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TO THE RESCUE

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY JUNE 3, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3

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LEIPZIG BEAT
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Over 2 lakh corona +ve in India

500 to 1L +ve in 55 days, second 1 lakh cases came in just 15 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India crossed another milestone in coronavirus count, crossing 2 lakh cases on Tuesday, ending the day at 2,07,135 with a death toll of 5,829.

While India took around 55 days to jump from 500 cases to 1,00,000, the second 1 lakh cases came in just 15 days.

On Tuesday while the regular big contributors like Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh showed no sign of slowing down, States like West Bengal, Haryana, Karnataka, Odisha, and Bihar indicated that coronavirus was fast spreading their terrain.

After a gap of three days, the deaths caused by Covid-19 touched a three-digit figure once again in Maharashtra on Tuesday, as an alarming 103 people succumbed to coronavirus and 2,287 others tested positive for the pandemic in various parts of the State.

With fresh deaths and infections, the total number of deaths in Maharashtra rose to 2,465, while the total infected cases jumped to 2,30,000. With as many 31,333 patients having already been discharged from hospitals after full recovery, the State health authorities pegged the number of 'active cases' in the State at 38,493.

The number of deaths in



A passenger and her child wearing protective suits wait to board a plane at Kempegowda International airport after authorities eased restrictions amid the ongoing nationwide lockdown in Bengaluru on Tuesday

PTI

Maharashtra increased 99 on Saturday, 89 on Sunday, 76 on Monday to 103 on Tuesday. There had been a total of 694 deaths in Maharashtra during the previous six days. On May 26 (Tuesday) the State had witnessed 97 deaths, while there were 105 deaths on May 27, 85 deaths on May 28, 116 deaths on May 29 and 99 deaths on May 30, 89 deaths on May 31, 76 on June 1 and 103 on June 3.

Of the total deaths reported on Tuesday, Mumbai accounted for 49, while there were 10 deaths each in Pune and Mira-Bhayandar, six deaths each in Raigad and Satara, four deaths each in Navi Mumbai, Panvel, three deaths

each in Sangli and Akola and one death each in Thane, Nashik and Ahmednagar.

Haryana reported more than 10 per cent jump in the number of cases on Tuesday. The State added 296 cases, which took its tally to 2,652 and 14 deaths. The State has seen a sharp rise in the number of cases during the last 10 days.

Like Haryana, Odisha is witnessing big surge in the number of cases during the last three-four weeks ever since the migrant workers began to return to the State. On Tuesday, the State added 141 new cases, which took its overall count to 2,245.

West Bengal reported 396 new Covid positive cases in the

Covid-19 in India

TOTAL CASES: 2,07,135
DEATHS: 5,829
RECOVERED: 1,00,205
ACTIVE: 1,01,090

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	72,300	2,465	31,333
Tamil Nadu	24,586	200	13,706
Delhi	22,132	556	9,243
Gujarat	17,632	1,092	11,894
Rajasthan	9,373	203	6,435
Uttar Pradesh	8,729	222	5,030
Madhya Pradesh	8,420	364	5,221
West Bengal	6,168	335	2,410
Bihar	4,096	24	1,803
Karnataka	3,796	52	1,403
Andhra Pradesh	3,791	64	2,414
Telangana	2,891	92	1,526
Jammu & Kashmir	2,718	33	953
Haryana	2,652	23	1,069
Punjab	2,342	46	2,017

last 24 hours. Total positive cases in the State stand at 6,168 and death toll is at 263.

As many as 1,091 persons tested positive for coronavirus in Tamil Nadu on Tuesday. The total number of persons tested for the pandemic in the State has reached 24,586 and 200 deaths.

Taking into account the 536 persons discharged from various hospitals in the State on Tuesday and the number of samples tested negative, the total number of active cases in the State as on Tuesday evening is 10,680.

Jammu & Kashmir saw the addition of 117 more cases on Tuesday — 77 from Kashmir division and 40 from Jammu division. Total positive cases in the Union Territory stand at 2,718 including 1,732 active cases.

Continued on Page 2

Social distancing delay by one day may lead to virus spreading for 2.4 extra days, says study

Houston: Every day a city delays in implementing social distancing measures after the appearance of its first case of coronavirus infection may add as much as 2.4 days to the duration of the outbreak, says an analysis of Covid-19 spread in 58 cities.

According to the study, published in the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases, places that take longer to implement social distancing measures may spend more time with the virus rapidly spreading than those that act more quickly.

13 staffers of Delhi LG office test Covid +ve

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Thirteen employees of the Delhi Lt Governor Anil Bajjal's office and six other Government officials here have tested positive for Covid-19, sources said on Tuesday. They said that junior assistants, drivers, peons are among the 13 people working at the Lt Governor Secretariat who have tested positive for the deadly virus.

Recently, all officers and officials working at the Delhi LG office underwent the Covid-19 test after a junior assistant was found infected.

LAC stand-off may end after June 6: Rajnath

'When senior commanders of 2 armies will hold parleys'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As stand-offs continue on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday hinted that the confrontation may end after June 6 when senior commanders of both the armies will hold parleys. So far, more than seven rounds of military-level talks have taken place but to no avail.

Hoping for a peaceful resolution of the tense situation prevailing at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh, the Minister also admitted that China has moved a large number of troops to the border during the ongoing face-offs.

His observations came in the backdrop of at least four such eyeball to eyeball confrontations currently on at four sites spread in a frontage of 25 to 30 km. Moreover, the Chinese troops have also intruded more than three kms into the Hot Springs area of the Galwan valley and built bunkers and barracks besides bolstering troop strength.

Stressing that the focus

was on bringing down the temperature on the LAC, Rajnath, in an interview to a private television channel, said Army Chief General MM Naravane had informed him that a meeting between the Indian and Chinese military commanders will be held on June 6. He expressed confidence the issue will be settled peacefully. He also referred to the 73-day face-off in Doklam in Sikkim plateau in 2017 and said "this has happened before too and a solution was found."

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Modi, Trump discuss Covid, LAC, Floyd stir

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump on Tuesday discussed various issues, including the situation on the India-China border, the Covid-19 pandemic and need for reforms in the WHO, and the Floyd protests, an official statement said.

During the telephonic conversation, Trump invited Modi to attend the next G-7 summit to be held in the United States. Modi expressed concern over the "ongoing civil disturbances in the US", and conveyed his best wishes for an early resolution of the situation, the statement said.

Detailed report on P2

Dip in humidity to boost coronavirus: Researchers

'Virus likely to be seasonal disease recurring in winter'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Coronavirus spread could neither be checked by the scorching heat of the summer nor by the chill of the winter and decrease in humidity could add to the viciousness of the disease.

A study published in the journal Transboundary and Emerging Diseases has found an association between lower humidity and an increase in locally acquired positive cases.

"Covid-19 is likely to be a seasonal disease that recurs in periods of lower humidity. We need to be thinking if it's wintertime, it could be Covid-19 time," said study author Michael Ward, Professor at the



University of Sydney in Australia.

According to the researchers, further studies — including during winter in the southern hemisphere — are needed to determine how this relationship works and the extent to which it drives Covid-19 case notification rates.

Previous research has identified a link between climate and occurrence of SARS-CoV cases in Hong Kong and China and MERS-CoV cases in Saudi Arabia and a recent study on

the Covid-19 outbreak in China found an association between transmission and daily temperature and relative humidity.

"The pandemic in China, Europe and North America happened in winter so we were interested to see if the association between Covid-19 cases and the climate was different in Australia in late summer and early autumn," Ward said.

For the findings, the team matched the patients' post-codes with the nearest weather observation station and studied the rainfall, temperature and humidity for the period January to March 2020. The study found lower humidity was associated with increased case notifications; a reduction in relative humidity of one per cent was predicted to be associated with an increase of Covid-19 cases by six per cent.

Continued on Page 2

'Delhi Corona' app to give bed availability info, help admission

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

An app named "Delhi Corona" that will give information to patients about the availability of beds in private and Government hospitals was launched on Tuesday by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

The CM said if the patients are unable to get a bed despite the app showing availability at a hospital, they can call on helpline number 1031 and special secretary (health) will ensure they are given a bed.

Kejriwal said the app will fill the information gap that exists regarding availability of facilities for novel coronavirus patients. "There are many places where coronavirus has spread in a big way. There were shortage of beds, ventilators

and ICUs, leading to a large number of deaths," he said in an online briefing.

"In Delhi, cases are increasing, but we have made sufficient arrangements for ventilators and beds in hospitals. We are several steps ahead of coronavirus," the CM said.

Continued on Page 2

Jessica killer Manu Sharma's premature release causes stir

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Manu Sharma, who was serving a life term in the sensational 1999 Jessica Lal Murder case, was released from Tihar Jail on Monday after Delhi Lt Governor Anil Bajjal approved his premature release, Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Geol said on Tuesday.

"Sharma walked out of jail on Monday. He spent 17 years behind bars. His actual period with remission is 23 years and four months," Geol said.

Women rights activists called the Delhi Government's decision to prematurely release Manu Sharma "unfortunate", saying it sets a wrong precedent. Activist-politician Brinda Karat said there is absolutely no ground for giving Sharma a lenient release and that it is sur-

prising that a board headed by a Delhi minister should come forth with such a recommendation.

Women rights activist Shamina Shafiq said the decision to release Sharma is "shocking" and "bizarre".

Bajjal approved the release of Sharma, son of former Union Minister Venod Sharma, on a recommendation by the Delhi Sentence Review Board, which is under the Delhi Government, said officials.

Sharma was convicted in 2006 for shooting model Jessica Lal after she refused to serve him liquor at the Tamarind Court restaurant owned by socialite Bina Ramani at Qutub Colonnade in South Delhi's Mehrauli area on the night of April 30, 1999.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

'TAHIR SPENT ₹1.10 CR FOR DELHI RIOTS'

New Delhi: Suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain spent around ₹1.10 crore to fund anti-CAA protests and the subsequent communal violence that rocked NE Delhi, the Delhi Police Crime Branch said in a chargesheet filed at Karkardooma court.

MAN TIED TO TREE, BURNT ALIVE FOR TEASING GIRL

Pratapgarh: A 22-year-old man was allegedly tied to a tree and burnt alive in UP's Pratapgarh district for sexually harassing a girl few months ago, police said.

CHARDHAM YATRA TO BEGIN FROM JUNE 8

Dehradun: The Chardham yatra will begin for devotees on a limited scale from June 8.

CHINA TO CONSTRUCT POWER PROJECT IN POK

Islamabad: China will set up a 1,124-megawatt project in POK despite India's objection to it.

Adesh Gupta made Delhi BJP chief, tribal leader Vishnu Sai Chhattisgarh's

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday replaced actor-turned-politician Manoj Tiwari as the president of the Delhi unit of the party with Adesh Kumar Gupta, a former mayor of North Delhi Municipal Corporation. According to party insiders, the appointment of Gupta is being interpreted as a sign that the BJP is once again looking for its old core support of the Vaishya community.

Gupta was born in Uttar Pradesh and has had a long association with the ABVP and BJP's youth organisation BJYM. Tiwari had offered to quit after the BJP lost to the AAP in the Delhi Assembly polls and his three-year term was also over.

In Chhattisgarh, the BJP appointed Vishnu Deo Sai — a tribal leader and former Union Minister who is a regional heavyweight with past tenure as the State party chief — as its State unit president, the party



Adesh Kumar Gupta

said in a statement. His appointment also underscores the party's attempt to win over tribal votes which is seen to have drifted from it.

In another appointment, the party made S Tikendra Singh its Manipur State BJP president.

Super cyclone Nisarga to hit Maha today

First-ever cyclone to hit Mumbai in June; Maha, Guj brace for it amid Covid spike

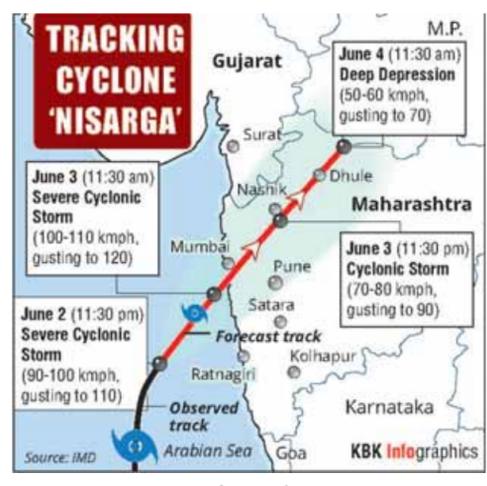
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tropical cyclone Nisarga is likely to convert into a 'severe cyclonic storm' which may make landfall close to Alibag, 94 km south of Mumbai, on the afternoon of June 3.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday said that the cyclone is headed towards the Maharashtra and Gujarat coasts. Mumbai, Palghar, Thane, Ratnagiri, South Gujarat and Saurashtra have been put on high alert.

This will be the first-ever cyclonic storm in recorded history to hit Mumbai in June, which is already on the top in the list to add in the maximum number of coronavirus cases so far. The earlier one had hit Mumbai in November, 2009. It, however, did not cause major damage.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday took stock of the situation in the wake of cyclonic conditions in western India. "Took stock of the situation in the wake of cyclone conditions in parts of India's



western coast. Praying for everyone's well-being. I urge people to take all possible precautions and safety measures," PM Modi tweeted.

The storm is expected to cross north Maharashtra and adjoining south Gujarat coast between Harihareshwar (Raigad, Maharashtra) and Daman during the afternoon of June 3. The nearly 260 km patch between Raigad and Daman has one of the highest population densities in the country. Apart from Mumbai, it also has satellites cities like Thane, Navi-Mumbai, Panvel, Kalyan-Dombivli, Mira-Bhayandar, Vasai-Virar, Ulhasnagar, Badlapur and Ambernath.

When it crosses the coast on the evening of June 3, it will have a speed of 105-110 kmph, the IMD said. Heavy rains are also expected in south Gujarat, coastal Goa, coastal Karnataka and madhya Maharashtra on June 3 and 4. Storm surge of about 1-2 meters height above astronomical tide is very likely to inundate low lying areas in these regions. The IMD alert says Cyclone Nisarga will likely hit Navsari area in Gujarat by tonight or June 4 morning.

Continued on Page 2

21 killed in Barak valley landslides

PTI ■ HAILAKANDI/KARIMGANJ/SILCHAR

Torrential rain triggered massive landslides in three districts of Assam's Barak valley on Tuesday, dumping mountains of mud, swamping homes and snuffing out at least 21 lives, officials said.

Three families were almost entirely wiped out, while 17 people were injured in Hailakandi, Karimganj and Cachar districts. Eight people, including five of a family, died in Hailakandi district.

Loosened by incessant rain, a hillside came crashing down on the tin-roofed house of Kuton Mia Laskar (40) early morning, killing him, his wife Jhumpa Begum (35), and three daughters Hazira (five), Nazira (four) and Tuli (three) in Mohanpur village, around 15 km from Hailakandi town.

Two other landslides killed Rupchand Sarkar and Matjur Rahman Laskar in Chandipur grant area, while Chandmoni Maal (6) died in a separate



Locals gather at the site of a landslide due to incessant torrential rain in Karimganj district on Tuesday

PTI

mudslide in Mohanpur, officials said.

Seven members of a family were smothered under mounds of mud that flattened their home when they were asleep in Kolarpur village of neighbouring Cachar district. The deceased were identified as Tamiz Mia Laskar (50), his wife Taimur Nesa Laskar (45), their two daughters Alia Begum Laskar (25), Sumona Begum (11) and their three sons Rehimuddin (18), Alom Hussain (20) and Arifuddin (17), district SP Monoranjan Debroy said.

Continued on Page 2

Modi, Trump discuss Covid, LAC, Floyd stir

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump on Tuesday discussed various issues, including the situation on the India-China border, the Covid-19 pandemic and need for reforms in the WHO, an official statement said.

During the telephonic conversation, Trump invited Modi to attend the next G-7 summit to be held in the United States.

Modi expressed concern over the "ongoing civil disturbances in the US", and conveyed his best wishes for an early resolution of the situation, the statement said.

"The two leaders also exchanged views on other topical issues, such as the Covid-19 situation in the two countries, the situation on the India-China border, and the need for reforms in the World Health Organisation," the statement said.

Trump spoke about the US Presidency of the Group of Seven, and conveyed his desire to expand the ambit of the grouping beyond the existing membership, to include other important countries including

During the telephonic conversation, Trump invited Modi to attend the next G-7 summit to be held in the United States

India.

"In this context, he extended an invitation to Prime Minister Modi to attend the next G-7 Summit to be held in USA," the statement said.

Modi commended Trump for his "creative and far-sighted approach", acknowledging the fact that such an expanded forum would be in keeping with the emerging realities of the post-Covid world.

Modi said that India would be happy to work with the US and other countries to ensure the success of the proposed summit.

Trump warmly recalled his visit to India in February. Modi said that the visit had been memorable and historic on many accounts, and had also added new dynamism to the bilateral relationship.

The exceptional warmth and candour of the conversa-

tion reflected the special nature of the Indo-US ties, as well as the friendship and mutual esteem between both leaders, the statement said.

Tweeting about their conversation, Modi said, "Had a warm and productive conversation with my friend President @realDonaldTrump. We discussed his plans for the US Presidency of G-7, the Covid-19 pandemic, and many other issues."

The richness and depth of India-US consultations will remain an important pillar of the post-Covid global architecture, the prime minister said.

The conversation between the two leaders came against the backdrop Trump maintaining that he spoke with Modi who was not in a "good mood" over the China border issue.

Sources in the government here had denied any "recent contact" between the two leaders. Trump had also offered to mediate between India and China.

The last conversation between them was on April 4 2020 on Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ).

China to construct CPEC power project in PoK despite India's objection

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

China under the multi-billion-dollar CPEC will set up a 1,124-megawatt power project in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) despite India's objection to it, according to a media report on Tuesday.

The details of the Kohala hydropower project was presented in the 127th meeting of the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) chaired by Energy Minister Omar Ayub on Monday.

The Express Tribune reported that the meeting was informed that a tripartite agreement has been finalised among China's Three Gorges Corporation, the authorities in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and the PPIB to implement the 1,124-megawatt Kohala hydroelectric power project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework.

The project will be built on the Jhelum River and aims at annually providing more than five billion units of clean and low-cost electricity for consumers in Pakistan.

The paper further reported that this marks one of the largest investments of USD 2.4 billion in an independent

power producer (IPP) in the region.

The 3,000-km-long CEPC is aimed at connecting China and Pakistan with rail, road, pipelines and optical cable fiber networks. It connects China's Xinjiang province with Pakistan Gwadar port, providing access to China to the Arabian Sea.

The CPEC passes through PoK, over which India has conveyed its protests to China.

Last month, India protested to Pakistan awarding a mega contract to build a dam in Gilgit-Baltistan, saying carrying out of such projects in territories under Pakistan's illegal occupation was not proper.

The Pakistan government has signed a whopping ₹442 billion contract with a joint venture of a Chinese state-run firm and a commercial arm of Pakistan's powerful military for construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam.

"Our position is consistent and clear that entire territory of the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have been, are and will continue to be integral and inalienable part of India," the Ministry of External Affairs said in New Delhi last month.

Four contract labourers killed in mine mishap

P V KONDAL RAO ■ RAMAGUNDAM

In a major open-cast mishap that occurred in Ramagundam opencast mines of Peddapalli district, four contract workers attached to a private company were killed and three others seriously injured on Tuesday. The mishap occurred when a gelatine stick detonated accidentally in the overburden sand areas of the opencast mine OCPI of the SCCL. The workers were planting detonators in the fillers when one of the detonators went off suddenly killing the workers instantaneously.

According to SCCL officials and the police, 13 workers of Mahalakshmi Company engaged in the OB removal works were at the unit since morning. Six of the workers went for a brief relief when the blast occurred while the seven in the vicinity succumbed to the mishap.

The victims were identified as Praveen, Rajesh,



Anjaiah, and Rakesh, while three more Shankar, Bheemaiah and Venkatesh sustained grievous injuries.

Usually the overburden removal is undertaken in the supervision of a technical expert but the company which took the contract of the work is relying on its senior staff.

On Tuesday too, the 13-member contract workers' team had commenced its work by planting and filling the detonators in the OB area. But while the process was going on, the planted detonator went off accidentally.

Officials opined that the detonators were substandard and insulation was also not upto the mark.

Gadkari assures all help to investors for moving investment from China

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday assured investors, who wish to move their investment from China to India, to address their issues at central as well as state level and provide a business-friendly environment.

Termining the prevailing global sentiment related to China as a "blessing in disguise", the minister said he will monitor and also take up the requirements of such investors with states.

"I assure that if you bring ten such proposals, I shall take up to resolve their problems at the level of the central and state governments," said the minister, adding that red carpet treatment will be provided to investors.

Addressing the annual session of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), he urged large industries to clear outstanding payments owed to MSMEs in 45 days. However, he acknowledged that dues of several large corporates are also stuck with public sector undertakings. Responding to a question related to the hardships faced by migrant labour, Gadkari said, "Regarding the migrant labour, actually the impression which is created by media and other people that our industry is 100 per cent dependant upon migrant labour, but when I went into the details after that the information I received on the basis of that, somewhere it is 10-20 per cent".

Officials opined that the detonators were substandard and insulation was also not upto the mark.

Centre counters India's projection as 7th worst corona affected country

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday sought to counter the projection of India as the seventh worst Covid-19 affected in terms of number of cases by pointing out that 14 countries with cumulative population almost equal to that of India have reported 22.5 times more cases and 55.2 times more coronavirus deaths. Further, it said 73 percent of fatalities had

co-morbid conditions.

"Very effective preventive measures have made it possible for India to be at a better position in Covid-19 fight than other nations," Union Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal said at a press briefing here.

The death toll in India due to the virus rose to 5,598 and the cases climbed to 1,98,706 on Tuesday, according to the ministry's morning update.

SC to explore feasibility of allowing lawyers to appear again in real courtrooms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, which has been holding virtual hearings since the lockdown on March 25, took first step on Tuesday to explore the feasibility of "physical appearance" of advocates in the court again as the country has entered the first phase of unlocking.

The apex court has been holding courts through video conferencing for over two months and recently allowed lawyers' chambers to be reopened on odd-even basis during week days with certain safety measures.

"In view of the request received from various quarters and in order to explore the feasibility of physical appearance of the advocates in the court, while adhering to social distancing norms, it is hereby notified to all the advocates and party-in-person to give their joint consent with regard to will-

ingness for physically appearing and arguing in the court," the apex court said in its notice.

It said the apex court, on receipt of consent from parties, consider the listing of the case for hearing before the real courtroom, "subject to availability of the bench and also subject to the order of the competent authority and social distancing norms".

Lawyers will have to give their consent with regard to their willingness to appear before the real courtrooms on the e-mail address, 'consent.List@sci.Nic.In', it said.

The Bar Council of India and few other bar bodies have urged the top court to consider resumption of courtroom hearings on various grounds including that the present virtual court system was not working well in favour of many lawyers who either do not have the access to the technology or they are not well versed with it.

LAC stand-off ...

From Page 1

Hectic talks at the highest diplomatic and political level then were undertaken to enable the soldiers from both sides to back off. On the Chinese aggressiveness on the LAC now when the coronavirus pandemic is raging, the Defence Minister refrained from attributing any motives.

He said it would be wrong to speculate or express doubts when talks are already underway. Rajnath also said he would have definitely said something were talks not being held. "They (the Chinese leadership) have also said they want to solve the dispute through

dialogue," he said.

The Indian and Chinese troops are involved in a face-off at three points in the Galwan valley and at one point at Pangong Tso in Ladakh. Two days back, the Minister had also said the "Chinese soldiers had come in a little further than they used to earlier" at the LAC to "make the situation different this time." While the Army Chief had reviewed the situation in a visit to Leh about a fortnight back, Northern Command chief Lt General YK Joshi is now in Ladakh to take stock.

Without going into details about preparedness to counter the Chinese enhanced troops strength, Rajnath said India has also sent a large number of troops to match the Chinese deployment, and assured that the Government would not let

anyone hurt India's self-respect. He did not answer or confirm when asked if China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) has entered Indian territory.

The Minister also refrained from terming China as an enemy and said he considers it just to be India's neighbour. "We don't consider anyone to be an enemy. Even Pakistan is just a neighbour. But we reserve the right to respond strongly if anyone tries to hurt us," he said.

On US President Donald Trump's offer that he would be willing to mediate to solve the border dispute, Rajnath said India and China have a well-developed mechanism to solve such issues and ruled out third party intervention. He added that China's President Xi Jinping, too, has said he would like to solve the issue through dialogue.

21 killed in Barak Valley landslides

From Page 1

Two others seriously injured were rescued by police and debris which dug through the locals with shovels and bare hands, as people wailed in despair and the village lay in a welter. A pre-dawn tragedy struck Karimpur in Karimganj district, when another hillside collapsed on the house of Ajiruddin (57), burying him and four members of his family around 3:30 a.m. Others who died with Ajiruddin were his wife Razia Begam (40), their two sons Afzar Hussain (10), Anwaruddin (7) and daughter Tahera Begam (5), said district Superintendent of Police Kumar

Sanjit Krishna. A girl, Jaynal Bibi (15), died in another house in the same area, he said.

Ten people were rescued by police and state disaster department personnel, and rushed to a hospital. Chaos prevailed everywhere as people frantically searched for friends and relatives, removing the rubble with hands and buckets before police and SDRF teams moved in with excavators and other heavy machinery. Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal condoled the deaths and asked the district administrations to undertake quick relief and rehabilitation measures for those affected. He also asked them to ensure proper treatment to those hospitalised.

Super cyclone...

From Page 1

"Depression over east-central Arabian sea lay near latitude 14.4 deg N and longitude 71.2 deg E about 300 km west-southwest of Panjim, 550 km south-southwest of Mumbai

and 770 km south-southwest of Surat," the IMD added. According to IMD, very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is predicted in Coastal Karnataka, madhya Maharashtra and Marathwada during next 24 hours. However, it could be less intense than the recent Cyclone Amphan. Categorized as an extremely severe cyclonic storm, it had ravaged parts of West Bengal 10 days ago.

Dip in humidity...

From Page 1

According to the researchers, there are biological reasons why humidity matters in the transmission of airborne viruses. "When the humidity is lower, the air is drier and it makes the aerosols smaller. When you sneeze and cough those smaller infectious aerosols can stay suspended in the air for longer," Ward said.

"That increases the exposure for other people. When the air is humid and the aerosols are larger and heavier, they fall and hit surfaces quicker," he explained.

"This means we need to be careful coming into a dry winter. Ongoing testing and surveillance remain critical as we enter the winter months, when conditions may favour coronavirus spread," Ward noted.

Just a day before, yet another study published in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases revealed that while the rate of Covid-19 incidence does

decrease with warmer temperatures up until 52 degrees F, further warmer temperatures do not decrease disease transmission significantly. Precipitation patterns did not appear to have any effect on virus transmission, said the researchers at Mount Auburn Hospital who looked at the impact of temperature, precipitation, and UV index on Covid-19 case rates in the United States during the spring months of 2020.

Temperature and latitude are not associated with the spread of Covid-19, said researchers, adding that they found a weak association between humidity and reduced transmission.

The results - that hotter weather had no effect on the pandemic's progression - surprised the authors. "Our study provides important new evidence, using global data from the Covid-19 epidemic, that these public health interventions have reduced epidemic growth," said study researcher Dr Peter Juni

from the University of Toronto, and St Michael's Hospital in Canada.

The study, published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, looked at 144 geopolitical areas - states and provinces in Australia, the US, and Canada as well as various countries around the world - and a total of more than 3,75,600 confirmed Covid-19 cases. China, Italy, Iran and South Korea were excluded because the virus was either waning in the case of China or in full disease outbreak at the time of the analysis in others.

"While the rate of virus transmission may slow down as the maximum daily temperature rises to around 50 degrees, the effects of temperature rise beyond that don't seem to be significant," said first author Shiv T Sehra, MD, Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program at Mount Auburn Hospital and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Jessica killer Manu Sharma's premature release causes stir

From Page 1

A trial court had acquitted Sharma of the murder, but the high court, which undertook the case amid nationwide outrage and protests, reversed the trial court decision and sentenced him to a life term.

The Supreme Court in 2010 upheld the life sentence. "Manu Sharma was on parole since the first week of April. He was released from Tihar Jail on Monday," his lawyer Amit Sahni said.

According to the DSRB, Manu Sharma had availed parole 12 times and furlough 24 times.

Sahni said Sharma's conduct has been good throughout the jail period, and claimed that he was eligible for premature release.

Over 2...

From Page 1

Kerala on Tuesday reported 86 new cases taking its total count to 774. With the death of a 77-year-old patient on Tuesday, the toll stood at 12.

41 Covid-19 cases were reported in Punjab, which took the overall tally to 2,342. Thirty-seven new positive cases reported in Jharkhand on Tuesday, taking the total to 712.

The Uttarakhand's coronavirus tally crossed the 1000-mark on Tuesday with 85 more people testing positive for the infection. According to a health bulletin, the fresh cases have pushed the State's infection count to 1,043. So far, seven patients have died in the State. The authorities claim that they died of other ailments and not due to the virus.

The Goa health department said that six new cases were reported in the State on Tuesday, taking the total number of cases to 79, including 22 active cases and 57 recovered.

'Delhi Corona' app to give bed availability info, help admission...

From Page 1

According to Kejriwal, 6,731 beds are available in private and Government hospitals, out of which 4,100 are vacant. "People are not aware about it," he said, adding, "we are launching an app today and it has details of all the beds, ventilators and ICUs available at private and government hospitals."

It will be updated twice during the day at 10 am and 6 pm, he added.

Kejriwal said if the app showed that a bed was available at a hospital but the facility refuses admission, the

patient could call the Government helpline number 1031 and register a complaint.

The Health Department Special Secretary will ensure that the person gets a bed, Kejriwal said.

"Only 2,600 people needed to be admitted at hospital out of more than 20,000 patients," he said. "If the hospital tells after examination that you that can be treated at home, please listen to them."

The Government has deployed a team that will be in touch with the patients during home isolation and, if they become serious, it will ensure that they get a bed.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my clients Sh. Dinesh Kumar Aggarwal S/o Sh. Chet Ram and his wife Smt. Sachna R/o B-304, Gokul Apartment, Sec.11, Dwarka, New Delhi-78 have severed all their relations with their son Himanshu Singhal and his wife Payal Bagadia as peace of mind of my clients lost due to disrespectful, misbehaving, quarrelsome and irresponsible behavior of Payal Bagadia and my clients have also debarred and disown them from their entire moveable and immovable properties and assets, anybody deals with them in future of any kind, will do so entirely at their costs and risks and my clients shall not be responsible for their any acts and deeds in any manner.

Abdul Qadir (Advocate), Ch. No.23, MC Setlavad Block, Supreme Court of India, New Delhi.

Kind Attention: Rail Passengers

IMPORTANT PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that **Entry and Exit plan for passengers at Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi Jn. and New Delhi Railway Stations are as under:-**

Station Name	Entry	Exit
Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station	Bhogal Side	Bhogal Side
Delhi Jn. Rly. Station	Chandni Chowk Side	Chandni Chowk Side
New Delhi Rly. Station	Both Ajmeri Gate and Paharganj sides	Both Ajmeri Gate and Paharganj sides

Passengers having **Confirmed Reserved or RAC Tickets** for boarding the special trains, will only be permitted to enter the station premises.

ENTRY FOR THE PASSENGERS NOT HOLDING RESERVED OR RAC TICKETS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.

IMPORTANT:

- Passengers are advised to carry their own food & water and Travel with light luggage.
- Bedroll and linen will NOT be provided by Railways.

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Integrated Helpline No. **139**

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E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender No.: 05-TRD-NDLS-2020-21 Dated: 02.06.2020
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, Invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:

1 Name of Work with its location	Replacement of failure prone brazed joint Contact wire (42 Km.) 3rd phase over Delhi Division.
2 Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 60,24,070.08
3 Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 1,20,500/-
4 E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	12.06.2020 (00:00 Hrs.) to 26.06.2020 (15:00 Hrs.)
5 E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	26.06.2020 (15:00 Hrs.)
6 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

1243/20

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of work and its location	30-Elect-06-T-2020-21-E3; Comprehensive AMC of Johnson make lifts installed at Gate no. 2A, 2B, 2C & 2D Railway Board New Delhi.	
Approx. cost of the works in	Rs.	15.87 lacs
Address of the office	Sr. Divil Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.	
Earnest Money	Rs.	31800.00
Date & time of submission of tender	29.06.2020, 15:00 Hrs.	
Opening of tender	29.06.2020, 15:00 Hrs.	
Website & notice board	www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.	

1232/20

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Adesh Gupta picked for focus on Baniya-Punjabi

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Actor-politician Manoj Tiwari has been replaced as chief of the BJP in Delhi with Adesh Kumar Gupta taking over the reins of the Delhi unit from Tiwari who was appointed Delhi BJP president in November 2016. According to party insiders, the appointment of Gupta, the former North-MCD Mayor is being interpreted as a sign that BJP is once again looking for its old core support of the Vaishya community. Also it means that the party's top brass wants to focus on its workers in the national Capital, party leaders

said, though for many the move came as a surprise. Under the leadership of Member of Parliament (MP) from North—East constituency, BJP in Delhi won Corporation elections in 2017 and Lok Sabha elections in 2019 however BJP faced defeat in recent Vidhan Sabha elections against Aam Aadmi Part (AAP) despite major gain in the overall percentage of votes. Welcoming Gupta as the president of Delhi — BJP, Tiwari said, "It is a process of organisational changes in BJP. I started my tenure as Delhi BJP president from November 20, 2016 and I am handing over the baton to

Adesh Gupta after a satisfying February 8, 2020. The AAP had returned back to power with a crushing victory. Though BJP could take solace from the fact that it increased its tally from 3 to 8 with an improved vote share. When asked why Gupta has been selected for the post, a senior BJP leader said, BJP is trying to regain its trust among the 'Baniya - Punjabi' community. "No doubt, Tiwari has helped in improving its vote share but we are in Opposition and our opponent is Kejriwal." Amidst long range issue like sealing of shops on the orders of the Supreme Court mandated committee, Delhi BJP took

the high moral ground as Tiwari broke open the seal of a shop and expressed his intention to go to jail for contempt of court. Delhi people identify themself with Baniya or Punjabi leaders," he said, recalling few names in the history of BJP state president- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Vijay Goel and Vijender Gupta. Late Madan Lal Khurana, Kedar Nath Sahni, Prof VK Malhotra and OP Kohli were Punjabi face of BJP in Delhi. With Adesh Kumar Gupta's appointment, the BJP wants to regain its hold among the traders community in the national Capital, a Delhi BJP leader added.

February 8, 2020. The AAP had returned back to power with a crushing victory. Though BJP could take solace from the fact that it increased its tally from 3 to 8 with an improved vote share. When asked why Gupta has been selected for the post, a senior BJP leader said, BJP is trying to regain its trust among the 'Baniya - Punjabi' community. "No doubt, Tiwari has helped in improving its vote share but we are in Opposition and our opponent is Kejriwal." Amidst long range issue like sealing of shops on the orders of the Supreme Court mandated committee, Delhi BJP took



Policemen stand guard while people commute via Delhi-Noida border, in New Delhi on Tuesday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Gurugram sees 160 cases in a day, total reaches 1,063

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Gurugram district reported 160 more Covid-19 positive cases on Tuesday. The situation is alarming now the tally has zoomed up to 1,063. However, a 28-year-old nurse of a private hospital reportedly died from the deadly virus but the health department didn't include in his daily corona health bulletin on Tuesday. The spike in numbers keep rising in the city with 779 cases registered in the last week.

It is worrying for all age groups especially senior citizens as infection appeared from every place in the district. The total cases have now reached 1063, including 284 who were cured and discharged from hospitals. While 779 are undergoing treatment and four patients have been declared from infection. As per the data of the health department, 33 infected persons were detected on May 26, 20 on May 27, 68 on May 28, 115 on May 29 and 157 on May 30, 97 on May 31, 129 on June 1 and 160 on June 2.

G'gram MLA to reward Govt official ₹25L for Covid work

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Rakesh Daultabad, the Independent MLA from Badshapur Assembly constituency in Gurugram district, has announced that the Government officers and employees who will perform to the best of their capabilities in their areas, will be rewarded Rs 25 lakh. The MLA will fund the reward money from his personal capacity (private fund) with a motive to reduce corruption in a different departments and encourage government employees to address the grievances of the public at the earliest. "We have a system to rate

officials/employees on the basis of public rating based on the services of the employees. The system is similar to private companies like Swiggy, Zomato, Amazon, Ola, Uber and many other companies where customers review and give ratings after utilizing their services. The monitoring of officials has been started and it will continue for next one year, said Daultabad. The employees and officials of departments like electricity, infrastructure, road and water will be in the race for this prize. A separate reward will be announced for other departments. "I have decided to introduce the incentive bill in the Haryana assembly in 2021,

in which every government employee gets a thick incentive on the basis of performance in addition to the salary," Daultabad said. On May 25, Daultabad had pointed out non-performing officials on social networking platforms (Twitter and Facebook). "The names of the non-performing officials and employee will be revealed within a month and a list of such employees has already been prepared on the basis of public recommendations which I will soon hand over to the Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar," he asserted. Daultabad further said his team has received 1,803 complaints related to elec-

tricity, infrastructure, road, water and sewerage through the public platform in which 689 has been solved and 821 are under process and 293 complaints are still pending. Daultabad is an independent MLA from Badshapur constituency in 2019 assembly election. He alleged that some of the officials in Municipal Corporation of Gurugram, Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitaran Nigam (DHBVN), Real Estate Regulation and Development (RERA), District Town and Country Planning Department (DTCP) and Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) are non-performers over the year.

Tahir mastermind of Delhi riots, spent ₹1.10 crore, alleges police chargesheet

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has chargesheeted suspended AAP municipal councillor Tahir Hussain for his role in the North east Delhi riots that had taken place in February this year. Delhi Police on Tuesday filed a chargesheet before the concerned court and named Tahir Hussain as the mastermind who organised the violence in the region for which he spent around Rs 1.10 crore. Police in its chargesheet also named Shah Alam (brother of Hussain) along with 15 others as accused in the case. The chargesheet was filed at Karkardooma court by the Crime Branch of Delhi police.

The police filed two chargesheets in connection with riots - one is related to Hussain and the other is related to murder and riots case in Jaffrabad, officials said. According to the 1030 pages chargesheet, during the course of the investigation, the police found several suspicious transactions into the account of two companies that Tahir owns. The chargesheet stated that Hussain also disclosed that from the account of companies owned by him, he allegedly transferred around Rs 1.10 crore to alleged fake companies and he got that amount in the second week of January, 2020, and he got that amount in cash through a chain of transactions and thereafter he started his preparations and distributed cash to anti-CAA protesters. Police also obtained the Bank account details of two companies of Tahir - Show Effect Advertising Pvt Ltd and Essence Cellcom Pvt Ltd - from HDFC Bank and were analysed to verify the disclosure statement of Tahir regarding organising and distributing cash for Anti-CAA protests and the riots," states the chargesheet.

The bank account details showed six suspicious transactions from Essence Cellcom Pvt Ltd, amounting to Rs 92 lakhs to two accounts. His (Hussain's) another company Show Effect Advertising Pvt Ltd showed a transfer of Rs 20 lakh on January 8.... All these chain of transactions are being investigated," stated the chargesheet. "During interrogation, Hussain admitted his involvement in the riots and also admitted that he was present at the terrace of his house at the time of incident. It said that he disclosed that he was in touch with other anti-CAA protesters of Delhi and admitted to have met Khalid Saifi (from United Against Hate) and Umar Khalid (from JNU) at Shaheen Bagh anti CAA protest (their CDR analysis prove their locations together) on January 8, where Khalid told him to be prepared for something big/riots at the time of visit of US president and also said that he and other PFI members will help him financially.

He further disclosed that Khalid Saifi gave him some money initially for the preparations, the chargesheet said. Police said in the chargesheet, a day prior to riots in Delhi, Hussain got his pistol released from Khajuri Khas police station on February 22 but during interrogation, he couldn't give any satisfactory reply on why he got his pistol released. "He was found connected to Khalid Saifi and Umar Khalid who are part of a larger group of persons who were organizing riots and protests in Delhi," the chargesheet said "Several CCTV cameras were found installed in his house/office and four DVRs were also recovered from his house, but as per expert opinion from FSL, no recording from February 23 to February 28, 2020 could be found or retrieved from any DVR," it further said.

Man faked his death to ward off money lenders

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 43 year old man planned his own death in Rohini area in order to avoid money lenders. Police said that the man returned to his home after 16 days after he ran out of money. The man has been identified as Deepak Dabas, a resident of Kanjhawla. According to P K Mishra, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Rohini district, on May 15, police got information regarding a burnt car in Kanjhawla area. Dabas, the owner of the car, was also found missing, following which his family members reported about his abduction. "During preliminary investigation, it was found that the victim had procured loans from his family members and other known persons. On May 19, it came to notice that Rs 2,500 was withdrawn from an ATM at Muzzafarnagar in Uttar Pradesh," said the DCP. "On Monday, police got a tip-off that the victim was in Haridwar and had boarded a train for Delhi in morning. Police found Dabas travelling in the train at Meerut. He was brought to Delhi," said the DCP. "Interrogation revealed that Dabas used to borrow money and further lent it on higher interest. He was under the debt of over Rs one crore. Due to having an accidental and life insurance, he planned to end his life in a way that it appeared as an accidental death," said the DCP.



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- A scheme of Rs. 20,000 crore has been approved
- The Scheme will benefit nearly 2 lakh MSMEs

Rs 50,000 crore Fund of Funds approved for Equity in MSMEs

- Approval of Equity to put an end to challenges faced by MSMEs in their development
- It will be a joint fund from the Government and Private Sector

PM launches MSME Ministry's portal: www.champions.gov.in, a one-stop shop

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- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



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200 migrants killed on road in 2-and-half-month lockdown

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 200 migrant workers lost their lives in road accidents in the country during the two-and-a-half months of COVID-19 lockdown. Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of victims at 94 followed by 38 road fatalities in Madhya Pradesh and 16 in Bihar.



media-tracking and multi-source verification by a road safety organisation and submitted to Road Ministry has also listed 1,390 people injured in road crashes.

Even in the total road fatality of lockdown period, Uttar Pradesh accounts for over 30 percent (245) of the total deaths followed by Telangana (56), Madhya Pradesh (56), Bihar (43), Punjab (38) and Maharashtra (36).

Further analysis by Save Life Foundation, a non-profit stakeholders working towards saving lives on roads in India, reveals that around 27 percent of the victims were migrant workers whereas 5 percent were essential workers like Police, doctors, and others. 68 percent of the overall deaths involved pedestrians, two-wheelers and three-wheelers - categorised as Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs).

While Telangana reported 11 deaths, Maharashtra reported nine migrants losing their lives on road or highways. The migrant workers lost their lives while walking or cycling back home among others.

The 200 migrants' deaths on roads are part of the total 750 people killed in road crashes across the country between March 25 and May 31, 2020. As many as 1,390 persons were reported injured in the crashes.

The data compiled using

PHCs being used as platform for holding Covid-19 tests

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As migrant workers reach their homes in rural and urban areas, the Government is now using primary health centres too as platforms for conducting Covid-19 tests with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) saying that on an average 1.20-lakh tests are being conducted daily. This even as the ICMR denied that the country has started witnessing community transmis-

sion as alleged by some health groups in the country. Senior scientist at the ICMR Nivedita Gupta said that "indigenous platforms" are being used too for "ramping up Covid-19 testing capacity".

"Truenat screening and confirmatory tests have now been validated. Outreach of testing has hence been increased since this is available in primary health centres and districts," she said. Gupta added that, "Indian

RNA extraction kits are now available in good number, RT-PCR kits by 11-12 indigenous vendors are now being used, we are now in a comfortable position with respect to testing, due to identification and hand-holding of domestic players."

She also pointed out that 681 labs are conducting tests currently. "At least, 681 laboratories have been approved for conducting COVID-19 tests. Of these, 476 are in the government sector and 205 in

private sector, as of 1 June 2020. Today, we are conducting 1 lakh 20 thousand tests every day," she added.

Commenting on whether India has entered the community transmission phase, Gupta said, "Instead of using the word community transmission, it is important to understand the extent of spread of the disease and where do we stand in comparison with other countries."

"We are very far away from the peak. Our preven-

tion measures to curtail the disease are very effective and we are better positioned in comparison with other countries. You will get to see the data in a week," she asserted.

Recently, a group of health experts had in their report submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that India is witnessing community transmission in few areas and if not contained in time can result in vast spread of the disease.

"One of the recurring reasons for mass casualties in most of the incidents was speeding and driver fatigue due to continuous driving on tenuous routes.

Fatigue among bus and truck drivers hired to transport migrants combined with

over speeding and poor engineering of roads top reason for road crash deaths," explained a senior Road Ministry official.

Founder and CEO of Save Life Foundation, Piyush Tewari, said the data suggests that there has been a surge in

road crashes with lifting of the restrictions across the States in Phase III and Phase IV.

Out of the four phases of lockdown, phase IV was the deadliest overall, whereas phase III was the deadliest in particular for migrant workers which reported 60

percent of all migrant deaths in road crashes during lockdown followed by phase IV with 19 percent of total migrant deaths reported in the media.

"It is critical that States enhance enforcement to prevent road crashes and the cit-

izens inculcate essential safety habits for the road like they did for personal hygiene during the lockdown.

There is now an urgent need for design changes to segregate pedestrian traffic from fast moving vehicles" Tewari said.

PM Modi optimistic about country's economic growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Notwithstanding the economic slowdown in the wake of outbreak of coronavirus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said India would get its growth back, which, he asserted, "is not difficult after all".

"Getting growth back is our motto too as we reopen the economy. India will get its growth back," said Modi in a video address to the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) 125th annual session.

Stating that the revival of economy is one of the top priorities for the Government, the Prime Minister sought to point out that his Government was taking key decisions with focus on inclusiveness, investment, innovation and widening of infrastructure in the country. All sectors are future-ready and India is "ready for a big flight", Modi maintained.

"There are so many sectors where we can do phenomenally well on the world stage," Modi said while speaking of an "Atmanirbhar Bharat"—his campaign to reduce India's dependence on foreign goods. "Atmanirbhar Bharat means we will be fully integrated with the world and fully supportive. However, always remember, we do not want to be dependent on others."

"Coronavirus may have impeded our speed, but the reality today is that we have left the lockdown phase behind and now are in the Unlock 1.0 phase. Trust me, getting growth back is not so difficult after all," he said.



The Prime Minister said after a successful lockdown, India is opening major sectors of economy and after June 8 more areas would be re-opened

The Modi Government had on Saturday said rules to ease the lockdown had an "economic focus" and would allow places of worship, hotels, restaurants and malls to resume business from June 8.

The Prime Minister said after a successful lockdown, India is opening major sectors of economy and after June 8 more areas would be re-opened.

Indian economy which was already in a slowdown mood with high unemployment rate has been hit hard following March 24 announcement of the lockdown with almost all sectors of economy forced to shut themselves. Unemployment rate is reported to be over 20 per cent after the outbreak of Coronavirus with several sec-

tors resorting to retrenchment and job cuts.

Prime Minister said the government has taken tough steps to fight the coronavirus pandemic and has also taken care of the economy

"On the one hand we have to save lives of our people and on the other hand we have to stabilise and speed up the economy," he said.

Modi said his confidence of getting India's growth back emanates from the high spirit and courage of farmers, small businesses and entrepreneurs and their talents.

He said along with the decisions for immediate growth major reforms have been set for the future development.

"For us, reforms are not any random or scattered decisions. For us reforms are systemic, planned, integrated, inter-connected and futuristic process," he said.

"For us reforms mean courage to take decisions and taking them to logical conclusion", Prime Minister sought to add.

Gadkari announces Greenfield connectivity to Amritsar in Delhi-Amritsar-Katra e-way

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday announced the development of a new Greenfield connectivity to Amritsar City from Nakodar via Sultanpur Lodhi, Goindwal Sahib, Khadoor Sahib as part of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said the road from Amritsar to Gurdaspur would also be fully developed and made completely signal free.

The travel time from Amritsar to Delhi International airport would also be reduced to about four hours from the present about eight hours.

Gadkari said this greenfield alignment will not only provide shortest and alternate express connectivity to Amritsar city but also to other religious centres of Sultanpur Lodhi, Goindwal Sahib, Khadoor Sahib as well as the recently developed Dera Baba Nanak/Kartarpur Sahib International Corridor in Punjab.

With this, traffic would have the option to travel to Gurdaspur onwards from Nakodar, i.e. via Amritsar or via Kartarpur.

Gadkari said the project would fulfil one of the long-standing demands of the people of Punjab.

The first phase of the expressway would involve an investment of about ₹25,000 crore.

In order to discuss and resolve the issue of alignment to Amritsar, a Video Conference meeting was held by Gadkari attended by Punjab Chief Minister Amrinder

Gadkari said the project would fulfil one of the long-standing demands of the people of Punjab

Singh, Union Ministers Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Hardeep Singh Puri, Jitender Singh, Gen V. K. Singh and MPs Shwair Malik, Gurjeet Singh Aujala, Road Ministry Secretary NHAI Chairman NHAI and others on Tuesday.

Gadkari requested Punjab to provide requisite support to NHAI to expedite Land acquisition for a proposed expressway in the State of Punjab.

The Centre has taken up development of Delhi Amritsar Katra Expressway under Bharatmala Pariyojana. The alignment of the expressway was firmed up in January 2019 and the process of land acquisition was initiated.

The issue of alignment of Expressway to Amritsar was taken up by Harsimrat Kaur Badal and Hardeep Singh Puri with Gadkari.

The Centre had envisaged that the proposed expressway would pass through Amritsar looking at religious importance of the city. Hence Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway under Bharatmala was conceived.

Amritsar city was always an integral part of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway. From the beginning, Expressway was proposed as a combination of Greenfield and Brownfield alignment in two phases.

CBI books pvt firm, its directors for hosting child pronographic contents

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked a private company based here and its directors for hosting contents online relating to child sex abuse.

Searches by the agency against the accused firm yielded electronic devices and other incriminating materials.

The agency conducted searches after it registered a case against a private company based at Paschim Vihar in the national capital and its Directors and unknown persons under the Information Technology Act, 2000 and relevant provisions of Protection of Children from Sexual

Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

"It has been alleged that the said company hosted websites of Russian domain containing objectionable material pertaining to child sexual abuse. The case involves the alleged jurisdiction of India, Netherlands and Russian Federation as of now vis-à-vis the location of servers, facilitation of hosting of objectionable material and owner of the objectionable contents," the agency said in a statement.

Searches were conducted at the residence-cum-office premises of the accused including a private company and its Directors in Delhi which led to recovery of electronic devices

and incriminating documents /material, the spokesperson added.

Earlier, the CBI had established a Special Unit "Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention/ Investigation(OCSAE)" here for matters pertaining to online child sexual abuse and exploitation. Apart from receiving various references/coordination, the unit is undertaking investigation of various offences relating to online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The case was registered by the OCSAE which seeks to specialise in investigation of such offences against children.

Focus on bringing down LAC temprature: Def Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As stand-offs continue on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday hinted that the confrontation may end after June 6 when senior commanders of both the armies will hold parleys. So far, more than seven rounds of military-level talks have taken place but to no avail.

Hoping for a peaceful resolution of the tense situation now prevailing at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh, the minister also admitted that China has moved a large number of troops to the border during the ongoing face-offs.

His observations came in the backdrop of at least four such eyeball to eyeball confrontations currently on at four sites spread in a frontage of 25 to 30 km. Moreover, the Chinese troops have also intruded more than three kms into the Hot Springs area of the Galwan valley and built bunkers and barracks besides bolstering troop strength.

Stressing that the focus was on bringing down the temperature on the LAC, Rajnath, in an interview to a private television channel, said Army Chief General M M Naravane had informed him

that a meeting between the Indian and Chinese military commanders will be held on June 6. The minister expressed confidence that the issue will be settled peacefully. He also referred to the 73-day face-off in Doklam in Sikkim plateau in 2017 and said "this has happened before too and a solution was found".

Hectic talks at the highest diplomatic and political level then were undertaken to enable the soldiers from both sides to back off.

On the Chinese aggressiveness on the LAC now when the coronavirus pandemic is raging, the defence minister refrained from attributing any motives. He said it would be wrong to speculate or express doubts when talks are already underway. Rajnath also said he would have definitely said something were talks not being held. "They (the Chinese leadership) have also said they want to solve the dispute through dialogue," he said.

The Indian and Chinese troops are involved in a face-off at three points in the Galwan Valley and at one point at Pangong Tso in Ladakh. Two days back, the minister had also said the "Chinese soldiers had come in a little further than they used to earlier" at the LAC to "make the situation different

this time." While the Army Chief had reviewed the situation in a visit to Leh about a fortnight back, Northern Command chief Lt General Y K Joshi is now in Ladakh to take stock.

Without going into details about preparedness to counter the Chinese enhanced troops strength, Rajnath said India has also sent a large number of troops to match the Chinese deployment, and assured that the government would not let anyone hurt India's self-respect. He did not answer or confirm when asked if China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) has entered Indian territory.

The minister also refrained from terming China as an enemy and said he considers it just to be India's neighbour. "We don't consider anyone to be an enemy. Even Pakistan is just a neighbour. But we reserve the right to respond strongly if anyone tries to hurt us," he said.

On US President Donald Trump's offer that he would be willing to mediate to solve the border dispute, Rajnath said India and China have a well-developed mechanism to solve such issues and ruled out third party intervention. He added that China's President Xi Jinping, too, has said he would like to solve the issue through dialogue.

Locusts attack: Fruits, veggies at risk of washout in 6 States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Horticulture crops such as fruits and vegetables are at risk of a washout in the wake of locusts' attack in six States. Fruits and vegetables account for nearly 90 per cent of total horticulture production in the country.

Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, cumulatively contribute 38 per cent to India's 310 million tonnes of horticulture production in 2018-19. Vegetables, on the other hand, constitute 59 per cent of the horticulture and these five states together had a share of 39 per cent in the production.

However, as per the Ministry of Agriculture's second advance estimates released on Tuesday, horticulture production in 2019-20 is still expected to be 3.13 percent higher than 2018-19.

Horticulture has a number of advantages compared with agriculture crops. For one, it's more remunerative. Unlike large-scale cereal crops, horticulture farms can be much smaller, allowing marginal farmers to boost their earnings from their small landholdings. While horticulture crops require more inputs in the form of fertilisers and so on, farmers often



plant two or three crops simultaneously to maximise yield from each acre.

The Total Horticulture Production of the country is estimated to be 320.48 million tonnes as compared to 310.74 Million Tonne in 2018-19.

Increase in Vegetables, Fruits, Aromatic and Medicinal Plants and Flowers, while decrease in Plantation Crops and Spices, over previous year, has been observed. Onion, Tomato and Potato's production is also expected to increase this year. This will help to keep prices under control across India.

As per the estimates, the total fruits production is estimated to be 99.07 million tonne compared to 97.97 million tonnes production in 2018-19.

It is mainly due to increase in production of Banana, Apple, Citrus and Watermelon.

The production of Vegetables in 2019-20 is estimated to be 191.77 million tonne, compared to 183.17 Million Tonne in 2018-19. Increase is mainly due to increased production of Onion, Tomato, Okra, Peas and Potato.

The onion production is estimated to be 26.74 million tonne, as compared to 22.82 million tonnes in 2018-19. Tomato production is estimated to be 20.57 million tonne (increase of 8.2%) as compared to 19.01 million tonnes in 2018-19.

Mango production is estimated to decline to 20444 million tonnes as compared to 21285 million tonnes last year.

Moody's has rated Modi's handling of India's economy a step above junk: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Moody's Investors Service downgraded India's sovereign credit rating for the first time in more than two decades, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday used the rating to attack the Government's handling of economy saying the global rating agency rated Modi's handling of India's economy as a "step above junk".

Citing lack of support to the poor and MSME sector, Rahul also issued a warning, saying that the worst is yet to come.

"Moody's has rated Modi's



handling of India's economy a step above JUNK. Lack of support to the poor and the MSME sector means the worst is yet to come," Rahul said on Twitter. Later in the day, addressing AICC video press conference, Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar questioned the

Central government's intention of helping farmers, saying Modi's aim of doubling their income by 2022 will remain a "pipe dream" if they don't get the promised minimum support price (MSP) for their produce.

He said a majority of farm produce is purchased in the open market at rates much lower than the MSP declared by the Government.

The Government on Monday raised MSP of paddy by a marginal ₹53 a quintal to ₹1,868 a quintal for 2020-21, while the rates for oilseeds, pulses and cereals were hiked substantially.

CHANGE IN THE TERMINAL OF TRAIN N. 02957/02958 SABARMATI - NEW DELHI - SABARMATI RAJDHANI SPECIAL

It is notified for the information of the general public that terminal of 02957/02958 Sabarmati-New Delhi - Sabarmati Rajdhani Special has been changed from Sabarmati to Ahmedabad w.e.f. 01.06.2020. Now, it will not halt at Sabarmati station in both the directions. The revised timing after change of terminal is as under :-

02957 Ahmedabad - New Delhi Rajdhani Special		
STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 02957	
	Time-Table	
	ARR.	DEP.
Ahmedabad	---	18:40
Palanpur Jn	21:02	21:04
Aburoad	21:47	21:52
Jaipur Jn.	03:52	04:02
Gurgaon	07:27	07:29
New Delhi	08:30	---

The Timings of 02958 New Delhi - Ahmedabad Rajdhani Special		
STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 02958	
	Time-Table	
	ARR.	DEP.
New Delhi	---	20:25
Ahmedabad	10:10	---

For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Railways website www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

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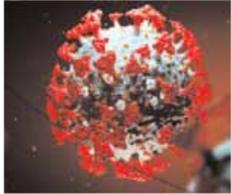
TN records 1,091 more cases, total at 24,586

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

As 1,091 persons tested positive for coronavirus on Tuesday, the total number of persons tested for the pandemic in Tamil Nadu till date reached 24,586, according to a bulletin released by the Department of Health.

Taking into account the 536 persons discharged from various hospitals in the State on Tuesday and the number of samples tested negative, the total number of active cases in the State as on Tuesday evening is 10,680, said the release.

The State tested a total of 5,14,433 samples till date out of which 4,89,258 samples



were tested negative. The number of fatalities reached 197 as 13 persons succumbed to the pandemic on Tuesday. Out of the 13 who breathed their last on Tuesday, eight were in the age group of 70 to 78, four were in the 50-56 age group while one was 62.

Except for a 78 year-old man who was admitted to the hospital with fever and myal-

gia, all others who died on Tuesday had co-morbid conditions like Type-2 diabetes or hypertension.

Out of the 1091 tested positive on Tuesday, 806 were from Chennai, said the release. There are 7,880 active coronavirus cases in the capital city.

Meanwhile, in Kerala, 86 persons were tested positive for the pandemic. Out of this 46 persons were those who reached the State from foreign countries while 26 were from other States in the country.

A press release issued by the Government of Kerala said that till Tuesday 71,068 samples have been tested for coronavirus. The number of hotspots in the State went up to 122.

Man tied to tree, burnt alive for harassing girl

PTI ■ PRATAPGARH (UP)

A 22-year-old man was tied to a tree and burnt alive in Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh district for allegedly sexually harassing a girl few months ago, police said on Tuesday.

A police team immediately reached the spot but agitated villagers in Bhujaini clashed with them and set afire two vehicles.

Ambika Prasad Patel was tied to a tree on Monday night allegedly by Harishankar, Shubham, Ram Milan and others, who set him on fire, Superintendent of Police Abhishek Singh said. Harishankar and Shubham have been arrested, and an FIR was registered, police said, adding that the situation was under control now.

Harishankar had lodged an FIR against Patel on March 1 for allegedly harassing his daughter and posting an objectionable photo of her on social media. Police suspect this to be the cause behind the killing. Patel was arrested at that time and also sent to jail.

An FIR was lodged against Patel under sections 67 (publishing or transmitting obscene material) of the Information Technology Act, and 354 (outraging the modesty of a woman) of the Indian Penal Code.

Everything under control: TN CM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

With the total number of covid cases in Tamil Nadu inching towards 25,000, Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy assured the people that there was nothing to worry and everything was under control. Addressing the media at Fort Saint George on Tuesday after presiding over a meeting of senior Cabinet Ministers, top bureaucrats and the medical advisors to the State administration, the Chief Minister said that Tamil Nadu has the best recovery and the smallest mortality rates in the country.

"It is true that more than 23,000 cases have been tested positive in the State till yesterday. In all likelihood the figure will go up in the coming days. But please understand that this is the result of massive testing undertaken by the State. Tamil Nadu is the State

which has conducted maximum number of tests and the process is still continuing," said the CM.

Till Monday, Tamil Nadu had held more than 4.8 lakh tests, much bigger than the tests held in other southern States like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana and Kerala, pointed out Palaniswamy. He said except for Chennai and the three neighboring districts, the situation was normal in the State.

"The increase of corona virus cases in Chennai is due to the city's population of 87 lakh and its high density. The Government is doing everything under its disposal to contain the situation in this region," he said.

Replying to DMK President M K Stalin's allegation that the State was facing a shortage of coronavirus test kits, the chief minister said it was not correct. "We have stocked sufficient number of PCR test kits and testing is in full swing

across the State. There are sufficient ventilators as well as beds in all hospitals across the State," said the chief Minister.

He said Tamil Nadu is the first State in the country to offer free face masks to the population. "More than 1.5 crore masks are being distributed free of cost to the needy. We are also providing quality health care to all those who have been hospitalised and quarantined," he said.

Palaniswamy sought the cooperation of the people in containing the pandemic and requested all the people to stay inside as far as possible and observe the norms and procedures like washing hands and wearing masks. While coming out of the secretariat, he was seen affectionately chiding journalists who were not wearing masks. "You understand that your health and safety are more important and hence wear masks without fail," he said.

J&K: Residents oppose cremation of virus victim

Family airlift the body and shifted to hospital mortuary

PNS ■ JAMMU

Hapless family of a Covid-19 patient from Doda, who breathed his last at the Government Medical College hospital on Monday, faced precarious situation when over two hundred local residents barged inside the cremation ground to disrupt the cremation ceremony in Domana area of Jammu on Tuesday.

Outnumbered by the presence of agitated residents, the family was advised to move out of the area by the district authorities and local policemen.

Left with no choice, they had to lift the dead body from the pyre and shifted the same to the mortuary of the hospital.

Later, the cremation was performed by the close family members with assistance from the district authorities at another cremation ground on the periphery of Jammu.

The family members alleged, it is on the directions of the district authorities they were escorted inside the Domana cremation ground but soon after they initiated the rituals before performing the last rites large number of people converged at the venue and forced them to move out of the area. District Magistrate Jammu Sushma Chauhan said, the cremation of the covid 19 patient was performed as per the guidelines in another cremation ground.

Meanwhile, two deaths were reported from Srinagar along with 117 new cases of coronavirus on Tuesday, taking the total tall to 2718 in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Out of these 117 cases, 40 cases were reported from Jammu and 77 from Kashmir division.

Tiff between Guv & Govt over Pro-VCs selection in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The continuing discord between the Mamata Banerjee Government and Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar has finally boiled down even to the appointment of a Pro-Vice Chancellor.

Some extravagant interpretation of mutual jurisdictions by the Governor's office and the Education Ministry triggered a unique administrative crisis in Burdwan University when the State Government on June 2 countered the Governor's order appointing Gautam Chandra as the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the prestigious institution by nominating a rival Professor Ashis Panigrahi to the same post.

Though none of the two appointees would mince words Education Minister Partho Chatterjee said slammed the Raj Bhavan for "trying to encroach upon the jurisdiction of the State Government," reminding the Governor had no right to take a decision independent of the State Government.

"It is the prerogative of the State Government to appoint a V-C or a Pro-V-C as the Government pays the salary

and not the Governor's House," he said accusing the Governor of "trying to play saffron politics more than the BJP does. His single-point agenda is to appoint BJP persons on the top posts of various departments so to further the interests of the party he has been battling for."

Earlier the Governor's House on June 1, appointed Professor Chandra the Head of the Department of Zoology in the same University issuing the Governor's communiqué read: "In exercise of the power conferred by sub-section (1) of section 9A of the Burdwan University Act, 1981 (as amended) I, the Chancellor of the University of Burdwan appoint Professor Goutam Chandra...as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Academic)...for a period of four years or up to the age of 65 years or until further order, whichever is earlier."

Within hours of the Governor taking the sudden decision "not in consultation with the State Government," the Higher Education Department on Monday night, appointed Ashis Panigrahi, Zoology professor of Kalyani University, as the Pro-V-C (academic) of the University, sources in the Department said.

WB: Hundreds head to native places, face transport crunch

PNS ■ KOLKATA

In a grim reminder of lakhs of migrant workers walking back to their homes post Lockdown 1.0, hundred of commuters in Kolkata walked towards their respective destinations on the second day of unlock 1.0 cursing the unavailability of public transport which had been plying on the city streets with limited number of passengers so as to maintain social distancing norms.

Thousands of daily commuters remained stranded on the streets anxiously waiting for vacant buses to board. Subsequent to the long wait irritating commuters either forced their entry inside the buses overcrowding them or walked back to their destinations, sources said. Kolkata had entered the phase one of "Unlock - 1" on June 1 and the city was likely to open up fully with the exception of the law courts and the educational institutions from June 8. "I have been standing here for the past 2 hours. In between, three buses came and went but they are not picking up more than 20 people so

what do we do? Why did the Government open up like this?" asked Amiyo Haldar at Lake Town.

Down South at Ruby crossing hundreds of people vainly chased buses filled chock-a-block. When asked to explain the situation a helpless conductor said "I have been asking people not to board but they would not listen. We are at great risk of getting the disease. Who will look after our family if we die?"

At Esplanade Deepa Manna an IT consultant said, "the unlock 1.0 is as sudden as lockdown 1.0. How will we maintain social distancing norms?"

With the State Government refusing the hike bus fares (from ₹7-₹10 regime to ₹20-₹30 regime) as demanded by the private operators they have refused to offer services. "The Government wants us to take 20 people or for that matter they want us to take only sitting passengers but how will we run the bus if we do not take standing passengers," asked Sadhan Pal a leader of the bus operators association demanding corona insurance for the drivers and conductors.

RS polls crucial for Opp Cong, JD(S) in K'taka

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

The announcement of the Election Commission to hold biennial elections to Rajya Sabha on June 19 is crucial for the main Opposition congress and JDS in Karnataka. Four seats from Karnataka are going to be vacant and two members from Congress and one each from BJP and JDs are going to retire. The election at the time of Covid-19 even though a low key affair, but the heat is on political parties to get their maths and chemistry right to make it to the upper house of the parliament.

This will be first such election since outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in March and could set the tone for political activity over the next few months.

Four Rajya Sabha MPs from Karnataka are retiring on June 25 after completing their six year term. These include

two from Congress - Prof M V Rajeev Gowda and BK Hariprasad while Prabhakar Kore from the BJP and D Kupendra Reddy from JDS will also retire.

In Karnataka the churning has started and many leaders are hoping to be in the fray to make it to the upper house. Former Prime Minister HD Devgowda's name is in the forefront of the fray. 87 year old Devegowda who has built JDs which has virtually become family party is likely to enter parliament through Rajya Sabha.

According to JDs leaders Devegowda is healthy and active and nothing wrong in seeking a Rajya Sabha seat. But the question is how does he manage the numbers? Will he compromise with the Congress and help Congress leader Mallikharjuna M Kharge to get elected and grab the surplus votes.

Maha GUV slams CM's move to cancel university exams

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Describing Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's announcement about cancellation of University examinations as "unprecedented" and made "without any profound thinking on the legal repercussions," Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari on Tuesday asserted that as the Chancellor of Universities, he had the final authority over all University matters as per the provisions of Maharashtra Public Universities Act.

In what appeared to be a brewing confrontation between the chief minister and the Governor, Koshyari conveyed Uddhav that decision regarding holding of the examinations of final year students 'shall be taken in consonance with the

provisions of the Act'.

Flagging the university examinations issue for the second time during the last 11 days, the Governor said that he was 'surprised' to learn through media reports that the former had declared that 'no examinations shall be conducted this year', while he was still awaiting a response to his letter to the Chief Minister.

The Governor wrote that even though the Committee of Vice Chancellors constituted by the Minister for Higher and Technical Education to analyse the situation and to explore various options available to conduct the examinations had given its report to the Secretary, Higher and Technical Education Department on 6th May 2020, the same had not been presented to him till date.

The Governor pointed out that during his video conference with Vice Chancellors, all the vice chancellors of state universities had communicated their preparedness for conducting their respective examinations. The Governor stated that he had clearly mentioned that the Chancellor's office shall give further directions after accepting the recommendations of the Committee partially or fully once the report was received by him.

"The arbitrary decision has violated the basic principle that to obtain an identical degree, there cannot be two sets of criteria, one who has given examination and for the other who has obtained marks on average. The examinations cannot be made optional", wrote the Governor.

Vaccine for Covid will take time, says medical experts

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The possibility of a vaccine becoming a reality to counter the coronavirus pandemic appears bleak at least for the time being, according to seasoned medical practitioners in India and abroad. Dr Venugopal Reddy, Kansas-USA based physician who keeps track of the progress of the researchers in developing a vaccine for covid has some unpleasant questions to ask.

"They have been trying for the last four decades to develop a vaccine for AIDS, a disease caused by another virus. Have they succeeded in it? What about the publicity regarding the vaccines developed for swine flu, birds flu and SARS? They have not reached anywhere. What is the guarantee that they would succeed this time?" asked Dr Reddy while speaking to The Pioneer from Kansas.

Even if pharma companies succeed in developing a vaccine for covid pandemic, it takes years for this drug to get the trust of general practitioners, pointed out Dr C V Krishnaswamy, Chennai based diabetologist and physician. He said there was strong objection from medical doctors in Britain when they were asked

to prescribe oseltamivir (Tamiflu) for the swine flu pandemic in 2015.

"Don't be bullied into prescribing Tamiflu," demanded Dr Margaret McCartney, a Glasgow based general practitioner in a communication to British Medical Journal.

"Now we have guidelines, hundreds of them. Good guidelines would distil evidence cautiously, making clear what we know and where the gaps are. They would say how many people would get what benefit from a treatment while identifying the cost in terms of harm. But guidelines are not always applicable to our patients and they are meant to guide practice; rarely should they dictate it," Dr McCartney wrote in the message which was published by the BMJ as a coup de grace.

She took strong objection to the communique issued by the National Health Service, the publicly funded health care system in England, in which the authorities had stated that "there is an expectation defined in the General Medical Council's Good Medical Practice that a doctor will respond to an organization advising on public health".

103 die, 2,287 test +ve in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After a gap of three days, the deaths caused by Covid-19 touched a three-digit figure once again in Maharashtra on Tuesday, as an alarming 103 people succumbed to the coronavirus and 2,287 others tested positive for the pandemic in various parts of the state.

With fresh deaths and infections, the total number of deaths in Maharashtra rose to 2,465, while the total infected cases jumped to 72,300. With as many 31,333 patients having already been discharged from hospitals after full recovery, the state health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the State at 38,493.

The number of deaths in Maharashtra increased 99 on Saturday, 89 on Sunday, 76 on Monday to 103 on Tuesday. There had been a total of 694 deaths in Maharashtra during the previous six days. On May 26 (Tuesday) the state had witnessed 97 deaths, while there were 105 deaths on May 27, 85 deaths on May 28, 116 deaths on May 29 and 99 deaths on May 30, 89 deaths on May 31, 76 on June 1 and 103 on June 3. Of the total deaths reported on Tuesday, Mumbai account-

ed for 49, while there were 10 deaths each in Pune and Mira-Bhayandar, six deaths each in Raigad and Satara, four deaths each in Navi Mumbai, Panvel, three deaths each in Sangli and Akola and one death each in Thane, Nashik and Ahmednagar.

Out of the 103 dead, 68 were men and 3 were women. Fifty nine of them aged over 60 years, 39 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 5 were aged below 40 years. "Sixty nine out of 103 patients (67%) had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease," a state health bulletin said. In Mumbai, with the latest 49 deaths and 1109 new positive cases, the total number of deaths went up to 1368, while the total infected cases rose to 42216. The authorities said that the total number of "active cases" in the metropolis was 23629. Out of 4,83,875 laboratory samples tested so far, 72,300 have positive for COVID-19 until Tuesday.

There are 3730 active co-tainment zones in the state currently. Total 19,019 surveillance squads worked across the state on Tuesday and surveillance of 71.61 lakh population was done.

Urgent Attention

Health Protocol for all travellers to Jammu & Kashmir by any means - Road, Rail or Air

All passengers returning to Jammu & Kashmir by Road, Rail or Air will be sampled on arrival for RT-PCR testing and sent to institutional quarantine for maximum of 14 days unless test results are negative earlier.

EXEMPTIONS

- i) Pregnant women in the last trimester, with a Doctor's certificate of pregnancy;
- ii) Cancer patients on chemotherapy;
- iii) Chronically ill patients, discharged from a hospital after a surgical procedure
- iv) Dialysis patients with doctor's certificate of being on dialysis;
- v) Mothers with infants below 1 year;
- vi) Children below 10 years travelling alone without a family member;
- vii) Government of India personnel on bona fide government duty
- viii) Passengers with an RTPCR TEST Negative Certificate from an ICMR approved laboratory/testing facility, not older than 2 days (48 hours) before the arrival date ;

Category of people from (i to viii) will be sent to home quarantine for 14 days

★ Armed forces/CRPF personnel returning to join duty will be sent to their respective units

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Government of Jammu & Kashmir

DIP/J-1063/20

PAPER WITH PASSION

Peak problem

Delhi has sealed borders fearing an influx of patients from neighbouring States but NCR needs a common protocol

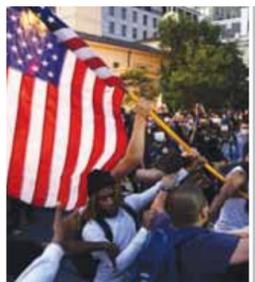


Can Delhi be immune to the symbiotic linkage with its surrounds that have come to be known as the National Capital Region (NCR)? More importantly, considering the overall social, cultural and economic potential of such an entity and the vibrancy and power this geographical contiguity affords, there ought to be a certain commonality of operations. Particularly in the time of the pandemic, there needs to be a cohesive response strategy where Chief Ministers of the three States concerned — Delhi, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Haryana — should at least evolve a unified protocol for better execution of COVID-19 management strategies. If there is a shared eco-system, then each must try to balance it. The sealing of borders will do more harm than good at a time when the regional growth engine has stuttered to a stop and sporadic economic activity is yet to show the much wanted results. And we could certainly do without the politics of posturing, in this case UP publicising that 42 per cent of its cases were carriers from Delhi and the Arvind Kejriwal Government hitting back saying Delhi hospitals were for residents only. The fact of the matter is people are fluid in this region, given their workplaces in the city and homes in the suburbs, and confusing them with differing protocols only leads to more violations and a patchy resumption of normalcy. Something which we can ill-afford during the pandemic. In fact, it's not just about the service sector but millions of labourers, who work across district and State borders and have been holding on. Closure means they, too, are now leaving their homes in a second wave of migration. And while consulting citizens is a good idea, State policies in times such as these should flow from the wisdom of the leadership and not populism. So though the border sealing is to be only for a week, its extension should be reasoned and measured. Chief Minister Kejriwal is not wrong when he says that healthcare services in his State are free and better than in a lot of neighbouring ones. So, as the number of Coronavirus infections rises, he fears patients from outside would want to get treated in the city and overwhelm its health infrastructure. But fact of the matter is that many in NCR have been former residents of Delhi and even if not COVID-infected, have been long-time regulars at Delhi hospitals, particularly for critical and terminal illnesses. A prolonged closure of such hospitals would mean that such patients would not find it easy to migrate to a local hospital and get the requisite treatment. Likewise, all COVID cases would not rush to Delhi unless there are complex cases that need specialist intervention. In fact, all neighbouring States should evolve a module of sharing medical resources in managing the spread in North India's most clustered cities rather than be partisan about it.

The larger reality is that hospitals, both private and public, are fast running out of COVID care beds and ventilators with patients being waitlisted and often succumbing to the disease because of the delay. According to official figures from the Delhi Government, with Corona cases expected to rise over the next 30 days, 10,000 beds have been earmarked for patients with serious symptoms. COVID-19 cases are at present increasing at the rate of 5.9 per cent a day in the capital. That is doubling every 12.8 days, compared to the national average of 16.8 days. Of course, Delhi had one of the highest testing rates with 10,881 tests per million population, as against the national average of 2,675 tests per million. For the next phase, between July-end and mid-August, when Delhi is expected to be closer to its peak, the administration plans to take over banquet halls, community centres, stadiums and more hotels. To tackle cases in slums and unauthorised colonies, it plans to increase the number of beds at COVID care centres to 10,000 from the current 6,000. On April 7, when Delhi had only 525 Coronavirus cases, Kejriwal had said that 3,000 beds were available and promised to scale up the number to 30,000. Seven weeks later, the number of beds in State-run and private hospitals remains 5,100. This prompted the AAP Government to give a renewed push to its home treatment for asymptomatic cases and organise more beds. In terms of viral overload in cities, Delhi is now second only to Mumbai where infection cases have crossed the 35,000-mark. There is no doubt a spillover effect would happen in Noida, Gurugram and Ghaziabad, too. UP now has 78,033 beds in L-1, L-2 and L-3 COVID hospitals and has become the first State in the country to ready one lakh beds for patients. There is an NCR Planning Board, an inter-State institution created expressly for regional planning. Why can't this be empowered to share and monitor containment strategies now? None of the States can afford a turf war.

Boots on the street

Trump's country is burning and the world is watching. America's race problem calls for an attitudinal change



The US military is used to walking into burning cities and restoring order. However, it is rare that it has done the same in its own cities. With many major cities in America now in the midst of yet another racial crisis that has precipitated riots, several States and the US Federal Government have seen the need to get troops onto the streets to restore order. For a country that "exports" democracy to the world and ostensibly fights for freedom, this is a poor picture. But clearly, America has been heading down this road

for years, thanks to growing inequity. The riots, following the brutal murder of a Black man, George Floyd, by an American police officer, have brought up how the American police and judicial system have systematically abused minorities. Other than a few multicultural urban areas where reforms have been enacted, attitudes and procedures are often a few decades old. And sending troops out onto the streets might help get a semblance of order back to them but it will not change the underlying issues. In fact, it might even make them worse with the US heading for another round of presidential elections later this year. Particularly, US President Donald Trump has been wanting to appeal to his supporters by bringing back law and order.

However, it would be prudent for the US to understand that this is not a "good look" for it. Simply because several other nations in the world look up to it. Seeing police in riot gear and highly militarised forces on the streets will not only give demagogues elsewhere in the world little pause for thought before indulging in their own violent reprisals. It will also weaken the case for democratic governments with Chinese politicians showing American anarchy as a contrast to their own vision of the world. That said, America's race problem cannot be solved overnight. It cannot be eliminated with some executive orders, Constitutional amendments or judicial orders. It will need a change in attitude, one which is deep-rooted. But for now, the way police arrests individuals, particularly by forcing them down with their knees on the neck, must change pronto. The rest is a process that must start from the White House downwards.



A SURYA PRAKASH

As the Narendra Modi Government 2.0 completed its first year in office after his spectacular return to power in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, there has been much debate about its balance sheet since it first assumed office in 2014. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political enemies relentlessly bombard the social media with criticism of his Government's performance, recent surveys have shown that they have not been able to make a dent in his public image. Instead, his popularity is soaring with his approval ratings crossing 80 per cent after the lockdown steps he took to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some nations, including the most developed, fumbled and stumbled as they waded through the human tragedy unfolding in their communities. Others like Brazil, Sweden and the US (initially) made terrible choices that led to a huge loss of life and lack of preparedness with regard to healthcare. On the other hand, India, the world's second-most populous nation, decided to confront the problem head-on. Prime Minister Modi took the lead and enforced a nation-wide lockdown from March 25, persisted with this mode of "treatment" for nine weeks and extended it by another four weeks. Meanwhile, he had a hands-on approach towards energising the healthcare system, tackling pharmaceutical issues and coordinating with various Chief Ministers through fortnightly meetings.

For those of us who grew up in an India whose leaders lacked the nerve to call a spade a spade (slogans such as *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai* in 1962 even as the Chinese were marching in), Modi's resoluteness is in contrast to the vacillation of the Nehru era. This has indeed been the running theme during his six years in office and has resulted in a sea change in the way the world views India. It has also resulted in major initiatives with respect to domestic policies. For example, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had raised the slogan of *Garibi Hatao* (banish poverty) at public meetings during the 1970s. But concrete steps towards poverty alleviation — for example the Jan Dhan Yojana (JDY) enabling direct cash transfer; a scheme to issue free cooking gas connections to the poorest of the poor; and the construction of toilets and electrification of their homes — were visible only after Modi took charge. Within a year of the launch, 330 million new bank accounts (the current population of the US) were opened under the JDY in the country. Similarly, the Government provided free gas connections to 80 million poor households in a strictly monitored time-bound programme. These are mind-boggling numbers which Western minds find difficult to comprehend.

Two other big-ticket issues, which have



had a major social and economic impact, are the banning of triple *talaq* and the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). With 42 political parties governing 28 States, few leaders would have contemplated GST, the single tax regime, and fewer still would have had the gumption to pull it off. As regards national security, the surgical strikes and the no-nonsense approach to the Kashmir issue are further examples of toughness. After COVID-19 disrupted our lives, the Prime Minister announced a ₹20 lakh crore package to provide some relief to those in great distress. The central idea of this package is to make India self-reliant (*Atmanirbhar Bharat*).

Over the last six years, frustration has, therefore, been growing in "The Establishment" in New Delhi, comprising Nehruvians, with the Marxists riding piggy-back on them. Together, they constitute a cosy club which spreads its wings across politics, bureaucracy, media, academia and all national institutions. In fact, the stranglehold of the Marxists over our national affairs is wholly illegitimate because people never gave them the mandate to do so (in the 2019 Lok Sabha poll, the two main communist parties — the CPI and the CPM — garnered just 2.36 per cent of the vote).

The fate of the Congress is similar. Its voteshare has

PRIME MINISTER MODI TOOK THE LEAD IN TACKLING THE CORONA PANDEMIC AND ENFORCED A NATIONWIDE LOCKDOWN FROM MARCH 25, PERSISTED WITH THIS MODE OF TREATMENT FOR NINE WEEKS AND EXTENDED IT BY ANOTHER FOUR WEEKS. MEANWHILE, HE HAD A HANDS-ON APPROACH TOWARDS ENERGISING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

SOUNDBITE

Moody's has rated Modi's handling of India's economy a step above junk. Lack of support to the poor and the MSME sector means the worst is yet to come.

Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi



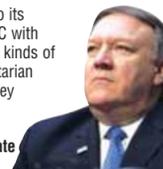
Mental health is important, period. Irrespective of the pandemic, I've always maintained that you should prioritise mental well-being over your physical well-being.

Actor —Ileana D'Cruz



China has moved up its forces along the LAC with India. These are the kinds of actions that authoritarian regimes take and they have a real impact.

US Secretary of State —Mike Pompeo



Racism is not only in football, it's in cricket too. Even within teams as a Black man, I get the end of the stick. Black and powerful. Black and proud.

West Indies opener —Chris Gayle



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Backpack safety

Sir — Many children keep developing irreversible back deformities because of the weight of their school bags which they carry to their classes every day. Despite the Children's Schoolbag Act, 2006, which states that satchels should not weigh more than 10 per cent of the body weight of the student, many students regularly carry heavy bags to school. Experts say these can cause muscle soreness as well as back and neck pain.

Children gradually lose interest in going to school due to the stress caused and their attention span also gets reduced. As textbooks constitute a major proportion of the weight of the bag and the teachers take up only a part of the textbook in a month, the publishers could separate the big textbook into thin booklets, which will make the load lighter for the children. Schools can provide lockers where the students can keep their books so that they don't have to carry them home daily and bring them back the next day.

Jubel D'Cruz
Mumbai

Digitisation gets new life amid pandemic

One of the biggest outcomes of the Coronavirus pandemic has been that there has been a paradigm shift in the planning of governance and service delivery with various sectors of the economy and even people adopting digital technologies. The lockdown has resulted in a boom in the use of technology. From an ardent spike in the usage of social media to an infallible reliance on Artificial Intelligence (AI), the lockdown period has made everyone tech-savvy. In the past few months, Governments, businesses and other industries have witnessed the power of online platforms as they helped companies sell their products. Consumers, too, could shop, pay bills, converse, entertain and collaborate without much physical contact. Along with this, food delivery apps like Zomato and Swiggy and online shopping apps like Amazon, which are now offering the delivery of essential items, ensured that people stay safe and healthy at home.

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought out how Governments can reinvent themselves digitally. A lot more can be and must be done for the digital revolution to take place. The near future seems bright as the advent of AI has been saving several industries and corporate hous-



es. If used judiciously, AI has the potential to harness newer paradigms for the future. This unprecedented crisis should speed up India's digital adoption. A digitally connected India can help improve socio-economic conditions of people through the development of non-agricultural economic activities apart from providing access to education, health and financial services. It is also important for Governments to enhance and concentrate on data security and collaborate with the private sector.

Ravi Teja Kathuripalli
Hyderabad

Labour reforms

Sir — Mahatma Gandhi had once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Employers and workers often work hand-in-hand

to accomplish greater results. In view of this, it is sad that rationalising labour laws has been on policy agenda for decades. Yet, labour reforms haven't taken off even during the pandemic. A number of States have now embarked on this politically contentious course

again. Such reforms, coming at a time of acute economic distress and labour insecurity, must strive to build adequate safety nets for them and provide them with fixed-term employment.

Kashish Mulani
Ujjain

Fooling the voters

Sir — In his letter to the nation to mark his first year of the second term in office, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote: "This day (May 30) last year began a golden chapter in the history of Indian democracy. It was after several decades that the people of the country voted back a full-term Government with a full majority." Undoubtedly, among those who voted for the Modi Government, many are innocent and not so educated people, who look to other crooked politicians for guidance with false hope.

This is a fact. The most glaring example of this was when Prime Minister Modi said about 70 days back, "Mahabharata was won in 18 days we shall win Corona war in 21 days". But on the 67th day of the country's lockdown, not only has India's Coronavirus death toll overtaken that of China but the country now ranks seventh in the global tally of COVID-19 cases.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee
Faridabad

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A bid for gram swaraj

If nurtured with a regular organic feed of educational and informational content via the internet, rural India can be digitally-empowered



DINESH TYAGI

Nandanam village in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district never experienced internet connectivity for decades. But thanks to Babu Reddy, a village-level entrepreneur of the Common Service Centre (CSC) who is now providing high-speed 'Fibre To The Home' (FTTH) connections to citizens utilising BharatNet, this idyllic village surrounded by hills is experiencing change. "The FTTH connections are transforming the villagers, especially the youth. For them, it is a dream come true", says Reddy.

In July 2019, CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under the Ministry of Electronics and IT, was tasked to enable last-mile internet connectivity along with the operation and maintenance of BharatNet Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) and First Line Maintenance (FLM) of equipment installed in phase one of the BharatNet project of the Department of Telecommunications aimed at providing high-speed broadband connection to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats.

The SPV took over the operation and maintenance of BharatNet OFC and FLM equipment from July 1, 2019, when only around 22,000 Gram Panchayats were functional and there were no dedicated OFC restoration teams to look after maintenance of this project of national importance in rural areas. After the SPV took over, around 2,000 dedicated Fibre Restoration Teams consisting of more than 10,000 local youths were trained and mobilised for BharatNet maintenance. CSC village-level entrepreneurs were engaged to provide custody and first line maintenance of the equipment installed in more than one lakh Gram Panchayats, which were otherwise unattended.

Neelam Singh, a champion entrepreneur from Block Dadraul, Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh was tasked with the operation and maintenance of the BharatNet OFC, connecting 63 Gram Panchayats. When she took over the activity in August, 2019 only two Gram Panchayats were functional with no last-mile internet connectivity for citizens. By November 2019, Singh and her team had installed internet services in all 63 Gram Panchayats, with more than 300 FTTH users availing of the internet. Out of these there were over 50 Government institutions and schools.

Now, with close to one lakh functional Gram Panchayats, the CSC SPV has accelerated the last-mile internet connectivity drive in rural areas through the CSC's Wi-Fi *choupal* programme. This initiative encapsulates enabling of internet services in over one lakh Gram Panchayats by deploying effective infrastructure. It is thereby delivering services at an affordable price and ensuring reliable access to the internet through village-level entrepreneurs.

In March, more than 3,00,000 subscribers registered for a FTTH connection from BharatNet in panchayats which are managed and operated by the CSC SPV. This shows the desire of rural households to get a reliable broadband internet facility at an affordable cost. The CSC's Wi-Fi *choupal* also has more than 12-lakh Wi-Fi registered subscribers who use this as a supplement to their mobile connection. This is also borne out by the fact that data consumption in these BharatNet panchayats increased to 150 TB per month in May from about 55 TB during January, a three-fold jump in just five months. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in high data consumption by rural populations, optimising the usage of the BharatNet infrastructure as envisaged by the Government.

A best example of how this initiative improves governance and lives can be found in the transformation of Pancheswar Police Station in Uttarakhand's Champawat district. Just four kilometres from the Nepal border, the police station had no internet connectivity and all records were manually maintained by the officials.

In fact, non-availability of internet in the hill town deprived Government institutions and citizens of the advantages of digital connectivity. However, things changed for the better when village-level entrepreneur Deepak Nath started delivering internet service in the area through BharatNet. He not only provided the much-needed internet connectivity to the police station but also to 19 other Government institutions and over 30 families. This was of immense use, especially during the lockdown enforced by the pandemic. Through the CSC's Wi-Fi *choupal* programme, 63 such non-feasible police stations in remote areas of the country got connected to the internet and eventually to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), thus improving their efficiency in handling crimes.

The CSC's Wi-Fi *Choupal* provides the requisite framework for facilitating internet services by integrating them with BharatNet endpoint at Gram Panchayats to enable last-mile connectivity. Once the remaining panchayats are connected through BharatNet, it will transform rural India and fulfill the Prime Minister's vision of 'Gram Swaraj'. The digital divide will be substantially reduced and citizens will be truly empowered to actively participate in nation-building.

The high appetite for internet data usage in rural areas, now and in the future, can be pivotal in bridging the digital divide in the country. And, if nurtured with a regular organic feed of educational and informational content, rural India can be digitally-empowered and transformed into a Gram Swaraj.

(The writer is CEO, Common Service Centre)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

YOU HAVE TO DOMINATE (THE RIOTERS). IF YOU DON'T YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME. THEY'RE GOING TO RUN OVER YOU. YOU'RE GOING TO LOOK LIKE JERKS.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



LET ME JUST SAY THIS TO THE PRESIDENT ON BEHALF OF THE POLICE CHIEFS. IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE TO SAY, KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

—HOUSTON POLICE CHIEF ART ACEVEDO

Rethink logistics logically

This sector has developed locally without following global standards. Most players agree that setting standards and their voluntary adoption are the only way for reducing costs



SANJIB POHIT

After the extended lockdown necessitated by the need to contain the spread of the deadly Coronavirus in the country, the process of kick-starting the economy has now commenced in a phased manner. As it is the Indian economy was in the doldrums even before the pandemic hit the nation, making the lockdown that commenced from March 25 a hard choice for the Narendra Modi-led BJP Government at the Centre, which was caught between a rock and a hard place. Now, as various sectors of the economy are slowly opened up to save livelihoods, the logistics supply chain, which was in a suspended state for most of the commodities for more than 60 days, needs to gear up to function again.

However, given the fact that we have been unable to flatten the COVID curve as yet and instead have seen a surge in Coronavirus cases and deaths across the country, which has corresponded with the opening up of the economy, we have to rethink our operating processes.

The mode of operation of the supply chains may need to be tweaked now as cargo transporters may have to bypass normal or the shortest routes they usually take as they may be out of bound due to their location in containment zones, a place where all activities are disallowed. Moreover, the entire logistics operation now has to be undertaken while adhering to the new norms of social distancing.

As it is, the logistics sector in India is not too well-developed. Inefficiencies have grown over the years from a combination factors, like a non-conducive policy environment, extensive industry fragmentation and lack of good basic infrastructure. India's indirect tax regime discouraged large centralised warehouses and over a period of time this has led to the fragmentation of the warehousing sector.

Of course with the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), there has been a move towards a centralised warehouse hub. However the pace has been slow as modern warehouses cost much more and the logistics stakeholders are yet to recover their investment from the scattered warehouses across the country. However, in the present scenario caused by the pandemic, this is indeed a boon to the logistics sector.

Fragmented warehouse distribution implies that logistic operations will be affected only in a region where the storehouses fall in a containment area. It may be possible to move cargo from other regions to the desired destinations. Thus, a fragmented warehouse regime is probably more cost-effective in this situation than a centralised warehouse. While one can find a way to bypass distribution hurdles when finished goods are in stock, the issue is more serious in respect of production activities as a modern production unit sources inputs from different parts of the country and the world.

As the COVID-19 map of India shows, the principal industrial States of the country, namely Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, the National Capital Region (NCR) and so on, where most of the industrial clusters are located, are also the States most affected by the Coronavirus. The majority of containment zones, a place where all activities are non-operational, are also located there.

In this scenario, even though the unlocking of economic activity is commencing, relaxation in non-containment zones continues to be a hin-

“OF LATE, A MOVE HAS BEEN MADE TO MODERNISE OUR LOGISTICS FACILITIES BY BENCHMARKING THEM AGAINST INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS. ONE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT OUR PLAN TO GO LOCAL DOES NOT HAMPER THAT PROCESS. IF WE ARE SHORT OF FUNDS TO ADOPT INTERNATIONAL NORMS OF LOGISTICS FACILITIES, IT IS BEST TO GO FOR A SYNERGY IN STANDARD WITHIN INDIA”



drance to supply chains, transportation and logistics.

A firm may have to close operations if right inputs/raw materials cannot be sourced if suppliers are located in a containment zone. In India, industrial clusters have developed around big industries in the metros, both of which now happen to be located in Coronavirus-hit regions. North-east India, which is practically unaffected by the Corona, does not figure in the industrial map of the country. There is no way that inputs can be sourced from there to carry out production. Thus, unless the entire supply chain is unlocked (or the number of containment zones declines), the impact of improved economic activity will be subdued.

A lockdown effectively increases the logistic cost of transporting goods in multiple ways. The shortage of labour at the point of origin and destination and new norms of social distancing may lead to increased time in loading/unloading activities, causing in effect lower efficiency and higher cost.

Though the inter-State movement of goods has now been allowed (barring containment zones) putting up of traffic barricades along the highways, diversions to avoid containment zones and multiple checkpoints put up by law enforcement agencies will invariably lead to increased fuel consumption, costly delays and more time on the road.

Even in normal circumstances, the problem of harassment faced by the truck drivers at the hands of the Regional Transport Office personnel and policemen is a serious issue across every route. With multiple barricades and officials on the road during the pandemic, harassment of drivers will surely rise manifold. All these factors amount to a fall in transportation efficiency and thereby higher transportation costs.

In effect, the economy will have to live with higher logistics costs now, which will have major economic repercussions. As per the NCAER's recently-released *Quarterly Review of the Economy*, a five per cent fall in efficiency in shipping in India translates to a 1.3 per cent loss in the Gross Domestic Product.

Thankfully, unlike transportation by road, freightage by rail is less hindered as there are no barricades on the railway lines. Moreover, in the absence of normal train services, there is less congestion on railway lines too. This is the time that the logistics supply chains could shift majorly towards freight transport by rail. As it is, the movement of cargo by rail turns out to be cheaper for distances over 500 kilometres.

However, if we compare cargo movement across major trunk routes (NCR-Mumbai, NCR-Guwahati, NCR-Chennai, NCR-Kolkata) where both modes — rail and road — operate, everywhere we see that the share of road transport is more than that of rail. This is the time to reverse the trend by ensuring timely delivery of consignment by the Railways.

However, Indian Railways needs a major policy correction in respect of freight. With the fall in economic growth, the overall demand for cargo movement will be low. Thus the Railways' policy of operating a full length (52 wagon) cargo train does not sync with the current low demand. It makes sense to operate shorter cargo trains. But, most importantly, the Railways needs to stick to timely delivery to attract customers. There is no other reason why a consignment of pharmaceutical exports from Hyderabad via the Jawaharlal Nehru Port, for a distance of about 700 km, would be moved by road and not by rail.

According to the NCAER's study on India's Logistics Costs, more than 90 per

cent of the cargo is moved by road on this route. A key message that is currently being played is go local to make an Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

This does not augur well for the logistics sector as it is highly capital intensive. If all entrepreneurs go local, the logistics investment will unlikely flow in as it would take a long time to generate the return from the investment. This sector has developed locally without following global standards. Most players agree that setting standards and their voluntary adoption are the only way for reducing costs.

This encompasses the following: Standardisation of truck bodies and loading/unloading docks for increasing operational efficiencies.

Second, standardisation of pallet sizes for achieving faster turnaround times. Third, standardisation of warehouse design and layout and a common standard across India in respect of other logistics facilities at airports, riverboats, sea ports, Inland Container Depots, Container Freight Stations, Multi-Modal Logistics Hubs and warehousing clusters.

In the absence of a national blueprint on logistics infrastructure and standards, we observe no uniformity across India in these facilities. This is essential to reduce India's logistics cost. Of late, a move has been made to modernise our logistics facilities by benchmarking them against international standards. One can only hope that our plan to go local does not hamper that process. If we are short of funds to adopt international norms of logistics facilities, it is best to go for a synergy in standard within India. The Government may interact with logistics stakeholders on this front. Else, it will cost India in the long run in terms of competitiveness.

(The writer is a Professor at the NCAER)

Covid has hastened the birth of the digital neta

Most parties have moved away from traditional methods of communication and have shifted their political wars to cyber space



KALYANI SHANKAR

COVID-19 has changed the dynamics of almost everything in the world, including politics, and poses challenges for all walks of life and all kinds of institutions. This is true of democracy, civil liberties and political parties, too.

Now that health experts say that we have to learn to live with the virus, how will the political system in India change and will it be for the better? Since the Coronavirus outbreak, most

political activities have taken a back seat and the pandemic has become the only focus of people and politicians alike. There may be fundamental change in the substance of politics and how it will cope with the new normal now that it is clear that some of the measures like social distancing, wearing of masks, washing and sanitising hands often, avoiding crowded places and congregating in large numbers, are likely to continue. Gone are the days of party supporters boasting of lakhs of people coming to listen to their netas.

So how are political parties strategising for the future? They have already found some new interfaces like digital platforms, videoconferencing and so on. Ever since the pandemic began they have swiftly moved away from traditional methods of

communication like putting up posters, distributing pamphlets and flyers, holding door-to-door campaigns and have shifted their political wars to cyber space. Virtual platforms have replaced actual meetings in most of the parties and in Government offices, too.

The BJP is already adept in using the digital platform and has been using it since 2014. Even the 2019 elections were fought more in the digital world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had used videoconferencing facilities and 3D holographic projections to address the public in large numbers during the polls. The party has used the new medium to its advantage and has prepared digital files of voters and their mobile numbers and so on, that makes it easier to reach out to them. The party has data on all

the 543 Lok Sabha seats.

In the changed circumstances, the BJP is planning for smaller meetings and digital interaction with the voters. Bihar elections are scheduled for November and next summer, State elections are due in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal and Assam. BJP chief JP Nadda told this columnist that the party was getting ready to face the new situation. "We are already using the digital platform. In view of the pandemic we have to think of new ideas for our campaigns and we will hold virtual rallies."

The Congress Party, too, is not lagging behind and is catching up with the BJP where digital reach is concerned. According to the Congress media head Randeep Surjewala, the party had the biggest-ever virtual contact of almost 10 crore in one day dur-

ing the May 28 'Speak Up India' campaign led by Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi to raise public support for people suffering as a result of the lockdown. "This is indeed a world record. We have adapted ourselves to the new situation," he claims.

The party has involved its leaders, functionaries, AICC office-bearers, district and booth-level workers numbering around 50 lakh. The Congress is using the Zoom app for holding virtual press conferences and Rahul's conversations with economists. He admits that social media and digital platforms will play a big role in the forthcoming polls.

Other parties, too, agree that digital interaction is the future of politics now. CPI-M General Secretary Sitaram Yechuri points out that today almost every party has a firm online presence. The

Left is also reaching out to the people through their cadres and mass organisations. Trinamool Congress leader Dinesh Trivedi, too, thinks that future campaigns will largely be on social media and digital platforms.

Former External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha notes that "politically there will be a lot more reliance on digital communication." Most parties now have political strategists and IT units that are responsible for their digital strategy.

The Election Commission (EC), which has announced polls for 24 Rajya Sabha seats on June 19, seems ready to deal with the new normal. However, the real test for the EC will be the Bihar polls. CEC Sunil Arora while admitting that it is too early to think about the timing of the Bihar polls, points out that even

during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls the EC had made arrangements for those above 80 and the armed forces to vote through postal ballot.

However, the immediate challenge for all political parties is to convince the people that they are concerned about their welfare. This is where the good old Gram Panchayats and booth-level committees come in.

Parties could go back to the basics and use their block and booth committees to spread the message through the digital platform, particularly as India is expected to reach 859 million mobile users by 2022. In short, politics was already moving towards a virtual world and the pandemic has only hastened that transition.

(The writer is a senior journalist)



A TURNING POINT IN US HISTORY

The nationwide protests following the brutal suffocation of an unarmed black man in Minneapolis could be a defining moment in America's racial politics. Attempts to dismiss those participating as merely "lawless rioters", wilfully misrepresent what has been a mass expression of revulsion and fury.

(The Guardian editorial)

Trump threatens to use military to quell violent protests across US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has threatened that he would deploy the military if the states fail to take necessary actions to quell the violent protests that have spread across the country over the custodial killing of African-American George Floyd.

During a hurriedly-convened address to the nation from the Rose Garden of the White House, Trump announced on Monday that he was dispatching "thousands and thousands" of heavily armed soldiers, military personnel, and law enforcement officers to stop the rioting, looting, vandalism, assaults, and the wanton destruction of property.

For about a week now, properties worth billions of dollars have been destroyed in the US, and rioters have damaged commercial centers, and public places and looted from shops and malls, in angry response to the killing of Floyd,

a 46-year-old man who was pinned to the ground in Minneapolis last week by a white police officer who knelt on his neck as he gasped for breath.

"Today I have strongly recommended to every governor to deploy the National Guard in sufficient numbers that we dominate the streets. Mayors and governors must establish an overwhelming law enforcement presence until the violence has been quelled," Trump said. "If a city or state refuses to take the actions that are necessary to defend the life and proper of their residents, then I will deploy the US military and quickly solve the problem for them," he threatened.

Trump said the country, in the recent days, has been gripped by "professional anarchists, violent mobs, arsonists, looters, criminals, rioters, Antifa and others".

But at the same time, in his address to the nation, Trump also said all Americans were "rightly sickened and revolted

by the brutal death" of Floyd, and asserted that justice will be served.

He assured the nation that he was taking actions to stop the violence and restore security and safety in America.

The president said he had mobilised all available federal resources, civilian and military, to stop the rioting and looting, to end the destruction and arson, and to protect the rights of law-abiding Americans, including the Second Amendment rights.

A number of state and local governments have failed to take necessary action to safeguard their residents, he said. "Innocent people have been savagely beaten, like the young man in Dallas, Texas who was left dying on the street, or the woman in upstate New York viciously attacked by dangerous thugs. Small business owners have seen their dreams utterly destroyed. New York's finest have been hit in the face with bricks," he said.

"Brave nurses who have battled the coronavirus are afraid to leave their homes. A police precinct has been over-

run. Here in the nation's capital, the Lincoln Memorial and the World War II Memorial have been vandalized. One of our most historic churches was set ablaze. A federal officer in California, an African-American enforcement hero, was shot and killed," he said.

These are not acts of peaceful protest, but acts of "domestic terrorism", Trump said, adding that the destruction of innocent life and the spilling of innocent blood were an offense to humanity and a "crime against God". "I swore an oath to

uphold the laws of our nation and that is exactly what I will do. My administration is fully committed that, for George and his family, justice will be served. He will not have died in vain," he said.

Considered to be the worst ever civil unrest in the US in decades, the violent protests have engulfed at least 140 cities across America in the days following the death of Floyd.

In Washington DC, the national capital, protestors burnt a historic church and damaged some of the prime

properties and historic place like national monument and Lincoln Memorial. Trump describing the violence in Washington DC as "total disgrace".

Thousands of protestors continued with their demonstrations across cities in the US, in civic-disobeyance of the curfew that has been imposed in more than 150 cities in the country including the nation-

al capital. State of emergencies have been declared in as many as six states and at least 13 major cities when reports last came in. As many as 67,000 National Guard troops have been deployed across the country. The Wall Street Journal said that this was the largest number ever activated in the US.

Asserting that his administration has not allowed the righteous cries and peaceful

protesters to be drowned out by an angry mob, Trump said the biggest victims of the rioting were peace-loving citizens in the poorest communities.

"And as their president, I will fight to keep them safe. I will fight to protect you. I am your president of law and order and an ally of all peaceful protesters," Trump said trying to calm down the situation.

"America needs creation, not destruction; cooperation, not contempt; security, not anarchy; healing, not hatred; justice, not chaos. This is our mission and we will succeed 100 per cent. We will succeed. Our country always wins," he said. "We are putting everybody on warning our 7 pm curfew will be strictly enforced. Those who threaten innocent life and property will be arrested, detained, and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," Trump said.

The nationwide protests sparked by the killing of Floyd have left at least five people dead.

Over 4,000 people have been arrested and curfews imposed in at least 40 cities.



SIDELIGHTS

FLOYD FAMILY EXPECTED AT MEMORIAL SERVICE
Minneapolis: Family members of George Floyd are expected to attend a memorial service in his honour Thursday in Minneapolis. The Rev Al Sharpton is to deliver the eulogy at the service on the campus of North Central University. The civil rights organisation Sharpton founded, National Action Network, organised the memorial. The family's attorney, Ben Crump, is also expected to make remarks at the service from 1 pm to 3 pm.

79 CASES OF PROPERTY DAMAGE IN STORES RUN BY KOREAN AMERICANS
Seoul: South Korea's Foreign Ministry says it has far confirmed 79 cases of property damage at stores run by Korean Americans amid U.S. protests over the death of George Floyd. The ministry, which held a teleconferencing meeting with diplomats based in the United States to review the demonstrations' impact on Korean Americans and South Korean citizens, said Tuesday it has yet to confirm any injuries or deaths. The ministry says 50 cases of property damage were reported from Philadelphia, 10 from Minneapolis, five from Raleigh and four from Atlanta.

PROTESTERS MARCH IN SYDNEY IN SOLIDARITY WITH US DEMONSTRATORS
Sydney: More than 1,000 protesters marched through downtown Sydney on Tuesday in solidarity with Americans demonstrating against the death of George Floyd half a world away. Police escorted a crowd carrying banners that said: "Black Lives Matter," "Aboriginal Lives Matter," "White Silence is Violence" and "We See You, We Hear You, We Stand With You." The group marched from Hyde Park to New South Wales state Parliament with plans to continue to the U.S. Consulate.

2 KILLED IN ANTI-RACISM PROTESTS IN CHICAGO
Cicero (US): Two people have been killed during unrest in the Chicago suburb of Cicero as protests continued over the death of George Floyd, according to a town official. Spokesman Ray Hanania says 60 people were arrested in the town of about 84,000 located west of Chicago. Hanania didn't provide additional information about those killed or the circumstances of their deaths.

BIDEN: TRUMP 'CONSUMED' BY EGO, NOT LEADING DURING CRISIS
Joe Biden on Tuesday blistered President Donald Trump a day after police drove back peaceful protesters near the White House so Trump could pose with a Bible before a damaged church. Biden said Trump's "narcissism has become more important than the nation that he leads."

The presumptive Democratic presidential nominee delivered a speech at Philadelphia's City Hall, addressing the civil unrest across America following the death of George Floyd.

PELOSI TO TRUMP: BE A 'HEALER IN CHIEF'
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Tuesday called on President Donald Trump to be a "healer in chief" and not a "fan of the flame" as the nation reels from mass protests over the treatment of black people in the United States. Pelosi, reading from Bible scripture at the Capitol, drew on past presidents — including George H.W. Bush speaking in the aftermath of the Rodney King unrest and Barack Obama following the death of Eric Garner — as models of the nation's chief executive at a time of crisis.

UK asks China to step back from the brink in HK

London: The UK Government on Tuesday asked China to step back from the brink and respect Hong Kong's autonomy as it reiterated its plan to offer British National Overseas (BNO) passport holders in the region a path to citizenship if a controversial security law goes ahead.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab made a statement in the House of Commons, which resumed its physical sittings under the coronavirus social distance norms, to stress that Britain would not look the other way as the freedoms of the people from its former colony are under threat.

"There is time for China to reconsider, there is a moment for China to step back from the brink and respect Hong Kong's autonomy and respect China's own international obligations," Raab told the Commons.

PTI

Putin signs Russia's nuclear deterrent policy

AP ■ MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday endorsed Russia's nuclear deterrent policy which allows him to use atomic weapons in response to a conventional strike targeting the nation's critical Government and military infrastructure.

By including a non-nuclear attack as a possible trigger for Russian nuclear retaliation, the document appears to send a warning signal to the US.

The new expanded wording reflects Russian concerns about the development of prospective weapons that could give Washington the capability to knock out key military assets and government facilities

Pak-based terror outfits JeM, LeT trafficking fighters into Af: UN report

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

Pakistan-based terror outfits Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba are engaged in trafficking fighters into Afghanistan who train and specialise in improvised explosive devices, threatening to derail the peace process in the war-torn country, according to a UN report.

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) have masterminded several terror attacks against India, including the 2008 Mumbai attack and the 2019 Pulwama attack.

The 25th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIL (Daesh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, submitted to the Security Council, said Afghan officials have noted that there were several groups that, based on their operational activities and permanent presence in Afghanistan, "posed a security threat".

"Those groups were also deemed capable of presenting a future threat to peace and security should the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban reach a ceasefire," it said.

The report said among those groups posing a security threat, Afghan officials highlighted Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, JeM and LeT on which the Monitoring Team has written in previous reports.

The presence of these groups is centred in the eastern provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar and Nuristan, where they operate under the umbrella of the Afghan Taliban, it added.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Around the Globe

□ Voters are being asked to navigate curfews, health concerns and a sharp increase in mail balloting on Tuesday as elections take place from Maryland to Montana. Four states were originally scheduled to vote in April but delayed their contests because of the coronavirus outbreak. Pennsylvania offers the day's biggest trove of delegates and represents a high-profile test case for Republicans and Democrats working to strengthen their operations in one of the most important general election battlegrounds.

□ Popular Pakistani actress and comedian Bushra Ansari, who is currently in Canada, has said she won't return until Pakistanis act seriously and stop treating the coronavirus pandemic as "a joke". Pakistan's COVID-19 cases reached 76,398 on Tuesday, while the death toll has gone up to 1,621. The number of coronavirus cases have risen sharply in the country since the government eased the lockdown and lifted restrictions before Eid last month.

□ A prominent international aid organisation warned on Tuesday that Afghanistan is on the brink of a humanitarian disaster because the government is unable to test at least 80 per cent of possible coronavirus cases. The Intentional Rescue Committee said COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, is rapidly spreading undetected through Afghanistan. The IRC said number of confirmed new cases rose by 684 per cent in May, but the country's extremely low testing capacity means many people are going undetected.

□ Parisians returned to the City of Light's beloved sidewalk cafes as lockdown restrictions eased, but health experts expressed deep concerns as several Latin American countries opted to reopen their economies despite a rapid rise in coronavirus cases.

CHINA DELAYED releasing coronavirus info, frustrating WHO

AP ■ GENEVA

Throughout January, the World Health Organization publicly praised China for what it called a speedy response to the new coronavirus. It repeatedly thanked the Chinese Government for sharing the genetic map of the virus "immediately," and said its work and commitment to transparency were "very impressive, and beyond words."

But behind the scenes, it was a much different story, one of significant delays by China and considerable frustration among WHO officials over not getting the information they needed to fight the spread of the deadly virus, The Associated Press has found.

Despite the plaudits, China in fact sat on releasing the genetic map, or genome, of the virus for more than a week after three different government labs had fully decoded the information. Tight controls on information and competition within the Chinese public health system were to blame, according to dozens of interviews and internal documents.

Chinese government labs only released the genome after another lab published it ahead of authorities on a virologist website on Jan. 11. Even then, China stalled for at least two weeks more on providing WHO with detailed data on patients and cases, according to recordings of internal meetings held by the U.N. health agency through January — all at a time when the outbreak arguably might have been dramatically slowed.

WHO officials were lauding China in public because they wanted to coax more information out of the gov-

Warmer temp may not slow Covid-19 transmission by much: Study

PTI ■ BOSTON

While the rate of Covid-19 incidence may decrease with increasing temperatures up until 11 degrees Celsius, further warmer temperatures do not decrease disease transmission significantly, according to a study conducted in the US.

The study, published in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases, found that a higher ultraviolet (UV) index also assists in slowing the growth rate of new cases, but the overall impact remains modest.

Precipitation patterns did not appear to have any effect on virus transmission, according to the researchers.

The researchers at Mount Auburn Hospital analysed daily reported cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection across the US from January 20 through April 3, as tracked by John Hopkins University's Covid-19 Dashboard.

Covid-19 TRACKER TOTAL CASES: 6,427,915 DEATHS: 3,79,503 RECOVERED: 2,943,309

COUNTRY	TOTAL CASES	TOTAL DEATHS
USA	1,866,654	1,07,370
Brazil	5,31,768	30,152
Russia	4,23,741	5,037
Spain	2,86,718	27,127
UK	2,77,985	39,369
Italy	2,33,515	33,530
France	1,89,220	28,833
Germany	1,83,984	8,639

□ Some British lawmakers were not pleased about going back to the office as the country eased restrictions from the virus outbreak. Some in Parliament, who have largely been working from home, say the government's decision to scrap a remote-voting system used during the pandemic will turn those who must stay home because of age, illness or family issues into second-class lawmakers.

□ Japan's capital city issued a coronavirus alert amid fears of a resurgence of the virus. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike issued the alert after 34 new cases were reported in the city, where infections had slowed to a few per day in late May

Monkeys, ferrets offer needed clues in vaccine race

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The global race for a Covid-19 vaccine boils down to some critical questions: How much must the shots rev up someone's immune system to really work? And could revving it the wrong way cause harm?

Even as companies recruit tens of thousands of people for larger vaccine studies this summer, behind the scenes scientists still are testing ferrets, monkeys and other animals in hopes of clues to those basic questions — steps that in a pre-pandemic era would have been finished first.

"We are in essence doing a great experiment," said Ralph Baric, a coronavirus expert at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, whose lab is testing several vaccine candidates in animals.

The speed-up is necessary to try to stop a virus that has triggered a pandemic, killing more than 3,60,000 worldwide and shuttering economies. But "there's no question there is more risk in the current strategy than what has ever been done before," Baric said.

The animal testing lets scientists see how the body reacts to vaccines in ways studies in people never can, said Kate Broderick, research chief at Inovio Pharmaceuticals.

With animals, "we're able to perform autopsies and look specifically at their lung tissue and get a really deep dive in looking at how their lungs have reacted," Broderick said.

She's awaiting results from mice, ferrets and monkeys that are being exposed to the coronavirus after receiving Inovio's vaccine. Since no species perfectly mimics human infection, testing a trio broadens the look at safety.

And there's some good news on the safety front as the first animal data from various research teams starts to trickle out. So far, there are no signs of a worrisome side effect called disease enhancement, which Dr. Anthony Fauci of the US National Institutes of Health calls reassuring.

Enhancement is just what the name implies: Very rarely, a vaccine doesn't stimulate the immune system in quite the

Sobering US nursing home death report as lockdowns ease

Washington: At least a quarter of the Covid-19 deaths in the United States were among nursing home residents, a new report said, a disclosure that came as coronavirus restrictions eased Monday even as US protests against police brutality sparked fears of new outbreaks.

The Florida Keys welcomed visitors for the first time in two months, the Colosseum opened its ancient doors in Rome, ferries restarted in Bangladesh and golfers played in Greece. But as tourist destinations worldwide reopened for business, new rules were in place to guard against the virus' spread. "Bring facial coverings, gloves, hand sanitiz-

China's Wuhan tests 10 mn people; finds 300 asymptomatic cases

PTI ■ BEIJING/WUHAN

China's aggressive testing of about 10 million people for coronavirus in Wuhan, the first epicentre of the virus outbreak, has not revealed new confirmed Covid-19 cases but 300 asymptomatic carriers, officials said.

A total of 300 asymptomatic patients were found after 9.89 million people were tested in China's worst-hit city Wuhan with no confirmed Covid-19 cases, the city government said on Tuesday.

The mass testing was carried out at a cost 900 million yuan (\$126 million), it said.

Asymptomatic cases also known as silent spreaders pose a problem as the patients are tested Covid-19 positive but develop no symptoms such as fever, cough or sore throat. However, they pose a risk of spreading the disease to others.

The results not only whicked off foreign media's baseless accusation that there were massive numbers of asymptomatic virus carriers in Wuhan, but also served as an unquestionable milestone on China's virus battle, and cemented the country's phased victory over the horrifying virus, a report in the state-run Global Times said.

Since the coronavirus outbreak in December last year in Wuhan, China has vehemently denied allegations of under-reporting cases and deaths by US President Donald Trump.

Wuhan, where the virus first emerged, so far had 50,340 confirmed coronavirus cases since January of which 3,869 people have died, according to the local health commission report.

Moody's downgrades ratings of SBI, HDFC Bank

FIANS ■ MUMBAI

Moody's Investor Services has downgraded the long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings of State Bank of India, HDFC Bank to Baa3 from Baa2, maintaining their outlook as negative.

It has also downgraded IndusInd's long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings to Ba1 from Baa3 and its BCA to ba2 from ba1 and the rating outlook is negative.

The downgrade comes a day after the rating agency downgraded India's sovereign rating.

Moody's has primarily attributed the downgrade to the economic disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the downgrade of the sovereign rating.

The ratings agency has also downgraded the long-term issuer rating of EXIM India to Baa3 from Baa2, keeping its outlook negative, said a Moody's statement.

Consequently, Moody's has downgraded HDFC Bank's Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA) to baa3 from baa2.

The deposit ratings of these banks are at the same level as India's Baa3 sovereign rating.

Moody's has placed the Baa3 long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings of Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Canara Bank and Union Bank of India and their ba3 BCAs under review for downgrade.

It has affirmed Punjab National Bank's long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings at Ba1 and its BCA at b1. The rating outlook of PNB

Moody's rating downgrade not surprising: SBI report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The downgrade of India's sovereign rating by Moody's has not come as a surprise as global rating agencies have lowered ratings and outlook of about 21 emerging economies following Covid-19 outbreak, SBI said in a report on Tuesday.

"...It seems that the downgrade was not completely unexpected. This is clearly visible in the data that market is not yet impacted by the rating downgrade. BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty rose and even Rupee appreciated against the US Dollar.

"...India has not been alone to witness rating downgrade. So far around 21 emerging and developing countries have registered either a rating and/ or outlook downgrade by the agency. This does not come as a total surprise as emerging markets are always more susceptible to rating downgrades compared to developed economies in times of stress

has been changed to stable from positive.

In the case of Central Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank, Moody's has affirmed their long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings at Ba2 and their BCAs at b2. The rating outlook of these issuers is maintained as stable.

"The rapid and widening spread of the coronavirus outbreak, deteriorating global eco-

nomically, even if some of them have very low debt to GDP ratio," SBI in its research report 'Ecowrap' said.

The rating action, the report said, was no reflection on the ability of the Indian Government to service its debt obligations.

"The sovereign external debt comprises around 20 per cent of the total external debt. The current level of foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to meet any debt obligations," the report added.

The downgrade was unlikely to result in any immediate repercussions on exchange rates and bond spreads immediately on India offshore bonds, the report said, adding "...We need to be careful that we remain in investment grade and continue to give growth a big push through policy measures."

It added in the current situation in India both the key interest rate and GDP are expected to fall further.

Businesses have sought a waiver from payment of late fee on GST returns filed for the earlier period between August 2017 (start of GST) and January 2020. This, they have said, was important considering the current business environment where most of the trade is losing money and do not have enough resources to even pay the taxes.

It may be noted that for helping the small businesses

Sensex rallies 522 pts; bank stocks shine

MARKET LOGS 5TH STRAIGHT GAINS ON ECONOMIC RECOVERY HOPES

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices continued their winning run for the fifth straight session on Tuesday as staggered opening of the economy and the prime minister assuring of more support to the industry restored investor confidence.

Shrugging off ratings downgrade by Moody's, the 30-share BSE Sensex soared 522.01 points or 1.57 per cent to settle at 33,825.53. Likewise, the NSE Nifty jumped 152.95 points or 1.56 per cent to 9,979.10. Indian stocks also tracked positive Asian peers to strengthen gains.

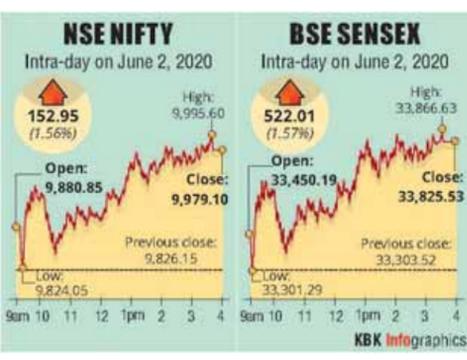
Analysts, however, said lingering US-China tensions and protests in America remained a concern going ahead.

On the Sensex chart, Bajaj Finance was the top gainer, soaring over 8 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, IndusInd Bank, HDFC, PowerGrid, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank and L&T.

On the other hand, Maruti, ITC, NTPC, Nestle India, Hero Motocorp and Bharti airtel ended as losers on the 30-share index.

Sectorally, BSE Realty was the top gainer, rallying 4.57 per cent, followed by bankex, finance, consumer durables, utilities and industrials indices. While FMCG was the sole loser.

Broader midcap and smallcap surged up to 1.83 per cent. A day after Moody's downgraded India's credit rating to a notch above junk status on growth concerns, Prime Minister Narendra Modi



asserted that the country will definitely get back its economic growth and said reforms undertaken during the lockdown will help the economy in the long-run.

"Indian markets shrugged off news regarding Moody's credit rating downgrade, which was trumped by the expectation of the economy opening up. The Government has again

reiterated its commitment to continued reforms to strengthen the economy," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

In spite of many possible negative triggers, positive sentiment still drives the markets and would advise to stick to quality stocks, he added.

Globally, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended on a positive note, and exchanges in Europe began trade with significant gains. International oil benchmark Brent crude futures were trading 2.95 per cent higher at USD 39.45 per barrel.

On the currency front, the rupee rebounded from the day's low to close 18 paise higher against the US dollar at 75.36.

GST Council may provide relief to trade on issue of late fee

New Delhi: In what may bring further relief to businesses impacted by Covid-19 pandemic, the GST Council has agreed to discuss the issue of late fee over delayed filing of returns at its next meeting slated later this month.

Businesses have sought a waiver from payment of late fee on GST returns filed for the earlier period between August 2017 (start of GST) and January 2020. This, they have said, was important considering the current business environment where most of the trade is losing money and do not have enough resources to even pay the taxes.

It may be noted that for helping the small businesses

having turnover less than Rs 5 crore in the current situation arising out of Covid-19, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had already announced extension of GST returns of February, March, April and May 2020 till June 2020. No late fee will be charged for this period.

"While the extension for filing GST returns is welcome, government should also waive late fee for past delays to help the businesses facing acute liquidity problems," said a Delhi based trader asking not to be named.

Sources in the Finance Ministry said that the late fee is imposed to ensure that the taxpayers file returns (GSTR 3B) in time and pay taxes on the

amount collected from buyers and due to the government. This is a step to ensure that a certain discipline is maintained regarding compliance. Honest and compliant taxpayers would be discriminated negatively in the absence of such a provision.

"In GST, all decisions are taken by the Centre and the states with the approval of the GST Council. It would not be possible or desirable for the Central Government to unilaterally take a view on this issue and therefore, the trade is informed that the issue of late fee would be taken up for discussion in the next GST Council meeting," said the source.

Rupee likely to stay stable if crude prices remain at current levels: SBI chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rupee is likely to be stable if crude oil prices stay at moderate level and fiscal deficit is under check, State Bank of India Chairman Rajnish Kumar said on Tuesday.

So far, the rupee has been stable against the dollar, he said at the CII Annual session.

"If the crude oil (prices) remain where they are, then there will be much less pressure on it. Our largest imports were

either crude oil or gold. So gold import is practically zero and crude import is down because of softness in the prices. So that's why pressure on the rupee is much less...So far the restraints shown by the Government and the trend is likely to continue in the future," he said.

The rupee has not witnessed a sharp spike in the past two months and has been trading in the range of 75-76 per dollar.

WB urges countries to go for comprehensive policies to boost long-term growth

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The World Bank on Tuesday urged countries to go for comprehensive policies to boost long-term growth along with short term measures to address health emergencies and secure core public services in the wake of the coronavirus crisis, amid indications that 60 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty in 2020.

The scope and speed with which the Covid-19 pandemic and economic shutdowns have devastated the poor around the world are unprecedented in modern times, World Bank Group President David Malpass said.

"Current estimates show that 60 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty in 2020. These estimates are likely to rise further, with the reopening of advanced economies the primary determinant," he told reporters during a conference call as the World Bank released analytical chapters from its flagship Global Economic Prospects report.

Noting that the coronavirus pandemic and the economic shutdowns are dealing a severe blow to the global economy, especially poorer countries, the report said developing nations and the international community can take steps now to speed up recovery

after the worst of the health crisis has passed and blunt long-term adverse effects.

"Policy choices made today — including greater debt transparency to invite new investment, faster advances in digital connectivity, and a major expansion of cash safety nets for the poor — will help limit the damage and build a stronger recovery," Malpass said.

"The financing and building of productive infrastructure are among the hardest-to-solve development challenges in the post-pandemic recovery. We need to see measures to speed litigation and the resolution of bankruptcies and reform the costly subsidies, monopolies

and protected state-owned enterprises that have slowed development," he said.

Short-term response measures to address the health emergency and secure core public services will need to be accompanied by comprehensive policies to boost long-term growth, including by improving governance and business environments, and expanding and improving the results of investment in education and public health, the World Bank report said.

To make future economies more resilient, many countries will need systems that can build and retain more human and physical capital during the

recovery — using policies that reflect and encourage the post-pandemic need for new types of jobs, businesses and governance systems, it said.

According to the report, in the long-term, the pandemic will leave lasting damage through multiple channels, including lower investment; erosion of physical and human capital due to closure of businesses and loss of schooling and jobs; and a retreat from global trade and supply linkages.

These effects will lower potential output — the output an economy can sustain at full employment and capacity — and labour productivity well into the future. Pre-existing

vulnerabilities, fading demographic dividends, and structural bottlenecks will amplify the long-term damage of deep recessions associated with the pandemic, it said.

"When the pandemic struck, many emerging and developing economies were already vulnerable due to record-high debt levels and much weaker growth. Combined with structural bottlenecks, this will amplify the long-term damage of deep recessions associated with the pandemic," said Ceyla Pazarbasioglu, World Bank Vice President for Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions.

Oversubscribed 130%, RIL issue largest in world in a decade by non-finance co

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) rights issue oversubscription reached 129.8 per cent with one day still to go. As per data, applications for 8.8 crore plus shares were received on Tuesday.

Dealogic has put together a list of USD 7 billion plus rights issues globally since the financial crisis of 2008. It shows that the RIL rights issue emerges as the world's largest by any non-financial company in last 10 years. RIL's Rs 53,124 crore rights issue, oversubscribed on Monday itself, received bids for another 8.8 crore shares on Tuesday taking cumulative demand to nearly 54.9 crore shares - an oversubscription of 130 per cent, according to stock

exchange data.

The issue subscription data on stock exchanges showed that at 5 pm on June 2, 2020, total bids received for RIL's rights shares stood at 54.9 crore overshooting the 42.26 crore shares on offer by 29.8 per cent. Tuesday's large subscription addition goes in line with the well-observed phenomenon that various investor classes apply towards the end. The oversubscription figure suggests that shareholders are applying for many more shares than their entitlements.

This means, the final oversubscription number can potentially rise to 1.6 — 1.8 times. Those subscribing to the rights shares by June 3 can expect allotment of partly paid RIL shares by Thursday, June 11 2020, in

their demat accounts. These partly paid shares will be separately listed on stock exchanges and their trading will begin from Friday, June 12, 2020, according to the issue schedule given in the Letter of Offer.

RIL has come out with a rights issue first time in three decades to enable all shareholders participate in its growth consumer/technology businesses, where new strategic investors have started joining. Under the issue, shareholders will get fresh shares of the company at a price of Rs 1,257 each and need to pay the amount over 18 months in three instalments — 25 per cent on application by June 3, 2020, 25 per cent in May 2021 and 50 per cent in November 2021, making the issue most investor-friendly.

Renewables cheapest option to recover from Covid-19: IRENA

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Renewable power is increasingly undercut existing coal-fired plants.

On an average, new solar photovoltaic (PV) and onshore wind power cost less than keeping many existing coal plants in operation, and auction results show this trend accelerating -- reinforcing the case to phase out coal entirely.

Next year, up to 1,200 gigawatts (GW) of existing coal capacity could cost more to operate than the cost of new utility-scale solar PV, the report shows. Replacing the costliest 500 GW of coal with solar PV and onshore wind next year would cut power system costs by up to \$23 billion every year and reduce annual emissions by around 1.8 gigatons (GT) of

carbon dioxide (CO2), equivalent to five per cent of total global CO2 emissions in 2019.

It would also yield an investment stimulus of \$940 billion, which is equal to around one per cent of global GDP.

"We have reached an important turning point in the energy transition. The case for new and much of the existing coal power generation is both environmentally and economically unjustifiable," said Francesco La Camera, Director-General of IRENA.

"Renewable energy is increasingly the cheapest source of new electricity, offering tremendous potential to stimulate the global economy and get people back to work."

Survey: Almost half urban Indians see online shopping as a norm

Mumbai: Even as there are signs that the nationwide lockdown to curb Covid-19 has led most urban Indians to see online shopping as the norm, a survey has revealed that this shift is restricted to only specific categories, including gadgets, beauty and personal care among others.

Close to half (44 per cent) of urban Indians said they are more likely to shop online once the lockdown is over, while 21 per cent said they are less likely than before to shop in physical retail stores, according to a survey by global mar-

ket research and data company YouGov.

"The current Covid crisis and the subsequent lockdowns have helped accelerate the momentum for e-commerce. A few categories will see a more significant and permanent shift towards online sales channels while for others consumers will revert to traditional buying behaviours," YouGov India General Manager Deepa Bhatia said. The survey was done online by YouGov Omnibus among 1,011 adult respondents in India between May 23-27.

GNIDA sets up citizen dashboard

Greater Noida: The Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) has launched an open-access dashboard — Citizen Das Board — to share daily progress reports with the public.

The software was launched by GNIDA CEO Narendra Bhooshan on Tuesday.

The GNIDA has decided to put up the status of all the applications it receives on a dashboard.

One can reach out to GNIDA portal — www.greaternoidaauthority.in — and click <https://investgnida.in/Home.aspx> and get on Citizen Dash Board. One can get the following information given below:

- Mitra App
- Online Services.
- Department wise Pendency.



The software has been integrated to deal with requests, complaints and grievances routed to the authority through the Mitra mobile app.

Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency
 First Floor, Directorate of Panchayatraj, Opp-T Park, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun

Ref. No. 233/11-02(xvii)/ITCO/URRDA/19 Dated : 01-06-2020
PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice (First & Second Call)

The Government of India has received a loan / credit number "LN 8864 IN" from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ International Development Association towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed in NIT. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the bidding documents.

The General Manager (Project), BRIDCUL on behalf of URRDA Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system (First & Second Call) for construction of Roads and Bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the **Barkot (District-Uttarkashi), Gairsain (District-Chamoli)** for 02 number of Package with estimated cost totaling to **Rs 1024.17 Lakh** including their maintenance 2 year for stage-1 & 5 year for stage-2 from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent".

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: **04-06-2020.**

Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstendersuk.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (ii) of ITB with the Projects related to Garhwal Mandal at office of **BRIDCUL HQ** Opp. Govt. ITI Majra, Niranjanpur, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun-248001. For Package No. **UT-13-38** submission of all physical documents will be accepted only up to or before the time and date of submission of bids (**04.07.2020 05:00 pm**) AND Package No. **UT-03-23** submission of all physical documents will be accepted only on a date not later than three working days (**22.06.2020 05:00 pm**) after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-tendering for Package No. (**UT-13-38**) **04.07.2020 01:00 PM** and Package No. (**UT-03-23**) **18.06.2020 01:00 PM**

For further details please log on to www.pmgstendersuk.gov.in.

Chief Engineer, URRDA, Dehradun

* Non Registered bidders may submit bids, however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

Note : For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2522941 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM, in any office days.

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No.	30-Elect-03-T-2020-21-E3
Name of and its location	Electrical work in connection with (i) Provision of replacement of signalling gears with distributed electronic interlocking at Delhi Shadara station. (ii) Provision of I&B between ROK-GHNA section of Delhi division. (iii) Provision of replacement of signalling gear on age cum condition basis with EI at Shamli section.
Approximate cost of the work	₹37.99 Lakh
Address of the office	Sr. Div. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi
Earnest Money	₹76,000.00
Date & Time of submission of tender	29.06.2020, 15:00 hrs.
Opening of tender	29.06.2020, 15:00 hrs.
Website & notice board	www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Div. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

1234/20

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that a woman namely **Jinat W/o Tasleem, R/o H.No. 958, Gali Patna Wali, Ballimaran, Chandni Chowk, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 25.03.2020 from her house the area of P.S. Jama Masjid, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No. 48A** dated **26.05.2020** has been lodged at PS, Jama Masjid, Delhi. The description of missing/kidnapped Woman is as under :

Jinat

Age : 32 years, Height : 5', Face : Long, Complexion : Fair, Build: Thin, Wearing : On Suit Salwar and sandal in feet. ID Mark : Left elbow bend due to old injury.

If anyone having any clue/information, about the missing/kidnapped Lady kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
 e-mail : clc@cbi.gov.in
 Fax : 011-24368639
 Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641
 DP/132/CD/2020

SHO P.S., Jama Masjid, Delhi Ph : 23261625, 23269777, 8750870422

Education on superhighway

COVID-19 has definitely opened up plenty of new avenues for learning as well as teaching. Students will now be more flexible in their approach to learn breaking away from the usual offline mode, says BRIJ MOHAN GUPTA

The IIT JEE is one of the toughest examinations worldwide and every year lakhs of students put in their best efforts to secure a seat in one of the coveted campuses of Indian Institute of Technology and National Institute of Technology. The battle to get into IITs and NITs is fought on many fronts — mental ability, endurance and perseverance. Students are prepared from an early age to excel on these fronts but this time the challenge is unprecedented.

The entire world is fighting an invisible enemy i.e. COVID-19. Who would have imagined that a country as large and diverse like India will be forced to go for strict lockdown? It has definitely created a unique situation for students in particular because all of a sudden they have to adjust to new socio-economic realities while keeping pace with their exam preparations to get into their dream institutions.

Thousands of students all over the country preparing for IIT JEE mains examination is one such group which is now finding novel ways to ensure that their preparations do not get derailed because of this catastrophe. The April 2020 session of JEE mains exam was all set to be held in April, which has now been rescheduled for July this year. While the examination conducting body National Testing Agency (NTA) is busy giving final touches to the plan, many students are worried that their session may get delayed but there are plenty of those who are taking this up as a blessing in disguise. The postponement of exam has given them some extra time to work on their weaker areas and get better prepared for the examination.

There are many students who have reached out to their respective faculties to clear their doubts on many chapters which are parts of a vast senior secondary curriculum. They are also revising their class notes and redoing study materials provided at their institutes.

Mock tests help mapping the speed and accuracy while familiarising students with the possible pattern of the exam. These tests are effective tools for self-evaluation. In addition to this, students are also utilising this extra time to attempt previous years' question papers to identify and strengthen their weak areas. All of it is making students comfortable and prepare for the exam



with better skills and more confidence.

Many students have opted for online mode to attempt these tests because of restriction in mobility imposed due to lockdown. National Testing Agency(NTA) too has come up with National Test Abhyaas app for the students preparing for engineering and medical entrance tests. The app offers immediate scores with the explanations of the answer and the complete analysis of how student attempted the paper including time spent by the student on each section. Students from across the country can take full mock tests in order to hone their skills ahead of the mains examinations.

A lot of students have opted for subject videos freely available on YouTube, which may never substitute the essence of actual classroom learning but they have come as a great learning tool in these testing times. There is a large repository of free educational videos made by good teachers on YouTube. Many teachers have uploaded full syllabus subject course on it. Many

A lot of students have opted for subject videos freely available on YouTube, which may never substitute the essence of actual classroom learning but they have come as a great learning tool in these testing times

have uploaded even revision video lectures for the chapters in which they discussed important points, formulae and concepts from that chapter and explained some relevant numerical questions.

There are many teachers who are conducting online live revision classes through live streaming at very nominal fee and sometime absolutely free-of-cost just to help students.

COVID-19 has definitely opened up plenty of new avenues for learning as well as teaching.

Students will now be more flexible in their approach to learn breaking away from the usual offline mode and embracing as much online modes as possible. This is also going to work majorly in favour of students from rural area and second and third tier cities, where good coaching institutes are a luxury.

During this lockdown, when students and teachers can't meet in real for academic discussions, teachers are available on phones. Students can ask their doubts on WhatsApp or even on

call to teachers. Many online interaction/meeting apps like Zoom, Microsoft teams and Google classroom are also available which offer a very smooth live interaction with advantages of screen sharing, whiteboard and camera options. Students are taking online classes, doubt discussions and counselling frequently through these apps. The whole process of digital learning and teaching has been fast forwarded. COVID-19 has actually encouraged students increase their adapting ability with new situations, self-reliance and better preparations.

COVID-19 is a health issue that is going to stay around us. While examinations are very important, students should first take care of their health, take good nutrition, ensure uninterrupted sleep patterns and maintain a positive mental attitude. It always helps to practice meditation and yoga to ensure their mental and physical being is in sync. It is heartening to see that most of the students have successfully found solution to this problem.

The writer is Founder, Vidyamandir Classes

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Education, whatever else it should or should not be, must be an inoculation against the poisons of life and an adequate equipment in knowledge and skill for meeting the chances of life.
— Havelock Ellis

SRM students shine

Ten students of SRM Institute of Science and Technology (Kattankulathur and Modi Nagar campus) are now part of Amazon Campus Mentorship Series (ACMS) internship linked placement.

These students will undergo four classroom sessions over a course of 24 weeks. Each session is of four-six hours. These students started their mentorship on March 27 virtually and will be asked to visit the Amazon centre a few times during the series. SRMIST is few education institutions in the country to send its students for this mentorship.

The BTech pre-final students who are part of this series are Shailli Shah, Rhea Chandok, Anushka Svara, Lekha K, Akanksha Sonkar, Deepanwita Mukherjee, Nikita Gupta, Ishita Mandvakar, Sreya Goswami and Niharika Raj.

ACMS encourages women to work at corporate offices through a series of workshops, training, and business communication. This follows the model of classroom-based learning. Along with these sessions, students are grouped and assigned a small project to give them an opportunity to apply the learning. Students who clear final interviews will receive a six-month internship with Amazon. Others will be awarded with participation certificates.

According to Sriram S Padmanabhan, Director Career Centre, SRMIST, these students were selected through two rounds of online tests (a combination of aptitude and coding), each being an elimination round. Amazon has selected the most number of students from



Shailli Tarun Shah
BTech pre-final student, SRMIST

SRMIST. A note from Amazon's HR desk stated that the most number of students in the Tamil Nadu region have been selected from SRMIST.

Sharing her excitement is Sreya Goswami, a third-year BTech student. "I am grateful for the opportunity given. The ACMS programme has started, teams and mentors have been allotted and project topics have been assigned. It is a great learning opportunity at this early stage and getting to learn a lot about corporate requirements," says this young techie.

Sharing this excitement is Ishita Mandvakar, who is also one of the 10 students. "The sessions for the same are taking place every Friday and we have also started our project work. The ACMS is a great initiative by Amazon and has given a lot of confidence to people like me. Getting an opportunity to work with the best minds and understanding industry way of working which is preparing me better for future careers," says Ishita Mandvakar.

Exchange ideas and skills

The foreign exchange programmes not only help students learn international pedagogy, but also give them a chance to experience the best of both worlds in terms of academic and cultural diversity, says DR PRATIMA SHEOREY

Imparting right knowledge and skill to the youth, paves the way for a country's progressive future. Providing a comprehensive learning experience is imperative to ensure they can choose a direction that helps them succeed. Not only within the country but also in the international arena. Education institutions and the Government have realised this vision over the years. Hence, they have been actively involved in promoting reforms through various policies and projects to create educational opportunities that prepare Indian students to match international standards, until the lockdown happened.

AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) and UGC (University Grants Commission) issued guidelines in 2016 to increase synergies between Indian and Foreign Universities. Since then, the education sector has seen a substantial rise in collaborations with coveted foreign universities from countries such as Canada, England, Australia, Netherlands, USA, etc.

To further assess the phenomenal positive impact, let us look at how these foreign collaborations with Indian institutes are empowering the education sector:

Twinning programmes for an innovative curriculum: This takes



place when an Indian student enrolls for a course at an Indian educational institute, and the study is divided between both the Indian institute and its foreign collaborator. However, to begin twinning programmes in India, both the Indian and international institutions are required to sign an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding). Which, many institutes in India have actively gotten into.

The collaboration enables students to learn from a curriculum aligned with international pedagogy, thereby students acquire skills that match with their global peers. They also get a chance to experience the best of both worlds in terms of academic and cultural diversity.

Affordable foreign education through distance programmes: Not all students can travel abroad to access foreign education. For those who have the talent and aspire for an overseas education but are held back due to various constraints, benefit immensely from such collaborations. Many foreign universities offer distance programmes to Indian students through e-learning teaching methodologies, MOOCs and webinars. They cost comparatively less as the students do not have to spend money on travelling and accommodation. Also, they have the option of pursuing their dream of completing their degree while managing other obligations.

Global exposure for both stu-

dents and faculties: Numerous educational institutes offer student exchange programmes and faculty exchange programmes. They provide cross-cultural exposure to both the students and the faculty. The students gain a global perspective while the teaching faculty get an opportunity to exchange ideas in the entire process. Thereby, augmenting the overall learning experience.

Indian institutes collaborating with foreign universities, also paves the way for investment opportunities into the country. A rise in investment in the education sector means improved infrastructure, better amenities, higher salaries, greater scholarships and ultimately, an increase in the overall quality of education. Also, due to numerous reasons, students move abroad to pursue higher education which causes a brain drain in the country. However, giving them similar opportunities where they have access to the same quality of education with lucrative career prospects will provide them with an incentive to stay in India. Thus, their knowledge and skills will contribute to their own country's growth and prosperity.

The writer is Director, Symbiosis Centre for Management and Human Resource Development, Pune

Virtual is new normal

The key to successful online learning is not the choice of tools, but the quality of the learning activities that students engage in, says DR SRIDHAR G

The education sector has seen rapid changes in the wake of the pandemic, with schools and colleges finding different ways to adapt to the new situation. It has resulted in educational institutions across the world being compelled to suddenly harness and utilise the suite of available technological tools to create content for remote learning for students. Educators are experiencing new possibilities to do things differently with greater flexibility. This has resulted in potential benefits in accessibility to education for students. It has made all the educational institutions across the world adopt online teaching. These are new modes of instruction that have earlier been largely untapped particularly in the kindergarten to Class XII.

We have been talking about virtual classrooms and various online tools that allow us to make the engagement between the teacher and students as close to a real, in classroom type experience, which has become a reality now. In order to support this revolution, there will be a boom in creative ed-tech solutions and learning options for students and teachers alike in the coming years. The onus is on the education sector to investigate ways to make learning more student and teacher friendly. Students will have access to different platforms or modes of learning, enhanced by technology and supported by an increased focus on life



skills. The key to successful online learning is not the choice of tools, but the quality of the learning activities that students engage in using those tools. These steps will definitely help strengthen the country's digital learning infrastructure in the long run.

There is no doubt that the coronavirus is going to be with us for a while and certain precautionary measures are a must to support our way into the new future. As institutions are awaiting government policies to help academia function during this time, certain practices like social distancing within the buses and classes, maintaining one student per seat in the bus and conducting classes at 50

per cent strength while alternating with online classes, an increased focus on hygiene and sanitisation within the college premises are necessary.

In a way the pandemic has revealed the ability of society to quickly evolve to challenges and has triggered a much-needed digital revolution that will change the way students receive education in India and will result in a more integrated learning model. Post COVID-19 is an opportunity to transform the education system and this opportunity should be utilised to the fullest to bring the required change.

The writer is Founder, Deeksha

Online exams at BML Munjal University

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BML Munjal University (BMU), a Hero Group initiative, has commenced online examinations for all students of the School of Law & School of Management, starting May 18 2020, till May 29, 2020. The exams are being conducted using existing technical platforms of BMU and using facilities from Mercer Mettl. BMU completely transitioned the learning process online, prior to the lockdown being announced. All academic activities are being conducted

online, from classes to submitting assignments and hosting guest lectures by renowned experts

Talking about this innovative methodology for conducting examinations, Dr. Manoj K Arora, Vice Chancellor, BMU said: "This is a unique way of conducting assessments and BMU is one of the first few universities to do so. All our students and faculty were adequately prepared before the exams began, given BMU's tech orientation and familiarity with online teaching, thus ensuring a smooth

conduct of the examinations. This sets a precedent for other institutions conducting examinations, thereby reducing the use of pen and paper and migrating to newer technologies."

The technologies ensure that there are absolutely no hindrances in the conduction of exams. Students must install the recommended browser on their laptops before the exam for enhanced security. This prohibits running of any software in the background and bars the student from using any other applications.

Campus connect 2.0

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The AGS Transact Technologies Limited (AGSTTL), one of India's leading

providers of end-to-end cash and digital payment solutions & automation technology announced the commencement of Campus Connect 2.0, a flagship brainstorming competition with a webinar on May 30, 2020. Campus Connect is a

platform for students to use their innovative mindset and get a chance to bootstrap their career with AGS Transact.

Campus Connect is a platform under the initiative, Horizon, where-in students with great minds across the country are invited and work with the ingenious team thereby gaining an exposure to the payments industry and making contributions to it. At the

same time, AGS is also working towards transforming their hiring process as they are now recruiting all the interns and management trainees through Campus Connect only.

Sunil Khosla, Chief Marketing Officer, AGS Transact Technologies & President — Digital Business and Capt. Partha Samai, Group Head — Human Resources, AGS Transact Technologies were

speakers of the webinar titled "Innovations in Payment".

They talked about digital payments in the current scenario, post Covid-19 business outlook and hiring plans, wherein, the focus will shift more from IQ to EQ, adaptability and preparedness. Students also participated in a quiz after the webinar session and winners were rewarded with vouchers.

Admissions open

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Rabindranath Tagore University (RNTU), which is under the aegis of the prestigious AICTE Group of Universities, has announced admissions open for the 2020 session. Owing to the COVID-19 lockdown, the admission process for the year has gone 100% online where-in students are provided with the facilities of online admissions and online fee payment.

The counsellors will connect with the students through various apps and the university will also arrange free career counseling sessions for students who have appeared for Class XII exams.

Free online classes on personality development, english communication and soft skills are also being provided. Students can visit the website www.rntu.ac.in to check the eligibility criteria.

COVID-19 and social distancing do not mean that you have to disappear and your career takes a backseat. Social media can play a great role in ensuring you are noticed, says DR JATIN CHADHA



‘An E-MBA can accelerate career’

One impact of COVID-19 lockdown is that many managers have taken the opportunity to re-assess their career plans to go for further studies. An executive MBA can be the way forward, says DR GARY STOCKPORT

What is an Executive MBA (E-MBA)?

It is a generalist management qualification which has the goal to develop strong all-round managerial capability. Its purpose is to provide a platform of knowledge, skills and competencies to help craft future leaders. Intertwined with all this is both career acceleration and career adaption. Typically, an E-MBA is for mid-career working professionals with at least three-five years management experience. However, many bring 10-plus year experience into the classroom. An E-MBA provides a huge and rich learning opportunity for sharing and learning with like-minded working professionals. Also, the networking impact might prove to be enormously beneficial.



Dr Gary Stockport, Dean E-MBA & Professor Strategy, SP Jain School of Global Management

The course offered by us is a structured sequence of courses organised in stages. This includes: Basics (the essentials) of management like Management Accounting, Corporate Finance and Marketing Management; Cross-functional management including courses such as Strategic Innovation and Business Strategy; Electives including the opportunity to specialise in areas like Finance, Marketing and Operations and doing an Applied Business Project, typically towards the end. This structure enables a student to wear many hats.

The E-MBA courses have been increasingly realised that building soft skills are critically important for effective managers and future leaders. Softer skills includes everything from listening more attentively, emotional intelligence, building resilience and grit, to making an effective sales presentation. Soft skills are built into an E-MBA through a course like Personal Effectiveness or through offering specialist workshops.

What is the duration?

It usually takes 18-24 month to complete and can cost approximately ₹15-16 lakh per annum. It is a part-time qualification with students still working full-time. It is offered in a face-to-face mode within a traditional classroom learning environment, via online and or a combination of the two in some sort of a

mixed blended learning format. As technology continues to improve a virtual classroom has increasingly and more efficiently been brought into a person's home or workspace.

Who are the people/sectors that can benefit from this course?

The batch is usually very diverse in terms of the people attending including work experience. An E-MBA appeals to persons who have an engineering background and want to move to a more generalist position.

The goal of doing an E-MBA is to help both career acceleration and career adaption. This includes the ability to speed up a manager's career trajectory as well as seize transforming career opportunities as they come along.

Over a longer period of time, persons armed with an E-MBA have reached CEO positions. It has also been noted that doing an E-MBA gives confidence to people start their own venture and subsequently growing them into a substantial size through building a scalable business model. Therefore, it has been concluded that calculating the return on investment on the initial fee and time spent studying could well prove to be infinite! It's not the cost that is important but the return.

BE A RUNWAY SUCCESS

Social media is a very vibrant and visual medium. It is considered as the new norm that can be optimised to your advantage to source good projects and to get noticed especially during the COVID-19 lockdown and social distancing. You want to make sure you present yourself such that you come across as a seasoned professional would in order to. Here are some pointers:

Enhance visibility quotient: As a designer in any discipline, be it graphic, interior, communication, product, web, or fashion your online portfolio is the summary of your capabilities and offers the prospective client a window into your mind, your imagination and your worldview. Make sure they get to see it from the best possible angle. How can you do that? Ensure that you have your portfolio on a good platform like Deviant Art, Behance, Adobe Creative Space and Issuu. Showcase your creativity by using hashtags and labelling your work under several category heads to enhance visibility.

Focus on displaying versatility: Your portfolio should be a curation of your best work, but you also need to showcase the breadth and range of your versatility as a designer. You may have done a brilliant

piece of designing for a smaller brand name. Go right ahead and include such projects that display your versatility and breadth as a designer.

Also, do walk the viewer through the process of creation with the work in progress (WIP) pictures. A good portfolio is a visual treat and must take the viewer through all the different aspects of your repertoire. They would love to know how the idea germinated in your mind, what worked for your project, what didn't work and how you finally fixed it. Designers are known to be problem solvers and an innovative way of addressing the situation is always an eye catcher.

Follow favourite brands and be updated with the latest trends: Keep abreast with the latest developments and trends and incorporate them in your designing elements. Follow your favourite brands and designers to know what are the current trends and latest innovations. This will help you think beyond confining parameters and discover something new to add to your work. Improve your network links to external sources by tagging designer-friends who have a lot of following, so that your work gets noticed by more and more people. There are niche networking sites for

Your portfolio must reflect your personality, worldview, thought process, experimentations and innovations. It must be kept updated always. You never know when an opportunity will come your way

every segment and style of designing. Use the social media platforms to draw inspiration from different sources. Expose yourself to what students from different parts of the world are ideating and creating. It will influence the individualistic interpretation of your work. Pitch for originality. Unconventional ideas are the buzzword in the current design landscape and community.

Learn new skills and get feedback from experts in the area: Solicit feedback from veterans and established designers in your discipline of designing. You can use the challenges set out by the many design firms on Facebook and LinkedIn to compete and start making a name for yourselves. You can also pick up projects online and gain work experience which you can then display in your portfolio. Inject life-blood into your online website by introducing a blog. The ongoing pandemic has placed time in your hands.

The lock down period can be channelised wonderfully by enrolling in online sessions as per your own schedule. You have the flexibility of attending as many or as few classes as you can assimilate from the comfort of your home. There is a plethora of possibilities for a design student if only he

chooses to focus on possibilities and inculcates a 'can do' attitude.

Your portfolio is your calling card: Your portfolio must reflect your personality, your worldview, your thought process, experimentations, interpretations and innovations. One look at your portfolio and the viewer starts to subconsciously conceptualise the kind of work he/she can expect from you. You need to be able to visually convey the value adds that you will bring to the project. An in-depth portfolio with a range of different projects, creatively depicted, will go a long way to make you stand out as a designer. Your portfolio must be kept updated always. You never know when an opportunity will come your way.

You need to focus on not only the content of the portfolio but also on the manner in which you are going to exhibit your portfolio on social media. Social media has completely replaced traditional forms of marketing and it is the place where business is being done and promoted. Make sure you leverage this medium to the utmost to connect with key clients to either source projects or procure an employment opportunity.

The writer Director, Indian Institute of Art and Design

At the launch of 2020-21 Budget, Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance Minister had highlighted about the new educational policy which the Government is currently working on. A draft version of the policy outlines the important role online learning could play in reforming India's education system and expanding access to higher education. Who knew that it will happen within few months?

Self-quarantine and social-distancing during the times of Coronavirus pandemic have forced the educational institutions to suspend classes and shift to the online medium in order to continue the process of education. Internet has brought a revolution across different sectors

right from the way we order food, book a cab or for that matter in our education. Teachers have been using technology in their classrooms to make the learning interesting for students, and at the same time, students have been using Internet predominantly to do more in-depth research on the subjects.

Online learning is a very convenient mode for students, provided they have good bandwidth. However, similar to classroom education, it requires self-discipline, time management skills, determination and a strong motivation. Here are some ways you can make yourself ready to accept the new change of e-learning:

Give importance to your online class like your real one: As this is a new form of

MINDIT

learning, there are chances that the students might not take it seriously as they have teachers to monitor them. One should make it a habit to sit for their online class with sincerity. There might be some problem in understanding a concept at one go. But don't fret. You can replay the recording later when you study the topic again. It's advisable that students should read about the topic before

Bridging the teacher gap: According to a report issued by Ministry of Human Resource and Development pointed out that mostly schools have less number of faculty

members than the required numbers because of which they don't able to focus on each students in the classrooms. This had made the students unable to utilise their time effectively in the classrooms. But, now with evolving technology, there are new developments. The information at one click has made the education process interesting and knowledgeable. Through online learning, students not only have the access to quality education but also seasoned professional and professors. They make the learning process fun by introducing puzzle and

quizzes to hold the attention of the kids.

The associated cost of online learning is low: Online learning has made the whole education process affordable. How? If you calculate the total cost of enrolling into a college/university for higher education then you will find that less than the one-time cost attached to online learning. Not just the education, the student has to take care of lodging and commuting as well. Quality education comes at a high cost, but with the advent of e-learning resources, students can access it at a much lower cost through e-learning since there is no spending on lodging and commuting as well. With the advent of e-learning resources, students can access quality education at a much lower

cost.

Can't forget classroom learning too: We are thankful that the coronavirus pandemic has brought a progressive change in the education system, which is battling issues like skill-gap, unemployment, outdated syllabus, lack of hands-on practical experience, lack of quality educators, and so forth. But at the same time, classroom education has its own benefits. We can't completely rule out the advents of classroom education. In these challenging times, the online education will surely bridge the gap in the education ecosystem and give the requisite room for improvement.

The writer is Dr RL Raina, Vice-chancellor, JK Lakshmiipat University, Jaipur



The VIBGYOR Group of Schools has rolled out a first-of-its-kind scholarship programme — VIBGYOR EduBridge Scholarship Programme, for the benefit of the parents who have been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is to provide financial support to the parents who have been affected due to the lockdown.

The programme has been designed by a team of experts who have rolled-out the scholarship in the last seven days and offered support and assistance to parents. The scholarship is aimed at ensuring that continuity of education is maintained and all stakeholders including teachers, students and parents' needs have been suitably addressed.

The scholarship will be awarded after evaluation of the financial situation of the parents impacted by COVID-19 and the results will be announced by mid-June. Parents across all schools have already been communicated about the scholarship roll-out and have been urged to apply for it to access the benefits of the programme. The programme is available across all 38 schools

in 14 cities, for the benefit of the parents whose earnings have been impacted by the pandemic and we are wholeheartedly encouraging parents to opt for this programme.

The University of Strathclyde invites applications for Dean's International Excellence Award from international students on merit-based scholarship.

Number: 50
Value up to: £4,000
Subject: Education, English, History, Law, Modern languages, Physical activity for health, Politics, Psychology, Social work and social policy, Speech and language therapy, Journalism, Creative writing

Duration: One year
Eligibility: Candidates must: Be available to commence their academic studies in the UK by the start of the academic year in September/October 2020. Have an offer of study for a full time, PG, Humanities and Social Sciences programme at the university.

For more information: <https://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/scholarships/humanitiesocialsciences/deansinternationalexcellenceaward-post-graduate/taught/or-contact-hass-pg-enquiries@strath.ac.uk>
Application deadline: It is May 31, 2020.

CONTENT WRITING AT NERDY SOLUTIONS

Location: Delhi, Gurgaon
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/3987448
Application deadline: June 25, 2020

HR AT CREATORSHALA

Location: Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/3987450
Application deadline: June 25, 2020

COOKING AT THE GOOSEBUMPS

Location: Lucknow
Stipend: ₹12,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/3987451
Application deadline: June 21, 2020

BUSINESS DEV (SALES) AT GLOBAL WASHCARE

Location: Chandigarh, Mohali, Zirakpur, Panchkula
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/3987452
Application deadline: June 25, 2020

GRAPHIC DESIGN AT OPOENTEQ BRIDGE

Location: Ranchi
Stipend: ₹4,000-₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/3987453
Application deadline: June 19, 2020

JOURNALISM & CONTENT WRITING (RESEARCH-BASED) AT FORWARD EYE LOCATION:

Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹7,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/3987454
Application deadline: June 23, 2020

CONTENT WRITING AT MUSE

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/3987457
Application deadline: June 25, 2020

STUDY ABROAD

Start preparing for global workforce

Due to the lockdown, new online programmes that are on offer will help students to gain comprehensive education

The Simplilearn, a global provider of digital skills training has announced its collaboration with Caltech's Center for Technology and Management Education (CTME) to offer a specialised PG programme in DevOps. The CTME joins Purdue



University, US and a growing list of higher education partners offering joint professional learning programmes. The blended learning environment combines live online classes, self-paced learning, labs and projects, extensive peer-interaction, and 24/7 access to Teaching Assistants (TA's).

The online programme will be offered in India and select international locations to help prepare a global workforce for advances in software engineering. Aspiring developers and technologists will learn essential skills in architecture, coding, and cloud computing.

On completion of the programme, learners will have a core understanding of various automa-

tion tools for developing digital pipelines (continuous integration/continuous development) and designs, and implementing software integration. Learners will be equipped with the skillset to manage workflow automation through integration and deployment processes, along with front-end and back-end coding skills.

Along with a comprehensive curriculum that covers the core concepts and the latest industry best practices, the programme also provides over 20 live projects to work on, Capstone projects in four industry domains, and Masterclass from experts at CTME. This blended learning approach ensures that the programme participants receive an in-depth understanding of the fundamentals and abundant opportunities for hands-on practice and learning.

On completion of the programme, participants will receive a joint industry-recognised certificate and be eligible for 25 Continued Education Units that can be applied to professional qualifications and employer development requirements. The graduates will also be enrolled in JobAssist placement service.

IN BRIEF

ONLINE REMOTE PROCTORED TEST FOR NEET

The extension of lockdown has led to the postponement of competitive exams including the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test, which is now scheduled for July 26, 2020. The extra two months before the exam offers an opportunity for students to efficiently prepare.

In line with the Government's efforts towards encouraging students to adequately prepare through mock tests, Pearson India has announced support for NEET students and institutes by launching the first ever all India online remote proctored test called MyInsights

NEET online test series. The test will be conducted on June 13, with exam like ranks for the students.

Additionally, the test series offers three all India non-proctored tests on NEET syllabus, one full-length test on Class XI syllabus and NEET 2019 previous year paper with solution. The series will help students to practice constructively and get instant reports on their attempt with NEET relevant scores.

Students can visit Pearson MyInsights to register for test series to aid their preparation at a discounted price of ₹499.

INNOVATIVE INTERNSHIP FOR RICS SBE STUDENTS

The RICS School of Built Environment (SBE) Amity University has implemented an innovative internship idea for its present students. Usually the students go through a mandatory two-month internship in the industry, but in the face of the lockdown, the institute has innovatively transformed the internships into intensive research projects based on the specific needs of the industry.

Commenting on this positive development at RICS SBE, Ashwani Awasthi, MD said: "Knowing that the students will be disappointed on missing

the opportunity to gain direct industry exposure as they can't go out, we decided to bring the industry home to them. A lot of thought and effort was put into organizing these internships so that students can get as close an industry experience as possible under the present trying circumstances."

The internship team brainstormed and prepared a list of research topics related to issues for which the industry is looking for answers. Students chose their projects according to their interests and were assigned a mentor and industry veteran who guided them.

E-SUMMER CAMP FOR SAI STUDENTS

To keep the children engaged and raise their spirits this summer, SAI International has come up with a unique Summer Camp. Owing to the current situation, SAI International has shifted its annual Summer Camp from the offline to the online mode, defining a new normal. The first of its kind E-summer camp will continue till June 14, 2020.

Students from play group to Class XII from SAI Angan, SAI International School and SAI International Residential School will sharpen their 21st century skills and augment their creative minds, through a gamut of interesting activities. To provide students an immersive learning experience, age-appropriate activities are designed, keeping in view students' interest and aptitude.

SHARING IS CARING

Leipzig prove that goals can come from anywhere on the pitch in 4-2 win over Köln

AFP ■ COLOGNE

RB Leipzig returned to third place in the Bundesliga with an entertaining 4-2 victory at Köln on Monday.

Jhon Cordoba claimed the early advantage for the home side but Leipzig scored four in 37 minutes, including Timo Werner's 31st in all competitions, to climb back above Borussia Moenchengladbach and Bayer Leverkusen in the hunt for a Champions League place.

"We wanted the three points, we succeeded. But it is annoying that we fell behind early and wasted a few chances," Leipzig's managing director Oliver Mintzlaff told broadcaster DAZN.

"We are back on course for the Champions League which is our goal, but the pressure is great. Everyone has to go all in, be totally focused and focused," he added.

The hosts' boss Markus Gisdol made four changes from Wednesday's loss at Hoffenheim, starting Rafael Czichos in place of suspended Sebastian Bournauw, red carded in the defeat.

Leipzig's Julian Nagelsmann switched both his wing-backs from Wednesday's draw to Hertha Berlin as Angelino, on loan from Manchester City, and French youth international Nordi Mukiele started.

The home side took the early lead as Cordoba poached for his 10th home goal of the campaign.

Midfielder Elvis Rexhbecaj's



Leipzig's forward Patrik Schick, front left, FC Köln defender Toni Leistner, center, & goalkeeper Timo Horn, front right, battle for the ball during Bundesliga match

effort deflected onto the far post and the Colombian finished from the rebound after seven minutes.

The sides were level 13 minutes later as Schick headed home Angelino's cross to start the flutter of goals.

Things went from bad to worse for Gisdol's men four minutes later as Cordoba was forced off with an injury and replaced by Anthony Modeste.

Leipzig's took the lead eight minutes from the break as

Christopher Nkunku claimed his first goal since January.

Austria midfielder Konrad Laimer played a clever ball into the box and former Paris Saint-Germain attacker Nkunku dinked his finish over the onrushing Timo Horn.

WERNER AFTER BREAK

Leipzig went further ahead three minutes into the second-half as Werner, who has been linked with a move to Premier League leaders



FIGURATIVELY

3 For the first time ever, 3 different teams in the Bundesliga have accumulated at least 74 goals after 29 matchdays

19 RB Leipzig have gained 19 points from losing position in the current Bundesliga season. The last team to collect more has been Wolfsburg in 2013/14 (21 after 34 Games)

1 With his assist for Timo Werner's goal Peter Gulasci becomes the first keeper to be involved in a goal in the current Bundesliga season

15 FC Cologne have now scored in 15 consecutive Bundesliga games - their longest scoring streak in 33 years (from November 1986 until August 1987 under coach Christoph Daum)

Liverpool, raced clear in a rapid counter-attack and beat Horn with a side-footed finish.

Köln hit back four minutes later as Leipzig failed to clear outside their area and Modeste curled home a shot.

Leipzig's two-goal lead was re-established less than two minutes later as Spain midfielder Dani Olmo scored his first goal since joining Leipzig in January with a curling shot of

Torino vs Parma kicks off Serie A return on June 20

AFP ■ ROME

Serie A will return after a three-month coronavirus-enforced absence on June 20 with Torino hosting Parma in the first of four postponed matches on the opening weekend, the Italian league confirmed.

The championship will resume with fixtures which were called off when Italian sports was suspended on March 9 because of the coronavirus.

The first match will be 15th-placed Torino versus ninth-ranked Parma at 7.30 pm (1730GMT) on June 20 followed by Hellas Verona, in eighth, versus Cagliari, in 12th, at 9.45pm.

The following day fourth-placed Atalanta will host mid-table Sassuolo at 7.30 pm while Inter Milan, in third, will be at home against relegation-threatened Sampdoria at 9.45 pm.

Most teams have 12 games left to play with 124 matches remaining, to be played in 43 days from June 20 to August 2.

After the four catch-up games, the 27th round of action will be played with matches scheduled from Monday, June 22 through to Wednesday, June 24.

Maurizio Sarri's Juventus who are bidding for a ninth consecutive title, travel to Bologna for their first game back on Monday with second-place Lazio at Atalanta on Wednesday.



Juventus players play football during team's training session ahead of Serie A restart

Juventus will host Lazio on July 20 at 9.45pm.

The league has not yet confirmed the dates for the Italian Cup, which is expected to be completed the week before Serie A restarts, with the final on June 17.

The return legs of the semi-finals remain to be played with Juventus facing AC Milan and Napoli playing Inter Milan.

Most of the matches will be played at 7.30pm and 9.45pm, because of the summer heat in Italy, with only ten games scheduled earlier at 5.15pm, in the north of the country.

Games will be played behind closed doors and adhering to a strict health protocol, whereby the entire group must go into a training camp retreat



for two weeks in the case of a positive test for Covid-19.

Italian football federation president Gabriele Gravina said he hoped that a small number of fans will be able to attend matches before the season finishes.

"It is my heartfelt wish to be able to see a small presence in stadium for the end of the championship," said Gravina.

"It seems unthinkable that in a stadium with 60,000 seats, there is no space for a minimal percentage of spectators who can attend the match with all necessary precautions.

"Certainly it is premature today but with the resumption of the championship, there could be a new little signal of hope for our country."

Ageas Bowl, Old Trafford to host Eng-WI Tests



AFP ■ LONDON

England will play three Tests at home to the West Indies in July, subject to British Government clearance to return behind closed doors, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced on Tuesday.

The first Test will take place at Hampshire's Ageas Bowl ground from July 8-12, with the second and third Tests at Old Trafford in Manchester on July 16-20 and July 24-28.

The West Indies, who agreed in principle to take part in the series last week, are due to arrive in England on June 9 and will then be based at Old Trafford for a three-week period of quarantine and training before travelling down to Southampton.

ECB director of events Steve Elworthy said: "Our main objective is to deliver a safe environment for all stakeholders including players, match officials, operational staff, essential venue staff, broadcasters and media.

"We are in daily dialogue with Government and our medical team, who have been incredibly supportive during this period. These are our proposed dates and they remain subject to UK Government approval.

"We would like to thank Cricket West Indies for their co-operation and dedication in making this tour a reality, and we all look forward to the prospect of cricket returning in the coming weeks."

Covid break could prolong my career: Anderson

LONDON: Veteran England fast bowler James Anderson reckons the coronavirus enforced break from the game could extend his career "by a year or two". English record Test wicket taker, who is in the twilight of his career, said the break could lead to something good for him.

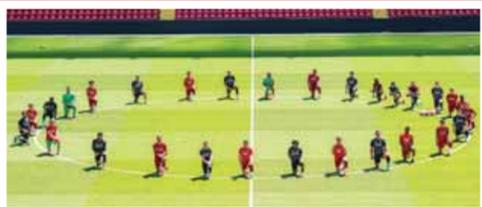
"It (the break) could just add on a year or two at the end of my career," Anderson said on the BBC podcast *Tailenders*.

The 37-year-old, who last played in January before suffering an injury, is part of the 55-member group that has been asked by the England Cricket Board (ECB) to return to training, ahead of the West Indies Test series.

"I've really enjoyed being back and as odd as it is just bowling into a net, with not many people around, it's still nice to be back and playing cricket," Anderson said. *PTI*

The series should have started at The Oval in south London on Thursday, with the second and third Tests originally scheduled for Edgbaston and Lord's.

But the fixtures — now behind closed doors matches — were moved to the Ageas Bowl and Old Trafford for reasons of bio-security, with both grounds having on-site hotels where players and officials can be closely monitored.



Liverpool players showed their solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement following the death of George Floyd in the United States by taking a knee around the centre circle at Anfield on Monday. Reds stars including Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold tweeted the same photograph with the words 'Unity is strength', accompanied by the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Made famous by former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick's kneeling during pre-game renditions of the US national anthem, bending down on one knee has become a symbol in the fight against racial injustice. *Liverpool FC/Twitter*

Dhoni's IPL 'preparations were different this time': Raina

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Out of favour batsman Suresh Raina has revealed that unlike previous editions, former India captain MS Dhoni was preparing in a different way for this year's edition of the Indian Premier League which currently stands indefinitely postponed.

Dhoni and Raina had started their preparations for IPL 13 from March 3 for the tournament earlier slated to stand from March 29.

"The first few days he took it lightly and just focused on going to the gym but he was playing the shots beautifully and his fitness level was great and he was not getting tired," Raina said while speaking on *Star Sports* show *Cricket Connected*.

"His preparations were different this time, I have played with him over the years with the national side and IPL getting ready but it was different this time, so I just hope the matches can start quickly then everyone can see how well prepared he is and see what I saw myself LIVE in the two months of camp that we had," he added.

The 2020 IPL is supposed to see return of Dhoni to cricketing action as the wicket-keeper is on a break since playing in the semi-final of the 2019 World



Cup where India lost to New Zealand.

"When someone works hard, then the prayers and blessings find their way to them," said Raina.

"The best thing was, (Ambati) Rayudu, myself, Mahi bhai and Murali (Vijay) were batting in a group and Mahi bhai bats for long hours when he is in Chennai for about 2-4 hours.

"But this time he was just not getting tired of batting. He was doing his gym in the morning, followed by batting for three hours in the evening," he added.

We'll have four-phased training module for match-readiness: Sridhar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's fielding coach R Sridhar says a four-phased training module is being prepared for the country's elite cricketers, who can attain peak match fitness with four to six weeks of training once the camp gets the go-ahead to start.

"I think if you have a camp for 4-6 weeks, we can bring them to peak match readiness...Fast bowler needs around 6 weeks, batsmen might take a bit less time," Sridhar said.

"Once we get a date (on start of national camp) from the BCCI and approved by the Government, we can start working backwards (starting from scratch). The challenge is to proceed in right phases as players can get excited when they play after 14 or 15 weeks.

"It's pertinent that we move in right manner forward. Don't want to look too much ahead," he explained.

Sridhar stressed on workload management and warned that pushing too hard would only cause injuries.

"Initially, we have to give them progressive workload. You can't have a sudden spike in workload which could lead to injuries," said the former Hyderabad left-arm spinner.

The coach then explained how they can go about it.

"First phase, it will be 'low volume-low intensity', followed by 'moderate volume-low intensity', 'high volume-moderate intensity' and then starts 'high volume-high intensity' training. This is how we will go," he said.

And what will constitute low-volume-low intensity training? Sridhar said it would vary.

"May be the fast bowlers will bowl two overs from half or quarter run-up. The deliveries will be bowled at 20 or 30 percent intensity. For a fielder, it will be at the maximum, six throws over 10 metres or 6 throws over 20 metres at 40 to 50 per cent intensity.

"For a batsman, it will start with five to six minutes of batting against moderate pace bowling," he explained.

"For catchers, it will start with semi-soft balls, intensity will be slow and volumes will be less. Then we can slowly pick it up as we



Indian fielding coach R Sridhar chats with Ravindra Jadeja during practice session

PTI/File Picture

cross one phase after another," he said.

It will be around the fourth week that match-intensity training will start and then

slowly, the players will enter the zone where they get match ready.

"We can't do same training every day as we start with low volume-low intensity training. Once we get to the fourth week when high volume-high intensity training starts, the hands will get used to hard balls coming at 140km an hour, 130km an hour, that's when match-training will start.

"The sharpest minds will take six weeks to get into Test match mode," the 49-year-old opined.

He agreed that duration of getting into peak match readiness physically and mentally will vary from player to player but the aim for the coaches will be to have everyone on the same page when the camp ends.

"Definitely, there would be different intensity level, (it will vary) from player to player. That's what the sport is all about. Each player has to be different. We understand that. Each one will take slightly different time to get into the peak readiness.

"Someone will do it 4 weeks and some one will take 3 to 4 days more or there may be someone who may take 3-4 sessions more. We respect that. As coaches, our job is to get everybody on the same page at the end of the camp."

India's attitude towards fitness influenced B'desh players: Tamim

NEW DELHI: Senior cricketer Tamim Iqbal has no qualms in admitting that Bangladesh closely followed Indian cricket, and said the 'Tigers' change in attitude towards fitness was influenced by Virat Kohli and his men.

"I think because India is our neighbour country, we follow a lot of things about what's happening in India. Indian cricket's change in approach towards fitness influenced Bangladesh cricket the most," the left-handed opener said in a



ESPNcricinfo podcast.

The 31-year-old said he was in awe of Kohli's focus towards fitness despite both cricketers being on the same side of

age. "I have no shame to tell you this. I think this should be out 2-3 years back, when I sometimes used to see Virat Kohli doing all those gym things, running around, I honestly used to feel ashamed myself.

"The guy of my age is training so much despite attaining success whereas I am not even doing half of what he is doing," he said.

"I, maybe, not doing half of what he is doing. At least, if I can't match his level, try to follow his path. Maybe I can reach 50-60 per cent." *PTI*

Rani, Manika recommended for Khel Ratna

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hockey India on Tuesday nominated national women's team captain Rani for the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award while Vandana Kataria, Monika and Harmanpreet Singh were recommended for the Arjuna Award.

The period of consideration for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, India's highest sporting honour, is between January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2019.

During this period, Rani led the team to historic victories in the Women's Asia Cup in 2017, Silver at the 2018 Asian Games and played a critical role in the

FIH Olympic Qualifiers in 2019 by scoring the deciding goal that helped India qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. The team also climbed to a career-best ninth in the FIH world rankings. Also joining Rani for top honour is star wrestler Vinesh Phogat, while her fellow colleagues World Championship medalists Rahul Aware and Olympic-bound Deepak Punia were nominated for the Arjuna award alongside Sakshi Malik and two others



by the wrestling federation.

Meanwhile, TTFI recommended star paddler Manika Batra name for the same.

Manika, who missed out on India's highest sporting honour last year, is the first woman paddler from her country to win a singles Gold medal at the Commonwealth Games. She achieved the feat in the 2018 edition in which she won as many four medals including two Gold medal.

The federation has recommended veteran Madhurika Patkar,

Manav Thakkar and Suthirtha Mukherjee for the Arjuna Award.

Mukherjee recently broke into the top-100 of the ITTF world rankings. A panel formed by the Sports Ministry will shortlist the nominations received from various national federations with the awards to be presented on National Sports Day, August 29.

India's top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty and men's singles player Sameer Verma profile was also put forward for the Arjuna award by the Badminton Association of India (BAI).

F1 will start with 2 races at Austrian GP

AFP ■ LONDON

The curtailed Formula One season will start with two races behind closed doors in Austria on July 5 and July 12 followed by six other Grands Prix in Europe, the organisers said on Tuesday.

Formula One said it hoped to have between 15 and 18 races in total, with the season being completed in December.

The Hungarian Grand Prix will be brought forward to July 19 before a two-week break, followed by consecutive races in Britain and events in Spain, Italy and Belgium. All will likely be run without spectators while participants must adhere to strict safety protocols.

Regular health tests will be conducted with the number of team members and race staff at the venue also reduced.

"While we currently expect the season to commence without fans at our races we hope that over the coming months the situation will allow us to welcome them back once it is



safe to do," said F1 chief executive Chase Carey.

"But we know the return of Formula 1 will be a welcome boost to sports fans around the world."

Silverstone will host two races in Britain on August 2 and 9, with the Spanish Grand Prix set for Barcelona on August 16.

The Belgian and Italian Grands Prix will take place on their original dates of August 30 and September 6, completing the European part of the

5 Barca players, two coaches test +ve

IANS ■ MADRID

Catalan radio station RAC1 reported on Tuesday that five players from FC Barcelona and two members of the coaching staff tested positive for the Covid-19 in tests carried out by the Spanish football league (LaLiga) at the start of May.

The radio station, which has close links to the club, did not name any of the players or staff who could have been infected, but highlights that they have all overcome the virus and generated antibodies.

The news comes the day after Spain's football clubs were finally allowed to begin training with their full squads as they put the finishing touches to return to action next week as the Liga Santander and Liga SmartBank (first and second divisions) come back after a break of over 3 months.

