

ANALYSIS 7
PANIC GRIPS PLACE AS
COVID PATIENT DIED IN OGH

MONEY 8
INDIA'S GDP TO SLIP TO 4 PC
IN 2020-21, EXPECTS ADB

SPORTS 11
INDIAN BADMINTON
GOES ONLINE

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY APRIL 4, 2020; PAGES 12 & 13



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



KEERTHY
BOARDS
POWER PETA

Page 12



Motivate religious leaders not to hold congregations: Naidu to governors

4



Nadda asks BJP workers to spread PM's message to masses

5



Naveen - Panic grips place as covid patient died in OGH

8

TODAY

ALMANAC

Math & Paksham:
Chaitra & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam:
Tithi: Ekadashi: 10:29 pm
Nakshatram: Aslesha: 05:08 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start
any important work)

Rahukalam:
09:15 am - 10:47 am
Yanagandam: 01:50 pm - 03:22 pm
Varjyan: 06:39 pm - 08:00 am
Gudika: 06:11 am - 07:43 am
Good Time: (to start any important
work)

Amritakalam: 03:38 pm - 05:08 pm
Ahhuti Muhurtham: 11:54 am - 12:43 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 35°C
Humidity: 72%
Sunrise: 06:08
Sunset: 06:29
Current Weather Conditions
Updated April 03, 2020 5:00 pm

KILLER VIRUS FOOTPRINT GROWS

● First death reported in Andhra ● Positive cases surge to 164

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The total number of coronavirus cases in Andhra Pradesh increased to 164, with the addition of three cases from Friday morning, while the state government confirmed the death of a 55-year-old man, even as two patients got discharged after recovering from the disease.

It was the first death of a Corona patient in the state after the first case was reported on March 12.

With this, the number of active COVID-19 cases in the state currently stood at 159, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Medical and Health Department.

While 12 Corona positive cases were reported since Thursday night, three more were added to the tally till 10.30 PM.

Of the three cases, two were from East Godavari district and one from Visakhapatnam.



Five days after a 55-year-old man died in the government hospital in Vijayawada, the government on Friday confirmed that coronavirus was the cause of the death.

The man contracted the disease from his son, who returned from New Delhi after attending the Tablighi Jamaat congregation on March 17.

The man came to the government hospital at 11.30 AM on March 30 for health checkup. His blood swab was sent for examination and in the meantime he died around 12.30 pm. He was suffering from hypertension and cardiac problems besides being diabetic.

The delay in confirming whether or not he died of

The deceased had contracted the virus from his son who returned from Delhi on March 17 after attending the Tablighi Jamaat religious convention there

coronavirus affliction was because of his other ailments, said a doctor. Arun Srikant said in a release. The man's son tested positive for Covid-19 on March 31 and was kept in quarantine. We have identified 29 others who came in contact with him and they were also sent to quarantine, Srikant added.

A 23-year-old UK returned man in Ongole (the second case reported in the state) recovered from COVID-19 and was discharged from hospital after three blood tests turned negative.

Since a 22-year-old who returned from the UK also recovered and was discharged from hospital in Kakinada. He was the fourth Covid-19 patient in the state.

Deputy Chief Minister (Health) A K K Srinivas said over 140 out of 164 Corona positive patients in AP related to the Jamarat.

3

Survey, test and stop Covid-19 spread, Jagan directs officials

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Tablighi Jamaat convention held at Nizamuddin of Delhi earlier in the month.

A total of 1,085 people attended the event and 946 among them returned to the state. Samples were collected and tests have been conducted on them.

The officials informed that lab results of 881 samples showed that 108 persons were indeed infected with the deadly and highly infectious virus.

While 62 persons who came in contact with the persons who attended the convention were also tested. Of these, 32 were found to be infected while test results of 335 were awaited, the officials said.

3

PM's 'lights off' call sparks fears of power grid collapse

● Sudden change in power demand can disturb grid frequency

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to countrymen to switch off lights for 9 minutes at 9 pm on April 5 to dispel the darkness spread by Coronavirus has sparked fears of national power grid collapse. This is because any sudden change in demand pattern will impact grid frequency that can lead to grid collapse and power blackout throughout the country. If this happens, it may take days to restore normally.

Modi had on Friday called for a blackout urging citizens to light a lamp, candle or shine a mobile flashlight to 'dispel the darkness spread by the Coronavirus'. If the country as a whole responds to Modi's call and switches off at 9 pm, it will result in the grid witnessing unprecedented change in power demand within a span of nine minutes as power demand will hit rock-bottom across the country. The second disruption will come minutes later, when the people will switch on power simultaneously. The



Officials of TS power utilities on alert to avert any disruption
Ready to switch off generating units to maintain grid discipline

—D PRABHAKAR RAO,
CMD, TS Traction

possibility of the grid not being able to withstand such a sudden drastic change in power demand within a matter of nine minutes and collapse, is real, say officials.

The PM's video message at 9 pm on Friday alerted the offi-

cials in the power ministry who went in a huddle to quickly devise a strategy to prevent the April 5 event from creating the ground for a possible grid collapse and resultant blackout throughout the country.

—S. RAGHUNATH, TS Power Minister

ials in the power ministry who went in a huddle to quickly devise a strategy to prevent the April 5 event from creating the ground for a possible grid collapse and resultant blackout throughout the country.

has been monitoring the situation constantly and coming to the rescue of the people financially. The YSRCP government inherited unpaid bills worth Rs 40,000 crore from the previous TDP regime that squandered public funds for programmes like Pasupu Kumkuma and so on.

The TDP looted the state and is now claiming that the situation would have been lot better if it was in power, Sajjala said.

At this crucial hour, Jagan

Centre credits
Rs 500 each to
4.07cr women
Jan Dhan a/cs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre credited the first installment of Rs 500 to over four crore Jan Dhan accounts of poor women on April 3 as part of a relief package in view of the lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak. The Rural Development Ministry said the amount is being released by the ministry and will be credited to more than 20.39 crore Jan Dhan accounts of women by the end of April first week, officials said.

Announcing the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) in view of the ongoing 21-day nationwide lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said on March 26 that ex-gratia payment of Rs 500 would be credited to women Jan Dhan account holders for the next three months, starting from April.

The Centre has released its first installment of Rs 11,092 crore to all states under the State Disaster Risk Management Fund (SDRMF) for setting up quarantine facilities and arranging other facilities for checking the spread of coronavirus.

The Home Ministry said the fund has been approved following assurances given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to chief ministers during his video conference on Thursday. The home minister has approved the release of Rs 11,092 crore under SDRMF to all states, a ministry statement said.

The Centre has released in advance its share of the first installment of SDRMF for 2020-21 amounting to Rs 11,092 crore with a view to augment funds available with

Centre to give
Rs 11,092 cr to states to
deal with COVID-19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday approved release of Rs 11,092 crore to all states under the State Disaster Risk Management Fund (SDRMF) for setting up quarantine facilities and arranging other facilities for checking the spread of coronavirus.

The Home Ministry said the fund has been approved following assurances given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to chief ministers during his video conference on Thursday. The home minister has approved the release of Rs 11,092 crore under SDRMF to all states, a ministry statement said.

The Centre has released in advance its share of the first installment of SDRMF for 2020-21 amounting to Rs 11,092 crore with a view to augment funds available with



the state governments. This fund is allowed to be utilized for setting up quarantine facilities, sample collection and screening; setting up additional testing laboratories; cost of consumables; purchase of personal protection equipment for healthcare, municipal, police and fire authorities; purchase of thermal scanners, ventilators, air purifiers, and consumables for government hospitals, the statement said.

DGP asks TJ members to get tested, save lives

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Calling upon all those who attended the Tablighi Jamaat convention at the group's headquarters in Delhi last month to come forward and get themselves tested, DGP Gautam Sawang said that by not doing so, they are not only putting their own lives at risk, but also putting their loved ones in danger.

The DGP reviewed the situation at various check posts across the state through video conference during which he said that SPs and DSPs in districts have been keeping their posted on various developments.

3

75 cases in a day, TS total now 229

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dashing Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's hopes of declaring TS "Covid-19-free" the state on Friday saw the biggest ever spike in the viral spread, with 75 positive cases being reported on Friday alone. This takes the total number of cases in the state to 229.

Two patients died in the state on Friday, taking the total death toll to 11. One of them is a resident of Shadnagar, while the other one is a resident of Secunderabad. A 50-year-old female, resident of Shadnagar, succumbed while being treated at Osmania Hospital on Thursday. She allegedly tested positive for coronavirus after her death. The Health Department

has therefore initiated contact tracing of the two persons. The silver lining in the dark cloud is that 15 people have been discharged. In total, 32 people have been cured, discharged, and advised home quarantine for 14 days. With this, there are 186 active cases in the city. While initially the Indonesian embassy had tweet-

ing that the Indonesians tested negative and will be under quarantine for 14 days, it later retweeted the post. Of the 229 cases reported across the state, majority of them had reportedly attended the religious congregation that the Muslim missionary group, Tablighi Jamaat, had organised at Nizamuddin, Delhi. Health Minister Etela Rajender said that the government had identified all the people who returned from Nizamuddin. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has asked officials to identify family members of the returnees and quarantine them at the earliest. The Health Department has engaged six labs which are working in two shifts to identify Covid-19 victims in the state.

ed that the Indonesians tested negative and will be under quarantine for 14 days, it later retweeted the post. Of the 229 cases reported across the state, majority of them had reportedly attended the religious congregation that the Muslim missionary group, Tablighi Jamaat, had organised at Nizamuddin, Delhi. Health Minister Etela Rajender said that the government had identified all the people who returned from Nizamuddin. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has asked officials to identify family members of the returnees and quarantine them at the earliest. The Health Department has engaged six labs which are working in two shifts to identify Covid-19 victims in the state.

is the responsibility of the government to provide that equipment and facilities necessary for the delay in doing so. The poor, labourers and immigrants for whom you want us to light a candle also deserve to have fire in their stove. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure this," Khera said.

3

TDP left state bankrupt, its remarks irresponsible

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Taking strong objection to the remarks of the TDP leadership, Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy on Friday said that the State was still bearing the brunt of financial mess created by the previous government.

"It is heinous for TDP to politicise every single issue, even one like the COVID-19 pandemic," Sajjala told reporters here.



He said that there is a financial burden on the state gov-

ernment due to the pandemic and TDP, which was voted out, had left behind debts and deficits but is still speaking in an irresponsible manner.

"At this crucial hour, Jagan

has been monitoring the situation constantly and coming to the rescue of the people financially. The YSRCP government inherited unpaid bills worth Rs 40,000 crore from the previous TDP regime that squandered public funds for programmes like Pasupu Kumkuma and so on.

The TDP looted the state and is now claiming that the

situation would have been lot better if it was in power, Sajjala said.

—S. RAGHUNATH, TS Power Minister

102 new Covid-19 cases in TN; total 411

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu on Friday reported 102 positive coronavirus cases, taking the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state to 411. According to Tamil Nadu Health Minister C. Vijayashankar, government sources said on Friday another senior doctor with the Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital recently complained to the Delhi government that the people brought from Nizamuddin Markaz are not cooperating

with the medical staff. In the neighbouring Ghaziabad, the Tablighi Jamaat members quarantined at the district hospital allegedly misbehaved with the nurses, making lewd remarks and dropping their pants, following which the Uttar Pradesh government sought their immediate return to the National Security Act against them.

They were later shifted to a temporary isolation ward at a private educational institute. Some of them are in Ghaziabad at an isolation ward of the MMG District Hospital.

—SAJJALA RAMAKRISHNA REDDY, Government Advisor (Public Affairs)

PM dashed hopes, expected answers: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had dashed the hopes of Indians who were expecting answers from him on critical questions on the fight against Coronavirus. steps to revive the economy and on helping all those affected due to the lockdown.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera also raised questions on the low testing for Coronavirus in the country, saying it is the first step towards containing the spread of the virus. He said the country was expecting answers from the

Prime Minister during his address on the issues of shortage of personal protection equipment and on helping the poor and migrant labourers who were without food and

water. "Respected Prime Minister today when you addressed the nation, you expected us to make some announcements and share some information with the country," Khera said, addressing a press conference through video conferencing. "The country was dejected today, people did not get any information they were expect-

ing from you on critical questions," he said. Khera said while the Prime Minister in switching off lights and lighting candles, just as they did while clapping for doctors and paramedics, but some questions need to be asked and answered.

"It is the responsibility of the government to provide that equipment and facilities necessary for the delay in doing so. The poor, labourers and immigrants for whom you want us to light a candle also deserve to have fire in their stove. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure this," Khera said.

3

CAPSULE

Food for kids, pregnant women at their doorstep

VIJAYAWADA: Nutritious diet for children and pregnant women will be provided at their homes in the wake of pandemic COVID-19, according to Women Development and Child Welfare director Dr Kritika Shukla. As per instructions given by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the district authorities have been told to take appropriate measures in this regard. Special measures have been taken to supply nutritious food to children aged between 6 and 36 months. 3 and 6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers coordination with ICDS across the State till April 14, she said. District project directors and CDPs have been instructed to supply ration to pregnant women and lactating mothers at their doorstep. Officials will provide 5.1 kg rice, 300 gms red gram, 200 ml oil, 2 eggs, two litres of milk, she said. For children of various age groups, nutritious food will be given, under Balasanevini scheme and YSR Sampurna Poshana scheme. The ration distribution would be carried out through the Health Care secretaries under the supervision of ICDS supervisors.

Lockdown spawns consumers queues

C PRADEEP

■ VIJAYAWADA

Gone on the days when film buffs had to stand in serpentine queues to watch their favourite hero's film on the first day of the film's release. But no one has imagined that one day they have to stand in front of malls to buy groceries. It has become a reality due to coronavirus.

Are you are planning to purchase monthly groceries then be prepared to stand in serpentine queues for several hours before you actually enter the mall. Since the announcement of the lockdown, hundreds of people are seen waiting in queues covering their face with masks with a thermal and entry cards eagerly waiting for their turn to enter the malls.

The same is the case in every mall in the city as people thronging to buy essentials commodities before the government imposes further restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the wake of a growing number of positive cases across the nation.

Many people are returning after seeing a 'Shop Closed' board placed at the main entrance of some malls. It may be noted that the government



Metre Store commercial division head Naveen said that they have been taking precautionary measures to contain the spread of the virus among people coming to the store.

has given relaxation to public to buy vegetables and other essentials from 6 am to 1 pm and later rescheduled the time to from 6 am to 11 am. However, it is observed that entry inside the malls was restricted well before the relaxation time says a few disappointed customers. Though a few delivery drivers are providing door delivery, people prefer to coming to malls and choose groceries of their choice.

They are thoroughly scanned before allowing them to enter the mall through a thermal scanner and sanitizers were provided for the customers to clean their hands

Each customer is given 20 minutes time to complete the shopping and they are instructed to maintain distance while shopping.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Siddhu, a businessman from Ajith Singh Nagar, who visited Metro Store, says that this is his third visit to the mall to purchasing essentials. He said that before 8.30 am, the main entrance was being closed and the security says that there is enough number of customers inside asking for next day.

He said that he comes all the way from his place as the local vendors in his place are making the hay taking advantage of the prevailing conditions. He says children being at home ask for eatables and with the lockdown down, one cannot venture out as they wish.

Metro Store commercial division head Naveen said that they have been taking precautionary measures to contain the spread of the virus among people coming to the store. They are thoroughly scanned before allowing them to enter the

mall through a thermal scanner and sanitizers were provided for the customers to clean their hands. Each customer is given 20 minutes time to complete the shopping and they are instructed to maintain distance while shopping.

He said there is a shortage of a few grocery items due to temporary shutdown. The restriction is imposed for customers not to carry large quantities of groceries, he added.



Covid-19 leaves granite industry workers jobless

PNS ■ KOIKUNTLA

Over 55,000 workers employed in granite quarrying and polishing units in Banaganapalle Assembly constituency of Kurnool district are thrown out of work due to lockdown clamped on the country.

Granite mines are situated in an area of 12,000 hectares in Kolimigundla, Avuku, Banjamangala mandals and Kurnool districts. Since the production of granite slabs has remained paralysed, there was no work for casual workers, who load and unload these granite slabs into tractors and lorries.

For the past 15 days, quarries and polishing units remained closed displacing the workers from their work.

The granite slabs produced here are exported to Anantapur and YSR Kadapa districts. Since the production of granite slabs has remained paralysed, there was no work for casual workers, who load and unload these granite slabs into tractors and lorries.

He said there is a shortage of a few grocery items due to temporary shutdown. The restriction is imposed for customers not to carry large quantities of groceries, he added.

to another. The loss to the State government by way of royalty due to closure of the units is put at Rs 5 lakh per day causing a huge dent to the government exchequer.

The granite slabs produced here are exported to Anantapur and YSR Kadapa districts. Since the production of granite slabs has remained paralysed, there was no work for casual workers, who load and unload these granite slabs into tractors and lorries.

To transport the granite slabs from one place to another, royalty should be paid to the government at the rate of Rs 500 per tractor and Rs 3,000 per lorry. On an average, 500-600 tractors and lorries transport granite slabs from one place



VMC provides food, shelter to migrant workers, beggars

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Measures have been taken in the wake of COVID-19 to provide basic facilities to migrant workers and beggars in the city as per the instructions given by Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Venkatesh.

The Commissioner told officials concerned to take initiative in providing food, shelter and other facilities to migrant workers, labourers, who lost their livelihood, in the city.

Accommodation is being provided to inmates at Sundaramma Girls High School, One Town, CVR Municipal High School, Governorpet, Vivekananda School, Ajith Singh Nagar, SC Welfare Hostel Prakash Nagar, BC Welfare Hostel, Gunadala, Devineni Venkatarama Municipal School, Rajarajeswaripet and Loyola College, Krishnajipet.

The Commissioner in a release on Friday said that all inmates are being provided with food and shelter and appealed to people struggling to cope up with the lockdown to avail the opportunity. He said for more details one can contact Commissioner's office phone No. 0866-2422515 besides WhatsApp number 8181960909 and a toll-free number 13004252000.

To monitor the facilities being provided to inmates an in-charge officer has been appointed, all the inmates are provided with masks, and were told to maintain social distancing.

They were provided with blankets and bed sheets, a regular health check up, is being conducted to inmates. Washrooms are also made available to inmates. Police personnel are deputed to look after security and other aspects. Inmates are provided with breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Vizag zone to oversee AP Customs related issues

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Considering the prevailing situation in the country due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBIC) has nominated Nodal Officers in each zone to facilitate the customs fraternity in customs related matters.

Accordingly, JM Kishore, Joint Commissioner of Customs, Visakhapatnam zone, has been nominated as the Nodal Officer for Customs Trade facilitation in Visakhapatnam zone, covering Andhra Pradesh.

He can be reached through an e-mail: kishorejm@govin and over phone Nos 0891-2560408, Cell : 9963322322.

One can meet him at the Chief Commissioner of Customs and Central Tax, GS Bhavani Port Andhra Pradesh, Visakhapatnam-53003.

Any person/firm seeking details/status of their import cargo needs to provide to the Nodal Officer, all the necessary details such as the bill of entry number, date of filing, location code, which will help the officer in tracking and facilitation of the consignment.

All the stake holders such as importers, customs brokers and trade associations may take note of this facilitation measure for smooth clearance of the imported goods.

Contents of this public notice should be brought to the notice of all members of the customs stakeholders and are urged to avail of the services of Nodal Officer.

CONCRETE HELP



Director of Finance Bharathi Cements G Balaji hands over a cheque for Rs 5 crore to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy for the Chief Minister Relief Fund at his camp office in Tadepalli. Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Pedduri Rambabu Reddy is all smiles

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Waltair Railway Division took initiative and prepared 20,000 masks with its available resources as scarcity of masks and sanitizers was witnessed in the local market.

The Diesel Loco Shed, Visakhapatnam, prepared more than 300 litres of sanitizers on date and distributed among its working staff and units.

In continuation of the measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Indian Railways is making efforts to supplement the health care initiatives of Government of India.

In this direction, Indian Railways is producing masks and sanitizers are being made available to all staff coming on duty. These are also being made available to contract labourers.

To ensure safety of these staff

Zonal Railways, Production Units and PSUs.

In an innovative way to clean hands, a foot pedal/hands free operated hand wash basin developed at SICK LINE of Coaching Depot, Visakhapatnam. Soap water with washbasin provided at entry point of railway offices and units as a preventive measure for spread of Covid-19. Thermal scanners also provided for scanning the persons entering the railway offices.

To ensure safety of these staff and boost their morale, following is being ensured at all workplaces: Masks and hand sanitizers are being made available to all staff coming on duty. These are also being made available to contract labourers. Soap, water and washing facilities are being provided at all work places. With local innovations hands free washing facilities have been provided. Social distancing is being ensured. Awareness in this regard is being regularly spread amongst all staff like trackmen, locomotive pilots.

Till April 1, Indian Railways has produced total 37,704 of masks and 25,808 litres of sanitizers in its Zonal Railways, Production Units and PSUs. Since freight operations of Indian Railways are running 24X7 to maintain essential goods and supplies, operation and maintenance staff are working round-the-clock.



Masks and sanitizers being distributed by Waltair Railway Division to its employees in Visakhapatnam on Friday

Waltair Rly Division ramps up mask, sanitisers production

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Innovative ways to clean hands, a foot pedal/hands free operated hand wash basin developed at SICK LINE of Coaching Depot, Visakhapatnam. Soap water with washbasin provided at entry point of railway offices and units as a preventive measure for spread of Covid-19. Thermal scanners also provided for scanning the persons entering the railway offices.

To ensure safety of these staff and boost their morale, following is being ensured at all workplaces: Masks and hand

sanitizers are being made available to all staff coming on duty. These are also being made available to contract labourers.

Soap, water and washing facilities are being provided at all work places. With local innovations hands free washing facilities have been provided. Social distancing is being ensured. Awareness in this regard is being regularly spread amongst all staff like trackmen, locomotive pilots.

Till April 1, Indian Railways has produced total 37,704 of masks and 25,808 litres of sanitizers in its Zonal Railways, Production Units and PSUs. Since freight operations of Indian Railways are running 24X7 to maintain essential goods and supplies, operation and maintenance staff are working round-the-clock.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, who provided jobs to lakhs of youth, thereby providing them an opportunity to serve the poor, she said and her colleagues have been drawing inspiration from Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, who took many steps to rein in the coronavirus.

The Chief Minister went on record stating that distribution of pensions should not halt under any circumstances on April 1. Working with the same resolve, she said she is rearing justice to her job in spite

of her delivery date is

Pregnancy is no bar to her work

PNS ■ PODURU

She is a volunteer, who believes in service to humanity to serve God. The woman unmindful of her advanced stage of pregnancy went around homes and distributed pension at the doorstep of beneficiaries. Villagers appreciated her dedication to work.

She is Vinnakota Jyoti posted in Marteru of West Godavari district. Prior to the day, when she delivered her baby boy at a hospital in Ramachandrapuram, of East Godavari district, she was distributing pensions among the beneficiaries.

Risking her life, she took part in the door-to-door survey in the village. On Wednesday also she went around homes to deliver pensions. Local government officials, YSRCP women's wing state secretary Karri Gouri Subhashini, YSRCP leader Karri Venka Babu and others appreciated her dedication to service.

Expressing gratitude to



She is Vinnakota Jyoti posted in Marteru of West Godavari district. Prior to the day, when she delivered her baby boy at a hospital in Ramachandrapuram of East Godavari district, she was distributing pensions among the beneficiaries

of her delivery date is approaching.

Awareness about Covid-19 higher in Tier-I cities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Awareness about Covid-19 is higher in Tier-1 cities in comparison to Tier-II and Tier-III cities, found a joint survey by the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, and Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, researchers.

They studied the impact of Coronavirus peak on daily commutes during the transition phase between pre-lockdown and the lockdown period.

This study analysed travel and visit behaviour changes that occurred during the third week of Covid-19 outbreak in the country during the pre-lockdown period. The data related to daily commute and visit behaviour was collected through an online questionnaire survey.

In tier-1 cities, it was found that about 12 per cent of the respondents switched from public to private mode during the third week of Covid-19. This modal shift was about nine per cent in tier-II cities



and about seven per cent in tier-III cities. Moreover, nearly 48 per cent of people said that they did not travel to work during the third week of March, whereas 28 per cent had the same frequency of travel to work. When enquired about cancellation of trips between the cities using major

mode of transportation, around 18 per cent said they cancelled their flights whereas, 20 per cent of respondents cancelled train journeys. This indicates that the awareness about COVID-19 is higher in tier-I cities, followed by tier-II (20.6 per cent) and tier-III cities (15.8 per cent). The researchers believe that the lockdown deci-

sion taken by the government has decreased risk of exposure to Coronavirus due to decrease in crowded settings observed in public transport such as buses, metro and trains.

"Given the uncertainties in the minds of the commuters regarding their travel behaviour due to social distancing, it is important for policymakers and local transport authorities in general to understand the change in travel pattern," said Ganesan S Pawar, one of the researchers.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or for the result of any action taken on the basis of this publication. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any comments published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services & shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements."

CAPSULE

Lions Eye Hospital donates Rs 1 lakh to CMRF

VIJAYAWADA: Following a call given by government to extend support to contain the rapid spread of COVID-19 pandemic, members of Lakshmi Seva East Lions Eye Hospital had donated Rs 1 lakh to the Chief Minister Relief Fund. The cheque was handed over to Collector M Imitaz at the camp office here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, hospital chairman Ln Dr B Hanumahal hailed the timely measures taken by Chief Minister YS Jagamohan Reddy to prevent the spread of the pandemic during the lockdown period. Ln Dr Gogineni Tejral Solanki, V Srinivas, Basik Sangvi and others were present.

Govt tackling Covid-19 effectively: Governor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government is taking necessary precautions to prevent the spread of Coronavirus, said Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan. Speaking during the video conference with President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday, the Governor said officials at front line deserve appreciation and coordination. He said that the government has made necessary arrangements to supply essential commodities to the poor during the ongoing lockdown. Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu also participated in the video-conference and addressed the Governors and Lt Governors on the measures to be taken to prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

The Governor while giving details of the situation in the State said that the State government has taken steps to reduce the relaxation time to avoid mass gathering and effectively implementing the lockdown. He said the positive cases increased in the past three days raising the total of cases to 161 out of which 140 cases



The video conference of President Ram Nath Kovind and Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu continued for three hours during which the President and the Vice-President interacted with all the Governors and Lt Governors and enquired about the situation in their respective States

are from those who attended religious meet in Delhi. Persons, who came in contact with them, were also identified and sent to isolation centres and home quarantine as required, said the Governor. Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu particularly enquired about the status of the agricultural sector in the present lock-down period and steps taken to mitigate the problems faced by farmers. He enquired about the measures taken by the State governments to assist the needy from farmers during the present season. The Vice-President said that AP is the hub of several commercial crops, the govt

should ensure that farmers do not face any problems in selling or transporting their produce. Giving details about the agricultural sector and farmers, the Governor said that farmers were exempted from lockdown so that agricultural operations could continue by maintaining social distancing.

The video conference of the President and the Vice-President continued for three hours during which the President and the Vice-President interacted with all the Governors and Lt Governors and enquired about the situation in their respective states. Secretary to Governor Mukesh Kumar Meena was also present during the video conference.

Armed Forces provide facilities for Covid-19 infected in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Dedicated Covid-19 facilities, including high dependency units, intensive care unit beds, are being prepared in 51 hospitals of the Armed Forces across the country. Some of these facilities are located in Visakhapatnam, Kolkata, Kochi, Dandigal near Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kanpur, Jaisalmer, Jorhat and Gorakhpur.

Armed Forces have been working round-the-clock to provide medical and logistics support to the needy to contain COVID-19 pandemic. The Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) has deployed its resources to aid the civilian authorities at this crucial time.



Armed Forces have been working round-the-clock to provide medical and logistics support to the needy to contain COVID-19 pandemic.

The Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) has deployed its resources to aid the civilian authorities at this crucial time

Command Hospital (Northern Command), Udhampur. Six more hospitals are being equipped soon with the resources to begin COVID-19 testing.

Special flights of Indian Air Force evacuated people and carried medical supplies. A C-17 Globemaster III comprising crew, medical team and support staff carried 15 tonnes of medical supplies to China and airlifted 125 persons, including five children comprising Indian nationals and a few citizens from friend countries on its return. The C-17 Globemaster III has made another trip for further treatment. In addition, 15 other facilities are being kept ready as standby for use, if required.

Five viral testing labs at Armed Forces hospitals, which can carry out COVID-19 tests, have been made part of the national grid. These include Army Hospital (Research & Referral), Delhi Cantt, Air Force Command Hospital, Bengaluru, and Armed Forces Medical College, Pune; Command Hospital (Central Command), Lucknow and

and assist in setting up of their own testing, treatment and quarantine facilities between March 13 and 21.

Transport fleet of IAF is being used to assist in transportation of essential supplies, medicines and medical equipment. Twenty eight fixed wing and 21 helicopters are on standby in various locations across the country.

Six naval ships are kept ready for assistance to neighbouring countries. Five medical teams are also on standby for deployment in Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan.

Killer virus footprint grows

Continued from Page 1

climbing to 32, adding eight overnight. In fact, the district saw the fastest spread of COVID-19 from three to 32 in a span of just two days. Krishnna district too witnessed a significant rise in Corona cases to 23, with Vijayawada city alone reporting 18. Three major hotspots have been identified in the city where the prevalence of the disease was high and, accordingly, the districts have clamped further restrictions on peoples movement, besides sanitising those areas.

The far-off north coastal districts of Srikrishna and Vizianagaram appear to be the safe zones in the state right now with not a single case of Corona reported from there.

DGP asks TJ members...

Continued from Page 1

Vehicles entering the state are being allowed inside only after thorough verification, Sawang revealed. He praised the police personnel who have been working round the clock in shifts. The DGP attributed the spike in the number of Coronavirus positive cases in the state due to the negligence of those who returned from abroad. He said there was an unprecedented rise in the number of Corona cases in the state because of the carelessness of the people who took part in the Markaz convention in Delhi.

While it has been confirmed that 1,085 people from AP attended the convention, the police suspect that the number of participants could be much higher.

PM dashed hopes, expected...

Continued from Page 1

The Congress leader said the nation expected Modi to announce the proposed moratorium on agriculture loan repayment. The state government is giving Rs 1,000 to each BPL family in the current situation, he said describing how Jagan has been providing benefit to the eligible under various welfare schemes unlike Naidu who had imposed a cut in huge burden on the state government.

He found fault with TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu's contention that the government was not paying wages in full to employees in spite of having sufficient funds.

"While the government is working hard at this time, TDP leaders are using people

with such a health crisis, "do we not owe it to health professionals to provide them with essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)? And if the government fails to do this is it not our duty as opposition to question the government on why are you failing to provide our doctors with PPEs?"

"Why did they delay in issuing the orders for banning exports of PPEs? Why didn't the Prime Minister today come and informed a worried coun-

Vice-President of the association Suresh Chitturi said the industry suffered heavily, beginning February, owing to false information linking coronavirus to consumption of chicken and eggs and subsequently due to problems in movement of poultry during the lockdown

The AIPBA has submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 30 seeking "urgent financial assistance and rescue package" from the Centre.

Chitturi said the association requested restructuring of loans allowing conversion of existing working capital loans cash credit (CC) limits to term loans with two years moratorium. He said the association also requested the government for interest subvention and issuing fresh working capital.

All the 20,000 capacity farms should be provided a compensation of Rs 100 per bird based

"The current 2.5 months loss of poultry industry (broiler farmers and layer farmers, integration companies and breeding companies) beginning February 1 to April 15 until lockdown opens is of Rs 22,500 crore," poultry breeders said.

On the current market scenario, the memorandum said poultry birds were being sold at a price of Rs 10 to Rs 30 per kg at the Farm Gate level due to fake news regarding Coronavirus.

Noting that the production cost of poultry in the country was Rs 80 per kg, the association stated that the prices of eggs have plunged to two rupees per egg at the Farm Gate.

It pointed out that the cost of production of egg on an average was four rupees per egg, it said.

Survey, test and stop Covid-19 spread...

Continued from Page 1

Chief Minister instructed the officials to follow a strategic plan based on data obtained from the police and medical personnel and survey.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to strictly ensure social distancing is maintained at Rythu Bazaars, shops and supermarkets. The price list should be displayed at every shop and strict actions should be taken against those who were involved in attacks. He recalled that erstwhile AP government under the leadership of Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy had passed an Act in 2007 to protect the doctors and medical staff and the same should be introduced now.

He condemned violence against doctors, medical staff and institutions and demanded that stern action be taken against those who were involved in attacks. He recalled that erstwhile AP government under the leadership of Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy had passed an Act in 2007 to protect the doctors and medical staff and the same should be introduced now.

The Telangana power utilities too sprung into action to put adequate safeguards in place to avert such a situation on April 5.

"Nothing will happen if grid discipline is followed. We are taking all measures to maintain supply as usual before and after the event," Devulapalli Prabhakar Rao, CMD, TS Transco, told The Pioneer. The Telangana power utilities have started a strategy to manage the power scheduling if such a need arises by keeping some of their generating units in ready mode to switch off a few units to main grid frequency in case the country as a whole responds to the PM's call. Central utilities like NTPC may also keep some of their gas-based stations in a state of readiness to switch on and off as per grid requirements.

The AIPBA has submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 30 seeking "urgent financial assistance and rescue package" from the Centre.

Chitturi said the association requested restructuring of loans allowing conversion of existing working capital loans cash credit (CC) limits to term

loans with two years moratorium. He said the association also requested the government for interest subvention and issuing fresh working capital.

All the 20,000 capacity farms should be provided a compensation of Rs 100 per bird based

"The current 2.5 months loss of poultry industry (broiler farmers and layer farmers, integration companies and breeding companies) beginning February 1 to April 15 until lockdown opens is of Rs 22,500 crore," poultry breeders said.

On the current market scenario, the memorandum said poultry birds were being sold at a price of Rs 10 to Rs 30 per kg at the Farm Gate level due to fake news regarding Coronavirus.

Noting that the production cost of poultry in the country was Rs 80 per kg, the association stated that the prices of eggs have plunged to two rupees per egg at the Farm Gate.

It pointed out that the cost of production of egg on an average was four rupees per egg, it said.

POULTRY SECTOR SEEKS CENTRE'S INTERVENTION

Continued from Page 1

The Corona outbreak and the consequent lockdown have pushed the poultry sector in the country into a crisis with losses projected at Rs 22,500 crore beginning February this year, prompting the apex body of poultry breeders to seek Centre's intervention to bail it out.

The All India Poultry Breeders Association (AIPBA) has sought restructuring of loans, interest subvention among others from the Narendra Modi-led government to help the industry tide over the crisis.

Vice-President of the association Suresh Chitturi said the industry suffered heavily, beginning February, owing to false information linking coronavirus to consumption of chicken and eggs and subsequently due to problems in movement of poultry during the lockdown

The AIPBA has submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 30 seeking "urgent financial assistance and rescue package" from the Centre.

Chitturi said the association requested restructuring of loans allowing conversion of existing working capital loans cash credit (CC) limits to term

loans with two years moratorium. He said the association also requested the government for interest subvention and issuing fresh working capital.

All the 20,000 capacity farms should be provided a compensation of Rs 100 per bird based

"The current 2.5 months loss of poultry industry (broiler farmers and layer farmers, integration companies and breeding companies) beginning February 1 to April 15 until lockdown opens is of Rs 22,500 crore," poultry breeders said.

On the current market scenario, the memorandum said poultry birds were being sold at a price of Rs 10 to Rs 30 per kg at the Farm Gate level due to fake news regarding Coronavirus.

Noting that the production cost of poultry in the country was Rs 80 per kg, the association stated that the prices of eggs have plunged to two rupees per egg at the Farm Gate.

It pointed out that the cost of production of egg on an average was four rupees per egg, it said.

Tablighi members are not cooperating...

Continued from Page 1

Police said the Tablighi members have been booked for indulging in ugly acts and passing lewd remarks against the women staff members at the hospital.

On Thursday, the Delhi Health Department officially sought more security from police in hospital as the coronavirus patients brought from the Markaz and some other patients were triggering a "law and order problem" and "commotion" in hospitals. It said those who had congregated inside the markaz were brought out in a massive exercise held from March 30 to April 1, 536 of them were sent to various hospitals after they showed symptoms and 1,810 were sent to quarantine facilities.

The All India Poultry Breeders Association (AIPBA) has sought restructuring of loans, interest subvention among others from the Narendra Modi-led government to help the industry tide over the crisis.

Vice-President of the association Suresh Chitturi said the industry suffered heavily, beginning February, owing to false information linking coronavirus to consumption of chicken and eggs and subsequently due to problems in movement of poultry during the lockdown

The AIPBA has submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 30 seeking "urgent financial assistance and rescue package" from the Centre.

Chitturi said the association requested restructuring of loans allowing conversion of existing working capital loans cash credit (CC) limits to term

loans with two years moratorium. He said the association also requested the government for interest subvention and issuing fresh working capital.

All the 20,000 capacity farms should be provided a compensation of Rs 100 per bird based

"The current 2.5 months loss of poultry industry (broiler farmers and layer farmers, integration companies and breeding companies) beginning February 1 to April 15 until lockdown opens is of Rs 22,500 crore," poultry breeders said.

On the current market scenario, the memorandum said poultry birds were being sold at a price of Rs 10 to Rs 30 per kg at the Farm Gate level due to fake news regarding Coronavirus.

Noting that the production cost of poultry in the country was Rs 80 per kg, the association stated that the prices of eggs have plunged to two rupees per egg at the Farm Gate.

It pointed out that the cost of production of egg on an average was four rupees per egg, it said.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Continued from Page 1

The Corona outbreak and the consequent lockdown have pushed the poultry sector in the country into a crisis with losses projected at Rs 22,500 crore beginning February this year, prompting the apex body of poultry breeders to seek Centre's intervention to bail it out.

The All India Poultry Breeders Association (AIPBA) has sought restructuring of loans, interest subvention among others from the Narendra Modi-led government to help the industry tide over the crisis.

Vice-President of the association Suresh Chitturi said the industry suffered heavily, beginning February, owing to false information linking coronavirus to consumption of chicken and eggs and subsequently due to problems in movement of poultry during the lockdown

The AIPBA has submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 30 seeking "urgent financial assistance and rescue package" from the Centre.

Chitturi said the association requested restructuring of loans allowing conversion of existing working capital loans cash credit (CC) limits to term

loans with two years moratorium. He said the association also requested the government for interest subvention and issuing fresh working capital.

All the 20,000 capacity farms should be provided a compensation of Rs 100 per bird based

"The current 2.5 months loss of poultry industry (broiler farmers and layer farmers, integration companies and breeding companies) beginning February 1 to April 15 until lockdown opens is of Rs 22,500 crore," poultry breeders said.

On the current market scenario, the memorandum said poultry birds were being sold at a price of Rs 10 to Rs 30 per kg at the Farm Gate level due to fake news regarding Coronavirus.

Noting that the production cost of poultry in the country was Rs 80 per kg, the association stated that the prices of eggs have plunged to two rupees per egg at the Farm Gate.

It pointed out that the cost of production of egg on an average was four rupees per egg, it said.

How to fight Coronavirus blues?: expert gives tips

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A top mental health expert has given tips on how to spend the Coronavirus lockdown period productively at home and to keep concerns, tension and stress at bay.

The Director of the National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) here, B N Gangadhar, suggested some activities along with family members, and doing things which one would otherwise want to do but did not.

"Un-clutter your house, remove garbage from your house, play some small indoor games like cards with your family members, learn to cook with your family members, do some group activities with your family members which you would have never done and wanted to do it could be exercise, it could be yoga, meditation, bhajan, you all do it together," he said.

If any member of the family is preparing for an entrance examination which has been postponed or needs help by conducting mock tests for some period during daytime



leveraging online resources, Gangadhar, a recipient of the Padmashri award, told PTI in an interview.

"TV should be watched by all the members at specified hours (only); because you are at home, don't spend all time watching it," he said.

Some women members may have tendency to feed the family with delicious food and try out new menus but one has to be careful not to add weight during the lockdown period.

"More so, not exercising, not going out, makes it all the more important to reduce your

indulgence on food altogether," Gangadhar said. There are no restrictions on people coming to their house compound, where they can do gardening and play shuttle with their own family members, suggested Gangadhar, a senior professor of Psychiatry.

"If you follow all of these, you can keep the concerns, or tension and stress of that lockdown away, and actually use it very productively reforming yourself and family," he said.

He stressed that while HIV and Hepatitis B, Coronavirus does not leave any lasting scar

"TV should be watched by all the members at specified hours (only); because you are at home, don't spend all time watching it," he said

and permanent defect.

People's degree of concern over Coronavirus is more than what it deserves, he said, but added, "caution that we should take in the time of crisis, should be more than what we think it deserves."

Coronavirus is a "transient phenomenon" and not a permanent one, he stressed.

Gangadhar, who has more

than 30 years of extensive experience in the field of mental health from both clinical and academic perspectives,

said there is no specific antibiotic medicine that is known

for this disease, nor is there any vaccine that has been approved for its use.

CRPF helpline gets 91% calls for COVID-19, lockdown info

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Calls seeking to obtain information about COVID-19, its testing centres and lockdown related measures in the country constitute an overwhelming 91 per cent of distress messages received by a national CRPF helpline set up last week to help citizens, latest data shows.

This is in comparison to only about eight per cent of distress messages received by it for supply of essentials like ration and medicine.

The Kashmir-based 'madadgar' helpline was expanded on March 26 for a pan-India coverage with the addition of WhatsApp number 7082814411 to help those affected by lockdown and other restrictions declared by the government to contain the spread of coronavirus.

It earlier used to only serve states in the northern part with a strong focus on Kashmir valley and Kashmiris, through its landline number 14411 and Twitter handle @CRPFmadadgar.

A per latest data accessed by PTI, 4,289 calls and messages were received by the helpline between March 26-April 2 out of which 4,289 (91 per cent) pertained to seeking information about the COVID-19 pandemic and related issues like when will the ongoing lockdown end, when will the trains services resume and even asking what kind of measures the government is taking to ensure that the disease does not spread.

The data said these information-seeking calls or messages on the telephone line, WhatsApp, Twitter, email and Facebook were about people

seeking details of testing laboratories, quarantine centres, treatment facilities in their vicinity or for places where the caller had a near or dear one residing.

People also contacted the 'madadgar' helpline seeking contact details of medical and other essential services in their area, local police and administrative helplines and issues related to the ongoing 21-day lockdown that was declared on the midnight of March 24.

A number of callers also sought information about the preventive measures to be deployed to combat the viral disease that has infected lakhs of people and killed thousands across the globe. "We had thought that the new helpline for COVID-19 will be deluged with calls for supply of rations and hence we are training logistics and manpower for these physical deliveries.

SHORT READS



'Bothered' by unknown callers, Digvijaya switches off phone

BHOPAL: Veteran Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Friday said that he had to switch off his mobile phone as he was annoyed by the unsolicited calls he had been getting repeatedly.

He said he has taken up the matter with the police department. Taking to Twitter, Singh said, "These are the phone calls that have been bothering me since 4 days. I said to my service provider MNP I also spoke to the service provider but these calls are not stopping. Sady I have switched off my mobile number."

In this condition, I have to switch off my mobile number." He also attached the screen shots of the numbers, some of them international, from which he has been getting the calls. Taking a swipe at Digvijaya Singh over his decision to switch off the phone, BJP MLA and state party vice president Rameshwar Sharma asked him to forward the calls to his number.

NCP slams Modi over his 'light up lamps' message

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The NCP on Friday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his light up lamps message, saying it left citizens quite disappointed in the fight against coronavirus even as one of its Maharashtra ministers termed it as mere stupidity to tell people to do so.

Maharashtra Housing Minister and NCP leader Nitendra Awhad also said he will not switch off lights as appealed by Modi as he is "not stupid".

In his 9 AM video message to the nation, the prime minister urged people to switch off lights of their homes at 9 pm for nine minutes on April 5 and light up lamps, candles and mobile flashlights to display the nation's collective spirit to defeat coronavirus.



Another Maharashtra minister and NCP national spokesperson Nawab Malik said it was expected Modi would speak about measures being taken to combat COVID-19, but people were instead told to light up lamps. People were left quite disappo-

inted after Modi's speech delivered at 9 AM, the Minority Affairs Minister said. People were expecting he would talk about what measures the Centre has taken for combating the COVID-19 outbreak, steps being taken to give relief to the affected people. But

It was expected of the PM to shed light in the lives of people particularly the poor, who are faced with darkness due to the outbreak of the disease.

— NITENDRA AWHAD
Maharashtra Housing Minister and MCP leader

were instead told to light up lamps, Malik said.

Attacking Modi, Awhad, too, said it was expected of the prime minister to talk about providing essential services and food to the people and assure about adequate availability of masks, sanitizers and medicines in the country.

Awhad said it was expected of the PM to shed light in the

lives of people, particularly the poor, who are faced with darkness due to the outbreak of the disease.

But instead he asked them to switch off lights and flash mobile phone lights to pure stupidity and childlessness to tell people to switch off lights therefore, Awhad said in a video message.

The minister said he is working among people and will not switch off lights at his home.

I will give the money that will be required for (buying) candles and oil (to light lamps) to the poor. I will keep lights in my home switched on and won't light up any candle. I just want to say I am not stupid, he added.

Awhad also accused Modi of trying to make an event out of everything.

Motivate religious leaders not to hold congregations: Naidu to governors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday urged governors and top officials to motivate spiritual and religious leaders to advise their followers against holding congregations and practice social distancing to prevent the transmission of coronavirus.

Addressing governors, LGs and administrators along with President Ram Nath Kovind via video, Naidu also asked them to stick on the arrangements made to ensure harvesting, storage and procurement of agriculture produce in their respective states and Union territories.

He urged them to contact spiritual and religious leaders in their respective regions and advise them to encourage followers to strictly adhere to social distancing and to observe personal hygiene.

On his arrival session, Naidu urged them to advise the state agencies to ensure smooth movement of farm machinery so that the farmers do not face any hardship.

able action" which caused widespread adverse impact across the country, Naidu cautioned the governors and Lt governors to treat it as a "wake-up call".

"No religious congregations should be allowed to take place in your respective states," he said in an apparent reference to the Tablighi Jamaat congregation at Delhi's Nizamuddin.

On his arrival session, Naidu urged them to advise the state agencies to ensure smooth movement of farm machinery so that the farmers do not face any hardship.

Indore cops adopt 'ghost' drive to keep people home

PNS ■ INDORE

The police in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city on Friday adopted a unique approach to stop people from violating the COVID-19 lockdown, by using 'ghosts' to scare them into staying indoors.

The Vijay Nagar police enlisted the help of some social workers who donned black masks and attires with images of lungs, and walked around slums and crowded colonies to frighten residents into staying home, an official said.

The Vijay Nagar police

separately, the defence ministry said five viral testing labs at armed forces hospitals have been made part of national grid for carrying out tests for coronavirus infection.

These include Army Hospital (Research and Referral) in Delhi, Air Force Command Hospital in Bangalore, Armed Forces Medical College in Pune, Command Hospital in Lucknow and Command Hospital in Udhampur.

1,400 Nizamuddin event attendees from Maha traced: Top

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tendulkar on Friday said that about 1,400 people from the state, who had attended the religious congregation at Delhi's Nizamuddin last month, have been traced. Talking to PTI, Tendulkar said these people are being isolated or quarantined by the district administrations.

"The quarantine facilities for them will be put in place in their respective districts. The number of participants is 1,400. At least 9,000 people had participated in the religious congregation at Tablighi Jamaat's headquarters at Nizamuddin in the national capital last month. The event became a key source for the spread of COVID-19 in India as many of the participants travelled to various parts of the country for missionary works.

So far, around 400 COVID-19 positive cases and about 12 deaths in the country were found to have links with the Nizamuddin Markaz.



Separately, the defence ministry said five viral testing labs at armed forces hospitals have been made part of national grid for carrying out tests for coronavirus infection.

These include Army Hospital (Research and Referral) in Delhi, Air Force Command Hospital in Bangalore, Armed Forces Medical College in Pune, Command Hospital in Lucknow and Command Hospital in Udhampur.

ICMR gives go ahead for COVID-19 testing in labs under DBT, CSIR, DAE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has given its consent for initiation of COVID-19 testing in laboratories run by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

DAE laboratories have been advised to strictly follow ICMR guidelines before initiation of testing for coronavirus infection, an ICMR official said.

As a note of caution, the apex health research body said that "SARS-CoV-2 is a highly transmissible and infectious virus. Sample handling at too many points and by inadequately trained staff can lead to spills and laboratory outbreaks."

30K doctors volunteer to join fight against COVID

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 30,000 doctors, including retired government and Armed Forces Medical Services, and private physicians have volunteered to help the government fight against COVID-19 pandemic, a senior government official said on Friday. The government on March 25 had appealed to retired government, Armed Forces Medical Services, public sector undertaking or private doctors to come forward and join the efforts to fight the pandemic caused by the deadly novel coronavirus.

30,100 volunteer doctors, including retired government, Armed Forces Medical Services, public sector under-taking or private doctors have

Administration quarantines 24 Tablighi Jamaat returnees & their family members

PNS ■ ITANAGAR

The Capital Complex administration has quarantined 24 persons, who attended the congregation at Nizamuddin in Delhi last month, after a returnee of the Tablighi Jamaat event tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, an official said on Friday.

The 24 persons and their family members have been quarantined.

Capital Complex Deputy Commissioner Komkar Dulom said.

A red alert has been sounded across the state after a person, a resident of Medo village in Lohit

district, who had attended the Jamaat event tested COVID-19 positive. However six others of nearby Namsai district were found negative.

Dulom said that efforts are on to trace more people who attended the congregation at

Nizamuddin and they would also be put on quarantine.

The state government had so far collected 80 samples from the state and sent them to Guwahati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) and Regiov.

As of now, over a hundred people are staying in quarantine facilities, while 85 have completed the 14-day quarantine period.

Meanwhile, Arunachal Pradesh Health Minister Alo Libang said Assam government has given its consent to treat critical patients from the eastern parts of Arunachal Pradesh at Assam Medical College (AMC) at Dibrugarh.

Government sources said the ministers deliberated on various arrangements being made to deal with increasing cases of coronavirus cases as well as to ensure adequate supplies of medicine and essential commodities during the lockdown.

India has recorded over 2,300 positive cases of coronavirus and at least 56 deaths so far.

Globally, the virus has infected more than one million people and claimed around 50,000 lives.

STAY HOME, SAVE LIVES:

Google Doodle shares tips to prevent spread of coronavirus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

and some talked to each other over a phone call.

Clicking on the doodle directs the user to another page that lists "Coronavirus tips".

"As COVID-19 continues to impact communities around the world, help stop the spread by following these tips," the page reads. The pandemic has claimed 55 lives in India, while 2,301 people have been tested positive for the virus.

The webpage lists "Stay home", "Keep a safe distance", "Wash hands often", "Cover your cough", and "Sick? Call the helpline" as the steps to prevent the spread of coronavirus.



It also features a list of Dos and Don'ts. "Wash your hands

regularly for 20 seconds, with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub. Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue or flexed elbow when you cough or sneeze. Avoid close contact (1 meter or 3 feet) with people who are unwell. Stay home and self-isolate from others in the household if you feel unwell. Read the list of precautions to be taken."

Further it also suggested not to "touch your eyes, nose, or mouth if your hands are not clean". The webpage also shows an interactive map of the world with realtime coronavirus statistics.

based hand rub. Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue or flexed elbow when you cough or sneeze. Avoid close contact (1 meter or 3 feet) with people who are unwell. Stay home and self-isolate from others in the household if you feel unwell. Read the list of precautions to be taken."

The DBT, DST, CSIR and

SHORT READS

At least 1,000 undertrials released on bail in Bengal

KOLKATA: At least 1,000 undertrial prisoners have been released from various correctional homes in West Bengal on interim bail in keeping with the Supreme Court's directions to consider decongesting the jails in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. A senior official said on Friday. The process of granting bail to the undertrials commenced on March 23, the Legal Services Authority secretary Durga Khanlal said. Following the apex court's direction, the Calcutta High Court had formed a three-member committee to examine the situation in correctional homes in the state and the number of inmates who can be granted bail or parole to decongest the jails.

Curfew-like 48-hour total shutdown in Bhubaneswar, Badrak

BHUBANESWAR: Intensifying its battle against COVID 19, the Odisha government has imposed a 48-hour total shutdown, akin to curfew, in the state capital Bhubaneswar and Badrak town from 8 pm on Friday, the state's top official said. The lockdown in other parts of the state will continue during which essential supplies like groceries, vegetables and milk will be available to people. However, all shops selling essential commodities will remain closed during the shutdown in Bhubaneswar and Badrak towns, Chief Secretary K N Venkateswar said. Only select medicine stores will be open, he said, adding the local administrations will decide on which pharmacies will continue to function.

COVID-19 cases rise to 172 in UP

LUCKNOW: There has been a steep rise in COVID-19 cases in Uttar Pradesh with at least 46 fresh cases being reported in the last 24 hours, taking to 172 the total number of coronavirus patients in the state as on Friday, a senior health official said. The total number of COVID-19 positive cases in UP was reported to be 126 on Thursday. On Saturday afternoon the total number of positive COVID-19 cases across the state are 172," a senior health official said.

Coronavirus cases rise to 43 in Haryana

CHANDIGARH: Cases of coronavirus rose to 43 in Haryana on Friday, with Nuh and Gurugram being among the districts to report fresh cases, officials said. As per the Health Department's bulletin, three persons who reported Covid-19 positive are natives of Kerala and natives who had been residing in Gurugram hall from Maharashtra. One person who tested positive in Gurugram belongs to Uttar Pradesh. Addressing media via digital link, Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Rajiv Arora said, "Total number of positive cases as of Friday morning was 43. Out of total number of positive cases, 13 have been discharged".

COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

NGOs, locals pitch in to feed strays in Goa

PNS ■ PANAJI

The COVID-19 lockdown may have forced many to stay indoors, but some compassionate Goans have stepped out of their homes to care for stray dogs.

Animal lovers in Goa have taken the onus of feeding stray dogs despite the lockdown, which is in place to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Several NGOs and citizens are pitching around feeding strays, who largely survive on leftovers from restaurants and roadside eateries, which are shut because of the curfew.

"Volunteers from NGOs move around without proper passes or authority letters, but we don't stop them as they are for a good cause," a senior police official said.



"Food is not the only issue, dogs get dehydrated without water in this heat," said Fidoll Frida J Pereira, an animal lover who feeds strays in South Goa's Salcette taluka regularly.

"Volunteers from NGOs move around without proper passes or authority letters, but we don't stop them as they are for a good cause," a senior police official said

"I have been urging people to keep containers filled with water outside their homes for strays," she said.

Pereira looks at least 40 kg of rice to feed strays at Margao, Nuwem, Fatorda, Colva, Majorda, Seraulim, Betalbatim, Chandor, Currimor, among other areas.

"Since the lockdown, she has been cooking 50 kg of rice every day, as the demand has increased, Pereira said.

Similarly, Netravali-based Amit Naik tours the entire district every morning, feeding stray animals.

"I leave my house at around 7.30 am and return only by late afternoon, after covering Samorvand, Sangem, Margao and Canacona, in extreme South," he said. Many donate money and some even provide rice bags to feed strays.

The country is in a 21-day



video campaign, former India captain Bhairung Bhutia urged all the fans to follow the government guidelines and stay indoors.

"On behalf of the entire football fraternity and the All India Football Federation, I would request everyone to stay at home. Stay safe, stay healthy, and stay positive," Bhutia said.

The video also featured Sunil Chhetri, Dangmee Grace and Indian U-17 Women's Cup World Cup probable Avika Singh.

Senior men's team striker Jeje Lalpekhlua said for him "it is a pleasure" to give something back to the fans.

Gathering of migrants, Jamaat event caused setback, Prez tells Guvs, LGs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



In his second communication with all Governors, Lieutenant Governors (LGs) and Administrators, President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday said that gathering of migrant workers and Tablighi Jamaat congregation in Delhi caused a setback to the efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

He also warned against gathering of migrant workers in Anand Vihar a few days after the nationwide lockdown was imposed, and the congregation of Tablighi Jamaat in Nizamuddin on various occasions in March — both in Delhi.

Both the gatherings, specially the Tablighi Jamaat, have caused havoc across India as it could be the main cause of spread of novel coronavirus pandemic with the President and the Vice President within 10 days.

In a video conference on March 27, 15 Governors and Delhi LG Anil Baijal had shared with the President their experience. On Friday, the Governors, LGs and administrators of 21 remaining states and UTs briefed the President and Vice-President on COVID-19 related efforts.

There was a concern that there is a scope for laxity or complacency in fighting the "invisible enemy". In this context, the President noted with concern the incidents of attacks on doctors, health workers and police personnel in some

parts of the country. He wholeheartedly endorsed the Prime Minister's appeal earlier on Friday morning to all citizens to switch off lights in homes at 9 p.m. on Sunday and instead switch on their mobile flashlights, torches or lamps in an expression of people's solidarity to fight against Coronavirus.

However, cautioned people not to let their guard down and steadfastly adhere to the practice of social distancing.

Taking note of the problems faced by the homeless, the unemployed and the weaker section of society during the crisis, the President said, "we will have to be extra sensitive towards their needs". He invited other participants in the conference to deliberate upon the ways to ensure nobody remains hungry.

PM discusses with top sportspersons, seeks support for awareness

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday discussed the growing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic with India's top sportspersons, including cricket icon Virat Kohli and star shuttler P V Sindhu, urging them to support awareness campaigns on social distancing.

More than 40 athletes, along with sports minister Kiren Rijiju participated in nearly an hour-long video call which started at 11am.

The country is in a 21-day lockdown to contain the spread of the virus.

The Prime Minister sought the athletes' support to raise awareness about the need for social distancing and personal hygiene at a time when the total number of COVID-19 positive cases in India has

crossed 2,000. "Your suggestions will be taken note of. We are fighting this pandemic like Team India. I am confident that India will be rejuvenated by the inspiration provided by you," the Prime Minister can be seen telling athletes in a clip shared by shuttle B Sai Praneeth, a world champion bronze-medallist, who also attended the call.

All sporting activities are currently shut in the country and it is still not clear when normalcy will resume. The much-anticipated Indian Premier League is among the big-ticket Indian events suspended till April 15.

When Gagan Narine asked whether he would be joining our Honourable PM via video call," But he refused to go into the details.



ECoR to convert 261 coaches into quarantine facilities

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The East Coast Railway (ECoR) will convert 261 coaches to serve as isolation and quarantine facilities to help fight COVID-19 pandemic, a senior official said.

So far conversion of 23 coaches have been completed, one each at Mancheswar and Khurda Road, five at Puri, six each at Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur and four at Vishakhapatnam.

All essential facilities required by individual are provided in these coaches. Measures like windows, one bathroom and three toilets in a coach, removal of the middle berth, six liquid soap dispensers in each coach are being provided.

Nadda asks BJP workers to spread PM's message to masses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



BJP president P J Nadda asked party workers on Friday to spread the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message to light lamps or turn on mobile phone torches on Sunday.

The way in which the entire country has fought the battle against the novel coronavirus united under Modi's leadership is laudable, Nadda tweeted.

Noting that Modi has urged people to turn off lights at their homes and light candles, lamps or turn on mobile phone torches at 9 pm on Sunday for nine minutes, the BJP president added similar appeals while welcoming the announcement.

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said, "PM Nadda

has made an appeal to all of us to switch off lights on April 5th for 9 minutes at 9 PM & illuminate our surroundings by lighting candles, diyas, torches or flashlights standing on balcony or at door step while maintaining social distance."

"We welcome this unique step of PM, which will boost the morale of people," he said.

This exercise will help spread the light of the people's collective confidence and will defeat the darkness of the coronavirus crisis — P. NADDIA, BJP president

This exercise will help spread the light of the people's collective confidence and this will defeat the darkness of the coronavirus crisis — P. NADDIA, BJP president

OUP offers free online access to its edu resources on corona

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Oxford University Press (OUP) on Friday announced that it is offering free online access to its educational resources on coronavirus in order to assist researchers, medical professionals and others who are working to address the pandemic.

The world's largest university press also launched a continuous learning at home initiative, inviting students and teachers with free access to its learning resources, for both schools and higher education streams. This initiative is aimed at creating a home learning environment and ensuring that the delivery of education is not disrupted, an OUP India statement said.

OUP will also support the teacher fraternity by providing them free online access to its online teacher training modules and webinars.

Speaking about the initia-

tives, Sivaramakrishnan Venkateswaran, managing director of OUP India, said, "As a mission driven organisation, OUP has made access to resources on coronavirus freely accessible in order to assist researchers, medical professionals and others who are working to address the pandemic. We have also committed ourselves to helping learners, teachers and institutions through this period, by providing them online and digitised versions of our world-class

learning resources."

OUP's academic journals website has launched a new free hub of over 2,500 research articles and online chapters relevant to coronavirus and related topics and has also been added to the Google Scholar homepage which will help to facilitate searches for COVID-19 research and articles.

The free online learning resources can be accessed through the dedicated school and higher education web-pages on the OUP India website.

MARKAZ:
AIMPLB official warns legal action for using his photos

PNS ■ ALIGARH (UP)

AIMPLB spokesman Maulana Khalil-ur-Rahman Sajjad Nomani Friday said some media houses are carrying his photo instead of Tablighi Jamaat head Maulana Saad's in their reportage on the Nizamuddin Markaz controversy and warned of legal action.

"Despite disclaimers, these media reports are carrying my photograph which compels me to conclude that is being done to defame me," the All India Muslim Personal Law Board spokesman said, asking media houses to not carry his pictures in Markaz-related reports.

He urged the media to act with "restraint and responsibility" while covering issues related to the coronavirus pandemic.

If, despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option but to take legal recourse," he added.

"Despite my request, deliberately planting of my picture continues, I will have no option



The food challenge

While we have enough stocks, the supply chain breakdowns and curfew protocols to choke the virus point to a crisis

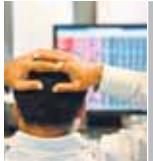


The country may have sufficient foodgrain stocks in Central and State warehouses as reserves to tide out an emergency but the breakage of supply chain management due to the lockdown has also meant that they are not reaching beneficiaries. The Government claims that we have nearly 10 times the emergency reserve needed for this time of the year and the fair price shops can go on an overdrive to meet our nutritional requirements. But these are just dry rations, such as rice, wheat, sugar and pulses. Farm supplies have been badly hit because of sudden closure. Even if there are vegetables waiting to be loaded, varying curfew protocols by different States and the still patchy system of curfew passes for trucks mean that there is no movement. Police harassment has only complicated transit. States like Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Delhi, Maharashtra and West Bengal have issued curfew passes promptly and set up police task forces to facilitate smooth movement. But virus hotspots States like Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan have totally closed their borders and even sealed their drop point depots. Although the Government is contemplating a staggered release from lockdown, mainly to ensure the April harvest from the fields, the exodus of daily labourers has meant that there are far fewer hands available to manage field work. There are also reports of truck drivers joining the migrants. The second biggest bottleneck is of manufactured, processed and packaged food items. With consumers hoarding anything with a shelf life, the sudden gush of demand, the flight of labour at units rolling them out and the supply chain gaps have meant that our breakfast platters are beginning to look different. Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies are already registering an upswing in demand from urban centres, indicating the hoarding spiral. The retail network has completely collapsed, its earnings now down to 15 per cent. A longer lockdown would mean that sector players would have to shut down and let go off their staff by June. It is, of course, the neighbourhood stores and grocers, who are back in business, having just enough capacity to serve their ecosystem and, therefore, able to smoothen some shocks given their scale. The online delivery platforms have already collapsed with the supply chain breakdown, running out of stocks, delaying deliveries and some of them not signing up new customers at all. The less said about the poultry sector the better; eggs are still available though chicken and meat are mostly off the shelves because of the zoonotic virus. Even dairy products could be affected as a report said that the Aarey dairy has just enough fodder for the cattle to last a week or so.

In the end, what is needed is enabling bulk supplies and that, too, at a time of isolation protocols that demand there is no over-crowding at procurement sites. Most agricultural produce market committees, where every business source supplies, have been shut for a while. Some of them have negotiated limited trading hours to minimise numbers. Respecting protocol and enforcing it with precision is a big challenge as is the enormous time lag. Besides, it is the high heat of summer and perishables, without fast movement, run the risk of being wasted. At least for a month or so, a risk-free procurement will have to be evolved in consultation with Central and State representatives. If the situation prolongs, then the Government may have to look for other alternatives. For example, the Food Corporation of India has both operational and food security stocks. At a stretch, the Centre can offer them to States and then perhaps to select retail chains should the market so demand. Wheat and rice godowns are already overflowing but the holding capacity of fair price shops will have to be ramped up. Of course, we will also have to deal with the possibility of reduced food imports what with export restrictions in place. And while we might be able to ensure emergency food needs of vulnerable populations, pricing interventions just might be required. As for civil society, it can be incentivised to donate to food banks, the amount exempted from taxes, for the vast numbers of homeless and jobless. Saving lives is not just about treating the infected but nurturing a whole nation back to life from a calamitous disruption that had neither been foreseen nor imagined. Call it social welfare but innovation and enterprise can only come when a nation is well-fed.

Business unusual

Whenever we emerge from the viral attack on the global economic system, business will never be the same again



Where will businesses stand in a post-Coronavirus world? Even as countries make plans to extend their lockdowns, both Government officials and citizens have no clue when the world will return to normalcy. There are those who are looking into the aspects as to where things may stand once everything settles down. However, one thing is certain: Things will not be the same as they were before the Wuhan contagion swept the world. Of course, there will be a lot of families and individuals who will be devastated by the fallout. Every passing day, it appears more and more likely that several businesses, which were swimming fine until the outbreak of the virus, will now sink into the depths of bankruptcy, with or without Government intervention. And those that survive will be fundamentally different. One of those differences will be driven from the "work from home" culture that has begun in many industries.

Work from home is a luxury that not every sector can avail. Even in the media industry, while online portals may have been able to spin their stories from a dark basement somewhere, that isn't a change for most such news parasites. Newspapers can survive on limited staff in offices but the printing presses need to be manned. Television channels need to have fully-crewed output desks and editors even if the anchors can be isolated. Nevertheless, working from home is a reality in many sectors and this will lead to some interesting changes in demand for commercial real estate and transportation requirements. Maybe there will be less demand for shared cabs. More companies might invest in "hot desking", having shared stations for employees where anyone can log in and work. Collaboration applications such as Zoom, which has become extremely popular, and Microsoft's Teams will begin to rule the roost. And as tele-commuting becomes standard, will companies use the opportunity to cut costs as employees spend more time at home? That is extremely likely, salaries are certain to face a reality check. But this may not be the case across the world and in every sector. Whatever happens, it might be too soon to make a prediction of how things will play out in the coming months. There will be some interesting new developments and some puzzling trends that will play out. It is clear that this generation, which has become accustomed to social distancing and wearing masks, will be traumatised for years to come and handshakes might go extinct. But what will business as usual look like in 2021? It is too soon to say but rest assured it will not be the same as it was on February 1, 2020.

Relief in times of crisis

Sir — It was pleasing to know that the Punjab and Chandigarh High Court has allowed farmers to work in the field for harvesting crops. The court further said that agriculture and horticulture function as long as workers are provided with accommodation, food and medication. In addition, markets will remain open from 10 am to 6 pm. These rulings bring a big relief for farmers, daily workers, poor and needy people as they can earn their livelihood for survival. It will also boost the declining economy of the State. However, it is also a bit challenging for the State to maintain social distancing among the people in such situations. Thus, the Government must ensure the safety of people at work.

AMS Nadwi
Lucknow

Strength ties

Sir — Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is quite active on social media, posted a video link on Twitter and claimed that he practises the Yoga Nidra asana once

or twice a week as it relaxes the mind and reduces stress and anxiety. Sharing Modis tweet, Ivanka Trump, the daughter of the US President, expressed her appreciation of the initiative, especially during a time of crisis when the

COVID-19 outbreak has put many countries in lockdown. Ivanka Trump recently visited India along with her family where Modi welcomed them by organising a "Namaste Trump" event. Clearly, Modi has fascinated

ed Trump and his family. One hopes that this bond between the heads of the two countries reflects in the US' development plans for India.

Munawwar Khurshid
Mumbai

The invisible people

The long march undertaken by migrant workers has reminded India of its poor but how long will this awareness last?



HIRANYAKARLA KARLEKAR

One can argue that this is not the time to discuss the view, however credible, that the 21-day lockdown has been imposed without adequate thought to its consequences, particularly on the poor. The emphasis now, the argument may continue, should be exclusively on repulsing the COVID-19 invasion which has brought India to a standstill and threatens to play havoc with its life. There is a point in this, as there is equally a point in the contention that the subject needs to be discussed threadbare both from the viewpoint of ensuring accountability on the part of the authorities and the need to avoid in future the mistakes that have been made.

While leaving such a discussion for a post-Corona time, which, one hopes, is not far away — one needs to focus on a related question: How is it that few could anticipate the post-lockdown trudge of hundreds and thousands of migrant daily wage workers, often with their entire families including women and children in tow, to their village homes hundreds of miles away? Anyone familiar with the Indian tradition of family and community support, which survives in a great measure in rural areas despite erosion in urban societies, should have known that the first instinct of starving labourers, without work and shelter and facing uncertain futures, would be to go back to their village homes, with most of them returning close ties.

The reason is clear. The poor have risen as an active presence in the consciousness of those who now set the agenda for discourse in India. This was not always so. Mahatma Gandhi's abiding concern for the poor and making their well-being the touchstone for all action has been reflected in his iconic observation, "Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you have seen, and ask yourself if this step you contemplate is going to be any use to him." He also stated, "Poverty is the worst form of violence." Equally well-known is his theory of trusteeship, the essence of which he expressed succinctly when he said, "Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth — either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry — I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community."

The presence of a socialist influence in the Indian National Congress as early as the 1930s was reflected in the formation of the All-India Congress Socialist Party in 1934 under the chairmanship of Acharya Narendra Deva with Jayaprakash Narayan as secretary. The Congress had a number of important socialist leaders like Sambupurnam, Achyut Patwardhan, Ram Manohar Lohia and Minoos Masani. After



Independence, the socialists left the Congress and established the Praja Socialist Party, Socialist Party and the Samyukt Socialist Party respectively and their leaders like SM Joshi, NG Goray, Madhu Limaye and George Fernandes played important roles in the political politics. Anger over exploitation and the suffering of the poor was, perhaps, the most powerful driving force behind Karl Marx's intellectual and political exertions and the programmes of the Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the various Naxalite groups.

For a long time after Independence, the Congress remained oriented towards a moderate, albeit nebulous, form of the ideology. After Parliament had accepted in 1954 the establishment of a "socialist pattern of society" as the aim of economic development, the Lok Sabha adopted in January 1955, a resolution calling for the "establishment of a socialist pattern of society where the principal means of production are under social ownership or control" and there is "equitable distribution of the national wealth." Later, Indira Gandhi, who nationalised banks, insurance, coal mines and abolished the privy purses of the princes, rode to a massive victory in the 1971 mid-term election.

Like the

THE POOR AND THE ALLEViation OF THEIR POVERTY NO LONGER OCCUPY THE CENTRESTAGE OF THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN INDIA. THEY HAVE NOW BEEN TAKEN OVER BY ISSUES LIKE THE TERRORIST THREAT TO THE COUNTRY, THE RAM TEMPLE, CAA, NPR AND NRC. ONE REASON FOR THIS IS, OF COURSE, THE ADVENT OF HINDUTVA POLITICS AND ITS CONCOMITANTS

LIKE THE

SOUND BITE

Don't let this wretched Corona get the better of us. No, no, you're not getting what I am trying to say. Please read Corona in reverse, it becomes no ro.



Congress leader
—P Chidambaram

Listened to the Pradhan Showman. Nothing about how to manage the load of their burdens, their financial anxieties. Just a feel-good moment curated by India's Photo-OP PM!



Megastar
—Amitabh Bachchan

The military dictum is prepare or perish but in these times of Covid, we have refined it to prepare or suffer. We must ensure 100 per cent lockdown and social distancing.



Chief of Defence Staff
—Gen Bipin Rawat

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Learn from Kerala's preparedness

This refers to the article, "Hope in Kerala model," (April 1) by Amit Sengupta. Kerala's current efforts to keep the deadly Coronavirus at bay need to be mapped with the struggle it went through for two consecutive years. Nowhere in the solution did it talk about facilitating harvest and celebrating the festival of Onam when the month of August progresses. But in 2018, torrential rains pounded the coastal State for days and all its 44 rivers were in spate. Kerala turned into a large green pool of water. The double curvature Idukki Dam, built across the River Periyar with a reservoir capacity of 2,403 feet, was filled to the brim. The State had to open the spillways and that raised the water level in the overflowing river. Floods devastated the State. In 2019, too, heavy rains caused flooding to wreak havoc. In 2018, a few months before the worst deluge, the dreaded Nipah virus (NIV) that descended on Kozhikode from fruit bats, threatened to send life haywire.

The ruling Central Government compounded the State's misery by rationing its financial support. Certain works required overtime to discourage personal contributions. A noisy pretender in a national television channel called the people of the State "shameless" during a debate on the UAE Government's offer to provide financial aid. Literally, Kerala waged a battle for survival.

Offering that "Kerala is a beacon to the world," Vijay Prashad and Subin Dennis, writing for "Globetrotter," a project of the Independent Media Institute, concluded, "The fight against COVID-19 is not over. Vigilance is necessary. Vaccines need to be tested and authorised; better cures need to be studied and shared. But even as one is vigilant, the lessons from places like Kerala should be absorbed." With lessons learnt from its struggles, Kerala is now positioned to fight COVID-19 from the front.

Haridasan Rajan
Kochi/kode

Address food problems

Sir — Besides bringing the entire nation into lockdown, the spread of Coronavirus has created a problem of plenty, which needs to be tackled. With states undertaking localised distribution of food grains, the onus is on the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to ensure sufficient supply to meet the enhanced requirement of all States. Thankfully India has sufficient foodgrain stockpiles to feed its poor for at least a year-and-a-half. But it is now up to the respective States to ensure no genuine beneficiary is left out. Foodgrain wastage and misappropriation must be avoided. Staples must reach the needy without any delay or leakage.

Side by side, the FCI must utilise this opportunity to take control of the many empty warehouses which need to be cleaned. With the harvesting season approaching, fresh stocks would soon arrive and would have to be stored.

Ashok Pal
New Delhi

Send your feedback to:
letterstopeople@gmail.com



COVID-19 outbreak has put many countries in lockdown. Ivanka Trump recently visited India along with her family where Modi welcomed them by organising a "Namaste Trump" event. Clearly, Modi has fascinated

ed Trump and his family. One hopes that this bond between the heads of the two countries reflects in the US' development plans for India.

Munawwar Khurshid
Mumbai

Munawwar Khurshid
Mumbai

FIRST COLUMN

The social media pandemic

During this lockdown we need to keep our spirits up and not be bogged down by the fake news being spread by scaremongers



PRAKRTI PODDAR

The Coronavirus outbreak has put the entire world under lockdown with the total number of cases rising to a whopping 10,16,395 globally and the death toll reaching 53,238. On January 30, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the Coronavirus outbreak as a Global Public Health Emergency. As more and more new hotspots emerge daily, experts are anticipating that the onslaught of this pandemic will continue for a few more months before we see the end of it. In the meantime, it has wreaked havoc on the world economy and every social activity known to man. Many countries, including India, have asked people to self-isolate themselves and set a 14-day quarantine period for citizens returning home from abroad.

Almost all global and national sports events have been indefinitely postponed, TV shows and film productions have been suspended, schools, colleges, malls, restaurants and cinemas have been closed. Foreign and domestic tourism is at a standstill due to closure of borders and aviation activity has been suspended in most parts of the world as well as India. People are working from home as inter-State borders have been sealed, so much so that transportation of goods across borders in the country has become difficult. Now, with the 21-day lockdown imposed by the Government, people are confined to their homes.

Naturally, anxiety due to the Coronavirus outbreak around the world is at an all time high, with people sporting social distancing discs that limit contact with others, using hand sanitisers as well as wearing masks to protect themselves against this epidemic. Governments around the world have also scaled up their respective healthcare systems and enhanced their capacity to provide timely screenings as well as treatment to people.

Nonetheless, there are various fake news portals as well as social media posts that are being circulated to spread misinformation about the Coronavirus, which is adding to the already-prevalent anxiety. Some myths like cow urine can prevent Coronavirus, spraying alcohol and chlorine on oneself can keep it at bay, mosquitoes can transmit the virus, eating garlic can prevent it, drinking lots of water will flush out the virus as well taking antibiotics will prevent the virus are doing the rounds of social media. People are unthinkingly passing such posts around despite leading scientists and healthcare professionals debunking these myths.

The nature of social media is such that anyone can share any fake or unverified information on their timeline which can cause anxiety among the people who see it. This has led to deterioration of their mental health as they are living in perpetual fear of the disease and resorting to measures which will certainly not prevent the Coronavirus but can potentially harm their health.

Thankfully, Governments are cracking down on such irresponsible behaviour and imposing fines as well punishment for people spreading misinformation. The Indian Government has written to top social media companies, including Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, ShareChat and Twitter, to control the spread of misinformation on COVID-19. In an advisory the Government asked social media platforms to start awareness campaigns, remove misinformation from the platform and promote authentic information on the Coronavirus so that wrong information does not add to the people's stress. If we really do want to protect ourselves from this dreaded virus? Healthcare professionals have recommended several precautionary and hygienic measures, which include avoiding hospitals unless there is an emergency and as far as possible avoiding direct contact with healthcare professionals. They also advocate washing of hands regularly especially after direct contact with sick people or their surroundings. People must also stay clear of farm as well as wild animals.

People with symptoms of a severe respiratory infection must limit contact with others and cover their mouth while sneezing or coughing. If they develop a number of symptoms of the Coronavirus, they must report to the nearest hospital and not panic unnecessarily. We must also clean everything around the house and workplace with disinfectant as when infected droplets from a person land on a surface it survives for days on end.

Use hand sanitiser regularly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose, especially if you have just been outside. Now when India is in a 21-day lockdown, we also need to keep our spirits up and not be bogged down by boredom or give in to fake news being spread by scaremongers on social media.

If you are not working from home and hence have a lot of empty time on your hands, use it productively to finish chores that have been pending for long. Take up a hobby that you never had time for earlier. Pray and meditate. Spend time with family. Play board games, read, watch movies. Do whatever it takes to protect your sanity by keeping negative thoughts in check and escape the pandemic called social media.

(The writer is a mental health expert and Director of a wellness company)

THE 21-DAY LOCKDOWN WAS NECESSARY BUT UNPLANNED. IT CAUSED HARASSMENT TO LAKHS OF MIGRANT WORKERS.
—CONGRESS PRESIDENT

SONIA GANDHI

POINT COUNTERPOINT



INDIA'S EFFORTS TO FIGHT CORONAVIRUS ARE BEING LAUDED DOMESTICALLY AND GLOBALLY. BUT CONGRESS IS PLAYING PETTY POLITICS.
—HOME MINISTER

AMIT SHAH

Economic cost of the lockdown

The Indian economy will face an income loss of ₹1.7 lakh crore per week or a total of ₹5.1 lakh crore during the three-week-long shutdown called by the Govt



BARUN DEB PAL SANJIB POHIT

The pandemic COVID-19 has already affected over 10,16,395 people across the world and there have been 53,238 deaths worldwide. Out of this, over 20,000 people died in the last three months alone. Health experts across the world are yet to discover a vaccine for this deadly virus that can be applied for human use worldwide. It is despite the fact that about 35 companies and academic institutions are racing to create an anti-Coronavirus vaccine. There are at least four candidates which are being tested on animals now. The first firm to conduct a human trial, Boston-based biotechnology firm Moderna, will enter Phase-II of trials, which means widespread human application by early summer. But this is not fast enough. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is expecting an exponential spike in the number of Coronavirus cases across the world in the coming days and is providing necessary information to vulnerable countries. As a result, national and local governments across the world are encouraging social distancing among the people and more and more nations are going into a lockdown mode.

India is already in the second week of its 21-day lockdown, which was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24 in a televised address to the nation. Despite its size and the density of the population, the entire country, that includes 28 States and eight Union Territories, has gone into a lockdown, making it the largest such exercise in the world.

The country which has a poor healthcare infrastructure has no option but to do this, as social distancing is probably the surest way of stopping the spread of the Coronavirus among the 1.3 billion Indians. However, health experts say that nothing can prevent the country from going into stage-III of the outbreak and the lockdown is just delaying our entry into it. It is giving us more time to prepare for stage-III and increasing the chances of us taking advantage of any medical breakthrough that takes place.

But, the big question is, for how long can India afford to be in a lockdown? As it is the entire economy is at a standstill, before the outbreak. Now, it also has to bear the huge economic loss of the three-week-long complete shutdown and the burden of the financial relief package of ₹1.75 lakh crore that was announced by the Government for the country.

Once this nightmare is behind us, it will become really hard for the Finance Ministry to prepare an effective package for a quick revival of the economy. Here are some estimates of the direct economic loss to the nation and some possible interventions for quick recovery.

The third advance estimate of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) published by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) revealed that India's estimated GDP for 2019-2020 stood at ₹47 lakh crore, which turns out to be ₹3.6 lakh crore per week, of which 17 per cent is earned by casual labour, 21 per cent by regular wage earners and 62 per cent by self-employed workers. The lockdown has forced these workers to a different magnitude. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data for 2017-18, a whopping 22 per cent of total workers in India are casual labourers (i.e. almost 93 million people) earning about ₹1,754 per week. Another 23 per cent of the total are regular wage earners who get an average ₹4,063 per week. The rest, 52 per cent workers, are self-employed ones that include own account workers, the self-employed and helpers in household enterprises.

According to the PLFS estimates, a self-employed person earns about ₹3,460 per week. The complete shutdown will affect casual labourers the most as their income depends on working days available in a week.

The situation is, of course, marginally better for regular wage employees. But nearly 46 per cent of the total regular wage earners in India do not have the benefit of paid leave. Therefore, if their salary is not protected during the lockdown period, they will lose their income. On the other hand, self-employed people will lose profit earning from their enterprises/firms due to close of operations.

The lockdown will affect various sectors differently. As Modis speech indicated, only manufacturing and service sectors have been allowed to operational. That includes food supply, goods transport, manufacturing of medical equipment, pharmaceutical, medical facilities, communication and financial services.

Therefore, workers will definitely suffer income loss if they are engaged in the locked down sectors.

Another 40 per cent casual labourers are engaged in the construction sector, which will surely be closed for 21 days leading to income loss to the respective workers. A further 10 per cent of casual workers are engaged in manufacturing industries, where almost 90 per cent of economic activities are closed for now.

The assumption of 90 per cent shut down of manufacturing is based on the output share of food and medical equipment sectors.

Therefore, workers will be vulnerable, provided agriculture and allied sectors continue to provide job opportunities to the rest of the workers. This is a reasonable assumption for the agriculture sector as harvesting of Rabi crops usually starts in most of the States in late March/early April, coinciding with the complete lockdown period in the country. Hence, the aggregate income loss of the casual workers will be ₹0.3 lakh crore per week during the lockdown period if we consider their per week income earning to be of the same level as in the third quarter (October-December 2019) of 2019-20.

Additionally, as 46 per cent of regular employees do not have the benefit of paid leave, it is estimated that almost 15 per cent of total regular wage employees will lose their income due to the shutting down of their regular activities. Thus, it is estimated that the regular salaried group will lose ₹0.35 lakh crore per week as compared to their weekly income obtained during the third quarter of the Financial Year 2019-20.

Since 53 per cent of self-employed people are engaged in agriculture, we assume, there will be no direct impact on their income during this time. However, the income of the rest of the 47 per cent of self-employed people will be affected if they are engaged in locked down sectors.

Based on calculations of the sector-specific impact, almost ₹1.05 lakh crore income of the self-employed people will be lost per week.

In effect, the Indian economy will face an income loss of ₹1.7 lakh crore per week or a total of ₹5.1 lakh crore during the three-week-long lockdown.

Considering that almost 95 million workers/employees will be hit and if we consider the cost of each of them working on an average four people, nearly ₹30 million people will face severe welfare threats. This estimate is only for the direct impact on income for a period of 21 days.

The economic loss will be much higher if timely recovery does not take place and if we are forced to go in for an extended

lockdown going forward. So what should the Government do to improve the situation?

As per estimates, the shutdown will cause a loss of ₹5,261 per casual worker, which is nearly equivalent to the income support given by the Government to the farmers through the PM-KISAN scheme (i.e. ₹6,000 annual income support to farmers). It makes sense to extend this scheme to the casual labourers engaged in the non-agricultural sector.

Regular wage employees without entitlement of paid leave are highly vulnerable during this period. Therefore, firms can be encouraged to compensate wage loss to those employees and a tax benefit package for the firms may be thought of.

Self-employed people will also face a severe loss due to the economic downturn. Boosting effective demand in the economy can encourage investment and in this context the first two measures will play a key role. So far, an amount of ₹15,000 crore has been allocated for the health sector for improving healthcare facilities.

The Finance Minister's recent announcement of a ₹1.75 lakh crore package to help the economically-weaker sections survive the loss of jobs and income that would be the inevitable fallout of the Coronavirus outbreak is not adequate.

As indicated above, this is only one-third of the loss of income estimated during the shutdown. Of course, the Government has issued instructions exempting workers and labourers from paying rent for a month and assured compensation for those in the hukum period. This may not do less than the burden. However, foolproof implementation would not be an easy prospect despite the Government's best intention.

(Deb is with IPFRI and Pohit works for the NCAER. The views expressed are personal)



Police excesses during shutdown not justified

Fines coupled with clarifications regarding the extent of the restrictions and positive propaganda like the 'Corona Warrior' videos shared by the Prime Minister are most effective and humane ways of ensuring that people understand the need for social distancing



ISHA SINGH

of the threat of COVID-19. In order to understand the legality of the incidents of police action, we must first distinguish between a "lockdown" and "curfew". A curfew is a short-term measure, where essential services are disrupted, to keep people off the streets in times of riots or terrorist activities.

On the other hand, a lockdown is a relatively long-term measure, requiring the closure of public and private establishments, schools and religious places in order to restrict the large-scale movement of people. As essential services continue to operate, a lockdown is less restrictive than a curfew. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) guidelines issued under Section 10(2)(b) of the Disaster Management Act (DMA), 2005, despite having the effect of a lockdown, do not use the term curfew or lockdown. Moreover, the guidelines do not specifically state that people cannot venture out of their houses. Even in States which have

invoked Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), no order has been issued which explicitly makes it criminal to step out of the house. This is less so if one is rendering an essential service or has ventured out to buy essential items.

However, given the Coronavirus outbreak, it is our duty as responsible citizens to ensure that we don't leave our homes. But in the event that we do have to, there is no justification for the police subjecting people to the appalling treatment that we have witnessed over the last few days. We live in a country plagued by illiteracy and poverty. There has been widespread and confirmed instances of police beatings and even torture during the lockdown. The plight of the migrant workers, who were compelled by their poverty to walk thousands of kilometres back home as they could not afford to live in the city without work, is a glaring instance of why we must exercise compassion and not violence in this hour.

The MHA guidelines clearly state that a person found violating stipulations of the IPC and Sections 51 to 60 of the DMA, 2005. Section 188 of the IPC provides for a fine and an imprisonment term for one month for the violation of an order of a public servant. Further, the DMA also prescribes penalties which can attract fines as well as imprisonment up to two years for violating orders issued under it.

However, given the penal provisions must be invoked cautiously, with due application of mind. Consideration must be given to the fact that it is difficult for people to approach the courts, which are functioning on an extremely limited basis. The State must also take into account that the punishment is proportionate to the offence in question, as held by the Supreme Court in the *Vishwanath vs Union of India* case, especially when the Government has not expressly clarified whether a single person walking on the street amounts to an offence.

Yasha Mounk, a professor at

John Hopkins University, in his book *The People vs Democracy*, argues that a liberal democracy strikes a balance between two fundamental principles, the "will of the majority" and the "rule of law", which gives primacy to individual rights.

India's constitutional framework must allow for individual rights to be curtailed but they cannot be completely sacrificed at the altar of the "will of the majority". In the face of a public health challenge, it is all the more necessary to be vigilant about human rights, as history teaches that the gravest human rights violations have taken place during wars, emergencies and disasters. The "majority rule" principle must be applied judiciously and with care. The "majority rule" principle must be applied judiciously and with care.

The ideal approach in this case would be for the police to fine people who are found violating a Section 144

order or the MHA guidelines on the lockdown. This can be done by the President or the Governor by promulgating an Ordinance under Articles 123 and 213 of the Constitution respectively, empowering local authorities to impose fines to violators. Such fines must be based on a differential system, accounting for the socio-economic background of the violators.

Fines are being used effectively as a deterrent in the UK, the UAE and Canada. In the UK, police officers have the power to issue on-the-spot fines of £60 for people found violating the lockdown rules. Such fines, coupled with clarifications regarding the extent of the restrictions and positive propaganda like the 'Corona Warrior' videos shared by the Prime Minister, are most effective and humane ways of ensuring that people understand the need for social distancing.

(The writer is a lawyer in the Bombay High Court)

CAPSULE



'Issues faced by e-comm players during lockdown being resolved'

NEW DELHI: The government has held several meetings with e-commerce players to resolve their issues which they have been facing due to the lockdown, and now there is an improvement everyday, a top government official said on Friday. Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Guruprasad Mohapatra said while lot of follow-ups on their issues, relaxations were given to them by the Home Ministry. "We had meetings with them; most of their issues are being resolved. E-commerce's position is much better now than what was there on day one of the lockdown. Everyday you are seeing improvement," he told PTI. E-commerce representatives had shared the problems faced by them in movement of essential goods by delivery boys due to the lockdown and the court's stay order.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal had earlier said the government was committed to ensuring that essential goods reach the people in the most convenient and safest manner.



OPEC+ to hold video conference meeting on Monday: source

Venice: The OPEC+ grouping led by oil major producer Russia will meet Monday via a video conference, a source close to OPEC said Friday. Leading world crude exporter Saudi Arabia on Thursday made a surprise call for a meeting of the OPEC+ oil producers to "stabilise the oil market," which has been rocked by a price war between the two key players.

NFL sees record fertiliser sales at 57 lakh tonnes during last fiscal

New Delhi: State-owned Fertilisers & Minerals Limited (NFL) on Friday said it has sold record 57 lakh tonnes of fertilisers during the last fiscal year. In a regulatory filing, NFL informed that it has registered the highest-ever fertiliser sales in 2019-20, fifth time in a row. NFL has recorded total fertiliser sale of more than 57 tonnes of all products, beating its previous best of 48.95 lakh tonnes achieved during 2018-19. While, the company had achieved a sales growth of 16.2 per cent over the previous year," the filing said. The sustained sales growth of NFL has helped in retaining its position of second highest marketer of fertilisers in the country, it added. NFL said it has dispatched more than 21 lakh tonnes of imported fertilisers including 12 lakh tonnes of urea on government account during 2019-20.

India's GDP to slip to 4 pc in 2020-21, expects ADB

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Friday said that India's economic growth rate will slip to 4 per cent in the current fiscal on account of the global health emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, the multilateral lending agency in its flash publication 'Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020 said that India will stage a strong recovery in the next financial year on back of its sound macroeconomic funds.

India's economic growth for 2019-20 has been estimated at 5 per cent by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

The Manila-headquartered agency said the growth rate of Indian economy is expected to be slow on weak global environment amid continued efforts to contain the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in the country.

The deadly disease has claimed over 50,000 lives across the globe, the maximum number of which has been reported from some countries in the European region and the US



The deadly disease has claimed over 50,000 lives across the globe, the maximum number of which has been reported from some countries in the European region and the US

mum number of which has been reported from some countries in the European region and the US. The total number of infected people has crossed over 1 million (10 lakh).

In India, more than 50 lives have been lost, as per the latest data, and number of infected people stands over 2,000.

"We face extraordinarily challenging times. The outbreak of COVID-19 is disrupting people's lives and interrupting business and other economic activities around the world," said Masatsugu

Asakawa, President of Asian Development Bank.

Speaking on India, ADB Chief Economist Yasuyuki Sawada said, "The COVID-19 pandemic jeopardizes global growth and India's recovery. But India's macroeconomic fundamentals remain sound, and we expect the economy to recover strongly in the next fiscal year."

Sawada said Indian authorities have acted swiftly to combat the pandemic. The reduction would be Rs 3.60 to Rs 47.75 per kg.

Ongoing reforms to personal and corporate taxes and measures to strengthen agriculture and the rural economy and alleviate financial sector stress will help accelerate India's recovery," he added.

Risks to the economic outlook are firmly on the downside, it said, adding a prolonged pandemic would push the global economy into deep recession and further slow India's growth.

Were the virus to spread widely within India, economic activity would be severely constrained, ADB said.



India's power demand falls over 25 pc to 125.81 GW on April 2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

imposed 3-week lockdown to fight the pandemic from March 24.

The demand was down mainly due to lower requirements from industry and state power distribution companies (discoms) across the country due to the lockdown.

The peak power demand met was 163.72 GW on March 20, which came down to 161.74 GW on March 21.

The government has

Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio will continue to gain market share at the cost of Vodafone Idea's "worsened" financial health that may deteriorate further in the wake of the AGR judgment. Capital said in a note on Friday.

Axis Capital said it has trimmed its revenue estimates for wireless telcos.

This is because muted subscriber additions as well as in 2G/3G conversions to 4G SIMs on account of the lockdown and a possible extension of certain curbs, could partially impact revenue growth that was expected in coming months from the tariff hike in December 2019.

We cut FY21/22E (estimates) revenue of wireless providers by 1-6 per cent and EBITDA (Earnings before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation) margin by 20-100 bps (basis points), Axis Capital said in the telecom sector report.

It said that while the tariff hikes undertaken by compa-

nies in December 2019 is likely to play out in nine months of calendar year 2020 as subscribers come for recharge, the floor pricing may be delayed due to the lockdown.

As per the Supreme Court judgment, incumbent telcos have to make full payment of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues pending interest on penalties, it said noting that Bharti Airtel appeared better placed to make the payment, given the recent fund raise.

Introduction of floor pricing and cut in levies to ensure that market continues to have four players, can further benefit the industry including Airtel, Reliance Jio, it said.

However, floor pricing may be delayed due to the lockdown.

Also, due to economic stress from the lockdown, demand for relief by other industries may increase, which could impact Vodafone Idea's prospects

VodaIdea's worsened financial health help Airtel, Jio

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Also, due to economic stress from the lockdown, demand for relief by other industries may increase, which could impact Vodafone Idea's prospects

nies in December 2019 is likely to play out in nine months of calendar year 2020 as subscribers come for recharge, the floor pricing may be delayed due to the lockdown.

As per the Supreme Court judgment, incumbent telcos have to make full payment of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues pending interest on penalties, it said noting that Bharti Airtel appeared better placed to make the payment, given the recent fund raise.

The regulator had received an application from Pradeep Kumar Family Trust and Bajrang Lal Family Trust seeking exemption from the applicability of SAST (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) in the matter of proposed acquisition of shares and voting rights in Borosil.

Subsequent to the proposed transactions, the trustees of the family trusts will be the legal

owners of 54.35 per cent of the total equity share capital of Borosil.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The regulator had received an application from Pradeep Kumar Family Trust and Bajrang Lal Family Trust seeking exemption from the applicability of SAST (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) in the matter of proposed acquisition of shares and voting rights in Borosil.

Subsequent to the proposed transactions, the trustees of the family trusts will be the legal

owners of 54.35 per cent of the total equity share capital of Borosil.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

been undertaken by the mem-

bers of the family trusts linked to Borosil Glass Works from making an open offer in the proposed acquisition of shares in the Company.

The promoters and pro-

moter group will continue to hold an aggregate of 72.85 per cent of the total equity share capital of the firm, while public

shareholders will continue to hold an aggregate 27.15 per cent of the shareholding in the company.

"The relief work which has

I DON'T, FOR NOW

Big fat Indian weddings have taken a direct hit in days of social distancing. Team Viva delves into the immediate and long-term impact on the industry

Inadians and their love for big fat weddings, with a thousand guests and lavish spreads, is legendary. So in times of a pandemic when it is advised to avoid large public gatherings and restrict travel, the brides and grooms are facing tough and heartbreaking choices. The lockdown has sent ripples through the wedding industry, from vendors, wedding planners and venues to guests, relatives and couples. A layer of caution and concern, thicker than that of butter on dal makhni at the banquet, has enveloped the celebrations. And the question that we are faced with is — even if we emerge out of this situation, will Indian weddings ever be the same again or will we now be more cautious of social gatherings?

LUXURY CATERINGS

Well, Indian weddings, especially the big fat ones, aren't just about their vibrant dances and music, decor and lights, dresses, it's a lot about food, too. However, with the food industry hit badly due to the deadly virus, experts predict that 'bahar ka khana' would mostly be avoided for a long time even if we have fought this war and emerged out of it. So how is it going to affect the wedding catering business when shaadiyon ka khana won't be appealing anymore?

Karan Talwar, managing director and the gastronomic chef, Kitchen Kraft Luxury Catering, points out that he has already faced some of the brunt. He says, "A lot of replanning and cancellation of weddings has happened. Some are on hold. Close to half of those planning to tie the knot in the coming quarter have also postponed or cancelled their plans to the later part of the year. We had our bookings full for March-end and the first week of April but we saw nine wedding bookings getting cancelled and six

being postponed."

He highlights that the destination weddings have been hit the hardest with most of them, even if planned in the next few months, being cancelled already.

Looking at future prospects, he says that for some time people will continue to eat out as well as for themselves as a catering industry will also have to take more precautions in preparing the food as and when they get the bookings and orders for weddings now. He adds, "We will ensure we get our staff members and employees vaccinated if any vaccination is available for COVID-19. Besides this, we will only hire people who have no previous history of Coronavirus or any other form of infection, including in their families."

Wedding organisers might also hesitate in laying out a large spread for their weddings since the very idea of large gatherings would see a scaling down. How will the luxury catering market deal with this? Karan says, "We are over-prepared such a time. Nobody imagined themselves to be sitting at home, doing nothing for so many days. Not just the catering market, but all the other industries are also shattered. A wedding is such an auspicious moment where people cannot miss anyone and invite a huge list of guests and relatives. I believe gradually, when the situation gets better, people will start to trust and would indulge in surplus items in the menus. Right now, I believe it is a difficult time for us but I am sure things will be back on track for the whole food and catering industry."

BEAUTY

The pandemic has affected the beauty industry drastically. It has brought a major shift in the mindset of the consumers which in turn has impacted the economy. "We have suffered a lot of losses as several make up bookings have been canceled and post-

poned. The pandemic has brought down the spending capacity of the consumers as everyone wants to save money for an emergency rather than spending on luxury. Approximately 70 per cent of my orders have been postponed to November and December and the rest 30 per cent have been canceled. I don't blame my clients as no one has an idea of the future," says Agrika Kalra, celebrity makeup artist. It will take a couple of years for not only this industry but

the entire economy to come back to normal. **FASHION**

The outbreak has sent ripples through the fashion industry as it has escalated in the midst of the 2020 spring-summer season, causing brands and design houses to shut their doors and postpone upcoming runway shows. Last month we even saw some fashion shows getting cancelled in Paris,

Milan and Italy. From vendors to fashion designers to wedding planners, everyone is going through a tough time.

"As we all know, April, May and June are the months when weddings are scheduled in bulk. And now they all are getting affected. Most of the weddings, social gatherings and events have been already canceled. Even the shoots have been canceled, this has affected our sales. The closure of malls and retail outlets with a view to control the situation has resulted in a substantial reduction in the sales of domestic textiles and clothing," says Ravi Gupta, owner, Gargen Desingers.

After we emerge out of this situation, people are going to be more cautious about gatherings. And Indian weddings are not a small affair. It's like a three-day long festival that has people of all age groups.

JEWELLERY

The sudden outbreak of the virus has impacted the Indian global gems and jewellery market. If we look at the present statistics, the lockdown in the metropolitan has resulted in an additional loss of five percent in the sales of the industry. This is mainly due to economic slowdown. Also, as the outbreak has affected countries like Japan, China, and South Korea, there is a sharp fall in demand in the global market.

"As of now, we are having a 100 per cent cancellation, especially for all marriage

orders. No new orders have been placed and the status of the old booking is also not clear. All the clients mentioned that they will only be able to confirm once the lockdown is over and the situation gets better. Most of the marriages have been postponed to later this year," says Bhuvan Goel, founder, S.K.A Diamonds. "All this will result in the decline of demand and thus affect the business. Due to the current situation of the jewellery industry, there will be a massive drop in sales. I presume that there could be a 50 to 70 thousand crore loss in business activities in the jewellery segment," says Goel.

A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH

The global rental market was expected to reach \$335 billion by 2025 as it offers the convenience of living without the responsibility of maintaining or upgrading them. So will this affect the rental market as hygiene issues are involved? Sanjhit Bawja, co-founder of Stage3, feels that rentals will increase post COVID-19 as consumption patterns would change. He shares that sustainability as a way of living and the pandemic we are witnessing are interconnected. "We are all a part of the same world. It is a wake-up call to stop overusing the resources as the threat from climate change is as real as the pandemic. The year 2020 will be remembered as a turnaround point in global markets and pave the way in reinvigoration of how resources are consumed."

There are millions of marginalised Indians who do not have the safety net that most of us take for granted. The trans community is one such section of society that is at the receiving end of this crisis, and is staring at difficult times ahead, writes K RAMYA SREE

The lockdown in the city due to the spread of coronavirus, has affected everyone. But there are certain sections of the society who are unable to voice their concerns.

The LGBTQ community, especially the transgender, already live it tough when the times are good. But with the world struggling to fight the pandemic and staying indoors, they are finding it tough to even have one square meal a day. Their main source of income, which is begging, has been hit as people are not venturing out on the streets.

Since the lockdown, many folks in the community are struggling to make ends meet, while living with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and/or compromised immune systems and without family support structures.

But, there are a few good samaritans who are helping out such people. A group of three volunteers from the city are helping out the community and making sure they don't go to bed with empty stomachs.

The lockdown has been declared without any prior information. A lot of trans women haven't stocked the groceries or money. Many women do not have subsidised ration cards due to lack of policies. With the help of six to seven donors, we are able to donate an average of 50 packets of groceries kid," Rachana Mudraboyina, a trans activist and one of the volunteers.

"We cover 75 to 80 kilometre per day. A trans woman Samantha runs a seven seater van. We sought police permission to run that van and have been reaching out to people through that can. We are also doing another fundraising campaign, whose target is Rs 20 lakh, so that the community can buy groceries for three months atleast," she added.

Hyderabadis are following the social distancing norms as instructed by the government and the transgenders too are following that. But due to many offices remaining shut and people staying at home, the trans people have become penniless. What ever groceries they had will get over in a day or two so I urge the civil society to help us buy groceries for them that would at least last a month," she said.

Another volunteer Moses Tulasi, a filmmaker, said, "Shyam, a gay activist, started the campaign in Pune and decided to implement it in Hyderabad too after getting a good response there. He then approached us and we jumped into it. Most of the community depend on others for their daily income and some of them have been forced to become sex workers too. That is why we started this campaign."

"Everybody knows they exist, but no one wants to talk about them or want to know them," he continued.

Being a tray of sunshine for trans community



The trio distribute food packets and other essentials to 100 members of the trans community in Hyderabad. Each packet costs Rs 1,000. A single packet consists of 2 kg aatta, 2 kg pulses, 2 kg rice, 1 litre oil, 1 kg salt, 100 gm of sabji masala, 100 gm haldi, 2 soaps, 1 match box, 1 kg milk powder and 500 gm tea leaves.

"Because of coronavirus, we are stuck at home just like others. It has become very difficult for us. We used to earn about Rs 200 to 300 everyday by begging (and other traditions like badhai etc) but are unable to do so now. We have run out of supplies and don't know what to do. Please help us," said Meera Jasmine, a trans woman.

We cover 75 to 80 kilometre per day. A trans woman Samantha runs a seven seater van. We sought police permission to run that van and have been reaching out to people through that can.

RACHANA MUDRABOYINA
TRANS ACTIVIST

Your Doctor at home

Lockdown has been tough on many, especially those with minor ailments or diabetics or people suffering with other health issues, as most of the hospitals are only treating emergency patients.

In an effort to reduce visits to the doctor during lockdown, a city-based youth developed an app, Connect Doctor, through which one can access pool of doctors online.

The brainchild of Sreenath Bangaru, Connect Doctor has a pool of doctors across the globe accessible to anyone looking for quick and easy video consultation for any illness.

Both doctors and patients will first need to register themselves on the app for free. They can then communicate at a particular time slot booked from any part of the world.

Speaking to this newspaper correspondent, Sreenath said, "The app aims to minimise visitations to medical institutions, saving a lot of

time, travel and money. A patient can book an appointment via video call."

After knowing the issue in detail, an online prescription will be sent to the patient. The patient can then purchase the necessary medication or go for tests if recommended.

Patients can search for a doctor by location and services. They can also choose the date and time slot, make the payment and then choose the doctor from a number of doctors available. "The app adheres to strict background verifications of medical history and workplaces before putting up any doctor's profile," Sreenath concluded.



PM seeks support of India's sports heroes to battle COVID-19

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday turned to India's sporting heroes for support in the herculean battle to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and more than 40 accomplished champions such as Virat Kohli and PV Sindhu responded by vowing to raise awareness and spirits amid a national lockdown.

The athletes, along with sports minister Kiren Rijiju, participated in nearly an hour-long video call which started at 11am.

From Sachin Tendulkar stressing on the need to keep the vigil even after the lockdown ends on April 14, to sprinter Hima Das expressing sadness at the recent attacks on frontline warriors such as health care workers and police officers, to others sharing their experience of being in a lockdown, the sportspersons had lots to offer during the interaction. All these athletes have been generous donors to funds being raised to fight the virus.

The Prime Minister, on his part, sought their support to raise awareness about the need for social distancing and personal hygiene at a time

when the total number of COVID-19 positive cases in India has crossed 2,000.

"Your suggestions will be taken note of. We are fighting this pandemic like Team India. I am confident that India will be rejuvenated by the inspiration provided by you," the Prime Minister can be seen telling athletes in a clip shared by shuttler B Sai Praneeth, a world champion bronze medallist, who also attended the call.

All sporting activities are currently shut in the country and it is still not clear when normalcy will resume.

When Ganguly was asked about the development this morning, he said, "Yes, I will be joining our Honourable PM via video call." But he refused to go into the details.

Cricketers formed a major chunk of the participating list.

Apart from Tendulkar, Ganguly and Kohli, others in the call included top batsman Rohit Sharma, former pacer Zaheer Khan, Yuvraj Singh, Captain of World Cup-winning team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and K L Raghuram were in the list of participants but it is learnt that they could not attend the call.

Olympic Silver-medallist



Prime Minister Narendra Modi chats with Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli via video conferencing MIB_Hindi/Twitter

shuttle Narendranath, javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, chess wizard Viswanathan Anand, sprinter Hima Das, boxing star Amit Panghal, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, and teenage shooting sensation Manu Bhaker were among the accomplished athletes who took part in the video call.

"Of these, 12 have been given three minutes each to speak and present their view," a ministry source said with- out revealing the names of the chosen athletes.

It was later learnt that Tendulkar, Ganguly, M C Mary Kom and Kohli were among those who were to speak during the interaction. "I suggested that much as possible we will use our way of greeting — saying Namaste instead of shaking hands, even after we overcome this pandemic," Tendulkar said after the interaction.

"I told him that it is sad that health care workers and police have been attacked," said Asian Games medalist Hima Das, who is employed with Assam Police as a DSP.

However six-time world champion Mary Kom could not connect to the call due to network issues.

Among those who managed to former world champion weightlifter Mirabai Chanu said the PM urged

everyone to be united in the fight to combat the pandemic. "The PM asked us to spread awareness of social distancing and hygiene. He spoke about how we need Virat's (Kohli) fighting spirit to win this battle," added veteran table tennis player Sharath Kamal.

World champion Silver-winning shooter Abhishek Verma said the PM urged athletes "to be positive and spread positivity."

"He said appreciate and highlight the work of frontline workers. Take good care of yourself and family at home. He asked us to spread our gestures we have on how to handle the situation better," Verma said.

The Prime Minister said the ability to face challenges,

self-discipline, positivity and self-belief, which are essential to sports, are crucial tools to combat the spread of the virus as well.

Olympic-bound archer Deepika Kumari said the PM advised the athletes to keep their immunity levels high during a time when they are not getting enough training exposure.

PM Sir urged us to post video about the awareness campaign. He gave us a few pointers like *Laxman Rekha* (Don't cross the line while maintaining social distancing); *Sankalp Lena* (Taking a pledge not to step out).

"He said *Dhairyak Rakhma* (don't press the panic button). He also advised us to boost our immune system and stay fit by doing daily exercises," she revealed.

Tennis player Ankita Raina said the PM equated the virus to an unknown opposition.

"(H) told us that athletes

are stronger mentally and

the quality of adapt to different conditions and

unknown territories. So he wanted us to spread the positive and encouraging message since this is also an unknown territory (fight against coronavirus)," she said.



UEFA Champions League trophy UCL/Twitter

Clubs risk CL axe if seasons not completed: UEFA

AFP ■ PARIS

UEFA and Europe's top clubs have stated their determination that the current football season should be played to a conclusion and threatened that teams may be excluded from the next Champions League if their domestic competitions are ended prematurely.

In a joint letter released last on Thursday, UEFA, the European Club Association (ECA), and the European Leagues body representing nearly a thousand clubs in 29 countries, said that they were exploring the possibility of playing on into July and August if need be.

The Champions League and Europa League — both of which are frozen in the last-16 stage — could be completed once the domestic seasons are finished, and "stopping competitions should really be the last resort after acknowledging that no calendar alternative would allow to conclude the season."

The joint response came after the Belgian Pro League announced on Thursday that it recommended declaring the season over with the present table accepted as final.

It is the first European league to take such a measure, although more could follow.

That means Club Brugge would in theory go straight into the next Champions League group stage, but UEFA, the ECA and the European Leagues indicated that they may be barred from participating in competition if the Belgian league decision is finalized.

"It is of paramount importance that even a disruptive event like this epidemic does not prevent our competitions from being decided on the field, in accordance with their rules and that all sporting titles are awarded on the basis of results," the joint letter said.

"We are confident that football can restart in the months to come — with conditions that will be dictated by public authorities — and believe that any decision of abandoning domestic competitions is, at this stage, premature and not justified."

"Since participation in UEFA club competitions is determined by the sporting result achieved at the end of a full domestic competition, a premature termination would cast doubt about the fulfillment of such condition."

The letter concluded: "UEFA reserves the right to assess the entitlement of clubs to be admitted to the 2020/21 UEFA club competitions."

There have been calls in other countries for this season to be declared null and void, but any option which rules out completing this season could have serious consequences for leagues reliant on huge television deals and who could find themselves having to reimburse broadcasters if remaining matches are not played.

SA cricketers symptom-free after returning from India

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

All the South African players, who returned from their incomplete ODI tour of India, were found to be symptom-free of coronavirus and those who underwent tests returned negative, according to the team's chief medical officer Shanti Mangat.

The Proteas, who returned from India on March 18, completed a 14-day period of self-isolation on Thursday but will remain in lockdown for the next two weeks just like the rest of the country.

"All the players were symptom-free and those who opted to per-



form the tests returned negative results," Mangat was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

The first match in Dharamsala on March 12 was washed out while the second and third games to be played in Lucknow and Kolkata — on March 15 and 18 respectively — were postponed.

South Africa is in the midst of a 21-day nationwide lockdown, which prohibits leaving home except to buy food or medicine and does not allow for any outdoor exercise.

CSA's focus now is on maintaining the players' fitness and trainer Tumi Masekela has sent all

the players their training programmes.

"We've got time now to work with players in terms of addressing the small niggles that they may also have. They have got time to rest and to do the strength work," he said.

"But the one big thing is the running volume: the aerobicity in my base which I am going to try and build up in the next two weeks, so that means lot of running, or a lot of cardio work, cycling or swimming."

The South African team doesn't have any international match lined up until June.

Indian badminton goes online

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With courts out of bounds due to the lockdown to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, Indian badminton has gone online with chief national coach Pullela Gopichand handing out tips through videos to the country's top shuttlers.

Staying away from the game can affect fitness of the players and so Gopichand has started putting in place a program for the shutters, albeit, through WhatsApp, an application which allows users to send text, voice and video messages.

"We can only do fitness (training) because nobody has access to courts so we are doing what we can. I am sending the players videos of what to do in our WhatsApp group," Gopichand said.

"It is a generic program but it is tuned in such a way that it caters to the people (Olympic bound) who are important," explained the 46-year-old, who is waiting for his three-week isolation to be over on Saturday.

Apart from Gopichand, Jamshedpur-born trainer Dinaz Vervatvala, who has worked with London Olympics Bronze-medalist Saina Nehwal, is also taking online classes for the Indian shutters via Zoom app, a platform of video communication.

The men's doubles pair of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, who were assured of a place in the Olympics, is also part of the group which is following the tips.

BWF/Twitter

Gopi sir sends us program schedule everyday on WhatsApp. It involves mainly meditation, wall practice where I hit the shuttle or wall, play my strokes and drives, which helps to strengthen the forearm,"

Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy in action

Everyone keen for IPL to go ahead: Cummins

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The costliest foreign player in Indian Premier League, Pat Cummins says he, including his team, Kolkata Knight Riders, is still hopeful of the 13th edition of the T20 event to go ahead sometime later.

The Australian, however, conceded that the priority now is to minimise the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

"Everyone is still really keen for it (IPL) to go ahead, but the

priority is to minimise risk of it spreading," Cummins was quoted as saying by the Australian Associated Press.

The 26-year-old Australian has been in constant contact with the Kolkata Knight Riders team which bought him for a whopping \$15.5 crore last December at the auction, as everyone waits for the league's fate.

"It's a holding pattern ... The last I spoke to them, they were still really confident and hopeful it'll be on at some stage," he said.

Pat Cummins AP

IOC announce new deadline for Oly qualification period

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Friday that the new deadline for the qualification period for the postponed Tokyo Olympics has been set to June 29, 2021. It further stated that International Federations (IF) of each sport retain full discretion for defining their own respective deadlines and pathways.

"The new qualification period deadline is June 29, 2021 and IFs can define their own qualification period. Deadlines should be prior to this date," said the IOC in a letter addressed to the National Olympic Committees (NOC).

The IOC said that it aims to finalise the qualification systems "by mid-April" with details on specific events to follow when available.

"The priority remains to reflect, where possible, the allocation method/pathway of the original qualification systems for each sport. This principle encourages IFs to follow a like-for-like approach by replacing those lost opportunities that were allocating the IOC.

quotas with the same number of events," it said.

Importantly, the IOC said that in case of sports that have age-based limits, it is willing to extend the criteria in the case of those athletes who had qualified for the 2020 Olympics.

"The only exception will be if the IF establishes that the upper age limit represents a safety and/or medical risk for athletes. Regarding the eligibility criteria for the lower age limit, if the IOC recognises the full authority of IFs to assess the eligibility of those athletes who are not eligible in 2020 but meet the lower age limit in 2021," the IOC said.

"Now, following the uncertainty of the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, IFs and the participating National Associations (NAs) have decided to consider the month of July and the beginning of August 2020 to play matches of the FIH Pro League, if the health situation improves," FIH CEO Thierry Seil said.

"At present, all matches planned in the current schedule are on hold until further notice."

FIH extend Pro League suspension

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The International Hockey Federation has been forced to extend the suspension of FIH Pro League's second edition due to the COVID-19 pandemic and now plans to hold the tournament in July and August, provided the current situation improves.

The FIH was forced to suspend the Pro League two days earlier due to the pandemic. The world hockey body first had postponed all matches scheduled before April 15 and later extended the deferment till May 17.

"Now, following the uncertainty of the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, FIH and the participating National Associations (NAs) have decided to consider the month of July and the beginning of August 2020 to play matches of the FIH Pro League, if the health situation improves," FIH CEO Thierry Seil said.

"At present, all matches planned in the current schedule are on hold until further notice."

Ancelotti wants fair play on season restart date

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Before the Premier League starts up it must ensure all clubs resume training on the same day, Everton manager Carlo Ancelotti told French newspaper *L'Equipe* in an interview published on Friday.

The Premier League is on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic. It was scheduled to resume on April 30, but club chairmen were meeting by video conference and were expected to push that the date back.

"One of the important things is that all the clubs resume training at the same time, that there are no disparities, that no one has an advantage over the others," the 60-year-old Italian told *L'Equipe*. "Players nowadays

are capable of being physically ready within a fortnight."

Ancelotti, who took over at Everton in December, has won the Champions League as a player and coach and has led teams to league titles in Italy, Germany, France and England.

Wimbledon chief fears 'no more tennis this year'

AFP ■ LONDON

Wimbledon chief Richard Lewis admitted that he feared the remainder of the 2020 tennis season could be wiped out.

Tennis has been in lockdown since early last month and is not scheduled to return until July 13 at the earliest following the cancellation of Wimbledon on Wednesday.

"I don't think it's unrealistic to say that there may be no more tennis this year," said All England Club chief executive Lewis.

"But I would like to think that things will settle down so that tournaments can be played sooner rather than later. Who knows what will happen?"

Lewis told *the Guardian* that, despite his fears, he hoped that



season's next Grand Slam, the US Open in August-September could take place.

"Let's hope the US Open and Roland Garros (rescheduled to start

in Paris a week after the final of the US Open in New York) can take place," he added.

"The optimism in me — and I am often not optimistic — still hopes the American hard-court season, the big tournaments, the Masters and the Premieres, will take place: Montreal, Toronto and then Cincinnati."

"But we all know that's probably tenuous at the moment."

Earlier, the president of the Spanish tennis federation, Miguel Diaz, said he hoped the sport could return to the courts "in the last quarter of the year."

"I think that in the last quarter of the season we will be able to see tennis again, we don't know if it will be with fans in attendance or without, but I think our sport will return to the courts," said Diaz.

London: British distance great Mo Farah has insisted he still intends to compete at the Tokyo Olympics even though they have been delayed a year by the coronavirus.

Farah will have celebrated his 38th birthday by the time of the rescheduled Games and there are concerns that athletes who had planned to reach peak form in 2020 may not reach the same heights in 2021.

But the four-time Olympic Gold medalist said the postponement and the Spanish federation, Miguel Diaz, said he hoped the sport could return to the courts "in the last quarter of the year."

"The Olympics was about the last thing to get cancelled. In a way obviously it's disappointing that it has been cancelled but I am glad it has been cancelled," Farah told *Talksport* radio on Friday.

Farah, who won Olympics Gold in the 5,000 and 10,000 metres at both the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Games, added

a delay was preferable to trying to fit in an Olympics without sufficient training time and warm-up races.

"In a way we could have been in a far worse situation, there are no races leading up to it, athletes can't test themselves," he said.

"I would probably need about six, seven, eight races before hand to see what kind of shape I am in," explained Farah.

"It is what it is and it gives us another year of preparation."

"At the moment, nobody is thinking about it. I am still running every day, just trying to get through this crisis time. It is not just sport, it is affecting everything we do. It is a difficult situation for everyone, and particularly for the older people, the more vulnerable."

"We just have to stay together, stay strong. We just have to get through this. It is a test for everywhere in the world and it is growing."

AFP

KEERTHY BOARDS POWER PETA

In the film, Keerthy plays a role which any actress would give her arm and leg for, as it has been fleshed out to perfection by the filmmaker, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

Lyricist-turned-filmmaker Krishna Chaitanya has assembled a strong central cast for his next with Nithin, *Power Peta*. More than a month after he signed Satyadev to play a role equal to that of Nithin, he has got the consent of Keerthy Suresh to be the film's leading lady, *The Pioneer* has learned exclusively. This is her second film with Nithin with whom she is already doing *Range De*, directed by Venky Aturi. A highly-placed source close to the development tells us, "Chaitanya has narrated the complete script to Keerthy last month. The narration went on for five hours but the actress agreed to come on board before the interval itself. The agreement with her though couldn't be signed, because of Covid-19 outbreak. The makers are hoping to complete the formalities once the lockdown is lifted."

The source further adds, "Keerthy plays a role which requires her to give her arm and leg for, as it has been fleshed out to perfection by Chaitanya. She will be seen as a town girl who will be a live-wire all throughout the two parts. The role calls for her to share a sparkling chemistry with Nithin and work on Godavari accent."

To be made in two parts, *Power Peta*, a gritty period drama, is a production venture of TG Vishwa Prasad under People Media Factory. It will move to sets once Nithin completes *Range De* and *Check* (working title) with Chadrasekhar Yeteti. Mani Sharma has been signed on to render tunes.

Koratala likely to don producer's hat for Mahesh's next

In addition to the existing producers Mythri Movie Makers, 14 Reels Plus and GMB, Parasuram's next with superstar Mahesh Babu might get a new partner. According to a source in the know, filmmaker Koratala Siva is likely to be credited as the joint producer.

A source says, "Koratala was instrumental in helping Parasuram reach out to Mahesh and narrate the script last year. Back then itself, there was in-principle nod between Mythri and Koratala that if Mahesh gives his nod to the script, Koratala will get a billing as the other producer. However, with 14 Reels Plus joining the production due to multiple reasons last month, Koratala's production credit hung in balance. The issue will be settled once the lockdown is lifted. Mythri though is firm on Koratala getting the producer's name as they share a great professional and personal equation with him."

If indeed the other partners agree to Koratala's name, this will be the first time that the top-drawer director will be donning a producer's hat for a film. To go on to floors in June, the untitled film is a love story faced with family emotions, plenty of humour and action. — NG

Back then itself, there was in-principle nod between Mythri and Koratala that if Mahesh gives his nod to the script, Koratala will get a billing as the other producer. However, with 14 Reels Plus joining the production due to multiple reasons last month, Koratala's production credit hung in balance.

Rajamouli to begin Alia's portions with a song

Due to varied reasons, top Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt couldn't be a part of *RRR* shoot yet — more than a year after film's director SS Rajamouli first announced her casting. But finally as reported by us sometime back, the actress will join the sets in May. The latest to this end is that Rajamouli will commence her portions by filming a romantic song on her and Ram Charan, her love interest in the film. Post the song, he will shoot some talkie portions with the actress. Pune is likely to host Alia's major shoot.

Talking about Alia's role, Rajamouli had earlier said, "She plays a strong character called Sita. She comes at a crucial juncture (in the film) and changes the course of the story."

Set in 1920s pre-independent India, *RRR*, being produced on a budget of Rs 500 crore by DVV Danaya, revolves around the fictional exploits of two real freedom fighters Komaram Bheem and Alluri Seetharama Raju. Tarak is playing the younger Bheem, with English actress Olivia Morris paired alongside him. The film will hit cinemas on January 8, 2021.



Understood what love is after Ayaan came into my life: Bunny

Sneha and sister Arha cheered him on.

Arjun, who will be joining the sets of Sukumar's next shortly, took to Twitter later and posted an emotional post. "I used to think 'what is Love?' all my life. Many times in the past I felt strong feelings but I was not sure if it was love. But after you came into my life I now know what LOVE is. You are the LOVE. I

Love you Ayaan. Happy Birthday My Baby (sic)," the actor wrote.

Ayaan got a swimming pool as his birthday gift last year from his grandfather Allu Aravind, making Bunny envious of his son. Wonder what Aravind gifted to his grandson this time around. Any guesses?



Balayya's generous donation to Telugu states and CCC

Nandamuri Balakrishna is the latest T-town celebrity to have generously donated to government and bodies in the states in battle Covid-19 and to Coreens Crisis Charity (CCC). The actor on Friday announced contributions of Rs 50 lakhs each to CMRF of TS and AP respectively and Rs 25 lakhs to CCC, which has been formed to extend a helping hand to daily wage employees of the industry who have been hit hard because of the lockdown. He handed over the Rs 50 lakh cheque to TS Municipal Administration Minister KTR on Friday and Rs 25 lakhs cheque to CCC executive member C Kalyan. He also appealed public to stay safe and

THE ACTOR ON FRIDAY ANNOUNCED CONTRIBUTIONS OF RS 50 LAKHS EACH TO CMRF OF TS AND AP RESPECTIVELY AND RS 25 LAKHS TO CCC

strong in their homes so that everyone can collectively pass through this period.

Director Sampath Nandi, who is making *Seetimaar* with Gopichand presently, has also pledged to donate Rs 5 lakhs to CCC. He said that nobody had predicted the current situation the world is facing and as such, every helping hand and every rupee raised matters the most.

