

OPINION 6
LEARNING IN
TIMES OF CRISIS

MONEY 9
MARKETS RESUME RALLY
AS BANK STOCKS SPURT

SPORT 12
COPPA ITALIA SEMIS
ON JUNE 12-13

BHUBANESWAR, SATURDAY JUNE 6, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



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DISCRIMINATION
IS INTOLERABLE:
ANGELINA JOLIE
10 VIVACITY

Send migrants home in 15 days: SC

Apex court says it intends to pass such order to Centre, State Govts on June 9

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday gave two-week time to the Centre and the States to complete the transportation of all stranded migrant workers to their native places and fixed June 9 as the date to pronounce its order on the issue.

A Bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan was hearing the matter in which it had taken suo motu cognisance on the plight of migrant workers who were stranded across the country due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Centre informed the court on Friday that around one crore migrant workers across the country have already reached their destination — around 41 lakh by road transport and 57 lakh by trains.

During the hearing, the advocates representing various States gave the figures of migrant workers as per which, over 11 lakh and 20.5 lakh people have gone back from Maharashtra and Gujarat respectively.

Counsel appearing for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh informed the SC they have so far received 28 lakh and 21.69 lakh migrants respectively.



Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the Bench, also comprising Justices SK Kaul and MR Shah, that so far 802 trains have been operated from Maharashtra for transporting migrant workers.

Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, representing the Delhi Government, told the top court that around two lakh workers are still in the national Capital and only around 10,000 of them have expressed their desire to return to their native places.

The counsel appearing for Gujarat told the SC that out of around 22 lakh migrant workers in the State, 20.5 lakh have already been transported back.

Senior advocate PS Narasimha, appearing for Uttar Pradesh, said that around 5.50 lakh migrants workers were brought back into the State from Delhi borders for which buses made over 10,000 trips.

The State Government told the Bench that 1,664 Shramik trains were organised and around 21.69 lakhs migrant

workers were brought back in Uttar Pradesh. It said they have sent back around 1.35 lakh migrants, who were in Uttar Pradesh, and 104 special trains were operated for this.

The counsel appearing for the Bihar Government told the court that around 28 lakh migrant workers have returned to the State. The lawyer said that the Bihar Government is taking steps to provide them employment and so far, skill mapping of around 10 lakh

PLIGHT OF MIGRANTS

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○Counsel appearing for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh informed the court that they have so far received 28 lakh and 21.69 lakh migrants respectively

○Over 11 lakh and 20.5 lakh people have gone back from Maharashtra and Gujarat respectively

○So far 802 trains have been operated from Maharashtra for transporting migrant workers

already been transported. The Kerala Government said 1.61 lakh wanted to stay put.

When Kerala's counsel said that Railways is under the Central Government and they should take care of the cost of return by migrants, the Bench said that all States must make their own arrangements.

The counsel appearing for Karnataka said that from May 3, the State has facilitated the return of over three lakh migrant workers and if 15 days time is given they will facilitate the transportation of the rest.

The lawyer said in past two weeks, the number of migrant workers who want to go out of Karnataka has come down.

The Solicitor General assured the apex court that the entire country is working in tandem and all demands and assistance required by the States would be provided to them.

On May 28, the top court had directed that the migrant workers wanting to return to their home States will not be charged train or bus fares and those stranded across the country will be provided food free of cost by the authorities concerned.

No new scheme for year, Central ministries told

Spending on only PM Garib Kalyan and Atmanirbhar Bharat allowed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Resource-starved as it is, the Government will not start any new schemes for a year, the Finance Ministry said on Friday making it clear that any spending will only be allowed in the Prime Minister's "Garib Kalyan Package" and the recent announcements made under "the Atmanirbhar Bharat package". No other scheme would be approved. Schemes already approved under the Budget will also stay suspended till March 31, 2021.

The drastic move is to tighten spending amid rising coronavirus cases with no clarity on when the pandemic will peak in the country.

"It may be appreciated that in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is an unprecedented demand on public financial resources and a need to use resources prudently in accordance with emerging and changing priorities," the expenditure department, under the Finance Ministry, said adding that it has been receiving many new proposals for in-principle approval from various Ministries or departments. All Ministries have been told to stop sending requests for new schemes to the Finance Ministry. Spending will only be allowed in the Prime Minister's Garib Kalyan Package and the announcements made under the Atmanirbhar Bharat package, it said.



"No new proposals for a scheme/sub-scheme should be initiated this year (2020-21) except the proposals announced under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package, the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package and any other special package/announcement," a Ministry note said.

Snan Yatra celebrated sans devotees

Deities sent to Anasar Ghar for 'treatment'

SAROJ KUMAR MISHRA ■ PURI

The famous Snan Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra and Chakravaraj Sudarshan was celebrated in the Shreemandir here without presence of devotees on Friday.

Limited numbers of servants conducted the Snan Yatra rituals. It was for the first time that the festival was celebrated without participation of devotees and the Lions Gate wore a deserted look during the grand festival amidst prohibitory orders put in place under Section 144 CrPC to enforce Covid-19 restrictions.

With multiple layers of barricades, the temple's surrounding was sealed to prevent entry of people. However, people enjoyed the Snan Yatra and paid obeisance to the lords through television. The Doordarshan (DD) aired the live telecast of the festival and private channels shared the signals through the GSAT-17.

The festival started from 1 am on Friday and continued till night. All the deities came in



Dhadi Pahandi to the Snan Mandap (bathing podium).

Earlier, the deities took bath with 108 pots of water mixed with aromatic ingredients. The water was collected from Suna Kua (Golden Well) in the temple premises.

The Chherapanhara Niti (sweeping of Snan Mandap floors) was conducted by Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb's Mudiratha in the Maharaja's absence.

The Gajanana Beshha (Elephant-Attired) of the Trinity began at about 11 am and continued till 4 pm. Lords Jagannath and Lord Balabhadra were adorned with various art and craft pieces and flowers to look like elephants.

At 5 pm, the deities were escorted in the Bahuda Pahandi (return sojourn) to Anasar Ghar (quarantine home), a makeshift room especially built to accommodate the

deities for a fortnight. As per tradition, the deities were taken ill due to bath and taken to the Anasar Ghar for treatment.

As many as 38 platoons of police were deployed to maintain law and order. DIG (Central Range) Ashish Singh oversaw the security arrangement. SJTA Chief Administrator Krishan Kumar and Puri district Collector Balawant Singh and SP Uma Shankar Dash were present.

State records 8th Covid-19 death

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The number of Covid-19 deaths rose to eight in the State when a 63-year-old man of Khordha district succumbed to the virus on Friday.

The deceased had been admitted to a Covid Hospital here. He was a chronic patient of diabetes and other underlying health conditions, the Health and Family Welfare Department said.

Meanwhile, 130 new positive cases were reported on the day, taking the State's total to 2,608. Out of the new cases, 124 were from quarantine centres and six local contacts.

The highest of 23 positive cases were reported from Cuttack district followed by 22 each in Khordha and

Mayurbhanj districts, seven each from Gajapati and Sundargarh districts, four each in Bahadrak and Bargarh districts, three each in Balangir and Kandhamal districts, two in Dhenkanal district and

• **130 more infected, highest 23 in Cuttack**

• **Total reaches 2,608**

• **123 more recover, total recoveries 1,604**

one each in Angul and Jagatsinghpur districts.

However, as many as 123 persons infected with the virus recovered on the day,

taking the total recoveries in the State to 1,604.

While 35 patients recovered in Ganjam district, 22 recovered in Cuttack, 14 in Nuapada, 14 from Balangir, 10 from Khordha, seven from

Kandhamal, five from Koraput and four from Kendrapada.

With this, the active cases now stand at 994 while the death toll is eight.

Constable rapes girl in M'ghanj

PNS ■ BARIPADA

A 19-year-old physically-challenged girl was allegedly raped by a police Constable in Mayurbhanj district on Thursday night when she was alone at her residence.

While the girl's mother had gone to her parents' house at Jashipur, her father, also a police Constable, was on Covid-19 duty at Baripada.

Police have registered a case under Sections 376 and 511 of IPC against the accused Constable, whose suspension has been ordered by Mayurbhanj Superintendent of Police Smit Parmar.

The medical examinations of both the accused and the victim were conducted at a Government hospital, police said.

THE VIRUS DOESN'T UNDERSTAND LOCKDOWN RELAXATION.

If we stop washing our hands regularly, wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, the virus will start attacking us. Because relaxing the lockdown norms doesn't mean we should too.

20 SECONDS

FACE MASK

2 METRES

GO OUT IF NECESSARY

#OdishaFightsCorona

OIPR - 15001/13/0019/2021 DADLS - 15

BBSR records 13 new corona cases

7 from home quarantine, 6 local contacts
3 cases reported from Cuttack city

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The six local contacts include one each from Dumduma, Salia Sahi, Aiginia and Laxmisagar areas and two from the Unit- IV area. With this, the number of cases in the state capital rose to 81, including 27 active cases. While 51 patients have recovered here, three succumbed to the virus so far, the department added.
In Cuttack, 23 tested positive for the virus on the day, of which 20 are from the Narsinghapur, Badamba and Nischintakoili blocks. The remaining three cases belong to the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) area.
The new cases included one from Deulasahi, contact of a positive case, another from Siddheswar Sahi, contact of a positive case and symptomatic and one was under paid quarantine, travel history and symptomatic.
"All the patients have been shifted to the Ashwini Covid Hospital. Their contact tracing and follow-up action are underway," said the CMC.

Facebook flirting costs city woman ₹2 lakh

Later, her phone, jewellery snatched by the youth

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Flirting on Facebook cost a married woman in Bhubaneswar dear as she was duped of over Rs 2 lakh by a youth, whom she had met on the social-networking site sometime ago. The woman, a resident of Mancheshwar here, alleged that she had been promised a lucrative job in exchange of the money.

Sources said the woman, who is a native of Bhograi in Baleswar district, befriended with the youth on Facebook and the friendship began with playing online game 'Hugo' together. Later the friendship developed into an intimate relationship.
As per a complaint lodged by the woman, the accused cheated her of a whopping Rs 2,22,000 assuring her to get her a manager's job in a private company.

The woman also alleged that in the absence of her husband, the youth once visited her house, intoxicated her and meeting in a restaurant at Khandagiri. When she and her husband went there, the youth reiterated his demand of the



had physical relationship with her. The accused also clicked pictures and recorded a video of the entire act and later started blackmailing her with the photos. After uploading the pictures and video on social media, he started demanding another Rs 2 lakh from the woman for deleting the video posts. Finally, the woman revealed her plight to her husband seeking his help.
Things turned bizarre three days ago after the accused called up the woman for a

money. Then, realising that the couple might not give him money, he snatched the woman's mobile phone and gold jewellery besides misbehaving with her. He also thrashed her husband when he tried to intervene before fleeing the spot.
The couple later lodged a complaint with the Khandagiri police, following which cops initiated a probe into the matter. However, the fraudster was yet to be nabbed when the last reports came in.

Shah to address Odisha people on June 8

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

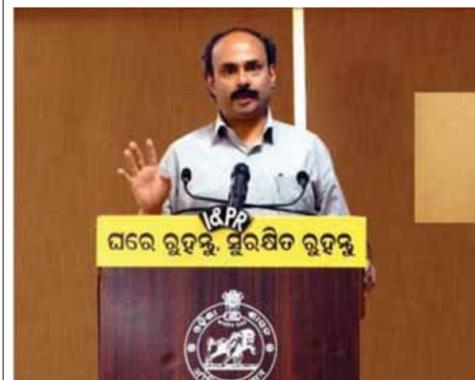
Union Home Minister Amit Shah would address people of Odisha through a digital platform at 3.30 pm on June 8 in the wake of completion of one-year of the second term of the Modi Government at the Centre.

A virtual rally will be organised and promoted through various digital platforms.

For this, a preparatory meeting was organised through videoconferencing at the BJP State party office here in which over 5,000 BJP workers participated. Posters and videos of the virtual rally were released. A plan was made to involve over 1 lakh party workers in the rally.

Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Pratap Sarangi, party State president Samir Mohanty, Leader of Opposition Pradipta Naik, BJP Legislature Party Deputy Leader Bishnu Sethi, BJP national vice-president Baijayant Panda, State general secretary and Modi's one-year completion programme chief Prithviraj Harichandan and virtual rally chief Ranjan Patel were present.

Sharma axed from Covid-related purchase job



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government on Friday removed senior IAS officer Hemant Sharma from the job of Covid-19-related purchases. Sharma is currently serving as the Principal Secretary of Industries Department with additional charge of MSME Department Principal Secretary.

Sharma has been relieved from the charge of supervision of procurement of all essential pharmaceutical goods and other equipments required to handle the Covid-19 situation,

said a notification issued by the General Administration and Public Grievance Department. "Sharma was allowed to assist Health and Family Welfare Department Principal Secretary in supervision of procurement of all essential pharmaceutical goods and availability of additional PPEs, masks and other critical care equipments for Covid-19 in the State. His additional charge related to procurement of Covid-19 equipment has been rescinded," the notification stated.

Twin City police issue advisory for shutdowns

Essential services exempted from restrictions

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate police on Friday issued a travel advisory for the weekend shutdowns in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack till the end of June. As per shutdown restrictions, the sectors fall under emergency and essential services category would be allowed to carry out activities

during 48-hour complete shutdown every week.

The cops advised people to stay at home and venture out only for essential or permitted purposes.

The police would allow people working in medical establishments, Central or State Governments, telecom staffs, petrol pump, media personnel, home delivery of food or medicine, water supply, sanitation, and sewerage workers, electric supply staffs, industrial establishment factories, service sector industries can use the Identity- cards issued by their respective firms for travelling.

Pass issued by police could be used by pharmacies, move-

ment of taxis, auto-rickshaws and marriage or funerals. For other emergencies, SMS pass could be attained by Dial 100. Unrestricted access is allowed for goods transport and traffic on the National Highways.

Notably, the State Government has announced weekend shutdown in 11 districts to contain the spread of Covid-19.

The shutdown would be in force on every Saturday and Sunday of June in Ganjam, Puri, Nayagarh, Khordha, Kendrapada, Bhadrak, Balangir, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur and Baleswar districts.

SHGs now to run septage plants in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a major decision towards women empowerment and inclusive sanitation, the State Government on Friday handed over the Operation and Maintenance (O and M) of four Septage Treatment Plants (SeTPs) to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the State. The treatment facilities were handed over to women SHGs in Brahmapur, Baripada and Sambalpur and to a transgender SHG in Cuttack through a contract agreement signed between the SHG and the ULBs at an event presided over by Minister Panchayatiraj and DW, Law, Housing and Urban Development, Pratap Jena, held through video conference mode on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Jena told that SHGs are now at the forefront of all development activities including sanitation in Odisha and have proven their ability time and again. "Community managed sanitation infrastructure not only results in community ownership but also makes it more sustainable in the longer run," said the Principal Secretary, HUDD G Mathi Vathanan on the occasion. The treatment plants were handed over to the SHGs through a service contract between the concerned Urban Local Body (ULB) and the SHGs. The ULBs will continue to provide technical and handholding assistance.

Why Gajapati stayed away from Snan Yatra

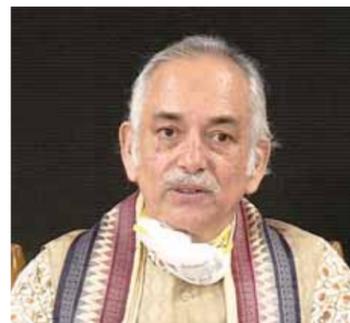
PNS ■ PURI

The Chhera Pahanra ritual by Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb has been an integral part of the Snan Yatra of Lord Jagannath and His siblings in Puri. However, there was an exception in this year's Snan Yatra as the Gajapati Maharaja didn't come to the Snan Mandap on Friday.

Instead, his Mudiratha performed the ritual at the Snan Mandap. Though there was confusion initially over the Maharaja's absence, he later cleared the air.

"I decided to stay indoors in compliance with Government's Covid-19 guidelines, which restrict outdoor movement of persons above 65 years of age. As per tradition, Mudiratha can perform all rituals of Gajapati Maharaja in the latter's absence," he said.

"This is the second time I couldn't perform



the ritual on Snan Yatra. Earlier in 1976, I was unable to conduct it as I was in the US for my LLM course," he added.

Bagchis donate ₹2.5 cr to CMRF

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Skill Development Authority Chairman Subroto Bagchi and his wife School Chairperson Susmita Bagchi on Friday contributed a sum of Rs 2.5 crore to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) for fight against Covid-19. The couple presented the cheque to Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy. They said, "We have

contributed this small amount to support Covid relief in Balangir district". Notably, Bagchi was born in Balangir district and her wife attended her first school in this district.

MoU inked to clean lakes near Lingaraj Temple

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

On the World Environment Day on Friday, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT-M), Bhubaneswar, a branch of ICT Mumbai with the CSR funding of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and the Odisha Bridge and Construction Corporation Limited (OBCC) for cleaning of lakes, including Bindusagar, at various locations around the Lingaraj Temple here.

The ICT would employ developed technology of hydrodynamic cavitation to clean the lakes. The OBCC will furnish details on present quality and volume of water in lakes to be cleaned. OBCC MD Er (EIC) Jaya Krishna Das and ICT-IOC KGP Director Prof Bhaskar N Thorat inked the MoU. It is aimed to complete the cleanup drive



in three months, but the duration depends upon Covid-19 restrictions.

Youth injured in attack in Bhapur

PNS ■ BHAPUR (NAYAGARH)

A youth, Sribasta Malla, was critically injured when he was allegedly attacked by three miscreants with sharp weapons at Baimundia Chhhack in Bhapur of Nayagarh district.

Three youth of the Harijan Sahi of Baimundia village attacked Malla while he was sipping tea near a shop in the locality. However, when he screamed for help locals rushed

to the spot following which the miscreants fled from the spot. The injured youth was rushed to the Khandapada hospital.

In the complaint, the victim has told the police that he knows the identity of the attackers. But police said that the victim has a past criminal record. He was involved in snatching, loot and extortion from the locals, for which complaints were lodged against him.

BBSR-R'kela train from June 8

BHUBANESWAR: One more intra-State train is scheduled to run between Bhubaneswar and Rourkela from June 8 to 30 except on Saturdays and Sundays.

As per the schedule, the train would leave Rourkela at 5.10 am and reach Bhubaneswar at 12.30 pm. On its return journey, the train would depart from Bhubaneswar at 2.10 pm and reach Rourkela at 9.40 pm.

The train would have stoppages at the Rajgangpur, Bamra, Jharsuguda, Rengali, Sambalpur City, Rairakhol, Boinda, Angul, Talcher Road, Dhenkanal and Naraj Marthapur stations. **PNS**

'Biodiversity great natural asset of country' No study materials in Odia under SWAYAM

OES holds Environment Day

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Three kinds of animals and plants per hour, 75 kinds per day and about 27,000 kinds per year are being extinct from the earth. If this trend of extinction continues, there would be less numbers of animals than human beings by the coming century. Biodiversity is the natural asset of a country. Thus, we must take moral responsibility to ensure that our so-called development doesn't impact animals and plants in natural habitats and environment negatively. Noted environmentalists opined this at the World

Environment Day organised through a webinar by the Orissa Environment Society (OES).

According to a study conducted in 1995, there are about 13.6 million kinds of living beings in the earth but scientists have been able to identify 1.75 million of them.

"Post Industrial Revolution, development process has been going on intolerably while human population and use of natural resources going on uncontrollably. As a consequence, there has been a rapid decay in biodiversity and negative incidents are happening in the living system," rued the speakers. They suggested that human beings should change their lifestyle, work process and objective of development and concentrate on protection

of environment.

OES president Dr Sundar Narayan Patra presided over the seminar.

Initiating talks, secretary Dr Jayakrushna Panigrahi said a country, which has more organic resources, has quality environment and higher rate of development. "We should protect animals and plants as they provide us various services and products," he said.

Former PCCF (Wildlife) Dr Bijay Ketan Patnaik opined that humans are primarily responsible for the extinction living being going on now and, if the process continues, it would certainly act as a Bhashmasura for human life.

Eastern region advisor to Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change Dr Bindheshwari Prasad Upadhyay stressed on protec-

tion of a balanced nature. "The Biodiversity Act 2002 stresses on assessment of regional biodiversity. We should feel that the extinction process is going on in a unchangeable direction. Thus, endurable ecology management must be our path finder," he said.

Former PCCF Vinod Kumar gave a brief note on the country's biodiversity hotspots.

In his concluding speech, Dr Patra emphasised on protection of animal sanctuaries, natural parks, biosphere and tiger and elephant projects. He said all individuals along with the Government should make vows for the purpose.

The seminar came to an end with a vote of thanks proposed by secretary Dr Panigrahi. Many environmentalists and intellectuals joined the programme.

Odia-speaking students, teachers, parents disheartened

TATHYA ■ BHUBANESWAR

While the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MoHRD) has developed study materials for students from Class IX till Post Graduation (PG) in different languages, it is yet to include Odia.

While crores of students of eight regional languages are benefited through the programme called Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), Odia language is not added, officials admitted.

The SWAYAM was launched by the Union

Government in the year 2017. At least 500 plus courses of different disciplines are included in the programme with an objective to achieve three cardinal principles of education policy such as access, equity and quality.

More than 1,000 specially chosen faculty and teachers from across the country took part in preparing the courses.

The courses hosted on SWAYAM are in four quadrants such as video lecture, special prepare reading material that can be downloaded and printed, self assessment tests through examination and quizzes and online discussion forum for clearing the doubt.

In the meantime, steps have been taken by the MoHRD to enrich the learning experience by using audio-video and multimedia and state

of the art technology.

In order to ensure that best quality contained is produced and delivered, nine national coordinators have been appointed.

The languages in which such courses are available include Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Kannad, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam.

However, Odia speaking students are yet to reap any benefits from SWAYAM platform.

The objective of SWAYAM is to take the best teaching learning resources to all including the most disadvantaged.

This programme has brought digital revolution among the students of the languages. All the courses are interactive and prepared by the best teachers in the coun-

try and are available freely to any learner.

It is pertinent to mention here that during current Covid-19 pandemic, educational institutions are closed since long. The students from class IX to PG of other languages who have registered in SWAYAM are benefited in absence of regular classroom teaching.

As no course materials are prepared in Odia, the Odia speaking students from Odisha are deprived of the benefits of SWAYAM which is available to their counterparts in Bengli, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil and Telgu languages.

Meanwhile, students, teachers, parents and academics are feeling disheartened with such unequal treatment to Odia students.

Woman delivers baby in Shramik Special

Third case in State
ECoR officials to sponsor gifts for babies

PNS ■ BALANGIR/BHUBANESWAR

Yet another new life was welcomed in a Shramik Special train when a passenger, who had been stranded in Telangana, gave birth to a baby boy on Friday morning. Nineteen-year-old Meena Kumbhar from Thodibahal village under Belpara Tehsil of

Balangir district delivered the baby on the train that was running from Telangana's Lingampali to Balangir. The train reportedly arrived at Titilagarh at 5:40 am. After a thorough checkup at a railway health unit in Titilagarh, doctors declared both mother and her newborn healthy. Later, on the direction of the Assistant Divisional Medical Officer (ADMO), both of them were shifted to the local Sub-Divisional Hospital through the Janani ambulance service. Notably, this was the third delivery case in a Shramik Special train under the jurisdiction of the East Coast Railway (ECoR) as well as in Odisha. Incidentally, all three

deliveries took place in Balangir district. By now, 37 babies have been born in Shramik Special trains in the country in the Covid-19 situation. Meanwhile, the ECoR has decided to sponsor gifts or cash to the children born on board Shramik Special trains on its network in an effort to support the new mothers. The effort would be completely voluntary by ECoR officers, the first such sponsorship having come from ECoR General Manager Vidya Bhushan himself, who sent Rs 5,000 to the mother of the child born on Friday. Other senior ECoR officials have volunteered to sponsor gift items in subsequent cases, if any.

PPT to plant 1L trees this year

PNS ■ PARADIP

With the theme "Celebrate Biodiversity", the Paradip Port Trust (PPT) observed the World Environment Day on Friday. In the Covid-19 situation, this year's plantation programme was conducted in a simple manner, following social distancing norms.



The PPT intends to plant around 1 lakh trees in this fiscal in the locality. PPT Chairman Rinkesh Roy planted a sapling at the PPT Golf Course. It was followed by plantation in the premises of Paradip Sakshyara Samiti. The PPT plantation drive would be executed through

the Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC). As part of the drive, the casuarina forests that have been depleted near the beach are being planned for rejuvenation along with tree cover in the Fishery Harbour and Mahanadi mouth area. The

township will be planted with fruit-bearing trees. All this would help restore the tree cover that has been destroyed by cyclones in the last 10 to 15 years. PPT Deputy Chairman AK Bose, HODs and other officials along with OFDC officials also participated in the programme.

Draft Environ Assessment opposed in Brahmapur

'Handing over natural resources to firms against national interest'

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Lok Shakti Abhiyan State President and Jan Jagaran Abhiyan convenor Madhusudan staged a 12-hour protest at the Gandhi Statue at Gandhi Chhak here alleging that the Union Government has decided to hand over the natural resources to companies without holding discussion of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) and public hearing on it. Lok Shakti Abhiyan national convenor Prafulla Samantra said, "Changing environment impact is undemocratic, unconstitutional and against the nature. By environment impact, mineral and forest resources are being looted. The Union Government has decided to cut lakhs of trees and degrade biodiversity in the name of establishment of an Italian hydro power project."

Madhusudan said the decision of handing over natural resources during the current Covid lockdown period indicates the immorality of the Government. Stating that 2.L trees have been targeted to be cut in Arunachal Pradesh, he demanded that the Draft Environment Assessment be lifted soon. Among others, Manav Adhikar Suraksha Manch convenor Abani Gaya, social worker Laxmi Nrusingha Rath, 'Sansar' editor Ramesh Chandra Sahoo, Srikant Hrushikesh Patra and AIKKS's Shankar Sahu were present.

NREGS boon for jobseekers in Nuapada

Thousands accommodated

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

The fact that MGNREGS, at the moment, can provide job to thousands of job seekers in a district like Nuapada, is proved from the online data in THE MGNREGS website.

According to the web information on e-Muster Roll generation as on June 4, the number of workers engaged was above 47,000. "It is significant in the context of lockdown and joblessness," say the officials monitoring the scheme in the district. "We will continue to provide job, till the people are interested to work," says the Assistant Programme Officer (APO) of MGNREGS, Boden block.

A visit to work sites and interaction with the people working under MGNREGS speaks a lot of the achievements this year. Bidyadhar Hans and his family members belonging to Dotto village under Karangalam Panchayat of Boden block have already completed 114 days of work since April. The family has earned Rs



33,972 till now, that comes to an average of approximately Rs 17,000 per month. Another family of this Panchayat which has completed 100 person days of work is the family of Kanakram Majhi, who has earned Rs 29,800 in last two months. One will find several such families in every village, who would be happy to narrate his changed experience this year. "We have benefited in two ways, in addition to the wage, the work has also helped us develop our undulating up

lands," say Bidyadhar and his family members, who got support for land development work. Kanakram Majhi and family, who were engaged in construction of a farm pond in their land have also similar view to share. Most important is that the wage payment mechanism has improved significantly. "The payment of wage has been regularised, we are being paid our wage every eight to ten days; otherwise it would not be possible to work under this scheme," say the workers.

The district at present is implementing 3,622 projects in the district. "It is encouraging that about 44 per cent of the total workers working at present is women," says APO of Komma block Pradip Kumar Ojha, which has engaged the highest number of labourers at present with Muster Roll generated for 11,540 workers, followed by Sinapali with 10,613 workers and Nuapada, Boden and Khariar respectively with MR generated for 8,871, 8,545 and 7,837 workers.

Reopen Deogaon sugar mill: BJP

PNS ■ BALANGIR

The members of BJP led by Anant Das and others on Wednesday staged a silent protest before the Collector here demanding reopening of the sugar mill at Deogaon, 20km from Balangir headquarters town.

"We the members of BJP are staging a silent demonstration before the collector demanding reopening of the sugar mill at Deogaon. Balangir has no industry and migration is endemic in the district. Earlier, it was providing employment to 800 youths and 15,000 farmers were benefited both directly and indirectly," said Das.

The BJP workers submitted a memorandum to Balangir Sub Collector Sanjay Mishra in this connection.

Receiving the memorandum, Balangir Sub-Collector Mishra said he would intently monitor the Government about the matter.

Authorities covering up K'jhar PDS rice scam!

Two minor staff transferred to save big fishes

MALAY MOHAPATRA ■ KEONJHAR

A letter no 2671 dated 25/09/2019 written by the Civil Supplies Officer, Keonjhar to the Secretary, Civil Supplies Department, regarding irregularities in PDS rice distribution has pointed fingers towards the suspicious action of the enforcement squad.

According to the letter, the enforcement squad was given the task to inquire into the irregularities in PDS rice distribution in Tangiriapal and Rasol Panchayat under Harichandanpur block. However, Supply Inspector Yashoda Singh and ACSO Paresh Mohanty in charge of enforcement squad instead of conducting an impartial inquiry tried to tamper with the evidences and also knowingly suppressed the incident. As per procedure during

inquiry by the enforcement squad on August 24, they did not seize the accounts and stock register of the panchayats. After the squad found that the rice bags on stock were directly transported from Syamsunder Rice mill, the stock of mill was not immediately verified to ascertain truth. The stocks of the respective panchayats were not weighed immediately to find any shortage allowing the culprits to manipulate and adjust the stocks later. Interestingly, the stock was formally seized and left in the custody of the same panchayat executive officer Durgaprasad Murmu. Even the godown was not sealed either. The CSO was intimated about the findings a week later.

According to the procedure, the rice procured from any mill first reaches the Mandua rice collection godown which is sent to different panchayats later on after verification and other formalities. But it was found that on August 23, 1,010 rice bags weighing 505 quintals with

Syamsunder Mill tag was directly transported from the mill to Rasol GP and similarly 414 quintals of rice was directly transported to Tangiriapal GP without verification and receipt of stock at Mandua godown.

The Additional Secretary of Public Distribution and Supplies wrote to the Collector Keonjhar on January 13 to take action on the PDS rice irregularities in these GPs and also raised doubt on the activity of the enforcement officials. But it is alleged that instead of prosecuting the real culprits, Junior Assistant Dushmani Nayak and peon Chintamani Pati were transferred from the district as a part of disciplinary action against them. And, ASCO Paresh Mohanty has been promoted to the CSO Keonjhar to cover up such irregularities. The PDS commodity transport scam and other irregularities in during the Covid-19 have reached sky high and if proved at higher level, the massive scams may come to the fore, locals claimed.

NRO seeks textile park in KBK zone

Prof Patra writes to Chief Minister

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Non-resident Odia (NRO) Professor Digambara Patra of the American University of Beirut, Lebanon has urged CM Naveen Patnaik to establish another textile and cotton park at Bhawanipatna. In a letter, he said that while the Odisha Government has accorded recent approval for a 1,000-acre textile park at Dhamra and another 1,000-acre medical park at Dhenkanal, it is silent on industrial development in the Kalahandi, Balangir, Koraput and Kandhamal (KBKK) region. Earlier, the State Government has also approved for a 800 acre for a Textile Park

at Malipada, Bhubaneswar. Similarly, a 500-acre petrochemical downstream park at Baleswar is under consideration. Although these initiatives by the State Government is appreciable, the Government's lack of enthusiasm to focus in industrial development in (KBKK) region is worrisome, he told. The KBK region has great potential in alumina, cotton and agriculture-based industries. Unfortunately, most of the aluminum based downstream parks are being established outside of the KBK district. At the same time, the KBK districts play a significant and major role in cotton production in Odisha. Cotton cultivated in Kalahandi, Nuapada, Rayagada, Koraput, and Balangir districts is well known for its quality internationally. Nevertheless, both the textile

parks proposed by the Odisha Government are coming in the coastal Odisha region and none of them has been proposed in KBK region. Konark Spinning Mill in Kesinga has remained closed for 27 years, he told. District wise Kalahandi is among the topmost districts for cotton production and Bhawanipatna is located centrally to all the major districts under cotton cultivation such as Kalahandi, Bolangir, Rayagada and Koraput as per the Odisha Government data. Similarly, Kalahandi, Subarnapur, Bargarh and Koraput region is known for handloom textiles. It will be ideal to encourage a textile park where cotton is widely grown in the State to provide direct benefit to the farmers and add value to their products, he opined.

2 docs among 25 B'swar hosp staff quarantined

UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR

As many as 25 medical staff, including three doctors, are in home quarantine after two patients were detected with Covid-19 positive. On Wednesday while 24 positive cases were detected in the district, two of them were undergoing treatment, reports said. Both are women patients and were under treatment in different wards. One 24-year-old woman Mumbai returnee while was admitted in the gynaecology ward, another, 55-year-old woman, a resident of Remuna, was admitted in the orthopaedic ward following

fracture. District Project Manager (DPM) Anil Mohanty said, "Both the women corona affected were in isolated beds in their wards and have been sent to the Covid hospitals. Their close contact relatives while are sent to temporary medical centre (TMC), the doctors, nurses, paramedics and other staff are on home quarantine." The 24-year-old woman was admitted in the hospital from TMC after vomiting compliant during her pregnancy. Since she was a Mumbai returnee and initially lodged in the TMC, her sample was sent for test. During her stay in the gynaecology ward she was in an isolated bed in the ward.

After detection of Covid virus she was sent to Covid hospital in the district and since her husband, also a Mumbai returnee, was in close contact with her, he was sent to TMC. In another case, the 55-year-old woman came to hospital with fracture along with her two sons. As she was required surgery, swab test was mandatory before the invasive procedure. She was in isolated bed in the Orthopaedic ward and when the report came positive she was referred to KIMS Covid Hospital, Bhubaneswar for treatment and further surgery. Her two sons were sent to the TMC, said DPM Mohanty.

Jharsuguda suicide pact Woman succumbs, toll rises to 4

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

The toll in the mass suicide attempt incident in Jharsuguda district increased to four as another woman died at the VIMSAR in Burla on Friday. The deceased was identified as Bandita Biswal (35). The matter pertains to suicide attempt by five members of a family here following the death of a family member. A

woman, her son and three daughters had consumed phenyl after being grieved over the death of her younger son Deepak Biswal (22). Pinki Biswal, Pushpabati Biswal (mother) and Srikanth Biswal had earlier succumbed at the hospital while undergoing treatment. Notably, Deepak had sustained critical after which his family members took the drastic step.

Post-Covid agri reforms: Odisha could be frontrunner

ARABINDA K PADHEE, ANJANI KUMAR, SHALANDER KUMAR, ROHIT PILLANDI

Many reforms in the Indian agricultural sector were long due for want of enabling rules in States or differences between State and Central Governments. Covid-19, it appears, is ironing out those creases, paving the way for major reforms. As the pandemic hit during Rabi harvest, proactive States did not lose time to relax or amend State-specific Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) Acts to allow farmers to sell marketable produce directly to buyers outside designated mandis. A few States also relaxed laws to give State owned and accredited warehouses the status of a mandi. These measures were to assure farmers remunerative prices

for their produce and prevented crowding in mandis. Freeing up agricultural markets has often been advocated to maximise the income of the farming communities. Madhya Pradesh was among the first few States to amend its 'mandi' Act to maximise the value of farmers' produce. Subsequently, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat followed. Odisha is the latest entrant to the club with two ordinances (as the State Legislative Assembly is not in session) in May that promise comprehensive reforms in existing agricultural marketing laws and provisions related to contract farming. The Odisha Agriculture Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020, aims at improving pro-

duction and productivity of crops and livestock with participation of contract farming companies in the process of input supplies, knowledge transfer, value addition and marketing. Fifty types of plant and five animal produce have been included in the contract farming legislation. Odisha's ordinances also amend the State's Agriculture Produce Marketing Act, 1957, to provide restriction-free trade and transaction of agricultural produce (including livestock) within the State (and the country) to maximize farmers' income by increasing market access. Only the fine print of the law, rules which are yet to be published, can tell whether the Government's positive intent meets the desired objectives. Centre's push

rooting for amendments to State's APMC Acts to free agricultural markets from the clutches of politicised market committees and infuse investments and competition to benefit farmers while permitting them to sell their produce directly to consumers or traders outside the mandi yards. The model APMC Act, 2003, did not meet the expectations for want of effective implementation by States. This again led the Centre to circulate the Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2017, and Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2018, without finding takers with the COVID pandemic hit the nation. In fact, the Union

Finance Minister, in her last budget speech for 2020-21, announced "to encourage" States to implement these long pending agricultural reforms. In the latest stimulus package under Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, these reforms have been specifically mentioned to boost the agricultural economy. As agriculture is a State subject with political considerations, States and the Centre have been at odds over advisories of the latter. The 15th Finance Commission has reportedly provided for financial incentives to States that would enact and implement all features of the Centre-suggested Contract Farming Model Act. Post-COVID, it is to be seen how the Centre nudges States with financial incentives for sincere implementation of these reforms. Understanding successful measures

Past studies by IFPRI and ICRISAT have shown that contract farming can be successful in increasing farmers' incomes significantly and improve compliance with food safety measures. However, a transparent and effective contract enforcement framework is a prerequisite for ensuring its success. An online platform providing members real time details of quantity sold by each farmer and its price would increase transparency and participation. Creating a dashboard which reflects everyday prices of major commodities in different markets would also help in transparent price discovery by contract farmers. To take advantage of the ongoing reforms, farmers must produce what the market demands. Each State should have an effective and functioning agricultural

marketing intelligence cell (AMIC). AMIC, in collaboration with Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and extension agencies, should continuously assess and inform about demand for type and quality of agricultural produce from within the country and export markets. There might be a need to identify sub-regional clusters suitable for particular commodities and create policy support for required storage and marketing infrastructure. Building farmer awareness on the scope, process and potential benefits of new provisions and reforms will be key to ensuring their effective participation. These reforms would go a long way in invigorating the agricultural sector in Odisha. Don't forget land leasing

The time has come to implement the land leasing law as well. The Central Government had earlier circulated the Model Land Leasing Act, 2016 to all State Governments for effective implementation. Since informal or concealed tenancy is growing very rapidly across States, and to bring in private investments from farmers themselves, besides off-loading a significant part of the population from agriculture sector, land leasing is now recognised as an economic necessity. (Padhee is country director-India; Shalander Kumar is Principal Scientist, Pillandi is Senior Communications Officer at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Anjani Kumar is Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Views are authors' own)

Home Min to procure arms/ammunition from pvt firms

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Ministry is seeking to procure arms/ammunition from private firms besides State-run Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) for the Central paramilitary forces and Central Police Organisations.

A meeting was held via video conferencing last Friday with at least 17 private firms and the Ministry may float tenders to procure such items from non-state players, sources said.

The meeting under the subject head "Procurement of Arms and Ammunition by CAPFs/CPOs from Private Domestic Manufacturers" was

held under the chairmanship of Minister of State in the Home Ministry G Kishan Reddy with private sector industries having licence for manufacturing arms/ammunition. The meeting was held to explore the possibilities to enhance the procurement of these items from private companies besides the OFB.

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) or the Central paramilitary forces with a combined manpower of about 10 lakh include the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), National

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Security Guards (NSG) and Assam Rifles. The CPOs include organisations under the Home Ministry like Bureau of Police Research and

Development (BPR&D). The CAPF and CPOs were also represented in the meeting. The online meeting connected to 40 locations

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across the country also had participation from industry bodies like ASSOCHAM, CII, FICCI and PH DCCI besides representatives of the domestic

arms/ammunition industry.

The list of invited companies with industrial licence to manufacture arms/ammunition included Indtech Construction Pvt Ltd (small arms and ammunition like 5.56 mm, 7.62 mm, 9 mm, 12.7 mm and 14.5 mm calibre) Larsen & Toubro Ltd (armament including ammunition/ordnance like missiles, rockets and torpedo land/naval mines), Vem Technologies Pvt Ltd. (Assembly, Integration & checkout of arms and ammunition, rockets and missiles), Sec Industries Pvt Ltd. (static and mobile launchers for air launch missiles of short, medium and long range, rockets,

bombs & ammunitions) and Hyt Engineering Company Pvt Ltd (manufacture of shells for ammunition of various calibres).

Other companies included Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Company Ltd (empty shells and required fuses for ammunition and explosive such as bombs, mines, missiles and torpedoes excluding the filling of explosives), Lords Vanija Pvt Ltd (manufacture and assembly of ammunition, empty fuses, primers and switches), Micron Instrument Pvt Ltd (weapon systems like mortars, rocket launchers, grenade launchers and missile launchers besides

ammunition for anti-aircraft guns, artillery guns, tank guns etc as also sub assemblies weapon systems).

The list also included Premier Explosives Ltd, BF Elbit Advanced Systems Pvt Ltd, Solar Industries India Ltd, Kalyani Strategic System Ltd, Himachal Futuristic Communication Ltd, Continental Defence Solutions Pvt Ltd, Shan Arms Industries Pvt Ltd, Pipav Defence and Offshore Engineering Company Ltd and Hughes Precision Manufacturing Ltd.

An official privy to the discussions said tendering for procurement of these items outside OFB.

Cong names Kharage as RS candidate from K'taka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

The Congress on Friday announced veteran party leader Mallikarjun Kharage as its candidate for the June 19 elections to the four Rajya Sabha seats from Karnataka.

"Congress President Sonia Gandhi has approved the candidature of Mallikarjun Kharage as Congress candidate for the ensuing biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka," All India Congress Committee Press release said.

The four seats represented by Rajeev Gowda and BK Hariprasad of the Congress, Prabhakar Kore of the BJP and D Kuppendra Reddy of the JD(S) will fall vacant on June 25 with their retirement. June 9 is the last date for filing nominations. The Congress, with 68 MLAs in the Assembly, can win one of the four seats easily on its own, so Kharage's victory is said to be certain.

Kharage, who was popularly known as "solillada Saradara", (a leader without defeat) faced his first electoral loss in his political life spanning several decades against BJP's Umesh Hadvay in Gulbarga by a margin of 95,452 votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

A nine-time MLA and two-term Lok Sabha member, he had served as Congress' floor leader in the previous Lok Sabha, and also as Union

Railway and Labour Minister in the UPA Government. Kharage (77) had also been a Minister in several Congress Governments in the State in the past and had also served as KPCC president and Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly.

His son Priyank Kharage is currently MLA representing Chittapur constituency and had served as a Minister during the previous Congress and coalition Governments.

While the ruling BJP with 117 members (including Speaker), can ensure victory in two seats, the JD(S), with just 34 seats in the Assembly, is not in a position to win a seat in the Rajya Sabha on its own, as a minimum of 44 votes are required for a candidate to win.

Speculations are rife that the Congress is likely to support the JD(S) with its surplus votes for the remaining one seat if the regional party fields its supremo and former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, and in return may seek favour during the legislative council polls slated later this month. No final decision has been taken in this regard yet, party sources said.

The JD(S) will hold its legislative party meeting to decide on the strategy for RS polls and decide on a candidate. The BJP too, with several aspirants, is yet to finalise its candidate for the RS polls.

IgG Elisa kits to conduct sero-survey to find virus exposure on Covid warriors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has validated IgG Elisa kits of three companies — Gujarat-based Zydus Cadila Healthcare Ltd, Euroimmun US Inc and Calbiotech Inc, both from the USA to conduct sero-survey to measure Covid-19 exposure in the vulnerable population like healthcare workers, frontline workers and people living in containment zones.

The IgG ELISA kits are the first indigenous antibody detection kits for coronavirus.

Zydus had licensed the Covid Kavach Elisa IgG test kit developed by the ICMR. The medical research body had earlier claimed that its test kit has an impressive 100 per cent specificity and 98 per cent sensitivity.

Three batches of 'Covid Kavach ELISA IgG kits' developed by Zydus Cadila Healthcare Ltd, one batch of Euroimmun Anti-SARS-COV-2 ELISA IgG by Euroimmun US Inc, USA, and a batch of Erbalisa Covid-19 IgG ELISA manufactured by Calbiotech Inc, USA have been approved.

The ICMR said "responsibility for batch to batch consistency lies with the manufacturer".

"Depending upon the level of sero-prevalence of infec-



tion, matching public health interventions can be implemented for prevention and control of the disease," the research body said.

Further, it should be used for survey in high-risk or vulnerable populations like healthcare workers, frontline workers, immune-compromised individuals, individuals in containment zones, to know who have been infected in the past and have now recovered.

The ICMR has also provided details of seven pharma companies to whom it has transferred the technology to undertake the production of indigenous Covid Kavach

ELISA IgG kits which help in the antibody detection for Covid-19. These test kits have the advantage of testing 90 samples in a single run of 2.5 hours so that healthcare professionals can proceed quickly with the necessary next steps.

"The ELISA tests have been validated in the laboratory. However, the performance of the test may be subject to variation under field conditions," the ICMR added.

The IgG ELISA/CLIA tests which are US-FDA approved can be used directly after due marketing approval from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).

Famotidine drug may reduce symptoms of non-hospitalised Covid-19 patients: Study

Researchers report on 10 people (6 men; 4 women) who developed Covid-19 infection, all of whom happened to have been taking famotidine during their illness

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A widely available and inexpensive drug, Famotidine (Pepcid AC) that is used to ease the symptoms of indigestion may prove a worthy contender for treating coronavirus in those whose disease doesn't require admission to hospital, as per a finding, published online in the journal Gut.

The effects were felt within 24 to 48 hours of taking famotidine, and a rigorous clinical trial is now warranted to see if the drug could be an effective treatment for Covid-19, the researchers said.

It belongs to a class of drugs known as histamine-2 receptor antagonists, which reduce the amount of stomach acid produced. Famotidine can be taken in doses of 20-160 mg, up to four times a day, for the treatment of acid reflux and heartburn.

The researchers report on ten people (six men; four women) who developed Covid-19 infection, all of whom happened to have been taking famotidine during their illness.

The severity of five cardinal symptoms — cough; shortness of breath; fatigue; headache and loss of taste/smell



as well as general unwellness — was measured using a version of a 4-point scale normally applied to assess the severity of cancer symptoms (ECOG PS).

Seven of the patients tested positive for Covid-19, using a swab test; two had antibodies to the infection; and one patient wasn't tested but was diagnosed with the infection by a doctor.

Their ages ranged from 23 to 71 and known risk factors for Covid-19 severity, including high blood pressure and obesity.

All started taking famotidine when they were feeling very poorly with Covid-19, the symptoms of which had been going on from 2 up to 26 days at that point.

Improvement was evident across all symptom categories assessed, but respiratory symptoms, such as cough and shortness of breath, improved more rapidly than systemic symptoms, such as fatigue.

Int'l Yoga Day to go social this year

This year's theme will be 'Yoga at Home and Yoga with Family'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid Covid-19 pandemic, International Yoga Day this year would be celebrated on digital media platforms and there would be no mass gatherings, the Government said on Friday. This year's theme will be "Yoga at Home and Yoga with Family".

People will be able to join Yoga Day celebrations virtually at 7 am on June 21. Indian Missions abroad are trying to reach out to the people through digital media as well through the network of institutions which support yoga, officials said.

The AYUSH Ministry had earlier planned to hold a grand event at Leh which, however, had to be cancelled because of the pandemic.

Besides, through the "My Life My Yoga" video blogging competition which was launched by the prime minister on May 31, the Ministry of AYUSH and ICCR seeks to raise awareness about yoga and to inspire people to prepare for and become active participants in the observation of IDY 2020.

UPSC Civil services preliminary exam to be held on Oct 4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The civil services preliminary examination 2020, postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, will be held on October 4, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) announced on Friday.

It said the personality test of the candidates selected through the last year's civil services preliminary and main examinations will resume from July 20. This year's preliminary test was originally scheduled to be held on May 31, but was deferred due to the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said the announcement of fresh date for the civil services preliminary exam would allay apprehensions in some quarters of it being cancelled. "It would also allay apprehension from the minds of some quarters who thought that they would become overage by the next year in case the exam was postponed. Candidates need not worry. The examination will be held as per the UPSC's

schedule," he said.

The civil services examination is conducted annually in three stages — prelims, main and interview — by the UPSC to select officers for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), among others. Lakhs of aspirants take the examination every year to be part of the country's coveted civil services.

The decision on announcement of fresh date was taken in a meeting held by the Commission to review the prevailing situation due to Covid-19 lockdown. "Taking note of the opening of lockdown and progressive relaxations being announced by the Central government and various states, the Commission decided to issue a revised schedule of examination/recruitment tests," the UPSC said in a statement.

According to the revised calendar, the civil services preliminary examination 2020 will be held on October 4 (Sunday). The main examination 2020 will begin from January 8, 2021 (Friday) for five days, it said.

Cong dubs Modi's 'vocal for local' call, stimulus package as jumla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday dubbed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "vocal for local" call and the economic stimulus package to make the country self-reliant as yet another jumla to divert the attention of the people from "real issues".

Addressing a video Press conference, senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal asked how can India become self-reliant till it creates innovation and intellectual property in its universities.

"This is an act of self-deception. This is another 'jumla' (rhetoric) that you sell to the people of the country. We are only manufacturing 'jumlas', statements and slogans. That is the only thing we make in India and we are masters at that under this government," he said, taking a swipe at the BJP-led government.

Sibal said while the Prime Minister calls for "Atmanirbhar Abhiyaan", his Government

has failed to help make the poor, the farmers, the migrant workers, the industry or the States to become self-reliant.

Similarly, his exhortation to industry to push "Made in India, Made for the World, to expand globally, not be dependent on another country in the strategic sector, did not have a clear roadmap as to how this goal should be achieved, the former union minister said.

The Rs 20 lakh crore 'Atmanirbhar' package does not lead to expansion of Government expenditure, as it includes measures already announced by RBI and the budget and amounts to less than 1 per cent of GDP, as against 10 per cent claimed by the Government, he noted.

"The reality is that Modi's 'Atmanirbhar' idea is merely a slogan like innumerable others," Sibal said. He also called for private investment in the universities to create innovation and ideas, which he said did not amount to privatisation.

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Mrs. Hemlata Kaushik had entered into an Agreement to sell for the purchase of freehold Residential House No. 386, (Ground Floor), under LIG Category, measuring 39.38 Sq. Yards, in the residential colony known as Housing Board Colony, Sector-7 Extn, Gurgaon, Haryana from Mrs. Rama Bajaj who is registered owner on the basis of Conveyance 24.09.2018 and Original Allotment Letter dated 22.05.1989 and Possessive Deed dated 22.06.1989 in favour of Mrs. Rama has been lost/misplaced and our client is mortgaging the above property to LIC Housing Finance Ltd. If anybody has any claim, right, interest in the said property shall also inform within 15 days to the undersigned on Telephone No:- 011-24324137, 9953683363 & 9811163363.
Karnail Singh, Advocate
Ch. No.153, Saket Court Complex, New Delhi-110014.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all through this public Notice that my clients Sh. Harjit Singh Sethi S/o Late Sh. Ram Singh Sethi and Smt. Harbans Kaur W/o Sh. Harjit Singh both R/o 9/12A, 3rd Floor, Vijay Nagar, Double Storey, Delhi-09, have severed all kind of their relationship and disowned & disinherited their elder son Kuldeep Singh Sethi and his wife Harvinder Kaur Sethi and their son Indpreet Singh Sethi and their daughter Japneet Kaur Sethi from their hard earned movable and immovable properties, i.e. 9/12A, 3rd Floor including roof, Vijay Nagar, Double Storey, Delhi-09, due to their misconduct, misbehavior and disobedient behavior. Anybody dealing with them in any manner, shall do the same on their own risk and my clients shall not be responsible for any act, deed and omission of their son Kuldeep Singh Sethi and his wife Harvinder Kaur Sethi and their son Indpreet Singh Sethi and their daughter Japneet Kaur Sethi.
G.S. Ahuja, (Advocate), Ch. No.151, First Floor, Western Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054.

Rain likely to pick up pace from next week: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday said rainfall activity in central and south India is likely to pick up pace from next week due to a cyclonic circulation which is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal and aid in the progress of the monsoon.

The low pressure area will form somewhere near the coast of Myanmar. A low pressure area is the first stage of a cyclonic disturbance; not all low pressure areas intensify into cyclones.

IMD director general Mrutunjay Mohapatra said a low pressure area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal and move towards Odisha next week. "A low pressure is a cyclonic circulation and the

first stage of any cyclone. However, it is not necessary that every low pressure intensifies into a cyclone. This will help advance monsoon and bring good rainfall during the next week," Mohapatra said.

In its tropical cyclones bulletin dated June 5, the IMD said the low pressure area has a "low", or 1-25 per cent, chance of turning into a 'depression' by mid next week. A depression is the second stage on the IMD's eight-level cyclone classification system.

If this predicted weather disturbance reaches the fourth stage — 'cyclonic storm' — on the IMD's scale, it will be given a name — Cyclone Gati.

Monsoon had hit Kerala on June 1 on its normal onset date. The IMD had earlier predict-

ed that the monsoon would be delayed by four days, but Cyclone Nisarga helped push the monsoon to reach Kerala on its normal onset date.

"Conditions are becoming favourable for further advancement of Southwest Monsoon into some more parts of central Arabian Sea, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, southwest and east central Bay of Bengal, entire southeast Bay of Bengal and some parts of west central Bay of Bengal during next 2 days," the IMD said.

According to the IMD, the country as a whole has received 9 per cent more rainfall than the normal since June 1.

The north Indian plains will also witness rainfall due to a western disturbance, the IMD said.

NEW OKHLA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

(A) 1. 02/SPE/PE(PH-II)/ET/2020-21 - Supply of Green Fodder in temporary Gauvansh Ashray Sthal, Vill-Nagli Wajidpur, Sec.-135, Noida, Cost - Rs. 6898500.00
2. 09/SPE/PE(PH-II)/ET/2020-21 - Cleaning & Desilting of main drain from Expressway Sec.126 to Irrigation drain via Sec.-127, 128, 129, 130 & 135 Noida, Cost - Rs. 5362058.90
The above tenders can be uploaded by date **12.06.2020** upto **5.00 PM**. Pre-qualification shall be opened / downloaded on date **15.06.2020** at **11.00 AM**.

(S.C. Mishra)
Sr. Project Engineer
(Public Health), Noida

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One held for pregnant Kerala jumbo's death

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Wilson, a farmer from Edavanna in Malappuram district was arrested on Friday by Kerala Police in connection with the gruesome death of a pregnant elephant which was fed coconut stuffed with explosives. According to sources in the police team probing the incident, Wilson said that the coconut stuffed with explosives was placed in the farm to get rid of pigs which frequently raided the crops. Though initially it was reported that the elephant had bitten explosive-laden pineapple, it turned out to be a coconut filled with deadly explosives. The police is in search of Abdul Kareem and his son Riyazuddeen, owners of the farm where Wilson is employed as a labourer. Kareem and Riyazuddeen are absconding and it is believed that they would surrender before the

police late this evening or on Saturday. Sources in the investigation team said that both Kareem and Riyazuddeen were into poaching of wild animals in a big way. Wilson was an expert in assembling explosives and stuffing it in fruits to trap the animals. The police has filed cases against the three under various sections of the Kerala Forest Act and Wildlife Protection Act. If proved correct, the accused could be sentenced up to seven years imprisonment. Forest officials with whom *The Pioneer* spoke were of the view that the elephant was from the Silent Valley Reserve Forest and had trespassed into the farm lands in the periphery of the forest. "It is difficult to pinpoint the exact spot where the incident happened. It could be either in Malappuram or Palakkad districts. The vast farm land stretches across the two districts," said Mohan Krishna, the Forest official

who broke the news to the outside world through his social media posting. He said it was not with any ulterior intention that the Forest Department said the incident might have taken place in either Malappuram or Palakkad districts. "When we understood that the incident happened at Mannarakkadu, we corrected the same immediately," he said. Kerala based Cyber Warriors hacked the website of People For Animal, a portal belonging to the NGO led by Maneka Gandhi, former union minister for environment for her reported outburst against Malappuram district while condemning the incident. Muslim League leader P K Kunhalikutty MP and K C Venugopal of the Congress along with the CPI(M), CPI leaders condemned the BJP and Sangh Parivar organisations for their efforts to communalize the issue.

TN: 1,438 more test positive

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu saw 1,438 persons testing positive for coronavirus on Friday, the highest ever number to be tested positive on a single day. With the addition of 1,438 patients into the pool, Tamil Nadu has 12,697 active Covid-19 cases as on Friday. Till date 28,694 persons have tested positive for the pandemic in the State, according to medical bulletin issued by Tamil Nadu Government. The death tally on Friday was 12 and this took the total number of fatalities till date to 232. Out of the 12 who breathed their last on Friday, four were in the 80-82 age group, three were in 70-72 group, one was 68, two were 56 and 50 years of age and a 44 year old person. While eight persons were having diabetes mellitus and hyper tension as co-morbid conditions, there were two cases of allergic bronchitis and acute respiratory distress syndrome. Two of the deceased were suffering from chronic kidney ailments. The bulletin said that till date 15,762 persons have been discharged from the hospitals fully cured. The State has tested a total of 5,60,673 samples till date out of

which 5,31,295 samples were found negative. Chennai continued to be the district which tested the highest number of positive cases - 1,116. Thiruvallur, Chengapattu, Kancheepuram and Cuddalore continued to the districts closely following Chennai in the number of positive cases detected in the State. The possibilities of any decrease in the number of patients testing positive in Chennai look bleak according to doctors in Government service. "The chief minister himself has said that there are six to seven persons staying in small rooms in the narrow lanes of Chennai. How is it possible to maintain norms like social distancing in these areas?" asked a doctor in one of the Government hospitals on Friday. Unperturbed by the growing number of coronavirus cases in the State, the Government is going ahead with preparations for the Class X public examinations which begin on June 15. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy has written to the heads of 11 global automobile giants asking them to explore investment opportunities and set up shops here.

Situation tense along LoC in J&K following intense shelling

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU



Havaldar Mathiazhagan P

Situation along the line of Control in frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch in Jammu division remained tense with continuous exchange of intense shelling in the area for the last couple of days. Since June 1, the Pakistan Army has been resorting to heavy exchange of fire along the line of control with a clear objective to push small groups of heavily armed infiltrators inside the Indian territory. An havaldar of the Indian Army sacrificed his life in the line of duty in Sunderbani sector of Nowsheera in Rajouri late Thursday night. Defence Spokesman, Lt-Col Devender Anand said, "Havaldar Mathiazhagan P, hailing from Sreerangai Kadu, Idappadi Tehsil, Salem district of Tamil Nadu had received critical injuries during unprovoked ceasefire violation by the Pakistan Army in Sunderbani sector

holed up in the area. However, security forces could not establish fresh contact with the hiding terrorists in the area till late evening. According to police, "the entire area has been kept under tight cordon while efforts were on to ascertain the identity of the terrorist". The security forces had also recovered 1 AK 47 rifle, three magazines, hand grenades (Chinese make), four Anti personnel mine, detonators, mobile handset with SIM card and other items. Earlier On June 1, three heavily armed terrorists were neutralised by the alert Indian troops in Kalal area of Nowsheera while continuous cordon and search operations were launched by the security forces in Poonch to track down the footprints of infiltrators. On Friday, fresh searches were launched in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch after receiving inputs about the presence of suspected terrorists hiding in the area. Massive searches were launched at day break on Friday to track down the footprints of other terrorists

Urbanisation, slums main cause of virus surge in Chennai: CM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

The unabated increase in the population of slums and failure in the programmes launched to eradicate slum areas are the reasons behind Chennai being the epicenter of coronavirus pandemic in Tamil Nadu, according to Edappadi Palaniswamy, Chief Minister. "Chennai has about 87 lakh people living in narrow streets and there are several houses with 6 to 7 people staying in them," Palaniswamy told reporters last Tuesday after presiding over a meeting of senior IAS officers and medical professionals. The metropolis has one of the highest densities of population among south Indian cities, according to Prof C Murukadas, Tamil Nadu lead economist who headed the Department of Economics, University of Madras for more than two decades. He said massive urbanization and the resultant unabated increase in the number of slums have

made Chennai a volcano which could explode at anytime. "We have opened a Pandora's Box and I doubt whether we would be able to restore Chennai to its lost purity," he told *The Pioneer*. He had alerted the Governments at the Centre as well as in States about the disastrous consequences of rapid urbanization, increasing population and free-for-all entry into the country's major metropolises in his research and the resultant book "Slum-Free Cities - A Sisypus Challenge for India" published in 2014. While the book won him accolades from abroad, the people who matter chose to ignore his findings. Dr Murukadas says the figure quoted by Chief Minister that 87 lakh people live in slums and overcrowded narrow lanes/streets of Chennai is way of the mark. "The Urban Agglomeration (UA) of Chennai has resulted in the city's population crossing the 89 lakh mark in 2013 itself. UA stands for

continuous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining urban Out Growth or two or more physically contiguous towns together and any adjoining urban outgrowths of such towns," he explained. He said he had visited many slum dwellings in the metropolis in India and abroad. The living conditions in the units in India are shocking. "All these single room or double room units house 10 to 12 persons. Most of the men are unemployed and it is the women who are the breadwinners. Men while away their time playing cards and drinking alcohol from the earnings made by the woman of the house," said the professor. Quoting the estimates made by the Committee on Slum Statistics/Census, Prof Murukadas points out that the slum population constituted 75.26 million (26.31 per cent) out of the 286 million urban population of the country in 2001. "As per the estimates the slum population of India is estimated to have

reached 93.06 million in 201. The slum population of Chennai could be somewhere near the 25 lakh mark. Another 25 lakh stay in narrow lanes in unhygienic conditions without basic facilities like toilet," he said. Toilet facilities are available at the community level only. "The extremely limited latrines and their overuse by too many persons have made the slum areas unhygienic and filthy," he said. He says unless the Government introduces massive population control measures India is in for major disaster. "There should be a mechanism whereby the entry of people to major metros are regulated by law. Those who are not employed and do not have even rented places to stay should not be allowed into the cities. The Slum Clearance Programmes launched by the governments were all piecemeal measures and have gone awry," said Prof Murukadas who is working on a project to come out with a sequel to Slum Free Cities.

1 more dies, 182 new infections in J&K

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Friday recorded 182 fresh cases of coronavirus, taking the total tally of cases to 3,324 and active cases to 2,202. In Kashmir, a 5-day-old baby from Kulgam tested positive along with five doctors, and seven pregnant women. However, senior government functionaries heaved a sigh of relief after test reports of senior bureaucrats and other government officials of the health department tested negative in Jammu. These officers had come in contact with a senior IAS officer at a high level meeting in Jammu. The IAS officer had later tested positive after his return from Srinagar. Meanwhile, with one more death reported from Kashmir the death toll too has gone up to 36 while the total recoveries touched 1,086 on Friday. According to the media bulletin,

74 cases were reported from Jammu division while 108 cases were reported from Kashmir division. Moreover, 38 more Covid-19 patients were recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 16 from Jammu division and 22 from Kashmir division. According to the media bulletin, out of 3324 positive cases, 2202 are Active Positive, 1086 have recovered and 36 have died; 04 in Jammu division and 32 in Kashmir division. In Kashmir valley, out of 108 positive cases, Shopian district reported a maximum number of 42 cases followed by Srinagar with 22 fresh cases. Meanwhile, three districts of Anantnag, Kulgam and Srinagar have so far recorded over 350 plus cases. Kupwara and Baramulla in Kashmir valley have reported 308 and 331 cases so far respectively. Jammu district has so far reported 190 positive cases followed by Ramban with 164 cases and Udhampur with 123 cases.

Goa active cases climb up to 130: CM

Panaji: Goa's active coronavirus cases have increased to 130 in the wake of detection of 96 positive cases in South Goa's Mangor hill area, already declared a containment zone, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said on Friday. Continuing to rule out community transmission in the state, Sawant said that four persons who landed in Goa from Dubai on Tuesday on a Vande Bharat Mission flight had tested positive. Sawant said that the key reason for the spike in corona infections in Goa was the quick spread of the virus in Mangor hill cluster, located in the jurisdiction of Vasco urban health centre. As many as 72 persons tested positive there on Wednesday and Thursday. IANS

Bengaluru Covid infection rate 0.003%: Minister

IANS ■ BENGALURU

The Covid infection rate in the city is a minuscule 0.003 per cent compared to a population of 1.2 crore people, said a minister on Friday. "The population of Bengaluru is estimated at 1.2 crore. The total number of infected persons in the city from the last two months to Thursday evening was 424," tweeted state Primary and Secondary Education Minister S. Suresh Kumar. He said Bengaluru's infection rate is 0.003 per cent. Out of the 424 cases, 148 are currently active, 262 discharged, 13 dead and one non-Covid death. A Covid patient committed suicide by jumping from a building and was categorized as a non-Covid death. Though the rate of infection in the city is not as high as other places in the state, it has witnessed the highest number of Covid deaths in Karnataka. These statistics are for Bengaluru Urban, as categorized by the state Health and Family Welfare department. Though the city bore the burden of the highest number of cases for a long time, infection spikes have resulted in other towns and districts overtaking the city. Currently, Udipi is grappling with the highest number of active cases in the state at 481, followed by Kalaburagi (375), Raichur (318), Yadgir (271). The initial Covid cases in Karnataka were recorded in the city in people who returned from international travel. Incidentally, the outskirts of the city categorized as Bengaluru Rural, has one of the lowest infection rates. Bengaluru Rural has seen only 19 infections until now, out of which only seven are active with 11 discharges and only one Covid death. Till Thursday, Karnataka had seen 4,320 Covid cases, out of which 2,651 are active.

Mamata slams BJP for playing 'dirty politics' in crisis situation

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday attacked the BJP for playing dirty politics at a time when the State is passing through bad times. "I do not want to name people who are vitiating the affairs of the State... But there are some political parties who are taking advantage of the current crisis after corona pandemic and super cyclone Amphan hit Bengal. They are playing dirty game to win political mileage. At a time when our Government is trying its best to fight out the crisis these political parties are talking about toppling it," Banerjee said asking "Is it the time to play politics taking advantage of a crisis that has hit the large cross sec-

tion of people?" She said, "They (BJP) are talking of throwing me out of power. But have I said the same thing about Prime Minister Narendra Modi? Have I called for throwing Modi out of power? I have never said that Modiji should be removed. So why are they disturbing me here... This is not the time to play politics" Attacking the BJP leadership for sitting back in the safety of their houses when her party men were out fighting corona and reaching relief to the distressed people she said "these leaders were in hiding in the cool comforts of their houses and now they have suddenly come out to take political advantage of the situation." Hitting back the BJP said it was the Chief Minister who

was politicizing the issue and not the BJP. Senior BJP leader Rahul Sinha said, "the Chief Minister's Government is stopping the BJP men from traveling to the cyclone-hit areas whereas they are allowing the CPI(M) and Congress to reach relief because she is afraid of our growing popularity. To fight corona she did not bring in doctors or nurses from outside but she brought in election strategist Prashant Kishore to tour the affected region... If this is not politics then what is?" Meanwhile, a seven-member central team is visiting Bengal to evaluate the post Amphan situation. The team led by senior IAS officer Anuj Sharma on Friday visited Amphan affected areas of North and South 24 Parganas.

139 die, 2,436 cases in Maha on Fri

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



Maharashtra sank into deep despair on Friday, as the state recorded highest-ever day's tally of 139 deaths and as many as 2,436 new infected cases. With the fresh deaths and infections, the total number of deaths rose to 2,849, while the total infected cases jumped to 80,229. Taking into the total number of deaths so far and the fact that 35156 patients have been discharged from various hospitals so far, the state health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" at 42,215. Of the deaths reported on Friday, Mumbai accounted for 54 deaths, while there were 30 deaths in Thane 14 deaths each in Pune and Jalgaon, eight deaths in Malegaon,

seven deaths in Kalyan-Dombivli, five deaths in Solapur and Nashik, one death each in Vasai-Virar -1, Bhiwandi and Aurangabad-1. Of the 139 deaths today, 75 were men while 64 were women. Seventy eight were aged over 60 years, 53 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 8 were aged below 40 years. "One hundred ten out of 139 patients (79%) had

high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease," a state health bulletin said. Out of the total deaths reported today, 27 deaths occurred in the last two days and the rest are from the period from April 21 to June 2 2020. In Mumbai, with 54 new deaths and 1459 fresh infections, the total number deaths mounted to 1519, while the total infected cases rose to 4680. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said that there were 25,768 cases in the metropolis. Some key observations made in Friday's health bulletin included: The recovery rate in the state is 43.81 per cent, while case fatality rate in the state is 3.55 per cent. Currently, 5,45,947 people are in home quarantine. There are 72,375 beds available in quarantine institutions. As many as 30,291 people are in institutional quarantine now. There are total 83 laboratories functional in the state for COVID-19 diagnosis - 46 government ones and 37 private ones. Out of 5,22,946 samples sent to laboratories, 80,229 have been tested positive for COVID-19 until Friday. The number of tests per 10 lakh population in the state is 3827, as against 2832 per 10 lakh population in the country. There are 3479 active containment zones in the state currently. Total 18,026 surveillance squads worked today across the state and surveillance of 69.18 lakh people done so far.

No need for CBI probe in Tablighi Jamaat event: Centre to SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday told the Supreme Court that probe into assembly of people at Anand Vihar Bus Terminal in east Delhi and at Tablighi Jamaat event in Nizamuddin Markaz is being conducted on day-to-day basis by the Delhi police and there was no need for CBI investigation. The Ministry of Home Affairs gave in detail the steps taken by the Delhi Police which is making all efforts to complete the investigation within the time frame to submit the charge sheet in the trial court. A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices AS Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy allowed the petitioner Supriya Pandita to file rejoinder affidavit to the reply of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and listed the matter for further hearing after two weeks. Pandita in her plea had sought various reliefs including CBI probe into the matter related to the assembly of peo-

ple at Anand Vihar Bus Terminal and Markz in Nizamuddin after nationwide lockdown was announced alleging that Delhi police has failed to control the people and the Nizamuddin Markaz chief Maulana Saad was still evading arrest. Detailing the steps taken by Delhi police, the Ministry of Home Affairs in its affidavit said that investigation in Markaz matter is being conducted on a day-to-day basis, in accordance with the mandate of law and all efforts are being made to finalize investigation and submit a report under section 173 CrPC (charge sheet) before the trial court in a time bound manner. "In view of the facts and circumstances it is respectfully submitted that prayer D (direction for CBI probe) of the writ petition does not merits any consideration by this court," the reply affidavit said, adding that plea needs to be disposed of.

Top court asks if pvt hospitals ready to charge Covid patients at Ayushman Bharat rate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

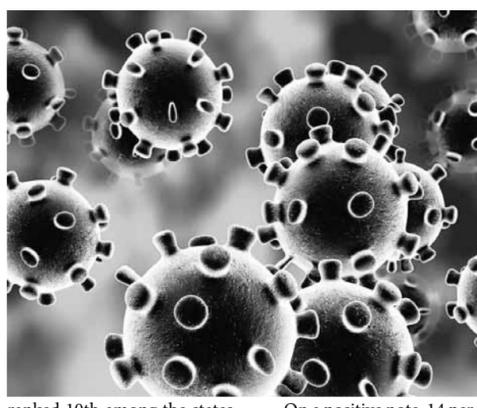
The Supreme Court on Friday asked private hospitals whether they are ready to provide treatment to Covid-19 infected patients at the charges prescribed under the Government's Ayushman Bharat Scheme. The 'Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' is aimed at providing health cover to poor and vulnerable persons in the country. A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde observed that the apex court is not asking all the private hospitals to treat certain number of Covid-19 patients for free. The bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy, said it is asking only those private hospitals, which have been given land at concessional rates by the government, to treat certain number of coronavirus infected patients for free. "I just want to know if hospitals are ready to charge at

Ayushman rates," the CJ observed during the hearing which was conducted through video-conferencing. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that government is doing its best for the lowest strata of society, and people who cannot afford treatment are covered under the Ayushman Bharat scheme. The top court, which posted the matter for two weeks from now, was hearing a plea which has sought a direction for regulating the cost of treatment of Covid-19 at private hospitals across the country. During the arguments, the bench observed that there is an earlier judgment which said that hospitals, which have been given land on concessional rates, should treat certain number of patients for free. "Why cannot these hospitals treat a certain number of patients for free," the bench observed, adding, "Please ensure they do some service".

Day tally dips, but no respite as AP corona count reaches 3,427

Amaravati: Yet another fluctuation was witnessed in Andhra Pradesh when the state's single-day count of Covid-19 cases dipped to 50 on Friday.

On Thursday, the state had reported an all-time high of 98 cases for the second time in four days. With the latest update, the state's tally rose further to 3,427. According to the medical bulletin issued by the state nodal officer, 9,831 samples were tested in the 24 hours ending 9 a.m., Friday. In comparison, 9,986 tests were conducted in the preceding testing cycle. On Friday, 21 persons were discharged from hospitals, taking the cumulative tally of cured persons to 2,294. Andhra Pradesh currently has 1,060 active cases that are being treated at various hospitals. Meanwhile, with two deaths reported from Krishna district, the death toll in the state climbed to 73 on Friday morning. Andhra Pradesh's mortality rate of 1.69 per cent



ranked 10th among the states of India, according to figures issued by the Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday. Friday also saw the cumulative tally of Covid-19 cases among the returnees from other states rise to 700 from the Thursday figure of 616 cases. The tally of active cases climbed to 442 from the 372 cases reported on Thursday. On a positive note, 14 persons from this category were discharged during the day. With four new cases detected among foreign returnees, their cumulative tally climbed to 123 on Friday. However, the tally of active cases in this category dropped to 119 following the discharge of three persons in the last 24 hours. IANS

PAPER WITH PASSION

Delhi reeling

Witnessing a surge in COVID cases, the Delhi Government has put in place new triage rules but this may not be enough



Increasing instances of potential Coronavirus patients lying for hours outside the hospital before admission or even dying before they see a doctor in Delhi are being shared on social media. This has grabbed media attention, too. Unfortunately, some are using such instances to score political points about Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's handling of the pandemic. But the fact remains that despite the national capital boasting about having the best urban healthcare infrastructure in the country, it is getting thoroughly overwhelmed. It would have been so no matter who or which party had been in power. With more than 25,000 cases, Delhi, like Mumbai, is seeing a surge given its dense population as a result of India's uneven development over the past seven decades. While the virus has started a conversation around public health and the lack of it all across the country, it will not take away the fact that despite Indian doctors and nurses being at the forefront of treatment across the world, Indian healthcare itself is all but a flaky shell.

As such, India should have begun large-scale testing weeks ago when more testing kits were made available. While testing numbers have gradually increased now, given the country's population, it remains woefully inadequate. Those who want to be tested are denied one. Even those patients who need to go to a hospital for other emergency procedures are not being tested, either at admission or when discharged. The Delhi Government's decision to "triage" all those patients who show signs of COVID-19 symptoms will not be effective until more tests are done. This will also help it understand the future course of action. Should school yards and stadia be turned into treatment centres or not? To what extent should the lockdown be eased? Where should non-critical patients be sent? And if there is a substantial number of asymptomatic carriers, can Delhi or any other city consider opening up of malls and restaurants and add to a bursting bulge? There is a prevailing anxiety as doctors and virologists warn that public engagement should be minimal in the viral storm months of June and July. The fact of the matter is that in India and in other countries across the world, the response by Governments to the pandemic has been woeful. Of course, hindsight is 20-20 (ironically) but many things should have been and could have been done differently. One thing that can still be done differently and that should be done is to test, test and test to establish a pattern. At the same time data must be used to calibrate further actions. There will be many more cases in the next few days of people dying from the virus and many more tragic stories will be written about. The question that Kejriwal and, in fact, every other Chief Minister in India needs to ask is: When will these stories end? By July or by 2021?

Cong crisis in Gujarat

Party loses more MLAs before Rajya Sabha polls, a steady slide since it won 81 Assembly seats in 2017



The Congress, for all its attempts to appear as a responsible Opposition, is not quite being able to hold on to its own members and convince them of its leadership or its political capital. Just as the party was recovering from the exit of Gandhi loyalist and aspirant leader Jyotiraditya Scindia over a Rajya Sabha ticket, its MLAs in Gujarat have resigned in quick succession days before the Rajya Sabha polls. Two legislators, Akshay Patel and Jitu Chaudhary, resigned on Wednesday. And yesterday, it was Brijesh Merja, the MLA from Morbi constituency. The latter even gave up primary membership of the Congress. With

this, a total of eight Congress MLAs have resigned since March. Before the polls were announced, the Congress had 73 MLAs in the Gujarat Assembly and was looking to win two of the four seats. Now that looks remote. The ruling BJP, which has 103 MLAs in the Assembly, is now eyeing a third seat. What is sad is the Congress had put up a determined show against an ascendant BJP, winning 81 seats in the 2017 Assembly elections, notching up its best performance in the State in years. Although the BJP had won, the Congress did deliver a psychological blow back then. It was expected to consolidate after this booster shot but since then the party has only seen a steady stream of exits, losing 16 MLAs. It is all too easy to blame the BJP for poaching MLAs but then the ruling party has made no bones about Operation Lotus or its attempt to avenge and wrest the psychological edge the Congress had in 2017. Knowing this full well, the Congress should have been vigilant and proactive, considering it wanted to make Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home State, a prestige issue. Instead it rested easy on the verdict without realising that the BJP's mammoth Lok Sabha showing and its near decimation would require more groundwork in State units and at least holding on to them. The rural vote did work for the Gujarat Congress then but it didn't build on it by breaking into Thakor voters for instance or work on the aspirations of its MLAs.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi may be crafting an image change in the middle of a pandemic, appearing to contribute to the national revival effort by holding conversations and dialogues with eminent men friendly to him, but it's not reaping results on the ground. Particularly at a time when capable leaders of the Congress have proved their mettle as Chief Ministers in the battle against the disease spiral, be it Rajasthan's Ashok Gehlot or Punjab's Amarinder Singh. It would have worked had he focussed on COVID-19 management in Gujarat, one of the worst-hit States, and done more on-the-grounds, like he did with migrants. Even his think tank-like advisories seem too tutored and self-serving than well-meaning. He may want to rebrand himself as a serious ideologue but webinars and conversations with public intellectuals will not help him if he wants to stay relevant in electoral politics. It is not that Gandhi hasn't tried to strip down his dynastic entitlements but he needs to be seen as a leader who has a grasp on issues. More importantly, he must make himself available to local units. Both the Scindia and Gujarat fiascos have shown that he needs to keep the party herd immune from political inducements. What Rahul and his strategists must do is to diminish the trust deficit in him as a deliverable leader, build on his natural strengths like when he did padayatras and entered people's homes and localise his appeal. The Congress is not short of advisors, he needs to show that he can be a leader of the masses, not of the podium.

Learning in times of crisis

The COVID pandemic has impacted education the most, compelling nations to embrace e-learning. India needs to invest in infrastructure and put right policies in place



MJ WARSII

Nations across the world have taken different yet significant measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. The most immediate one taken by almost all countries was to cancel physical face-to-face teaching in schools and higher education institutions. All kinds of social and religious gatherings and public events, too, were banned. With a sudden shift from the classroom to e-learning, many wondered whether the adoption of online education would continue to persist post-pandemic and how such a shift would impact the education market.

Indeed, in India, too, physical classrooms have replaced online classes. The transition has mostly been smooth in private universities though public institutions are yet to adapt to the changes. This has led to widespread debates on the future course of classes — whether they should be conducted online or not. Realising the long-term impact of COVID-19, faculty members, too, are finding it hard to conduct online classes with ease. On the other hand, students have been left clinging on to their mobile phones, laptops and computer screens. What, however, is certain is that a post-COVID world must gear itself to adapt to some changes. Being physically present in a classroom may not be the only learning option anymore — not with the rise of the internet and new technologies, at least. As long as there is access to a computer with a robust internet connection, students can attend live sessions or watch pre-recorded classes. Does this mean that online education will soon replace classroom education? It should be kept in mind that even though there have been huge technological advancements, they aren't flawless. E-learning comes with its own set of challenges.

Challenges and possibilities: In the case of traditional classrooms, lack of engagement is problematic for teachers and students alike. Unlike online education, here, they cannot pause or rewind the classes in case they miss out certain chapters. On the other hand, online education is not as easy as speaking into the microphone at the one end and connecting a laptop or phone and listening on the other. There are other challenges with this form of education that have to be faced by both — faculty as well as students. While the former will have to put in extra labour to generate lectures, it will be difficult for the latter to make sense of it online. Then, how will this form of education compensate for the academic loss suffered by students? Practically speaking, there is no alternative to classroom activities.

Most important of all, even after so much digitisation, rural India will face unprecedented challenges due to poor connectivity and frequent power cuts that would affect the productivity of the classroom. Talking about access to electricity, according to Mission Antyodaya, a nation-



wide survey of villages conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2017-18, 16 per cent of India's households received one to eight hours of electricity daily, 33 per cent received 9-12 hours and only 47 per cent received more than 12 hours a day. Further, according to data collected by the National Sample Survey as part of the Survey on Education (2014), only 27 per cent of households in India have some member with access to internet. Access to internet does not necessarily mean that a household actually has internet at home.

While increasing ethernet connectivity should be the larger goal, in the short term, data on mobile phones must be subsidised. Device ownership, too, is a problem and for this, the Government must provide for cheap smartphones for students to get on with the business of teaching. Organisations such as the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), IGNOU and other such bodies offering distance education as well as the Government must assess current and future infrastructure requirements for digital age and bridge the gap.

But what if e-learning becomes the way of life for education? What would be the major issues and areas that

require introspection? And what does this mean for the students going forward?

Most universities are now offering web-based file-sharing services to their faculty members and research communities. However, there are several other ways to make multimedia resources accessible over the internet. Certainly, the most familiar one is YouTube, which though ubiquitous and easy-to-use, does present challenges to classroom use that must not be ignored. The most glaring one is the comments section. The instructor can take it for granted that some comments will not be suitable for projection on a classroom screen.

Similarly, advertisements found lining the video could be a problem, too. Regardless of the product being promoted, the classroom need not be turned to a search service in order to access multimedia resources. To avoid this, a number of web browser extensions are available that provide for an unsullied viewing experience, hiding comments, menu side bus and advertisements from the view. A number of cloud-based tools, too, are available that allow files to be stored and shared across a remote host, which at the very least offer the instructor the flexibility to adapt. Foremost among these are Dropbox, which is a file hosting service that offers free

data storage across several operating platforms. Amazon cloud drive offers 5 GB of free storage and provides a straight forward web-based interface for uploading and retrieval of files. Similarly, GoogleDocs allows for the uploading of entire folders to the cloud, making remote storage of a set of organised files quite easy.

Make the digital transition: Technological prospects for classrooms have evolved in remarkable ways since the COVID-19 pandemic. We have witnessed the successful introduction of smartphones that are capable of running audio-visual clips and interactive language drills; tablets are now replacing the laptop as an essential classroom gear; and there has been a rich array of online dictionaries. Further, news media and unicode blogs are now searchable in original scripts; a sea of websites are dedicated towards the study and dissemination of literature. The worldwide popularity of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google classroom, Zoom, Cisco Webex and the user-centred design of web has addressed concerns of language use. Even mini tablets are now equipped with built-in digital camera. In fact, they allow students to use audio and video editing software immediately upon recording. All of these advancements offer promising

ways for the students to do their homework, going far beyond just a paper and pen.

The time has come for us to adapt to new and innovative teaching methods. So, what next? Most experts and researchers across academic institutions agree that there is a need to create standardised online education platforms. Besides students and teachers must be trained to get accustomed to using digital technologies. Others highlight the necessity to introspect on the nature of these platforms and how students must be taught using different online tools and methods while keeping accessibility and the challenges in mind.

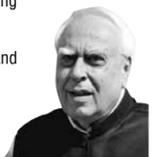
To look for possibilities, there is lack of clarity among teachers and researchers about the plan of action, especially with respect to teaching, examination, results, internships and placements. Challenges are many that need to be overcome. Some students without reliable internet access and technology struggle to participate in digital learning. This gap is seen across countries. Education is going to be digital in the foreseeable future. We will be better prepared to handle it only with the right kind of infrastructure and policies in place. The Government must pay heed.

(The writer is a linguist, author and columnist)

SOUNDBITE

We are only manufacturing jumlas, statements and slogans. That is the only thing we make in India and we are masters at that under this Government.

Congress leader —Kapil Sibal



People have had the time to introspect and understand that there is no planet B. This is the only world we have and it's our only chance at survival.

Actor —Bhumi Pednekar



Issues of human dignity will not abide standing on the sidelines. To the Black community — we see you. You matter and your lives matter.

Apple CEO —Tim Cook



In the context of China, they (the Congress) started finding fault without realising that China is a baggage left by Rahul Gandhi's great grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru.

Union Minister —Jitendra Singh



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cowardly act

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Elephantine problem" (June 4). It was heart-wrenching to know about the horrific death of a pregnant elephant in Kerala's Palakkad district after she ate a pineapple filled with firecrackers that was allegedly left by some locals. Amid the Corona crisis, one had expected that this would be the time for nature to reclaim its lost space. The death of a wild elephant in Kerala serves as a reminder that we humans have long forgotten what humanity is.

In Kerala, which boasts a literacy rate of 93.91 per cent, it is a practice for locals to use explosive-laced traps to get rid of wild animals, especially boars. And this wasn't the first time that such traps have claimed the life of an elephant here.

Though one arrest has been made in the present case, it is a travesty of justice that the maximum punishment for the murderers would be just seven years in jail. There's an urgent need to strengthen animal and wildlife protection laws, too.

Tushar Anand Patna

A turning point for America

George Floyd, an Afro-American, had been living in Minneapolis for several years after moving there from his native Houston, Texas. Handcuffed at gunpoint, he was pinned to the ground as the police officer, Derek Chauvin, kept his knee pressed hard on his neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds. "I can't breathe," he cried repeatedly but his cries fell on deaf ears. About six minutes into that period, Floyd fell silent. Why did Chauvin do the unthinkable? Years ago, Rohith Vemula, a Dalit PhD candidate at the University of Hyderabad, found himself ousted from the hostel and was forced to live in a tent. A distraught Vemula committed suicide. In the searing note he left behind, he said, his "birth was his fatal accident." Floyd was Black, born to parents of African origin in a racially divided America. His birth, too, "was his fatal accident."

Martin Luther King Jr, the redoubtable civil rights leader, reached Memphis, Tennessee on April 3, 1968, to support the striking African-American city sanitation workers, who were facing crass racial discrimination there. He was shot when standing in the hotel balcony the next day. Addressing an angry crowd, Senator Robert F Kennedy said, "For those of you who are Black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all White people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind



of feeling. I had a member of my family killed but he was killed by a White man." He was referring to his slain brother John F Kennedy. It calmed the crowd, albeit temporarily. Floyd was no Martin Luther King Jr. Yet, the killing in cold blood highlighted the deep-rooted prejudices persisting in American society. And for US President Donald Trump, Floyd's death "on the streets of Minneapolis" was just "a grave tragedy." His open threat to deploy the US military reservists of the National Guard against the angry anti-racism protesters to "dominate" the streets, was, by no means, a healer's touch. Perhaps, this may well be a defining moment for America's racial politics.

Haridasan Rajan Kozhikode

Reconnect with nature

Sir — Coronavirus has elicited varying degrees of response from nation-states. Weeks after the

spread of the virus, it was more than evident that even countries with the best medical and public health infrastructure could find no match to this biological invad-

er. Containment through isolation was seen to be the lone weapon.

By virtue of the progress made in science, we may find a

cure for COVID-19 but like every other microbial onslaught till date, we have to pay a heavy price. When will mankind learn the universal tenet of simple living and high thinking as advocated by our rishis of yore?

R Narayanan Navi Mumbai

Mired in confusion

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Trump's expansionism" (June 4). US President Donald Trump's call to transform G-7 into G-11 lacks clarity. He has failed to convince nations on the need to upgrade the grouping. He has only said that it has become outdated. Besides, an analysis needs to be done on the failures of G-7. Given that the US would be going to polls in November, it remains unclear how this would shape up. India has taken the right step by showing willingness to attend the G-7 summit but it must be impartial as it has till now on international affairs.

Manisha Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Firms need a new perspective

Business processes will change due to the pandemic and so should the way valuations of companies are done



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Coronavirus cases are rising exponentially in India even as the country is in the midst of unlocking the economy. With the Government allowing almost all sectors to restart, companies are faced with the new challenge of valuing their businesses as a consequence of the pandemic. Nothing is the same now. The financial markets, the economy, real estate and almost all sectors have seen major turbulence and the uncertainty will not end anytime soon. According to the 2020, *Brand Finance India 100* report, during the pandemic, the combined valuation of India's top 100 brands dropped by \$25 billion as compared to the start of this year. The uncertainty in future cash flows is now a hard reality. Organisations have to renew ways of measuring risks associated with the cash flow of their businesses as the categories of risk may have increased in the light of COVID-19.

The elements which are a part of the discount rates used in valuations, including the risk-free rate and unsystematic risks, may have changed, altering the way businesses approached valuations before the crisis. All business valuations are done on projections. However, in these unprecedented times, there is every chance that these projections might change. It has become difficult to quantify the short-term and long-term financial projections and the shape of economic recovery is also uncertain. It may be 'V' shaped, 'U' shaped or even 'W' shaped. Moreover, some industries may bounce back faster than the others. Even though governments across the world are providing economic stimulus, the fact remains that consumer demand may still be slow and may possibly see a paradigm shift in the long-term.

So, during these times, selecting a valuation model relevant to one's own business is imperative. All three valuation methods — income, market and asset — are available to business managers and analysts. However, in the present situation, some methods may be more appropriate as compared to others. For example, of the two income-based approaches that are used to value a company, one may be more appropriate than the other now. The first method, the Capitalisation of Cash Flow (CCF) method is used by mature firms, which are relatively stable in their growth expectation and cash flows. Under this method, the valuator assumes a steady growth rate, picks a single income stream and predicts future income based on historical numbers.

On the other hand, the Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) method is more flexible and allows for more variations in the future cash flows based on varying growth rates, changes in the interest rates of debt repayments and any other factors that may change in future and could affect cash flows. Given this rising economic uncertainty and market disruption, DCF, with its flexibility to allow modelling of performance of future years of a business individually, with varying growth rates and cash flows till businesses stabilise, may be a more useful method. This method will not be devoid of challenges as valuations may still have to consider multiple scenario analysis to capture the growing uncertainty in the next 18 to 24 months.

Organisations can value their business using other methods as well. However, additional considerations need to be applied in doing so. For example, if a company was using the market approach of valuation earlier, it needs to make relevant adjustments in the financial parameters now. It may not just use an average of the previous three or five-year period, as it may not be applicable in these uncertain times. So usage of previous years' financial metrics during these times needs more analysis and adjustments.

Cash flows and the ability of a business to continue its operations and generate cash flows are important for business valuation. In addition, cash balance and the rate at which money is being used by an organisation also determine its survival and ability to continue doing business. So any changes that help a firm to preserve capital and cash flows, now and in the near future, will help in the valuations as it can give a good idea of how long a company can survive in these turbulent times.

The longer-term prospects of any organisation are also important in assessing its value. However, every dark cloud has a silver lining and tough times help some companies to thrive or re-engineer themselves, like grocery and food delivery, manufacturers of PPE and digital businesses. These and similar other businesses by virtue of their relevance in these times, or because of timely reinvention, are actually booming during the outbreak. With world economies going through disruptions and maybe permanent changes in consumer behaviour, some companies would take advantage of the situation and do better than pre-pandemic times. Going forward, due to the unpredictability of the business environment and future cash flows, valuations cannot be done by just numbers. Stories of survival, tales of flexibility and the ability to either scale up or scale down at a short notice should be definitely part of valuations. Many things may not remain the same in the aftermath of the outbreak. Business processes will change and so should the way valuations of companies are done. (The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)

DELHI GOVERNMENT RE-TESTED 30 SAMPLES FROM RML HOSPITAL WHICH WERE DECLARED COVID-19 POSITIVE. THE RESULTS OF 12 SAMPLES WERE NEGATIVE. —AAP SPOKESPERSON RAGHAV CHADHA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



IT IS NOT RIGHT TO DO POLITICS OVER THE COVID-19 SITUATION IN DELHI AS IT WEAKENS THE FIGHT AGAINST THE DISEASE. —UNION HEALTH MINISTER HARSH VARDHAN

Give back to 'city makers'

The absorption of jobless migrant workers in newer fiscal activities with dignity would significantly depend on the nature and type of Government policies put in place to jumpstart economies of cities



ARJUN KUMAR

Symmetric to global trends, COVID-19 has had multi-dimensional impacts on the Indian economy and society. Amid rising concerns over the lives and livelihoods of the poorer sections of the population due to the nationwide lockdown, the Government announced seemingly bold economic packages. However, with a few exceptions, lack of coordination in the official sphere at the ground level has had appalling consequences, especially on the millions of "city makers", the urban informal workers, who represent a significant share of the workforce and contribute in multiple ways to the economy.

Employed mostly in the unorganised sector and living in informal settlements in cities, they have borne the major brunt of the lockdown. They have no job contracts, no regular work, are often employed casually and are without any social safety nets to support them and their families during exigencies. Moreover, their livelihood opportunities are constrained by multiple barriers that include deplorable housing conditions, inadequacies of urban services, in-built socio-economic disparities relating to caste and gender and also the policies and practices of governments.

The challenges during the lockdown: An IMPRI survey to understand the impact of the lockdown on the lives of migrant workers revealed that almost three-fourth of the 3,121 respondents from over 50 cities of India were engaged in informal employment, i.e. daily wage work, petty trades/business and as temporary workers without any social security benefits. It was found that six out of 10 workers had lost their jobs during the lockdown, with unemployment being highest among the casual labourers and self-employed respondents. A whopping 74 per cent of the casual labourers lost their jobs while 67 per cent of the self-employed workers could not pursue their economic activities due to the lockdown.

The workers, who had no other option but to remain confined within their houses without any work, could neither realistically practise social distancing, nor could they afford it. The inability to earn during the shutdown translated into 54 per cent of the people being unable to pay rent for their accommodation.

The loss of jobs had a spillover impact on the education of children, too, as most city-makers send their offspring to Government schools. In the prevailing new normal of online teaching methods and reliance on digital modes of learning, education has become a distant dream for the children of migrant labourers because they have no smartphones for accessing such education, forget about computers.

With 88 per cent of the city makers depending on household income, savings, financial help from relatives and friends and so on, for meeting their health-related expenditure, this temporary job loss has added to their anxieties that any kind of health emergency, including COVID-19, would exacerbate.

What they want: Quite understandably, most people want to return to work and almost three-fourth of the respondents said that they would join the same job in which they were engaged prior to the lockdown, if possible. In other words, this loss of jobs or livelihood options was considered as a temporary phenomenon.

However, the absorption of jobless migrant workers in newer fiscal activities with dignity would significantly depend on the nature and type of Government policies put in place to jump-

“ IN THE US, A SUM OF \$300-\$400 IS BEING GIVEN WEEKLY TO THE UNEMPLOYED AS AN ALLOWANCE. THEREFORE, TO ENSURE A DIGNIFIED ASSISTANCE TO THE POOR, THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CAN AFFORD TO GIVE \$1 (ABOUT ₹75) A DAY TO EACH POOR PERSON. IF WE GIVE ₹2,000 PER MONTH ASSISTANCE TO 12 CRORE PEOPLE (THE BOTTOM QUARTILE POPULATION IN THE URBAN ECONOMIC LADDER), IT WILL TRANSLATE TO ₹24,000 CRORE A MONTH AND ₹72,000 CRORE FOR THREE MONTHS. THIS IS CERTAINLY DOABLE ”



start economies of cities. This can mostly be done by providing boosts to local businesses and small and micro-enterprises.

The challenges: A defining challenge for devising appropriate mitigating policies for the city makers is the lack of data about them both prior to and during any kind of emergency. So, preparedness and early action by the communities are essential. To benefit from any Central and State Government relief measures — both cash and non-cash — people must possess Government documents (ration card, Aadhaar card), bank account and be enrolled in different Government welfare schemes and so on.

The survey revealed that coverage of and eligibility for Government support programmes was a major concern, as evident from the possession status of various important documents by the respondents.

About 23 per cent of the respondents did not have ration cards, 32 per cent did not have zero-balance Jan Dhan bank accounts and on an average only one out of 10 respondents were covered under the Government of India's flagship public health as well as life insurance schemes — Ayushman Bharat, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima and PM Suraksha Bima Yojna.

About 65 per cent of the surveyed respondents were aware of the AarogyaSetu App and among them 62 per cent reported use of the app. Only 38 per cent respondents were aware of State WhatsApp helplines. For other apps and e-initiatives, the awareness levels of the respondents were very poor. Roughly about 20-30 per cent of the respondents were aware of State e-coupons for rations, State e-pass or other different State apps and use of these apps among them turned out to be even more pathetic.

Lack of access to smartphones and unstable internet connectivity were the major impediments in using the apps and portals.

Regarding their awareness on eligibility for Government support programmes, only 37 per cent of the respondents thought that they were eligible for benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana (having an outlay of ₹20 lakh crore for the COVID-19 response). However, only 34 per cent of the respondents could avail benefits like cash transfers and free ration under this scheme.

The solutions: In the light of the above evidence, it becomes extremely important to think of precise policy improvements to tide over the crisis. To start with, the stringent Aadhaar-requirements for accessing different schemes must be relaxed for at least the next six months. Another option could be a job assurance programme that would give needy households livelihood security during health crises.

Essentially, the COVID-19 crisis requires extremely localised and coordinated responses. So, city governments and their elected representatives should decide on vigorous delivery of basic urban services that might be the most effective in their contexts. Financially-empowered city governments with clear functional domain and adequate institutional capacity can respond rapidly and contain the outbreak of COVID-19.

It is equally important to improve and expand the coverage of the Public Distribution System (PDS). Bridging the awareness gap regarding available Government support programmes, especially the PDS, through timely and reliable information and expanding the coverage of such programmes to the needy but non-registered segments via certain temporary forms of authentication as alternatives, can be very useful.

The last Economic Survey (2019-20) spoke of "Thalinoomics", which says that a good vegetarian and non-vegetarian platter costs a minimum of ₹25 minimum and ₹40, respectively. Therefore, in order to ensure that the

poorest sections of the population are able to fulfil their dietary requirements, each identified needy person must be provided with a dollar a day (around ₹2,000 per month).

Further, for everyone to be vigilant about the spread of COVID-19, digital literacy for children belonging to poor families, and smooth transfer of digital payment of welfare schemes, poor households should be provided an Android phone either for free or at a subsidised rate through PDS shops. In addition, the private sector (under the CSR component) should come forward and provide free SIM and data coupons to Below Poverty Line households. It is the most opportune time to ensure digital literacy among the people.

In the US, \$300-\$400 are being given weekly to the unemployed as an allowance. Therefore, to ensure a dignified assistance to the poor, the Government of India can afford to give \$1 (about ₹75) a day to each poor person. If we give ₹2,000 per month assistance to 12 crore people (the bottom quartile population in the urban economic ladder), it will translate to ₹24,000 crore a month and ₹72,000 crore for three months. This is certainly doable.

Moreover, if we can give an Android phone in a graded manner to around five crore people (prioritising the elderly, women and children going to Government schools) in the cities, it would amount to around ₹30,000 crore (cost per handset around ₹6,000). Overall, this would amount to ₹100,000 crore and would be crucial as India moves into the "unlock" phase. Such provisioning is certainly doable and would just need a reorientation of the Budget 2020-21. And to this, the ₹35 lakh crore worth of forex reserves could be rightly utilised to pay for the war against COVID-19, as it would help distribute the pain similar to the Keynesian tenets during World War-II and create a better society. (The writer is Director, IMPRI)

Enlarge role of local govts in handling crisis

The lockdown exit plan will gradually give way to decentralised responsibilities to panchayats and municipalities. The sooner this shift takes place the better it will be



VN ALOK

Given the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government imposed a nationwide lockdown by invoking provisions of the National Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DM Act). The law was enacted by invoking entry number 23, namely, "Social Security and Social Insurance; Employment and Unemployment" in the Concurrent List of the Constitution. Hence, it empowers Union and State Governments to frame rules and issue

executive orders. In fact, the subject "disaster management" is not specifically mentioned in all the three lists of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. Therefore, the Parliament exercised its power to enact a law on the subject.

Other entries like "Public Order" and "Public Health" were included in the State List when the Constitution was framed. Further, consequent upon the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution in 1993, "Public Health" found place in the 11th and 12th Schedules. As a result, panchayats and municipalities have been assigned civic powers to render "public health" to citizens in their respective jurisdictions.

Rightly so, as democratic and cooperative organisations at the local level are arguably the best to render preventive and prophylactic measures like inoculation and vaccination. The

main function of these local self-governments is to make the people understand what change or innovation benefits them, why it does so and how it can be introduced. It is for the community to participate in all the activities which lead to such change or innovation.

Panchayats and municipalities were brought into the statute book to promote better living for the community with the active participation of the community. Here, the word "community" means a local society in a geographical rural or urban area, cutting across caste, religious and economic differences.

Ironically, these key institutions have not found their rightful place in the DM Act. A passing reference is made to "local authorities" under Section 41 of the DM Act. As per the section, these panchayats, municipalities and cantonment boards are

mandated to carry out "relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities" only under the "directions of the District Authority." The DM Act stipulates, under Section 25, the setting up of a "District Disaster Management Authority" under the stewardship of a District Collector/Magistrate, who is assisted by the chairperson of the district council in the capacity of co-chairperson of the district authority.

Further, Section 31 of the DM Act provides for a "plan" by the district authority in consultation with local authorities subject to approval by the State. The provision is akin to Article 243 ZD, a mandatory constitutional provision, which envisages a district planning committee (DPC) for spatial planning, infrastructure development and environmental conservation.

States have given the provision of DPC in their respective Acts but seem to be reluctant to make them

operational. As a result, the process of decentralised planning is hampered and associated capacity-development is completely denied.

On the other hand, the DM Act is unambiguous in assigning powers to Union and State Governments. Section 62 of the Act stipulates extraordinary powers to the Centre by which any authority in Union Ministries, statutory bodies and State Governments is bound to take direction from the nodal Central Ministry. In addition, a national plan is drawn up under Section 11.

At the State level, under Section 14, a State Disaster Management Authority is required under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister of the State. This authority is assisted by a State Executive Committee headed by the Chief Secretary of the State. The committee prepares the State Disaster Management Plan after following the

guidelines of the National Authority and a select consultation with the district and local authorities.

Penal provisions in Chapter 10 of the DM Act pave the way for security personnel to take coercive measures against offenders. However, medical professionals are not covered under this provision. Recent incidents of stone pelting and misbehaviour with doctors and nurses compelled the Government to introduce penal provisions protecting healthcare personnel and their property against violence. For the purpose, an Ordinance was promulgated on April 22 to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 in the light of the current pandemic. This could be a permanent provision to maintain the morale of the healthcare professional and discipline miscreants.

It may be observed that the pandemic till date is being controlled through centralised institutional

arrangements with remarkable cooperation of all State Governments and public servants and security forces have been enforcing the lockdown effectively. The lockdown exit plan will gradually give way to decentralised responsibilities to panchayats and municipalities. The sooner this shift takes place the better it will be.

The Government has prominently pronounced the role of local self-governments to combat COVID-19, which can only be prevented by changing human attitudes and behaviours. Local governments and the community are best placed to bring this change and inculcate social distancing on a sustainable basis. Hence, the role of local governments must be prominent, at least, in the DM Act.

(The writer is faculty, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

Thousands gather across country to remember Floyd

Washington: Thousands of Americans carrying placards reading "black lives matter" and raising slogans such as "no justice, no peace" took to the streets in many US cities, demonstrating peacefully against the killing of unarmed African-American George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis on May 25.

The 46-year-old victim, a native of Houston, was handcuffed and pinned to the ground on May 25 by a white police officer who knelt on his neck as he gasped for breath.

Floyd's death has triggered nationwide violent protests with a section of the protesters resorting to looting and rioting across the country, leaving behind a trail of destruction.

Mourners gathered in huge numbers across the country on Thursday night to remember Floyd after a private memorial service in Minneapolis.

Seeking justice for Floyd, they are demanding urgent reforms in the police and criminal justice system.

Several cities including New York, Washington DC,



AP Demonstrators protest near the White House in Washington over the death of George Floyd

Chicago and Los Angeles have reported large-scale violence and looting in the last few days.

More than 10,000 Americans have been arrested across the country for violent protests.

Protesters chant slogans as they march, with music and drum beats blaring in the back-

ground in Los Angeles. Cars were seen moving slowly along with the marchers, with many drivers and passengers holding protest signs or raising fists out of their windows to show support.

In New York, city Mayor Bill de Blasio was booed at an event.

"It will not be about words in this city. It will be about a change," he said.

Reverend Al Sharpton, who delivered the eulogy, said that the reason "why we're marching all over the world is because we were like George, we couldn't breathe. It's time for us to stand up in George's

name and say get your knee off our necks".

He also asked mourners to stand in silence for eight minutes and 46 seconds, the length of time Floyd lay pinned to the pavement by the police officer.

"At the end of the day, my brother's gone, but the Floyd name lives on. I thank god for you all," his brother Terrence Floyd told another massive gathering in Brooklyn.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi described this as a day of great sadness.

"They are having the first service for George Floyd. It is a national day of mourning, I see, for George Floyd, and we pray for his family and pray for healing for our country," she told reporters at the US Capitol.

With placards reading "black lives matter", protesters chanted "no justice, no peace."

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison on Thursday announced to elevate charges against the former Minneapolis police officer who killed Floyd while adding the charges of aiding and abetting murder against the other three officers at the scene. **PTI**

Floyd case restokes anger over French custody death

Paris: Churning US protests over the death of George Floyd have revived anger in France over police violence, systemic racism and the complicated case of Adama Traore, a black Frenchman who died in police custody in July 2016.

For Traore's family, the Floyd protests have also revived their hopes for change.

"During the coronavirus, people had a pause in their lives. They filmed scenes of police violence and they realized they

were living in a country where there is violence every day against people of color," his sister, Assa Traore, said.

Over 20,000 people flouted a police ban and protested vociferously Tuesday in Paris to call for justice for both Traore and Floyd, and similar protests are planned around France this weekend. "As long as police aren't convicted, we will keep coming out in the streets," Traore's sister told The Associated Press. **AP**

California mayor resigns over police killings

Temecula (US): The mayor of a Southern California city resigned following an email in which he stated he didn't "believe there's ever been a good person of color killed by a police officer" locally.

Temecula Mayor James Stewart had apologised Thursday for the email, saying he never meant to use the word "good." He had said he is dyslexic and so used voice text to send his late-night Tuesday message but failed to notice the added word.

"Unfortunately I did not take the time to proofread what was recorded. I absolutely did not say that," Stewart told the Riverside Press-Enterprise on Thursday.

"What I said is and I don't believe there has ever been a person of color murdered by police, on context to Temecula or Riverside County. I absolutely did not say 'good.' I have no idea how that popped up."

Stewart said he was replying to someone "concerned about our police officers and their sensitivity training." **AP**

TWITTER DISABLES TRUMP CAMPAIGN'S GEORGE FLOYD VIDEO TRIBUTE

Washington: Twitter has blocked a Trump campaign video tribute to George Floyd over a copyright claim, in a move that adds to tensions between the social media platform and the US president, one of its most widely followed users.

The company put a label on a video posted by the @TeamTrump account that said, "This media has been disabled in response to a claim by the copyright owner."

The video was still up on President Donald Trump's YouTube channel and includes pictures of Floyd, whose death

sparked widespread protests, at the start.

"Per our copyright policy, we respond to valid copyright complaints sent to us by a copyright owner or their authorized representatives," Twitter said in a statement. It did not say who made the complaint.

The three minute and 45 second clip is a montage of photos and videos of peaceful marches and police officers hugging protesters interspersed with some scenes of burning buildings and vandalism, set to gentle piano music and Trump speaking. **AP**

US airstrikes hit Taliban; 10 Afghan cops killed in ambush

Kabul: US forces carried out two sets of airstrikes against the Taliban, in western and southern Afghanistan, a US Military spokesman said on Friday.

Elsewhere in the south, the Taliban set off a roadside bomb and ambushed a police convoy, killing 10 Afghan policemen.

The US strikes against the Taliban were the first following a brief cease-fire declared by the insurgents for a major Muslim holiday last month.

A US military spokesman, Colonel Sonny Leggett, said one of airstrikes took place on Friday afternoon in western Farah province, targeting 25 Taliban fighters who were attacking Afghan forces.

Hours earlier, on Thursday night, the US air forces struck an unknown number of Taliban in southern Kandahar province, he said. There was no

immediate comment from the Taliban.

Since the signing of the US-Taliban peace agreement at the end of February, US forces have only once before announced a strike against the Taliban, in defence of Afghan forces. Leggett did not elaborate on the latest airstrikes or their targets.

However, an Afghan government official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to talk to the media, said three senior Taliban commanders and at least 13 other fighters were killed in the Farah airstrikes.

Meanwhile, Afghan officials in southern Zabul province said the Taliban there ambushed an Afghan police convoy after setting off a roadside bomb on Friday, killing 10 policemen. **AP**

White House calls on China to honour Tiananmen Square massacre victims

Washington: The White House has called on China to provide a full accounting of those who were killed, detained or remain missing in connection with events surrounding the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

"The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) slaughter of unarmed Chinese civilians was a tragedy that will not be forgotten," White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said in a statement on Thursday, joining the global condemnation of the massacre.

The American people reflect on the courage and optimism of the hundreds of thousands of Chinese citizens who gathered peacefully 31 years ago in Beijing and throughout China to protest widespread official corruption and demand a greater say in the governance of their country, she said. **PTI**

German bomb experts to defuse WWII-era bomb in Frankfurt

Frankfurt: German police and firefighters are clearing a section of Frankfurt around the convention center to defuse a World War II-era bomb that was discovered during recent construction work.

Authorities say some 2,700 people are being asked to leave their homes as they cordon off the area as a precaution to defuse the 500-kilogram (1,100-pound) bomb. Buses and trains through the area were also shut down and bomb experts were expected to get to work on the bomb about noon Friday.

They say they hope the work will be finished by around dinnertime. Even 75 years after the end of the war, such finds are still relatively common in Germany. **AP**

Gunmen Kill 21 in fresh Northwest Nigeria Attacks, say police

AFP ■ KANO, NIGERIA

Armed gangs have killed 21 people in the latest bloody assaults on villages in restive northwest Nigeria, police said.

Assailants trying to steal cattle shot dead 15 people in clashes with local residents in six remote communities of Zamfara state on Tuesday, regional police spokesman Mohammed Shehu.

The gunmen — dubbed "bandits" by the authorities — returned the next day and shot dead six mourners at funerals for the earlier victims, the statement released Thursday said.

Nigeria's northeast has been wracked by years of violence, involving clashes between rival communities over land, attacks by heavily armed gangs and retaliation strikes from vigilante groups.

EU, UK still at loggerheads in post-Brexit negotiations

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Another round of trade discussions between the European Union and the UK ended Friday — and once again there were no signs of real progress ahead of a looming deadline on whether a transition arrangement can be extended.

Following four days of video discussions because of the coronavirus pandemic, the two sides remained at loggerheads on a number of issues, including on regulations for businesses. Their positions on fisheries also remain distant, with the UK adamantly

opposed to EU demands for long-term access to British waters.

"The truth is there was no significant progress this week," the EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier said during a press conference.

The UK left the political institutions of the EU on January 31 but remains inside the EU's tariff-free economic zone until the end of the year. That so-called transition period can be extended by two years but a request to do so has to be made by July 1. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has repeatedly said he won't ask for an extension.

Around the Globe

Kathmandu: Nepal reported 278 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, taking the total number of infections in the country to 2,912. The coronavirus has spread to 68 of the 77 districts in the country, the ministry of health and population said.

Berlin: German authorities say a Catholic priest who came into contact with many people during church services in several cities has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. The dpa news agency reported Friday that health authorities in the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania said the priest was involved in services in Demmin, Stralsund and Grimmen, among other places.

London: British Airways is considering legal action against the U.K. Government's plans to force anyone arriving into the country to quarantine themselves for 14 days in order to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

London: Britain's official human rights watchdog is to mount an inquiry into the racial inequalities exposed by the coronavirus pandemic. The Equality and Human Rights Commission said it was a "once in a generation" opportunity to tackle deep-seated inequalities and create a fairer country.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one female **Namedly: Rehana Khatun, D/o Mohd. Rabbani, R/o: H.No. 3098, Street Sushila, Turkman Gate, Delhi** has been missing/ kidnapped from her house since **31.05.2020** at 3:00 pm. from her house from the area of P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi In this regard a case vide **DD No. 25A, dated 01.06.2020** has been registered at P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi. The description of the missing/ kidnapped female is as under: **Age: 23 years, Height: 4'5", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Normal, Wearing: Black colour suit-salwar, black-white colour dupatta and grey colour shoes in feet.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the female but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this female kindly inform to the following. **Website: http://cbi.nic.in**
E-mail id - cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 **SHO**
Fax No. 011-24368639 **P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi**
DP/141/CD/2020 **Ph.: 011- 23279338, 8750870423**

Pak reports record 4,896 new cases, tally reaches 89,249

Islamabad: Pakistan on Friday registered a record spike of 4,896 new coronavirus cases, taking the total tally to 89,249, even as Prime Minister Imran Khan asserted that over 175,000 volunteers have helped to enforce the official guidelines to contain the spread of the deadly virus in the country.

The Ministry of National Health Service said 68 coronavirus patients died in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 1,838. Friday was the third consecutive day when a record number of COVID-19 cases were reported in Pakistan after the Eid holidays and easing of lockdown restrictions at the end of May.

With 4,896 new infections, the total coronavirus tally in Pakistan now stands at 89,249, the health ministry said. **PTI**

Sindh province reported 33,536 infections, Punjab 33,144, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 11,890, Balochistan 5,582, Islamabad 3,946, Gilgit-Baltistan 852 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir 299.

Addressing the Corona Relief Tiger Force via a special television briefing, Prime Minister Khan said over 175,000 members of the force have helped to enforce the official guidelines to contain the spread of the coronavirus in the country. A record one million volunteers have registered for the force. "They have played an important role after the lockdown was eased. More than 1,75,000 were active in Ramadan who went to different mosques to ensure compliance with the safety guidelines," he said. **PTI**

3 million jobs loss expected in Pak due to virus outbreak

Islamabad: Cash-strapped Pakistan is expected to record around 3 million jobs losses due to the coronavirus outbreak, the finance ministry told the country's Senate on Friday.

In response to Senator Mushtaq Ahmed's question on estimated damage to the economy due to the pandemic, the finance ministry said the industrial sector is likely to lose 1 million jobs and the remaining 2 million will be lost in the service sector. **PTI**

EU hopes to free borders of virus restrictions by June-end

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Europe could have its free travel zone up and running again by the end of the month, but travellers from further afield will not be allowed in before July, European Union Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said Friday after talks among the bloc's interior ministers.

Panicked by the coronavirus outbreak in Italy in February, countries in the 26-nation Schengen area — where people and goods move freely without checks — imposed border restrictions without consulting their neighbours to try to keep the disease out. The moves caused traffic jams and blocked medical equipment.

Free movement is a jewel in Europe's crown which helps

business flourish, and many European officials feared that the very future of the Schengen area was at threat from the restrictions. These added to pressures already caused by the arrival in Europe of well over 1 million migrants in 2015.

"I personally believe that we will return to a full functioning of the Schengen area and freedom of movement of citizens no later than the end of the month of June," Johansson told reporters after the video-conference meeting.

She said Europe's Centre for Disease Prevention and Control believes that confinement and other health measures are working. The center says that more than 168,000 people have been killed by the coronavirus in Europe, mostly in Britain, Italy, France and Spain.

NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed through this notice that **Dr. Attam's Nursing Home** situated at 19 Bhera Enclave, New Delhi-110087 is going to destroy its Medical admission records from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, as per record destruction rule, if any body is interested in obtaining the records of this period. Please contact the Nursing Home within 7 days of appearance of this notice. After that administration will not be responsible for the records.

Thanks **Hospital Manager**

INDIAN RAILWAYS

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (BHARAT SARKAR)
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (RAIL MANTRALAYA)
(RAILWAY BOARD)

No. 2020RS11741TC New Delhi, dated 01.06.2020

E-TENDER NO. 2020RS1174TC

Executive Director, Railway Stores (Steel), Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), Government of India, invites e-Tender for procurement of **36,000 Nos. Upgraded High Tensile CBC Freight Stock for Indian Railways to RDSO specification No. WD-70-BD-10/Rev.02** with latest revision, if any.

2.0 The interested suppliers are advised to visit the website <http://ireps.gov.in> for details of the tender and submission of their e-bids.

3.0 No manual offers will be accepted against e-tender.

5.0 Tender will be closed at 15:00 hours on 15.07.2020.

Director, Railway Stores (Wagon), Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India

1230A/2020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Metro Railway, Kolkata
Kolkata's Pride

ZONAL CONTRACT FOR ZONE 8

Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Metro Rail Bhavan, 33/1, J. L. Nehru Road, Kolkata - 700071 for and on behalf of the President of India invites Tender Notice for e-tendering for the following work:

Name of work : Zone No. 8, i.e., Zonal Contract for arresting seepage on track bed, treatment of expansion/construction joints of RTS Box/Elevated Structures/Circular Tunnel/Stations/Ventilation Shaft, box walls, floors, mezzanine & ceilings by grouting with cement admixed with non-shrinkable water proofing compound and with cementitious grout on both UP & DN track including pit lines and ballastless track from Noapara Car Depot Complex (In.) to Kavi Subhas Car Depot Complex (In.) i.e., upto Km. 25/11 of Metro Railway, Kolkata **Tender Value : ₹ 4,19,98,030.90 (approx.). Cost of Tender Document : ₹ 10,000/- Earnest Money : ₹ 3,60,000/- Completion Period :** The contract shall be in force for a period of two years starting from 01.07.2020. **Date of Closing :** 26.06.2020 at 12.00 hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://ireps.gov.in). In the bidding for the tender is to be submitted only through e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any manual offer, if received, shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected.

Abridged e-Tender Notice No.: Civil-2329-2020-Recall (Open)

FASTER SAFER SMOOTHER CLEANER

Beijing further relaxes curbs, Wuhan clears all patients

Beijing/Wuhan: Beijing on Friday decided to lower its COVID-19 emergency response, marking the return of normalcy in China's capital following the coronavirus outbreak, while the central city of Wuhan, the origin point of the pandemic, cleared all its confirmed cases.

Wuhan recorded zero cases of the virus following testing of 10 million people.

Beijing city will lower its emergency response to the novel coronavirus epidemic from the second level to the third level starting Saturday, a local official announced on Friday.

On May 17, the Beijing Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said it was not necessary to wear masks. **PTI**

B'deshi courts freeing child suspects due to virus risk

AP ■ DHAKA

Authorities in Bangladesh have been releasing hundreds of children suspected of committing mostly petty crimes as they try to keep the coronavirus from spreading in overcrowded detention centers, officials said Friday.

The orders for their release on bail came from virtual courts set up by the country's Supreme Court with the help of UNICEF, officials said.

About 400 children have been granted bail in recent weeks and more than 300 of them have already been reunited with their families, said Natalie McCauley, chief of child protection at UNICEF in Bangladesh. She said the decision came as public health experts said children living in the country's detention centers

face a higher risk of getting infected, mainly because of overcrowding and poor conditions.

Bangladesh has a protracted system of delivering justice, with some cases for petty crimes taking years to conclude. According to UNICEF, some 23,000 cases involving children under 18 are currently pending with courts across the country.

Saifur Rahman, a special officer of the Supreme Court and additional district judge who is involved with the release program, said the program was crucial as with inadequate staff and utilities in detention centers, it was extremely difficult to minimize the risk of infection from COVID-19.

"In all fairness, maintaining social and physical dis-

tancing is next to impossible in such a situation," he said. Mohammed Rakib, 15, was accused of beating a man in Dhaka nearly two months ago. A judge from a regular court denied him bail and he was eventually sent to an overcrowded detention center just outside Dhaka that UNICEF says houses nearly 700 children even though it has the capacity for about 300.

Late last month he was finally granted bail through the new virtual court.

"It feels great to be freed and get united with my parents," Rakib told The Associated Press on Friday. "I am very happy. I have suffered in the jail a lot. That's a bad place." The reunion was special for Rakib and his family as they were able to celebrate the end of Ramadan together.

Switzerland to lift travel limits on EU, UK

AP ■ BERLIN

Switzerland says it plans to lift restrictions on travel from European Union countries and Britain on June 15.

The Swiss government previously had announced that it would completely reopen the country's borders with three of its neighbours — Austria, Germany and France — in mid-June.

On Friday, a government statement said "in view of the current epidemiological situation" it can now expand that to all countries in the EU and the European Free Trade Association, as well as Britain.

Switzerland is not a member of the EU but is part of Europe's usually passport check-free Schengen travel area.

Institute of Horticulture Technology, Guwahati Mandira, Kamrup-781127
Expression of Interest

The administrative officer of Institute of Horticulture Technology invites Expression of Interest in Seal cover from interested companies, organisations.

Establishment of integrated Turmeric Post harvest processing system production capacity 1 ton per hour. Including all machines, equipments, material, as per the document our work plan.

Companies having expertise in turmeric should only apply Total duration of completion of project is in 12 weeks, from date of order, the sealed Expression of interest should be submitted to this institute on or before 21 days from the date of publishing of this EO. The technical bid will be open at the same date at 11:00 am, and financial bid next day at 11:00 am in the office of Institute of Horticulture Technology Mandira, Kamrup-781127.

Project from DBT Ministry of science and Technology, Government of India New Delhi The sealed envelopes technical and commercial bid separately and 2% EMD and 5% security of project cost [after work award], in technical bid envelope should be mentioned EO for "Establishment of integrated turmeric production post harvest processing system"

sd

Administrative officer
Institute of Horticulture Technology
Mandira, Assam, Pin code - 781127
Email id: enquiry@iht.edu.in

Markets resume rally as bank stocks spurt

LOG WEEKLY GAINS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices resumed their upward march on Friday as investors piled into banking and infrastructure stocks amid robust foreign fund inflows and a firm trend in global markets.

Reversing the previous session's decline, the BSE Sensex zoomed 306.54 points or 0.90 per cent to end at a three-month high of 34,287.24.

The broader NSE Nifty rose 113.05 points or 1.13 per cent to 10,142.15.

State Bank of India (SBI) was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, surging 7.90 per cent, after the country's largest lender reported an over four-fold jump in standalone net profit for the March quarter at ₹3,580.81 crore.

Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, NTPC, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank also ended with gains of up to 6 per cent. On the other hand, TCS, HUL, Bajaj Auto and Infosys were among the laggards, skidding up to 2.19 per cent.

Reliance Industries (RIL) succumbed to profit-booking, ending flat after touching its one-year high in intra-day trade. Continuing its deal-



KBK Infographics

making streak, the company announced sale of 1.85 per cent stake in its digital unit Jio Platforms to Abu Dhabi-based sovereign investor Mubadala for ₹9,093.60 crore.

During the week, Sensex surged 1,863.14 points or 5.74 per cent, while Nifty advanced 561.85 points or 5.86 per cent.

According to traders, besides stock-specific action, persistent foreign fund inflows and positive cues from global markets led to bullish sentiment here.

On a net basis, foreign portfolio investors bought equities worth ₹2,905.04 crore on Thursday, provisional exchange data showed. "The current week has been a good one for

the global markets as major frontline markets posted a strong rally," said Sanjeev Zarbade, VP PCG Research, Kotak Securities.

The rally has been driven by positive sentiment generated from gradual lifting of lockdown across economies, despite weak economic readings and civil unrest in the US, he said. "Markets during the week surprised everyone by moving higher. The only justifiable reason to the current momentum is the liquidity.

The investable universe is gradually narrowing with shortage of top-graded stocks whereas the abundant monies available for purchasing them are increasing.

SBI records historic profit in FY20 on stake sale in subsidiaries

Q4 net jumps over 4-fold

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State Bank of India on Friday registered its highest ever yearly profit in 2019-20 and logged a four-fold rise in March quarter profit at ₹3,581 crore as one-time gains from stake sale in subsidiaries and decline in bad loans bolstered the country's largest lender.

The bank reported a stand-alone profit after tax of ₹838 crore in January-March, 2019-20, according to a regulatory filing. For 2019-20, the bank reported its highest ever yearly profit of ₹14,488 crore as against ₹862 crore in the previous year. SBI said exceptional items during 2019-20 included net profit of ₹3,484.30 crore on sale of certain portion of investment in subsidiary SBI Life Insurance in the second quarter and net profit of ₹2,731.34 crore on sale of some stake in SBI Cards and Payment Services in March quarter.

"Despite not so easy circumstances even before COVID-19, the bank has declared a record profit of ₹14,488 crore in FY20, which is the highest ever profit for SBI in its history. We have consistently been able to improve our

asset quality as well as the provision coverage ratio quarter after quarter," bank's chairman Rajnish Kumar told reporters.

Close to 21 per cent of the bank's retail borrowers have availed the three-month moratorium announced by the RBI. Kumar said in spite of the bank extending the moratorium to all its customers, nearly 82 per cent have paid two or more instalments and about 92 per cent have paid one or more instalments during March to May. The central bank had initially allowed banks to offer moratorium on repayment of term loans till May 31 but later extended it for another three months. "The three-month period has just started but my feeling is that our numbers would not be significantly different than what they were in the first three months. It may even improve (in June-August period) as we exit the lockdown," Kumar said. He said the bank has extended the standstill benefit, in terms of asset classification, to accounts with an outstanding loan of ₹6,200 crore. It has made a provision of 15% aggregating ₹938 crore on these loans. Domestic net interest margin (NIM) stood at 2.94 per cent in January-March, 2019-20 as compared to 3.02% in the year-ago period.

Freeze Govt employees' salaries to cut public debt: IMF to Pak

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The IMF has asked cash-strapped Pakistan to freeze salaries of Government employees and adhere to the fiscal consolidation path by showing a nominal primary deficit in the new budget due to the unsustainable public debt that is set to hit 90 per cent of the total value of the national economy.

Pakistan is finding it hard to concede to the two demands but the IMF is insisting that the country should continue to follow the fiscal consolidation path due to the high and unsustainable public debt, the Express Tribune reported on Friday.

Owing to the prevailing tight fiscal situation, growing public debt and Pakistan's decision to seek debt relief from G-20 countries.

The International Monetary Fund has asked Islamabad to freeze salaries of Government employees, the daily reported, citing sources in the Ministry of Finance.

However, the Government is resisting the demand due to high inflation that has eroded people's real income. Nonetheless, it is inclined to abolish over 67,000 posts that have remained vacant for over one year and is also ready to further squeeze current expenditures including a ban on purchase of vehicles.

The IMF's key demand, which was also the reason for seeking to freeze the salaries, was that the government should announce a primary budget deficit target - total deficit excluding interest payments - of only ₹184 billion or 0.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Pakistan has its own reasons for resisting the IMF's demands as it does not see a significant jump in revenue collection in the next fiscal year due to the prevailing economic conditions.

The Government is also inclined to give a raise in salaries due to high inflation that has eroded the real income of people, the daily reported.

Discoms' debt to hit ₹4.5 lakh crore by FY21: CRISIL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Power distribution utilities' debt will hit an all-time high of ₹4.5 lakh crore by the end of the ongoing financial year, CRISIL Ratings said on Friday.

The liquidity package of ₹90,000 crore announced by the Government last month offers a breather, but structural reforms have become critical to sustainability of discoms, the rating agency said in a statement. The package will help state power distribution companies (discoms) settle a significant portion of their overdue bills to generating companies, it said.

However, it noted that with power demand weak and cash losses high amid the COVID-19 pandemic, discoms would end up owing lenders a staggering ₹4.5 lakh crore by the end of 2020-21, or 30 per cent more than that in the last fiscal. Such a material increase in debt would deteriorate the credit profiles of discoms and make structural reforms critical to their sustainability, a study of 34 State discoms (from 15 states), which account for over 80% of India's power demand, shows, CRISIL stated. According to it, presently, only one in five discoms is capable of servicing debt through own cash flows and budgeted subsidies. The scenario would worsen this fiscal because of weak demand for power.

Reliance strikes 6th deal Sells 1.85% in Jio Platforms for ₹9,093.60 crore to Abu Dhabi's Mubadala

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries on Friday announced the sale of 1.85 per cent stake in its digital unit to Abu Dhabi-based sovereign investor Mubadala for ₹9,093.60 crore, the sixth deal in as many weeks that will inject a combined ₹87,655.35 crore in the oil-to-telecom conglomerate to help it pare debt.

"Mubadala Investment Company (Mubadala), will invest ₹9,093.60 crore in Jio Platforms at an equity value of ₹4.91 lakh crore and an enterprise value of ₹5.16 lakh crore," the company said in a statement. With this investment, Jio Platforms has raised ₹87,655.35 crore from leading global technology and growth investors including Facebook, Silver Lake, Vista Equity Partners, General Atlantic, KKR and Mubadala in less than six weeks.

Facebook picked up 9.99 per cent stake in the firm that houses India's youngest but largest telecom firm on April 22 for ₹43.574 crore. Within days of that deal, Silver Lake - the world's largest tech investor - bought a 1.15 per cent stake in Jio Platforms for ₹5,665.75 crore.

On May 8, US-based Vista Equity Partners bought 2.32 per cent stake in Jio Platforms for ₹11,367 crore. On May 17, global equity firm General

Atlantic picked up 1.34 per cent stake in Jio Platforms for ₹6,598.38 crore.

This was followed by US private equity giant KKR buying 2.32 per cent for ₹11,367 crore. Jio Platforms, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd, is a next-generation technology company. Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd, with 388 million mobile subscribers, will continue to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Jio Platforms.

Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries, said Mubadala is one of the most astute and transformational global growth investors.

"Through my longstanding ties with Abu Dhabi, I have personally seen the impact of Mubadala's work in diversifying and globally connecting the UAE's knowledge-based economy.

We look forward to benefiting from Mubadala's experience and insights from supporting growth journeys across the world," he said.

Khaldoon Al Mubarak, Managing Director and Group CEO, Mubadala Investment Company, said: "We are committed to investing in, and actively working with, high growth companies which are pioneering technologies to address critical challenges and unlock new opportunities."

India's forex reserves surge to all-time high of \$493.48 billion

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's foreign exchange reserves surged \$3.43 billion to a fresh all-time high of \$493.48 billion for the week ended May 29 on a handsome accretion of the core currency assets, the RBI said. The reserves, which are counted as a key strength as the country faces the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, had risen by \$3 billion to an all-time high of USD 490.044 billion in the previous week. During the week ended May 29, foreign currency assets, a major component of the overall reserves, increased by \$3.50 billion to \$455.21 billion, data from the RBI showed

US unemployment drops unexpectedly to a still-high 13.3%

AP ■ WASHINGTON

US unemployment dropped unexpectedly in May to 13.3 per cent as reopened businesses began recalling millions of workers faster than economists had predicted, triggering a rally on Friday on Wall Street and giving President Donald Trump something to boast about amid his reelection bid.

The jobless rate is still on par with what the nation witnessed during the Great Depression. And for the second straight month, the Labor Department acknowledged making errors in counting the unemployed during the coronavirus outbreak, saying the real figure is even worse than the numbers indicate.

Still, after weeks of dire predictions by economists that unemployment in May could hit 20% or more, the news that the economy added a surprising 2.5 million jobs last month was seen as evidence that the collapse may have bottomed out in April at 14.7% and that a recovery is well underway as states loosen their lockdowns and let stores, restaurants, gyms and other businesses reopen.

"We are witnessing the easiest phase of growth as people come off temporary layoffs and come back to their employers," said Harvard University economist Jason Furman, who led the White House Council of Economic Advisers during the Obama presidency. "And once employers are done recalling people, the much harder, longer work of recovery will have to proceed."

Most economists had

expected rehiring to kick in as shutdowns were increasingly lifted and people gradually resumed shopping and eating out.

"The surprising thing here is the timing and that it happened as quickly as it did," said Adam Kamins, senior regional economist at Moody's Analytics.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 was up 2.6% around midday on the news.

An exultant Trump seized on the report as evidence that the economy is going to come back from the coronavirus crisis like a "rocket ship."

"This shows that what we've been doing is right," said the president, who has pushed governors aggressively to reopen their economies amid warnings from public health officials that the country is risking a second wave of infections on top of the one that has killed over 100,000 Americans.

Still, the job market is in such a deep hole that it could take years to dig out, economists say. Most are forecasting unemployment in the high single-digits or low double-digits by the end of this year.

Economists had expected the government to report that employers shed 8.5 million more jobs in May on top of the 21.4 million loss in March and April.

Instead, nearly all industries added jobs, a sharp reversal from April, when almost all cut them. Hotels and restaurants added 1.2 million jobs in May, after shedding 7.5 million. Retailers gained 368,000, after losing nearly 2.3 million in the previous month.

World stock markets rise on US jobs data

Washington: Global markets rose on Friday and Wall Street futures as investors awaited the US jobs report for May, which is expected to show another surge in unemployment in the world's largest economy.

Germany's DAX gained 1.7 per cent to 12,643 and the CAC 40 in Paris added 1.9 per cent to 5,108. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 1.3 per cent to 6,421. Futures for the Dow were up 1.3 per cent while those for the S&P 500 were 0.8 per cent higher. Economists expect the Labor Department's monthly jobs report for May to show employers slashed 8.5 million jobs last month, down from 20.5 million in April. That would push the unemployment rate to nearly 20 per cent from about 15 per cent.

GST Council to meet on June 12

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council is scheduled to meet on June 12 and likely to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tax revenues, sources said.

The 40th meeting of the GST Council, headed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising state counterparts, will be held via video conferencing. The meeting would discuss the impact of the pandemic on revenues of the Centre and states and ways to bridge the revenue gap, sources said. Faced with dismal collection and extended deadline for filing returns, the Government has refrained from releasing the monthly GST revenue collection figures for the months of April and May.

Chittaranjan Locomotive Works observes World Environment Day

New Delhi: The World Environment Day was observed in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW).

In view of prevailing Covid-19 situation, e-posters & e-presentation on "Celebrate Biodiversity" theme are prepared for raising awareness amongst the CLW employees and family members.

No gathering, community programmes are organised. CLW employees and their family members are informed to save our mother earth and join in large numbers to build it back for a better tomorrow through electronic and social media.

Works of Noapara-Bimanbender Metro extension project going on smoothly

Kolkata: During the lockdown, works of Noapara-Bimanbender Metro Extension Project have been going on smoothly. Excavation of tunnel of this Metro project has been started. Base concrete of Grade M-20 for bottom slab of the tunnel has been completed recently. Casting work of the top slab is in progress.

Two numbers of PSC Box Girders of 20-22 m span have been safely unloaded in this period with the help of a main crane of 600 MT capacity. Casting of five numbers of PSC 1 girder of 20-22 m span has been completed during the lockdown period. Social distancing, sanitization, covering faces with masks.



South Western Railway E-Procurement (IREPS) Tender Notice No. 03 UBL 2020 of 29.05.2020. The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India invites E-tenders for the following works. 1 Annual Repairs Contract Rs. 4,42,314/- for Walkie Talkie sets and VHF 25 Watt base stations of Kenwood make over Hubballi Division. (for a period of two years).

WESTERN RAILWAY (CONSTRUCTION) E-TENDER NOTICE. Dy Chief Engineer (Construction) I, Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara - 390 004, invites E-tenders as per the details given below. Table with columns: Sr. No., E-Tender No., Name of the work, Approximately cost work (₹), Earnest Money to be deposited (₹), Availability of online Tender for bidding.

NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM/ADDENDUM. In Tender No. 558-Sig/16M/Tender/1342 which is scheduled to be opened on 17.06.2020, following changes are made: Table with columns: S.No., Item No., Description, As per NIT drawn, To be read as. Also includes Metro Railway, Kolkata ZONAL CONTRACT FOR ZONE 1 details.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FASHION TECHNOLOGY Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India. E-TENDER NOTICE. NIFT, Jodhpur invites E-tenders for under mentioned various services at campus at Karwar, Jodhpur. 1. Housekeeping Services 2. Manpower Service. Includes details of services, tender process, and contact information.

SHORT CIRCUITS

AMITABH BACHCHAN

The prosthetic make-up is always an issue during hot weather. It tends to melt away the sticking glue and destroy the prosthetic. Adequate care on the sets of *Gulabo Sitabo* was taken to keep the face cool. It's a requirement. If you want to be an actor, it's important get on with it and stop complaining.

TAHIRA KASHYAP

Seeing the current situation and the world we are living in right now, it's pretty much the reflection of the causes that we have created. From not littering the streets to not destroying plants and doing some gardening and adapting glass and wood for our necessities, everyone should follow some tips in their lives to keep nature beautiful.

ANURAG KASHYAP

Casting the role of Sarita for *Choked: Paisa Bolta Hai* was a big challenge for me. It's a unique role that has to be delivered in a very organic way. She is a young housewife and mother who aspires for more than what her current basic life can provide. And her need for money alters the trajectory of her life and that of her family.

KIRTI KULHARI

Respecting nature is to know when to stop. We as humankind have been exploiting nature, this lockdown has definitely taught us that we need very minimum resources to live and I hope we all now have understood its importance. It is like a default setting in all of us. There is a lot for us to learn and to change in ourselves.

ANGELINA JOLIE

Rights don't belong to any one group to give to another. Discrimination and impunity cannot be tolerated, explained away or justified. I hope we can come together as Americans to address the deep structural wrongs in our society.

CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES

PREMIERE FLASHBACK

Conceptualised and directed by SUJOY PROSAD CHATTERJEE, an inter-disciplinary artist and actor, the docu-film *Spotlight* aims to highlight the lost charm of commercial Bengali theatre and how its revival can create a conduit for empathy and a community of support, says CHAHAK MITTAL



On a typical Sunday evening of 1990s in the then Calcutta, the streets of Hatibagan were spilling with people and there was no place to park the car. The reason was not far to be sought. The seven theatre houses surrounding the street were holding their public premieres, the tickets of which sold out quickly. The auditoriums were decorated with flower garlands and some playhouses even distributed sweets. Sujoy Prosad Chatterjee had gone to watch *Bhaalo Kharap Meye* that starred the much-acclaimed Aparna Sen in the lead. His father, "a typical South Calcutta man," always found it difficult to park his car in the rather congested theatre alley. His mother walked out of the car to speak to the box-office person and she managed to get the tickets. "How did you do that?" asked Sujoy with a surprised look. Well, she said, "Look, I am a North Calcutta-bred girl. I may not speak like your father but I do carry an artsy smile!" The three burst into a hearty laugh and together walked into the Biswarupa theatre.

Cut to today, when one takes a walk through the area, the erstwhile 'Theatre Para' or the 'Broadway of Bengal,' one is only met by the dilapidated abandoned playhouses that line the streets of North Kolkata. From the 1970s till the late 1990s, these theatres were very popular. These cultural spaces thrived on making a difference, yet held on to a unique tradition. However, their decline came by soon. Actors would be greeted by empty halls, producers started facing great losses, the funds saw crunches, the TV era had hugely set in. Later, in early 2000s, while Rangmahal (a theatre house in then Calcutta) was converted into a wedding hall, mysterious fires gutted halls like Star Theatre and consumed the remains of Biswarupa. Perhaps, the fires, ironically, meant the decline of this once-famed culture of the city.

Sujoy's docu-film *Spotlight* reflects on how moving from the big stage to the little screen, it is now more important than ever to realise the power of theatre and how it can create a conduit for empathy, be nudged towards compassion for the downtrodden, and be constituted as a community of support.



EXCERPTS:

□How did you conceptualise the film?

My Montreal-based friends Abhishek Ghosh and Shyamosee Ghosh and I have been hugely interested in cultural archiving and we have been thinking of many ideas to approach this.

Meanwhile, I had also been reading *The Firebird* by Saikat Majumdar and found it quite intriguing. The book, told through the perspective of a 10-year-old boy named Ori, looks at the heydays of the commercial Bengali theatre and its subsequent death. What's interesting is that the narrative touches upon the heritage through the eyes of a boy whose mother was a part of it. I think this was primarily the muse of *Spotlight*, the docu-narrative that I have conceptualised.

□What was the research work involved? How long did it take for you to complete the film?

The research and the build-up has been done by a young theatrical, Rudrarup Mukhopadhyay. I, too, contribute often and it's been a month that we are trying to collate as much as we can. A very important part of this research is the posters, advertisements, lobby cards of the plays, which have been provided by Sounak Chacraverti, an acclaimed art curator and archivist. I am also speaking to a lot of insiders and audience for the

documentation.

□What do you think was the cause of Broadway of Bengal's decline and how have you reflected that in your film?

The main cause of the decline is the paradigm shift in the pattern of entertainment. Going to the theatre for a Sunday matinee and catching the evening train back was an important practice for the audience who lived in the hinterland. People were willing to pay to watch a Sabitri Chatterjee or a Soumitra Chatterjee play within the social distance of the proscenium. The idiot box or the television began showcasing these actors with regular viewing in soaps and, of course, the whole experience of going to a playhouse became secondary, gradually.

The crunch for funds became a pertinent reason too. Theatre producers never had an organised cartel and what spelled the doom finally was the rise of multiplexes. I think the government also did nothing absolutely to preserve or support this very important part of our cultural history. Can I say that theatre was also not a "social responsibility" for corporates?

In the film, what we have reflected through the interview of contemporary theatre practitioner Sohag Sen, is the birth of an alternative theatre movement that drove the audience to the Academy of Fine Arts.

□The documentary features many known thespians and actors with whom the youngsters would connect better. Do you think this will help them know the Bengali theatre's essence in a more nuanced way?

Well, I'd say, yes and no, both. Heritage doesn't require celebrity endorsements. I had requested actor Neeraj Kabi to read from *The Firebird* in the film because of his artistry and not just his stint in the reel world. But yes, if today a millennial watches the film and buys a copy of the book after hearing Neeraj, no harm is done.

Another interesting aspect is that we have the legendary Soumitra Chatterjee and theatre actress Poulami Bose reading the play, *Neelkantho*, that ran to packed houses in Rangmahal.

We also have Ratna Ghoshal reading from *Nohobot*, which ran for 1,600 nights in Tapan Theatre. She had essayed the central character Keya, in the play, directed by the veteran Satya Bandopadhyay.

I think today's generation of young actors can also look forward to thespian Bratya Basu, who has done the prologue for the film. We have actually used a clipping from his popular play, *Awdoyo Shesh Rajani*, based on the life and times of Ashim Chakraborty. His play, *Barbodhu* is a pivotal point in the history of the Broadway of Bengal. Daminee Benny Basu also sings the closing song from the play.

□Given today's scenario, what do you think is the future of theatres since social distancing and self-quarantine are here to stay for some time now?

I have been myself a part of an online play, *Lockdown Diaries*, directed by Souptic Chakraborty and will soon be acting in its sequel called *Unlockdown Diaries*, which will be streamed online on June 14.

The first edition turned out to be hugely successful and that's why the sequel was planned. Yes, we have to think of digital productions keeping in mind the pandemic but the struggle for the other people in theatre fraternity still remains unsorted.

Many light designers have resorted to selling vegetables and casual workers are looking for alternative professions to earn their livelihood. The future looks bleak unless we move into the intimate

format completely with select audience.

□How do you think theatre will be able to fight the current pandemic because such places might be shut for a long time?

I sincerely pray and hope that theatres open, maintaining the safety protocol and the sanitisation. It's too early to say that the future belongs to the digital space completely. Yes, it can be explored as an interim option but how can one experience the illusions of darkness and light on the stage on the internet? The third bell pumps up an actor's adrenaline and the applause from a live audience is a moment that can never be replaced by 2,000 likes and 100 comments.

□Many world theatres have now brought the stage home for people through online shows. Do you think Broadway of Bengal might have the chance to revive itself digitally now?

The Broadway cannot be enlivened digitally. One can talk about it and even share videos of legends. I would like to mention here that Theatre Sansriti, led by Debesh Chattopadhyay, is doing some phenomenal archive work by sharing documentaries on Bengali theatre legends like Ramaprasad Banik, Tripti Mitra, Utpal Dutta, Asit Mukhopadhyay and the likes, who were essentially a part of the alternative theatre movement that the intelligentsia adhered to. There's practically nothing on the Broadway.

□You had earlier mentioned that you have experienced a large part of this Broadway and have a trove of memories. Could you share some of your personal anecdotes associated with the theatres in Bengal?

Oh yes! My maternal home was in the northern fringes of Calcutta, precisely Beadon Street. This was very close to the theatre district. I remember the huge cut-outs of characters from plays like *Asleel*, *Bibor*, *Kone Bibhrat* and many others right at the junction of the street. My maternal grandmother had a deep interest in plays and she used to organise complimentary passes for us to watch the premieres.

(The film will release on Youtube by the channel, GhoshCompany.)

STUDIO CHAT 30 MINUTES

Believable moments

Actors BRANDON ROUTH and KATE BOSWORTH share their experiences from the sets of *Superman Returns*.
By TEAM VIVA



you put on the harness, the body suit and the costume over that, you feel restricted in a lot of ways. But when you're hooked up and actually doing those flying scenes, it's all so worth it.

□Did you research as to how the character has been portrayed in the past?

Kate: I actually made a very conscious decision not to watch past performances before I played her. I had seen the 1978 version when I was six or seven, so it was years ago. I remember the magic of that, the essence of Lois but the character was so different in the scripts given to me. That was Bryan's vision and I thought that it was interesting. I really wanted the audience to feel that she's changed.

□How was your experience working with Brandon?

Kate: Brandon is one of the kindest and loveliest people you will ever meet. He does have the quality of being a Superman. He has that pure look in his eyes and carries the kindness in his heart. People might underestimate his ability but I think it's one of the hardest roles to play because it can be so easily overdone. He played it with much confidence and subtlety.
(Watch the film on June 7 at 9 pm on Sony PIX.)

□What was it playing Lois Lane?

Kate Bosworth: My favourite thing about her was that she appears to be such a modern-day woman, no matter which era she's been depicted in. I love that she is respected by so many different people and is attractive to men because of her intelligence. She is feisty and passionate. What I enjoyed the most about playing this role was that she does seem so different than the past performances. Lois has a son and a fiancé. Her heart is broken by Superman, so she has got more battle wounds. She feels a little more grown up now.

□What was it like being rigged up to fly?

Kate: Initially, it was a pretty awkward experience. To be honest I'm kind of claustrophobic. So when

□What was it like working with

ining what the character would be like and what will the people want to see. Putting the body-hugging suit on for the first time was a little awkward because I was in the room with all the casting. But it way too cool later.

Bryan Singer? How is he as a director?

Brandon: He is great personality. Bryan has an amazing ability to be creative on the spot. He is open to changing the shot or a line, if he feels it is not working. There were some discrepancies because it was a huge script and

sometimes things didn't quite translate well, so we were able to change those. It was great of him for communicating that with me. He was so passionate about the characters in the script and knew he had an opinion. He could give me his views and I had mine so it helped.

◆What was the best thing about your character in *Superman Returns*?

Brandon Routh: The best thing was that I get to play 'Superman'. It was fun to portray this character, who has so much history. The character had many layers to it. Sometimes when I meet kids or even grownups for that matter, who have seen me in the suit, they seem nervous while shaking hands. Kids barely can look at you because, you are The Superman, who saves the world from falling apart. It feels amazing to be people's favourite.

◆How did you manage to bring out the differences between Superman and Clark Kent?

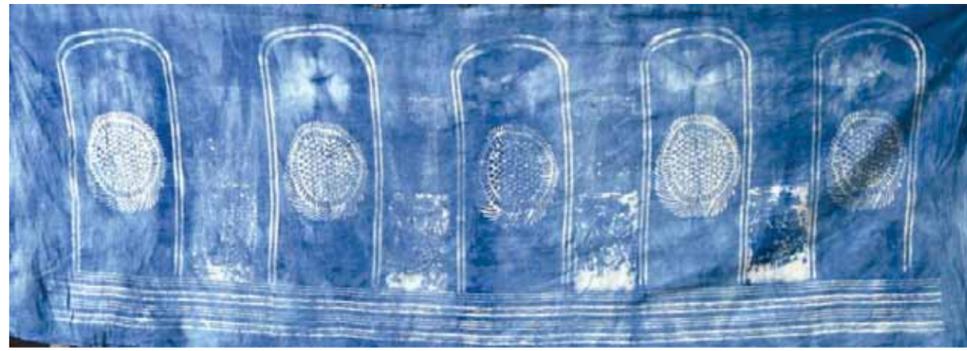
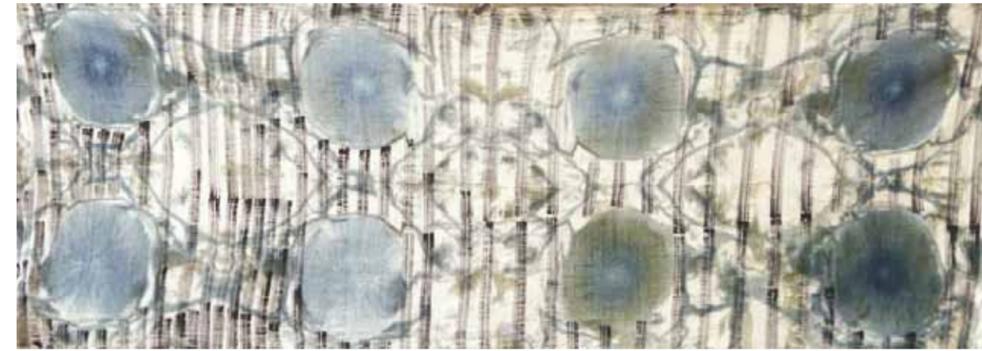
Brandon: Well, as you know, they're the same person but they serve different purpose. We first made a difference between the two physically. We had Superman move very gracefully, kingly and have a great presence. And as for Clark, some people would describe him bumbling. He is just very excited to be around and talk to Lois because this is the only way Superman talks to anybody, through Clark. He is the social face for Superman. So that's the difference I guess, one is calm and other one is very excited. And playing two characters in a single film

was a similar experience as playing two different characters in two films.

◆How did you prepare for the role?

Brandon: We did a lot of preparation including physical weight training and putting on muscles. I worked with a movement coach, moving the two characters differently and how to make flying look cool. We also indulged in a lot of conversation with Bryan about the story, plot points, the motions involved in the film, imag-

ARTS&CULTURE 45 MINUTES



PAST GLORY OFFERS HOPE

Artist, poet and filmmaker SANGEETA GUPTA creates a massive painting, *Adiyogi Shiva: A Journey in Cosmic Indigo*, to send out a positive message about sustainable living, clothing, textile art and our age-old natural dyes and colours. By TEAM VIVA

A true revival means nothing less than a revolution," Andrew Murray once said. We are known for our rich heritage and culture. Handmade art and craft is intrinsic to these. But overtime, some of our unsung, hidden treasures such as *dabu* printing and indigo dyeing, are fading. They need slight propelling to come out in open and make their place. Artist, poet and filmmaker, Sangeeta Gupta, explores both the techniques to create a massive 606 feet painting bathed in Indigo — *Adiyogi Shiva: A journey in Cosmic Indigo*, as she believes we have to return to the basics if we want to survive peacefully.

◆How did you conceptualise the idea?
I wanted to create a positive impact about sustainable living, clothing, textile art and our age old natural dyes and colours, especially, indigo. During a visit to Jaipur in December last year, I had an opportunity to visit Ratelia Village in Sanganer, where I painted a fabric with natural indigo. It was exciting. Since then, I have been conceptualising this painting. I had made all related sketches in great detail before executing this project. I am an abstract artist and Shiv is pure abstraction. Therefore, I decided to work on the, *Adiyogi Shiv*, who combines the masculine and feminine energies within himself as he is the *Ardhnarishwar*, (half-male and half-female) which I find unique and appealing as a woman and an artist.

◆What went into its making?
The theme of the painting is Shiv, as I am drawn towards *Mahamrityunjaya Mantra* and *Nirvana Shatkum* composed by Aadi Shankaracharya. The text is painted in natural indigo and the 200 metres, of hand spun *khaddar* is painted with *dabu*, traditionally used by block printers of Rajasthan. After painting it with *dabu*, it was sun-dried. Post that it was soaked in drums of indigo dye and then washed and dried again.

I completed 185 metres in nine days at Sanganer and then had to return to Delhi in March because Coronavirus had started spreading in areas close to Jaipur. I will get this registered for a world record. Though it was not a conscious decision when I started. It happened while I was in the process of executing it on account of my passion for sustainable development. Art and literature are



my lifeline. Both bring pure joy to me.

◆What does *A Journey in Cosmic Indigo* signify? Did you blend the native Indigo with some modern techniques?

We have to return to the basics if we want to survive in peace. Handmade fabric, natural colour and dye are environment-friendly and chemical-free. I have created this abstract, conceptual, mini-

malist painting through organic ways to promote sustainable living and natural indigo as this aims at its revival. I want to encourage this cash crop as a mass movement to make it a commercially

viable venture for farmers, dyers and craftsmen.

◆How was it possible to create a 606 feet masterpiece joining 71 khaddar paintings in mere eight days?

We are on this planet to experience life in its entirety. Each one of us has our own share of struggles and challenges and it wasn't different for me. But I faced it with grit and determination.

I was secretive about the whole process as it was pretty much about my endurance too. It was a challenge to my physical limitations because I had met with an accident in March last year when I smashed my right wrist. Though, I could paint and do all that was required but making a 100 metre painting at a stretch was my ultimate test. I was not competing with anyone or for any world record but was challenging myself to explore the physical and mental boundaries that I had.

It seemed that Shiv and the whole universe was on my side because to my surprise I found that I intended to paint 100 metres but went on to finish 185 metres. That just happened by accident. I kept on asking my workers about the measurements of the fabric. The same day I checked the world records and was amused to realise that I had created a new one by making the longest painting. That is the power of one's spirit.

◆The painting depicts the various aspects of *Shiv Shakti* in a nuanced way. Did you do any research for it?

I have always been a spiritually inclined person but with maturity, my interest in the eternal cosmic entity — Shiv — became deeper. He is omnipresent, both inside and outside us. We are all connected and originate from one source, god.

It all started during my early child-

hood. My grandfather had a great influence on my spiritual upbringing. Kashmir reiterated my faith in the universal principle of *Shivohum*, while I was posted there for two years. I realised that the whole universe is Shiv, there is no beginning, no end. I believe in oneness of the whole, *Ekam*.

When an artist is at peace with herself, subject and medium merge. If you are experiencing love, compassion and bliss, the medium doesn't bother you. If you are connected with the universe, every thing unfolds before you. I just had to train my hands a bit to use *dabu* as a medium on fabric. When artists work they are in solitude, preoccupied with their creativity.

◆There is a growing concern that our ancient crafts are dying. What has been your experience?

Yes, it is a serious concern. Artisans and craftsmen need not only the support of the government but people too. Their creative ventures need to become commercially viable. This is one of the reasons why I took it upon myself to revive the age old techniques by making it contemporary and innovative.

◆Since there will be a rise in Indian brands in the post-pandemic world, do you think it will bring out more age-old techniques?

Yes, hopefully it should, provided, we make all the right moves and sincerely work for it. It will be a great revival of our rich heritage and the restoration of our creative labour too. Handmade art and craft is so intrinsic to our culture and abundantly available in our country. The intent to promote it in a big way has been lacking so far. However, I am optimistic and enthusiastic about it and shall do what I can for its survival and revival, both.

Ayushmann urges water conservation

Actor Ayushmann Khurrana is widely regarded as the socially-conscious star who stands up to raise his voice on issues that affect him deeply. The star is now urging people to be judicious in terms of water consumption and battling for preserving the resource at a time when water scarcity is plaguing people across the globe.

The actor has come forward to support actress Bhumi Pednekar's initiative Climate Warrior that is trying to raise awareness on several important issues plaguing our climate through a campaign called *One Wish For The Earth*. Bhumi's campaign will see Bollywood's thought leaders come forward to discuss climate justice. The platform will see the stars urge citizens to take climate change seriously and, along with them, also do their bit to protect the planet.

"These are exceptional times that we have seen in the last few months. It's time to wake up, take notice and participate," he says, adding, "This environment day my one wish for the earth is or rather request for all of us to use water wisely. It is a scarce resource and right now we are even more dependent on it to wash our hands at regular intervals to battle this pandemic."

He asks citizens to be conscious that they need to preserve water because it impacts many. He urges for unity in protecting people's right for water. The star says, "In the endeavour to keep ourselves safe, we should not forget about the bigger goal. We need to use water wisely so that our future generations have it enough and more. It's my humble request to all of you to become climate warriors and work towards a clean and a green future."

CAUSE 30 MINUTES

A world of extremes

The producer of Asian and Australian episodes of *Stories Behind Stories*, EMMA NAPPER, elaborates on the research and preparation that go into capturing every small shot, the life-risking challenges while shooting wildlife and much more. By TEAM VIVA

Several series on Natural History have shown us the world the way that we could've never imagine. While these moments captured on camera take us on a roller-coaster of emotions, the biggest question that perplexes everyone is, "How did they even shoot that?" The latest anthology, *Stories Behind Stories*, covers the making of the most celebrated shows of all times — each revolutionary in its own way. Filmed over years, each series reveals an unseen side of nature and wildlife. It includes the 'making of' of some of the landmark series — *Seven Worlds, One Planet*, *Dynasties*, *The Hunt*, *Planet Earth II*, uncovering the action on the other side of the camera, the dedicated crew who risk their life while filming, the kind of research and preparation that goes into capturing every small shot, the life-risking challenges they face, the cutting-edge technology that's developed, especially for the shows and even the fun anecdotes.

◆Why did you choose Asia for shooting?

It is the largest continent on earth, covering one third of the world's surface. It presents a lovely but massive challenge when it comes to finding stories. Right from the jungles of Indonesia to the high Arctic in Russia, you've got absolutely everything to choose from. What we wanted to focus on was how the animals coped with living in such vast landscapes. Asia's geological history is also a key part of the story. Around 30 million years ago, India crashed into the rest of Asia, forming the Himalayas which changed the landscape entirely. As a result, Asia, today, is a world of extremes. It has the hottest deserts, the highest mountains and all of it stems from its geology. We made a real effort to look at those different environments and most importantly, to find stories that have never been done before. In addition, we wanted to show the impact that people are having on the environment and the wildlife living there today because that are a really important part of every continent's story.

◆What was it like filming the golden snub-nosed monkeys in central China?

The high mountain ranges in central China are remote and have been largely inaccessible to film crews. Yet for hundreds of years, stories of the 'Abominable Snowman' have emanated from this region. This is where the story of the Yeti (strange, scary-looking people that nobody knew anything about) comes



from. Actually, Yeti is a golden, snub-nosed monkey. They're absolutely incredible because they walk upright like we do and the males have got enormous feet. They like little people and they've got phenomenal colours on them. The monkeys are a little bit of a holy grail for sir David. It's something that he had heard described in scientific papers in the early 60s but has never had the opportunity to see. So it was really cool to be able to come back and show him that footage because he was just blown away by how they looked and survived. They have these big, shaggy coats and cuddle to stay warm. The families are bonded and reliant on each other as without somebody to cuddle, the babies would die very quickly in the winter there. They were a joy to be able to film and a joy to be able to show David.



◆What did you find out about the Sumatran Rhino Serenade?

For me, the most important thing about making these films is where you see something in the natural world, and you just can't believe it's true. That's where the joy comes from. One real highlight was our story about the Sumatran Rhino. The jungles of Indonesia are rich and dense, which means the animals there have a real problem finding each other. I've been to lots of jungles before, but here, while I was looking at the way animals talk to each other, I came across this sound, which sounded like a whale. I played it to the team and made everyone guess what it was. Nobody guessed it correctly. It turned out to be a Sumatran Rhino. We filmed them mostly because of their way of communicating but also because they are one of the rarest species on earth. The rhino we filmed was born in 2000. They used to be widespread across Southern Asia and now, there are only 300 left. The upper estimate is 70. The lower estimate is 30. The decline in the number is a combination of poaching and loss of habitat to timber and palm oil production.

We filmed them in a protected area, which is the only place you can possibly see them. All I had heard of the singing rhino was an old bit of sound footage that

was recorded at a zoo in America. There's almost nothing known about why they do it or the meaning of their vocalisations, other than that the females and the males use the song as part of their way of meeting up. So I wasn't sure what we were going to experience when we went in the field but almost as soon as we got there, we could hear the female singing. It was quite loud.

◆What do you have to say about Australia?

Australia's story across time is that it used to be attached to Antarctica. Then it split from Antarctica and it has been moving north. When it split, a raft of animals — marsupials, reptiles, birds — were separated off and marooned. As a result, most of the animals in Australia are found nowhere else. It's a continent of weirdos, beautiful animals, things you haven't seen in other places. What I loved at the beginning of this process is you ask a lot of people what lives in Australia and they'll say kangaroos and koalas... and then they get stuck. Yet there's this amazing array of animals that have been stranded there for millions and millions of years. Australia over time has been getting hotter and hotter. When it separated from Antarctica, it was basically all forest. Now it's almost all desert. That's quite a story to tell in itself.

◆Can you tell us more about cassowaries?

The cassowary is Australia's ostrich. It's the world's deadliest bird and it lives in the deep jungle in the north of Australia, which is the oldest jungle on earth. That jungle was walked by dinosaurs and basically when dinosaurs became extinct, cassowaries took their place. We filmed a cassowary, but they are incredibly secretive and very hard to spot. You don't see them until you've stood next to them and then they get cross. You wouldn't accidentally walk up to a lion but you might accidentally walk up to cassowary. The females stand about six feet tall, the males more like five feet. But they rear up above head height and they have claws on their feet that are longer than velociraptors. They can run up to 30 mph, jump five feet in the air and can swim too. So if you surprise them, you're done for. That's why they're the world's deadliest bird. Two of our Australian cameramen staked out the forest for a long time until we worked out where this male cassowary was going to be. We had to put out camera traps and do our own fieldwork, but we managed to film this male looking after his chicks in this forest. I've wanted to film them for several years and that forest is just quite a magical place for me. The audience would be literally looking at what dinosaurs would have seen.

◆How did drone technology help you make *Seven Worlds, One Planet*?

On Planet Earth II, we were using drones, but even three or four years ago, they were quite heavy-duty things. Now the technology is so much better that we're able to use the drones with almost all of the animals that we've filmed. It can make a big difference in the behaviour you can see. In the Australia episode, for example, we filmed a shark aggregation which only happens every 15 years. It's sharks on a bait ball off the West coast of Australia on Ingle, and if you were filming that from the sea on about, you would just see a hell of a lot of splashing around and some fins. Get a drone up in the air and suddenly you can see the shark's tactics, what they are doing and not just that, you can see the bait ball at one point got up to something like 15 kilometres. We have shots of thousands of sharks all at once coming together. For me, that's the magic of drones.

(Tune in to *Stories Behind Stories* on June 8 at 9 pm on Sony BBC Earth.)

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Premier League leaders Liverpool could claim a first title for 30 years at Anfield after the initial batch of fixtures of the restart was announced on Friday.

Jürgen Klopp's men, with a commanding 25-point lead at the top of the table, were just two wins away from clinching the title before coronavirus forced the suspension of football in March.

Liverpool's first match back is against Everton on June 21. The Merseyside derby is due to take place at Goodison Park, less than a mile from Anfield, but a venue has not been confirmed by the Premier League. Crystal Palace will then visit Anfield three days later.

Wins in both of those matches would guarantee Liverpool's first English top-flight title since 1990.

But if Manchester City lose at home to Arsenal on June 17, the Reds would be champions if they beat Everton.

Liverpool City Council's safety advisory group will meet next week to make a decision on whether the game can go ahead at Goodison or should be moved to a neutral venue.

All remaining 92 Premier League games this season will be played behind closed doors, but there are fears that hosting the game in Liverpool could encourage supporters to congregate around stadiums.

Palace's trip to Anfield will kick off at 2015 local time (1915 GMT).



LIVERPOOL COULD WIN TITLE AT ANFIELD

Premier League announce schedule for first three match days

The only other match that could be moved to a neutral venue from the first three rounds of fixtures is Liverpool's visit to City on July 2.

The mayor of Liverpool, Joe Anderson, voiced fears that "there would be many thousands of people who would

turn up outside Anfield" on the day Liverpool's long wait for a league title was ended.

That has been disputed by the club, who said they have engaged with supporters' groups to make sure social-distancing guidelines are followed. Aston Villa will host

Sheffield United in the first match of *Project Restart*, followed by Arsenal's trip to City on June 17.

Manchester United's visit to Tottenham will spearhead the first full round of matches spread over four days from June 19 to 22.

Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said: "We know it won't be the same without our loyal supporters in stadiums but, together with our broadcast partners, we are able to ensure fans can watch or listen to each match live from home."

"I am delighted we are able to take another positive step towards the season returning in just under two weeks' time," he added.

Werner close to Chelsea move



AFP ■ LONDON

Chelsea are closing in on a deal to sign striker Timo Werner from RB Leipzig, British media reported on Thursday.

The 24-year-old had been thought to be attracting interest from Premier League champions-elect Liverpool but it appears Chelsea have in fact met the German's reported release clause of some £53 million (\$67 million).

Were Chelsea to bring Werner to Stamford Bridge it would be a major feather in the cap of the west London club.

For the past year there has been speculation linking Werner with a move to Anfield but time appears to be running out for the Reds, with the forward's release clause expiring on June 15 — two days before the Premier League is set to restart.

The Germany international has scored 31 goals for Leipzig in all competitions.

Chelsea have already agreed a deal to sign Ajax winger Hakim Ziyech.

Barca confident Messi can face Mallorca

AFP ■ BARCELONA



Lionel Messi has sustained a "minor" thigh injury, but Barcelona remain confident he will be fit for the team's first game back against Mallorca on June 13, the club said on Friday.

Messi has not trained with the rest of the squad since Tuesday after working separately in the gym on both Wednesday and Friday, while on Thursday all the players were given the day off.

Barcelona said Messi should return to training "in a few days' time", but his absence raises doubts over his fitness ahead of the trip to Mallorca.

Like all La Liga teams, Barca will have had only 10 days to train together when competitive matches resume on June 11, following the

essential risks with just eight days remaining before Barca finally get back to playing matches, a club statement read.

"He should be able to rejoin his team-mates in a few days' time."

Messi has endured an injury-interrupted season. The 32-year-old was out for six weeks between August and September with a calf injury and then at the end of September missed another week with a problem in his left thigh.

Barca added the team will train on the pitch at Camp Nou on Saturday as coach Quique Setien "works to get his players ready for the return to football, but with games being played behind closed doors".

Barty wary of US Open return

SYDNEY: World number one Ashleigh Barty voiced caution on Friday about resuming tennis too soon, saying she needed more information before committing to the US Open in August.

The Australian, who surged to the top of the rankings last year and has stayed there since, said it was not just her but her entire team she must consider in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. "It's exciting that tennis is being talked about again and things are moving in the right direction for us to start competing," she told the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"But I'd need to understand all of the information and advice from the WTA and the USTA before making a decision on the US events," Barty said she is concerned about travel exemptions for her support staff. **AFP**

Paes wants to complete 100 Slam appearances

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leander Paes is just three shy of completing a century of Grand Slam appearances but is now unsure whether uncertainty caused by Covid-19 pandemic will allow him to complete the coveted milestone or for that matter compete at the next year's Tokyo Olympics.

Paes had announced that 2020 would be his last season as a professional player but his plan to bid adieu on a high with a record eight appearance at the Olympics, was stalled by the pandemic, which has wrecked the sporting calendar.

"Olympics is still far away. As of now, I find it difficult to believe that sports will start by July or August. Would it start October or November, who knows. But my team and I are

very well prepared that when the lockdown opens up, we will reevaluate then and look at *One Last Roar* as season whether we should look at 2021 or not," Paes told table tennis player Mudit Dani on his chat show *Sportlight*.

Further talking about his plans, Paes said there one piece is statistics he would like to get.

"I have played 97 Grand Slams so far and if I play 3 more, it will be 100 so that moves me. Also getting to the eighth Olympics to make sure India is forever on the top as the most number of Olympics played by a tennis player. That is the benchmark I would like to push. But even if I don't get there, still I'm happy with what I've done and the career I have," he said.

India to host 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Asian Football Confederation has awarded the hosting rights of the 2022 Women's Asian Cup to India for the first time since 1979.

In a letter to the All India Football Federation, Dato Windsor John, General Secretary, AFC wrote: "The Committee awarded the hosting rights of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 Finals to the

All India Football Federation." The tournament will likely be held in the second half of the year. In the 1979 edition, India had finished as runners-up.

"I need to thank the Asian Football Confederation for finding us suitable to host the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022," AIFF President, Praful Patel said.

"The tournament will galvanise the aspiring women players and bring in a holistic social revolution as far as women's football in the country is concerned," he added.

The tournament will feature 12 teams, expanded from the previous slot of eight teams. India qualify directly as hosts. The event will also serve as the final qualification tournament for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

The tournament comes as the latest boost to AIFF as India are slated to host the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup next year.

India had also hosted the AFC U-16 Championships in 2016 and the FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2017.

Also The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Friday invited bids for new clubs who would take part in the Hero I-League from 2020-21.

Coppa Italia semis on June 12-13

MILAN: Italian football will resume with the second legs of the Italian Cup semifinals on June 12 and 13. Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora announced on Thursday that the competition can resume one day earlier than previously scheduled.

While league officials had not yet officially released the schedule, Juventus is expected to

host AC Milan on June 12 followed by Napoli vs Inter Milan a day later. Juventus and Milan drew 1-1 in the first leg while Napoli beat Inter 1-0. The final is scheduled for June 17. **AFP**

ICC should wait for a 'suitable time' to host T20 WC: Akram

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan pace legend Wasim Akram cannot visualise a T20 World Cup happening behind closed doors and believes the ICC should wait for a "suitable time" to host the big-ticket event after the Covid-19 pandemic subsides.

"Personally, I don't think it's a good idea. I mean, how could you have a cricket World Cup without spectators," Akram told *The News* on Thursday.

"A World Cup is all about big crowds, spectators coming from all parts of the globe to support their teams. It's all about atmosphere and you cannot get it behind closed doors," he said.

"So I believe that they (ICC) should wait for a more suitable time and once this pandemic subsides and restrictions are eased then we can have a proper World Cup," he said.

'Cricket is nothing without diversity'

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council on Friday said "cricket is nothing without diversity" as racism remained a topic of global debate following the death of African-American George Floyd in Minneapolis.

The ICC on Friday posted a 90-second video clip of the final moments of England's 2019 World Cup victory with Barbados-born Jofra Archer bowling the thrilling Super Over against New Zealand.

"Without diversity, cricket is nothing. Without diversity, you don't get the full picture," read ICC's message on *Twitter*.

The England team that won the ODI World Cup had an Irishman captain (Eoin Morgan) at the helm. The best performer was a New Zealand born all-rounder (Ben Stokes), spinners were of Pakistani origin (Moeen Ali & Adil Rashid) and the innings got a headstart from an opener of South African heritage (Jason Roy). **PTI**

YOU ARE THE MEDICINE.

Yes, the most effective way to keep this dangerous virus at bay is to wash our hands regularly, wear masks and maintain social distancing.

20 SECONDS

FACE MASK

2 METRES

GO OUT IF NECESSARY

#OdishaFightsCorona

OIPR - 15001/13/0020/2021 DADLS - 16

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway Lines and premises situated on the complete section of the under noted section of the East Coast Railway, Waltair Division that the 25000 Volts, 50 Hz, ac Over Head Traction Wires will be energized on or after the date specified against the section. On and from the same date the Over Head Traction Lines shall be treated as live at all times and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said Over Head Lines.

Sl. No.	Description of Line	FROM (chainage)	TO (chainage)	TOTAL LENGTH (in meters)
1	Electrification with 25 KV, 50 HZ, Single Phase Tram Way & Conventional type of OHE for providing connection from Tikiri take-off in to UAIL In-plant yard (UAIL Private siding) at Doraguda of Waltair Division of East Coast Railway.	229.03	10250	10021

Date of Charging: 20-6-2020

AVP/ Railways, UTKAL ALUMINA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

NOTICE

No.5513 Date 04.06.2020

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF DISTRICT MEDICAL & PHO, BARGARH

In pursuance to Advt. No. 4404, Dt-28/04/2020 for the post of District Data Manager under IDSP, NHM, Bargarh, the Provisional merit list of candidates for appearing written test, list of rejected candidates & Compliance of Objection have been uploaded in the Office website of Bargarh District i.e www.bargarh.nic.in. The Provisionally shortlisted candidates are requested to appear for written test on dt-08/06/2020 at District Training Unit, NHM, Bargarh at 10.00 A.M and qualified candidates in written Test securing 50% or more will appear for computer Test and Viva-voce on dt.09/06/2020 at 10.00 A.M in the same venue. The Candidates fail to appear the test as per the schedule fixed shall not be entertained later. The Candidates qualified for computer Test and viva-voce are requested to bring all original documents for verification.

Sd/-
Chief District Medical & PHO Cum
District Mission Director,
NHM, Bargarh

**Government of Odisha
Rural Development Department
O/o the Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore**

PRESS NOTICE (for inviting tenders)

NIB No.e-procurement notice no.1102,Date.05.06.2020

Superintending Engineer, R.W.Circle, Balasore on behalf of the employer invites online item rate Bids from eligible bidders for construction of road and CD works including Maintenance for five years of Rural Roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (ADB Rural Connectivity Investment Program).

Period of availability of tenders on-line :		The details are as follows:		
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification NO.	No. of Packages	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	
1	2	3	4	5
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works, Circle, Balasore	ADB Assisted PMGSY On-line NCB No.266	1	11.06.2020 at 11.00 A.M	26.06.2020 upto 11.00A.M

List of Packages under procurement officer, Superintending Engineer, R. W. Circle, Balasore (1 Package)

Sl. No.	Package No.	No. of Roads	No. of LSB	Length of roads in Km.
1	OR-04-ADB-24/TII (Balance work)	1	-	3.30

Sd/-Er.D.Sahoo
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore