames the separatists and the NC and PDP leaders by holding the threats of secession, for the dilution of Article 370. As regards the impact of the abrogation of Article 370, Assad is right in saying that "the majority of Kashmiris are happy that the political class, which exploited them emotionally, economical-



KASHMIR: BEYOND ARTICLE 370
Bashir Assad
Pentagon Press, ₹595

ly and politically for decades, is finally made to pay the price for it. The common people want these corrupt leaders to be arrested on charges of corruption, misappropriation, embezzlement, nepotism and favouritism".

Now that Article 370 is history, new tasks for the government are to restore the confidence of the people through EID, de-radicalisation, rational delimitation to give due representation to deprived sections both in Jammu and Kashmiri regions, and to undo the artificial merger of areas in a particular constituency initiated by Mirza Afzal Beg in post-1975 period to prevent the Shias, Kashmiri Pandits, Gujjars and other communities from getting elected from their territorial strongholds. To conclude, the book provides a refreshing narrative of the actual situation obtaining in Kashmir, not touched upon otherwise by the so called Kashmir experts. As such it is a must for all those interested in understanding the social and political dynamics in Jammu and Kashmir.

The reviewer is a Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi and editor, Himalayan and Central Asian Studies

NEW ARRIVALS

FIREKEEPERS OF JWALAPURAM: THE KISHKINDHA CHRONICLES BOOK 2
Vamsee Juluri
Westland, ₹450

In this, the sequel to *Saraswati's Intelligence*, we see that an environmental catastrophe has hit the land, causing a shortage of food for Kishkindhans. Hanuman, Vaishnavi, and the *rishis* split up to go and urge people everywhere to leave their villages and shelter in the cave-temples. Meanwhile in Kishkindhanagara, Riksharaja has made life miserable for Sugreeva, blaming him for abandoning his brother Vali and accusing him of stealing the throne. A refugee crisis is also on their doorstep, with thousands of villagers coming to the rock city everyday as their plants and trees are dying...

TIMELESS TALES FROM MARWAR
Vijaydan Detha
Puffin, ₹250

Timeless Tales from Marwar gives a new lease of life to his folk tales. It is a hand-picked compilation from the much-celebrated *Batan ri Phulwari* — 'Garden of Tales' — a fourteen-volume collection written over a span of nearly fifty years.

YOUNG PANDAVAS: THE CITY OF ELEPHANTS
Anupam Arunachalam
Hachette, ₹199

Nine-year-old Sahadev and his four brothers — Yudhishtir, Bhim, Arjun and Nakul — are happy in their little forest home, until a forgotten curse changes their lives forever. They return as princes to Hastinapur, a city full of riches ... and secrets. Lively and action-packed, this illustrated reimagining of the *Mahabharata* brings alive the world of the great India epic.

Stories that inspire action and change

GUNJAN VEDA's book seeks to celebrate the everyday heroes, who have, despite all odds, managed to change not just their own lives, but the lives of those around them. An excerpt:

Ten kilometres from the Pratap Singh High School, on the road to the famous Kaas Plateau, Maharashtra's very own Valley of Flowers, is the picturesque campus of the Bhatiya Bhatke Vimukta Vikas Va Sanshodhan Sanstha (Indian Institute of Research and Development of Nomadic and De-notified Tribes). Inside, there is a School of Social Work, a junior college, hostels and an Ashram school with 250 students from classes 1 to 10.

At 2 pm on a weekday, the place is abuzz with activity. Students and teachers have just returned from an invigorating lunch break, ready to resume their quest for knowledge. I head to the first floor of the double-storeyed institute building that embraces a circular courtyard. Here in a small corner room, a group of 50 students await me—the youngest is 12 years old, the oldest 16. Some play the *tabla*, the *dholki* and the Congo drums. Others create music on the synthesizer and the harmonium. Together they form the school's orchestra—one that has won name and fame in the district.

They are often invited to sing for the All India Radio and at local programmes. As the strong voices of the girls and the boys in the group decry casteism and call for equality through their songs, a new energy pervades the room, and with it, a new hope.

It is these students whose stories I wish to tell...

Aishwarya
Aishwarya Umesh Dharase is



13 years old. Slim, with a deep sepia skin tone, she wears a bright, sleeveless red and gold salwar suit. Her jet black hair is oiled and tightly pulled back into a pony. 'I want to become a lawyer and fight for the truth,' this Class 7 student tells me. She also wants to learn to play the harmonium and the *tabla*. After all, she spent the first few years of her life around these musical instruments. Aishwarya's parents lived in the Bijapur district of Karnataka. Her father played the *dholki*, *tabla* and *pakhawaj* in an orchestra, while her mother was a singer. She also sewed garments to feed her family. Then one day, when she was barely six years old, Aishwarya's mother died in an accident. Shortly after, her father abandoned her. 'I was very small then. I didn't understand

what was happening. Suddenly I had no family, no one to call my own,' she tells me matter-of-factly. Life as Aishwarya knew it was over. Initially her paternal grandparents looked after her. Soon however, her *mausi* (maternal aunt) took over.

Aishwarya does not know if she is related to her *mausi* by blood. She doesn't know her maternal grandparents either. '*Mausi* says my mother was her sister and she treats me like her own daughter. That's all that matters. I have seen her work in the fields to raise me. It is her name—Bharti—that I write when I am asked for my mother's name.' Bharti first got Aishwarya admitted into a Kannada-medium school but she wasn't happy with the quality of education. She decided to send her to the

Ashram school where her own daughter Vaishnavi was studying. It was in Class 6 that Aishwarya came to Satara. 'I have been here for a little over a year now. Each day I learn new things. When I feel low, I think of my *mausi*. She is my inspiration. One day I will make her proud,' she tells me, the quiver in her voice only emphasizing the determined look on her face.

Pragati

Next to her sits a slim bespectacled girl in a white, printed salwar suit. 13-year-old Pragati Ranjeet More is a student of Class 8. Eyes brimming with tears, she narrates her story.

'When I was born, my mother abandoned me in the hospital and went to live with her parents. She didn't take me home. Didn't



hold or hug me.' Pragati's father collected her from the hospital and took her to Pune. There he left the tiny infant with his sister. 'My *buu* raised me. She put me in a school in the city. Then one day my *dadi* turned up. She said that I shouldn't stay in Pune. She fought with my *buu* and brought me to Phaltan in Satara district. Since that day my *buu* stopped talking to us.'

Young Pragati was once again uprooted. She lost the only life and family she had known. But she was a survivor. She began to adjust to her new life. Just as she was learning to cope, another tragedy befell the family. Their house in Phaltan collapsed.

They had to move to Satara. Pragati's father used to be a construction worker. But he drank heavily and gradually stopped working. In fact, it was his drinking that had driven Pragati's mother away. In Satara, her grandfather took up work in a hotel to feed the family. Pragati enrolled in a nearby school.

One day, when she was in Class 3, her grandmother and father fought bitterly. 'My *dadi* burnt herself. She died,' Pragati recounts in a stony voice. Her mother used this opportunity to divorce her father.

That was when she discovered that she had a younger brother. 'My mother never came to see me. I didn't know that my father used to visit her. After they divorced, I found out that I had a younger brother, Omkar. He is now in Class 4.'

Despite all the tragedies that life had heaped on her, Pragati did not give up. She had learnt how to cook when she was barely five years old. While her grandfather helped her with the housework, he also had to go out and earn. So young Pragati went to school, did housework, cooked and looked after her brother. One day, in the newspapers, she read about the Ashram school in Satara. She quietly went to her father and said she wanted to join the school.

He agreed. Thus began a new journey.

The Museum of Broken Tea Cups: Postcards from India's Margins written by Gunjan Veda is published by Yoda SAGE Select

Corona-led leadership challenges for Trump

Elections and Presidential leadership in the United States are a spectacle par excellence. This is equally true for both the elections for the anointed Presidency and the Congressional polls locally. Awareness and deliberations about the US foreign policy across the larger international system are everyone's pet peeve but the scenario in the domestic politics remains an domain orb, which has been investigated to a lesser extent elsewhere in the international system. Also, it is a theoretical principle in the discipline of international relations that there lies a continuum between the domesticity of a nation and its larger footprint in the global comity of nations. It's in this partisan narrative, where-in the domestic political discourse gladly but confrontationally subsists.

In the contemporary American firmament, President Donald Trump is going through the toughest phase of his Presidency which is even more serious concern than the impeachment proceedings in the US Senate, which he had to be content with. As a related fact, it is the COVID-19 virus which poses a national security and a health challenge for a besieged American nation. As the trail of coronavirus patients mounts in the United States, the American leadership seems perplexed despite being on the anointed pedestal of being the most powerful nation endowed with a mammoth defense paraphernalia which the nation can wield in the international sea, land and air firmament. It's the Calvinist self doubt of an incessant urge for self enhancement and continuously being on guard which should be utilised by the American establishment in this hour of crisis when the entire comity of states is seemingly strangulated by the new pandemic.

Apart from the pandemic, it is the threat of global terrorism in the aftermath of the impeachment proceedings which cause a big snarl-up and a vitiation of the political ecosystem in the United States of America. Frequent ego-trips that President Trump has had with the various Secretaries and



Patrons wait in line for a supermarket on April 2, 2020, in the Corona section of the Queens borough of New York. Data released by city health officials show that residents in the immigrant-rich Jackson Heights, Elmhurst and Corona sections of Queens have tested positive for the coronavirus at higher rates than in wealthy, mostly white parts of Manhattan and Brooklyn AP

his other top official machinery has marred the taint-free expectation of confused hoi polloi. Despite being the unstinting confidants of President Trump, several Cabinet members have been shown the door despite their scathless records of efficiency and loyalty towards the Trump's dominion.

One stand-out aspect of the US Democratic primaries has been the fact that Bernie Sanders, the left of the centre, Democratic Presidential hopeful, has been sidelined out of the race with Joe Biden being the candidate from the Democrat side of the fence to take on the political juggernaut of President Trump. One singular perspective out of many in the context of the American public sphere concerning the

leadership performance of President Trump has been the idiom of myriad flip-flops which President Trump has undertaken in the light of the various position and portfolio changes in his Cabinet. Secondly, President Trump has been changing the quintessential American point of view in the light of the climate change policies, American judiciary and the American policy perspective in the context of South Asia, where-in India's stance has always been that of negating the hyphenation of itself (India) with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The win-win economic leadership by inking a mega trade deal with India along with the quarantining of India concerning the stipulation of GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) has

been the characteristic goggles through which some sections of India perceive the American policy perspective to be. Another poser on his political leadership happens to be that of frequent changes in the visa-related work conditions vis-a-vis India, which renders New Delhi slightly doubtful, especially the old guard in New Delhi's political and diplomatic leadership. One area where President Trump's leadership of the new world has been proactive is that of a peacemaking role in the Afghanistan conundrum and his tie-up with the Taliban based in Doha, Qatar. Even in the context of a turmoil-ridden "Middle East", the Washington leadership has done well with a mixed outcome in the context of the Syrian quagmire. In the

context of Iran, President Trump got rid of General Soleimani but did not retaliate when the American assets in Iraq were targeted by Tehran thus casting aspersions on a cleansing and aggressive posture of the American leadership. It was this BOP run policy which took the steam out of the acolytes of the leadership in Washington.

Jeffrey A Jenkins writes in his authored book titled, Leadership in American Politics, that, "There is a leadership gap in American politics between the leadership needed to address the country's most pressing problems and that provided by the nation's elected and appointed leaders. If we turn to political scientists to shed light on such leadership issues, we find their work often

lacking. As important as leadership is in explaining political choices and policy outcomes, studies of leadership are limited in many subfields of political science research and are missing altogether in others." Still, despite traces of whims and flip flops, the domestic WASP fraternity and the white blue collared workers still root for President Trump despite his leadership and popularity rankings transforming in the aftermath of individual situations.

His appeal lies in the leadership gung ho, loud chaperoning and symbolically stiff upper lip political nonchalance embedded with a sense of American hyper puissance which takes wings with the presence of a cacophonous political leadership and

opposition.

As an adjunct imagery, one can cite the speech of President Whitmore in the original patriotic flick, Independence Day. On the occasion of the launch of the American counter attack on the Alien Mothership, the embattled American President perches himself atop a F-16 and orates, "We the people of the free world and the American people shall not falter. We will not disappear into the night. We will not wither away into darkness and shadows. We will put up a struggle against the Alien Mothership. We shall overcome and it will be a historical moment when the world's fighter jets gather together for the largest aerial battle of the world, since World War-II along with the brave American flyers."

Thus, the practice of Presidential leadership is a reflection of the larger impact on the commoners which rings true in the leadership framework of President Trump, also, whenever the American homeland faces a crisis or a holocaust of impactful proportions. The venerable Pew Research Center too reported in January 2020 about the dismal support to President Trump's foreign policy. It was argued that, "Despite negative trends in his popularity as a true blue leader, his standing has improved. The current Pew Research survey finds an uptick in some countries since 2018 in ratings for President Trump and the US, though the degree of change varies from modest to solidly positive."

At least two plausible factors may be behind these shifts. First, support for Trump has increased somewhat on the ideological right in many nations." The 63 per cent recorded disinterest and dissatisfaction with President Trump's policy has been generated maybe because the world is flat since a long time but the domestic panning out of his electoral prospects might be a completely different leadership ball game altogether in the context of the American homeland.

(The writer teaches at IIPA, New Delhi)

The American leadership seems perplexed despite being on the anointed pedestal of being the most powerful nation endowed with a mammoth defense paraphernalia which the nation can wield in the international sea, land and air firmament



MANAN DWIVEDI

PERSPECTIVE

Why poor migrants need to fend for themselves

While many view the Covid-19 lockdown as an instance of the efficacy of the administration, the moot point is why the poor people want to run out of cities. This urban middle-class India refuses to see their contradiction. If the poor work so hard in the cities, why must any emergency make them leave the city to return to the village? Isn't the city their home too?



RAHUL JAYARAM

Published in 2002, poet and writer Dom Moraes in the co-authored book with Sarayu Srivatsa, *Out of God's Oven: Travels in A Fractured Land*, wrote: "India had the most brutally stupid middle-class in the world."

That observation comes to Moraes, a prolific and privileged man, after journeying through and writing about the world in the 1960s and 1970s. He returns in 1980 to India for good. In his remaining 25 years, he produces journalism, non-fiction, travelogues, while struggling through the desertion of his poetic muse that returns late in his life.

Moraes, like VS Naipaul, is dismayed with subcontinental poverty, violence and brutality, while awed by its cultural past. Owing to the stark class divide that has arisen due to India's struggles with tackling Covid-19, his comment has resurfaced online in recent days. In one way, Moraes' observation reeks of western condescension, but it carries insight that allies with concern: A society's fiercest critic is often its truest lover.

A mass of the middle-class of this country views the Covid-19 driven lockdown as an instance of the efficacy of the administration. Some members have gone on to question why poor people are walking from cities to the innards of rural India. Many, mainly middle-class people, have defended police excesses like spraying disinfectant on the walkers, or worse, con-

verted the Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi, into one about Muslim bashing.

There's proof that the Union Government didn't take the threat seriously at the time; law enforcement both at the Centre and Delhi State was lax; major shrines of other religions were open. But, none of those seem to matter. Our "Hindu-Muslim" framing is set.

This majority middle-class India lauds the Government when it sends airplanes for countrymen abroad who need to be retrieved to escape the coronavirus. But a hodgepodge quarantine for the unwashed masses is par for the Covid-19 course. It's easier and cheaper to send airplanes for a few Indians abroad, it's harder to arrange for transport for thousands of daily wagers in the big cities who belong to villages.

This urban middle-class India refuses to see their contradiction here. If the poor work so hard in the cities, why must any emergency make them leave the city to return to the village? Isn't the city their home too?

Your essayist departs from the Moraes rapier thrust into the Indian psyche. It was made long back. A part of it is true now. The India that he wrote of is removed from us. In some ways for the good, in many for the worse. A part of today's Indian middle-class is perhaps more brutal than it's stupid. It isn't ready to see the mess that's the lockdown: There have been 22 documented deaths of migrants while walk-



Migrant workers try to catch buses during nationwide lockdown to stem coronavirus spread, at Anand Vihar in New Delhi

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer/FILE

ing back to their villages; many have said they'd die of hunger before the coronavirus kills them. If our poor feel so, what does that mean about our boisterous nationalism?

India's urban culture has made the poor seem sub-human. Our poor are our invisible people. Almost no big country in the world that battles Covid-19 has witnessed

its urban poor walk back to its native place. Our daily-wage workers slave in the cities for decades. Many even have papers that enlist them as domiciled residents. But they

are made to feel that they really don't belong. There is middle class acceptance to their unbelonging. The collective emotion is one of wonder and disconcert: Ah, millions-are-

marching to oh no, get-them-back-in-the-city! Yes, there are middle-class exceptions. But nobody has been able to convince them to stay back, least of all the Union Government. They banged plates saluting our healthcare workers the day the Prime Minister announced the lockdown. No sooner, they set foot for home.

However, it's essential to steer away from binaries: We may empathise with the urban poor but can't demonise the majority of India's urban middle-class. Many sections of today's collective urban middle-class, wasn't unlike the poor. Most of them have had tough lives, have seen their ancestors toil. They too came from villages some generations back. Exactly like today's urban poor, they lived cheek by jowl and were exploited.

One assumes, one's sufferings, makes one a better human being towards other sufferers. It's not true. Our middle class has its origins in discord. But they will behave exactly like their class superiors who exploit and may look down on them. That's why our poor are poor. Poet WH Auden, who encouraged Moraes as a teenaged poet, wrote in his poem "September 1, 1939": "I and the public know/What all school-children learn/Those to whom evil is done/Do evil in return". This moment sums up sub-

continental middle-class mores. (The writer is Associate Professor, Jindal School of Liberal Arts & Humanities)



IN DIFFICULT TIMES, WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO QUIT BELIEVING; WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO QUIT GROWING — JOEL OSTEEN

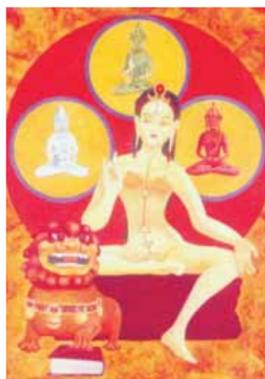


YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19
This week will be very hectic for you. You need to control your aggression. Getting physically violent may hurt your image. You will be highly perceptive and intuitive. You need to control your emotions and ambitions. Avoid any kind of arguments with the people around you. Since it is work from home for most of you, a feeling of stagnation, dissatisfaction may take a toll on you. If you remain focused enough then there is a good chance of realising your potentials and opportunities coming your way. On the personal front, things are a little difficult. You may face accusations and your partner may be demanding. Singles may set their heart on someone who is unavailable to reciprocate their love. Time to clear away all illusions.
Lucky number 1
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Friday



LEO July 23-Aug 22
Your health looks promising this week. This is a great time to practice new health care approach. Exercise, eat well, and make sure that you get enough sleep to keep well. Fitness is on top of your mind. You may come across valuable health information on the internet or indulge in a discussion with your friends. Work from home may put tremendous work pressure and leave you exhausted. In such a case, don't hesitate to seek help or delegate your workload. Leaders should know how to get work done efficiently. On the love front, you will enjoy unconditional love and affection this week. News of a pregnancy will bring happiness and fulfillment in a marital relationship. You will feel emotionally attached and closer to your partner.
Lucky number 16
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Sunday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21
Your determination and will power will help you tackle any health challenges. You need to be disciplined this week. Avoid spicy foods. Follow your routine exercises, and a planned diet to stay healthy during this pandemic. Besides, ensure timely medical care to tackle existing health issues. Your focus is your strength in your career as well. This week is rewarding in terms of your profession. Those in partnership business will work for selfless motives. You will lead from the front and win many followers. Those who are in a job will accomplish an important project that will mark a stepping stone in their career. On the relationship front, you will feel blessed and will share cherished moments with your partner.
Lucky number 9
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Tuesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20
This week most of your time is consumed by your passion for creative pursuits or hobbies. There is a sense of satisfaction, and a positive environment that surrounds and you will enjoy the bliss of good health. You are seeking pleasure in life's little things and appreciating whatever comes to you. On the work front, you will get wakeup calls to change yourself for the better. During your stay at home, you have the time to realise the area for change and get over the confusion. If you stress over small troubles then everything will get tangled. It's time you start taking things as they come. A new love interest is on the horizon. An experience will bring a new passion to your life. Existing relations will also blossom.
Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pastel Blue
Lucky day Thursday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22
You will radiate with a healthy aura and reflect a smart persona this week. You are active and are constantly attempting the make things happen. This week you will utilise your skills to create a world you want. Your skill in smooth-talking and adaptability to any situation is working in your favour. Professionally, you feel stagnated. This may irritate you and make you an under-confident person. Don't worry, this is a temporary feeling. Your creative and logical thinking will sail you through a rough time. You need to realise your potentials and others will believe in you. On the personal front, this is an entertaining and rewarding week. You are spending quality time with your loved ones. This week has in store many good things for you. Stay blessed and safe.
Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19
This week you will be generous and kind. Your concern and care for others will be appreciated. Overall health remains good for you. You are likely to spend some time looking after your ailing parents or a friend. You are a spiritual person and are most likely to invest time in meditation, Yoga and Pranayam and other practices. You will feel in tune with your body, mind and soul. Professionally, this is a good period. Old associations will be helpful. Do not waste your time in leisure. Ensure there are no pending tasks. On the personal front, a happy and prosperous family life will bring bliss. Your partner will understand your dilemma and provide support if needed. Singles, use this time to reflect on what you need from a relationship.
Lucky number 17
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20
This week you have that kind of ability to perform right action at any given moment. You will embark on a new path. By being in tune with the spiritual environment, as well as those around you, you will not make any error in judgment. You are precise, and therefore, appear to perform tasks efficiently. Some of you are taking your work lightly. This may cause a serious problem in your career. The world has not come to an end, so don't ignore your inefficiency and focus on your work. Some of you are experiencing a void. This is the time when you can use some quiet time to decide whether you want to continue the job or take a break. This is a very good week for relationships. Warmth and affection with the near and dear ones is on the cards.
Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Sunday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22
You need to keep a close check on your health this week. Stress and anxiety may take a toll on your health. Ensure that you are following a proper diet, exercise, and sleep routine. Keep a positive attitude. With people at home, you may need some time alone. You will find depth and wisdom in solitude, and in listening to your inner voice. On the work front, you have an excellent energy to complete pending tasks. You will focus your time towards work rather than killing it in unnecessary leisure activities. Financially you will feel secure. Do not invest in any project right now. This is not a good time to put in your money. The week is extremely good in terms of a relationship. Trust and faith will be generated and you will be committed.
Lucky number 7
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Thursday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18
You are sentimental and emotional this week. Small things may cause worry. Ignore rumours and follow the relevant source for news. Any tension can be a cause of ill health. You will suffer mood swings. Talk to someone trustworthy and let out your frustration. Follow meditation and other Yogic practices that will keep you balanced. Career-wise, whether it is your energy, time or money investment, you have worked with full dedication and are now waiting for the dividends. Stay positive as good things are on their way. This is the time to relax. Relationships are smooth and easy-going. You will enjoy mutual understanding among the family members. Love is in the air. Good news awaits married couples.
Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Rose Gold
Lucky day Tuesday



CANCER June 21-July 22
The week will bring new energy, stamina with good health. You are likely to put your all your energy in creative pursuits. This week, you will put forth your best. You may never know what your creation will bring out at this time. Quality time with family and children is indicated. You will connect with old acquaintances this week. This will prove beneficial for your career. Old connections and associations will bring a smile on your face. Stay alert as an opportunity may come your way. Don't lose this chance because it will be difficult to regain it. This week relationships may be troubling and are likely to bother you to a great extent. You may end up hurting the feelings of your near and dear ones.
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Off-white
Lucky day Monday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21
You are filled with a new zest for life. You will feel healthy and experience a change in perspective. Your negative thoughts will be replaced with optimism. You will spend time in analysing your problems and learn the importance of solving them with conscientious thinking. You will feel relaxed in terms of your professional life. Praise from a senior will make you confident, secure and well-established. You are a motivator and will be an inspiration to your colleagues. Those having their own business, your ideas and views are being respected and followed. On the personal front, your dynamic personality will ooze charm and leave an impression on the others. Romance is in the air. Your appreciation and sweet words for your spouse will rejuvenate your relationship.
Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20
You are sensitive to diseases this week, especially water-borne diseases. Keep yourself safe from any kind of infection. Coming in contact with a diseased person could prove harmful for you. Avoid alcohol or unsafe water. Those who are feeling physically low should take timely action. At this time, it is not advisable to ignore your health. You should drink plenty of water, juices to avoid dehydration. On the career front, you will feel indecisive and under-confident as a person. This is all an illusion. Be aware of any misdoings that will be revealed, eventually. You will feel optimistic, upbeat, and hopeful about your relationships. Those in a committed relationship will take it to newer heights. This week you will have fun and be positive and committed.
Lucky number 1
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Tuesday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Be ready to combat evil forces

The first calling of the present pandemic is not to panic. Should you panic, you may lose your sense of reasons and alert, which may not let you carry on your fight prudently in all strength. Let us brave the situation by exercising all the care and caution as suggested by the experts. We have braved many such pandemic in the past. Even this one will pass. Rest assured, the situation may begin to ease out soon.

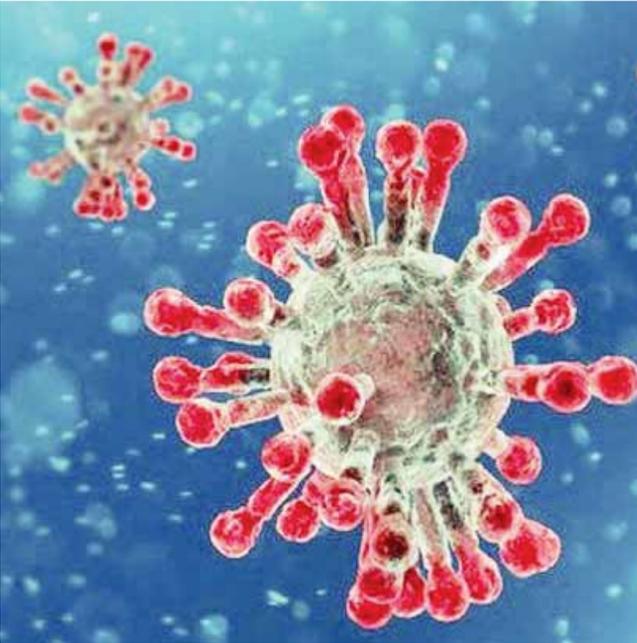
In the cosmic game plan, global health situation is figured out through a look at progressive movement of the Sun. That is about to reach its zenith on April 14th. Till then, watch your health carefully and remain live to our collective obligations as well. Situation may begin to gradually ease out thereafter. Once the Sun moves considerably beyond the Rahu-Ketu axis by June end, the situation may be expectedly be in control.

Even otherwise, if we ever lose our alertness and become complacent, we could be taken for a ride. Only a few days back, Chaitra navaratra got over, when the devout would have offered prayers to Mother Goddess Durga, believed to be repository of Shakti. Mind it, it is a period of major weather change

in India when one needs to rejuvenate oneself and be well geared up to face the challenges during the emerging season. We maintain austerity and regulate our food regime to tone up our digestive system, vital to our overall health condition. Regular prayers help clear off the clutters of mind, regain confidence, and strengthen vital forces playing within.

It may be pertinent to note here that all ancient puranic stories necessarily discuss terror — fight between devtas (high born) and rakshas (demon), in which, the latter always have the first laugh. Why? Perhaps, the devtas would have been complacent, not been alert against impending danger from unseemly forces, and forgotten their sense of collective obligations. Hence their fall. But when all devtas gather, invoke the divine — the all-powerful and all-knowing eternal element of consciousness, which drives all our dynamic functionalities including power of knowing — they outsmart the demonic forces and regain their lost ground. Import of the above simile does not need any further elaboration.

Mother Goddess, in the form we perceive, is shown with 10 hands — car-



rying weapons in eight, a conch shell (blowing instrument) in one, and lotus flower in the other — having two imports. First, the ten directions. Second, the 10 sensory organs — five each of perception and action. She combats negative energies flowing through eight directions with her armouries, with the rest two marked with productivity.

The conch-shell when blown excites a sound note comparable to 'O' — the primal-sound that supposedly got excited when the first motion happened at the primordial source, which, in turn, excited the creation chain. The conch-shell thus naturally symbolises the source energy, up above in the cosmos. The majestic lotus flower in all colours made of numerous petals signifies enormity and diversity of creation. Mind it, lotus flower grows in the mud underneath water body. But not even a trace of mud or water droplet can stay on flower leaves, which implies that though being all-powerful, yet, she does not carry any sense of ego, or attachment to the primal elements making it.

The evil forces are in evidence all across, making us vulnerable to their onslaught. Their killing potential would be felt much faster and relatively cover a fairly wider range than our productive

initiatives, which could take us for a ride if ever we become complacent. We, therefore, need to be fully on guard in a combative mode against the evil forces to make optimum use of our productive potential, vital to our existence.

Now, why weird form assigned to the demons? It is said that demons are conjurers, capable of hoodwinking us by making varied illusionary presences and take us for a ride. Remember, no such form-existence is in evidence anywhere in the world. It is so characterised just to exemplify in clear terms the danger inherent in the evil forces playing from within or beyond. Coronavirus could be taken as one form of unseen demonic force available in our surrounding carrying killing potential. Negative memory implants in our minds are another form of negative forces playing within, which often make us lose our sense of reasons and order that may cost us heavily. Let us be always war-ready to combat such demonic forces for a smooth sail of life.

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