

OPINION 6
DEATH OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

MONEY 9
FUEL PRICES RISE OVER ₹4 PER LITRE

SPORT 12
NAPOLI BEAT INTER TO REACH COPPA ITALIA FINAL

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SUNNY TIRED OF FEELING BLUE
10 VIVACITY

Covid peak in mid-Nov: ICMR

Need to upgrade facilities by 80%, else there'll be severe shortage of ICU beds, ventilators

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The peak stage of coronavirus could come about in mid-November when the country will face paucity of isolation and ICU beds as well ventilators.

This alarming finding is part of study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which has said the eight-week lockdown along with strengthened public health measures has delayed the peak stage of Covid-19 pandemic in India.

The study conducted by researchers from an Operations Research Group of ICMR has noted that if the coverage of public health measures can be increased to 80 per cent, the epidemic can be mitigated, otherwise around mid-November there will be serious shortage of isolation and ICU beds as well as ventilators.



Migrants queue outside the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus to return to their hometown in Mumbai on Sunday PTI

"The lockdown shifted the peak of the pandemic by an estimated 34 to 76 days and helped bring down the number of infections by 69 to 97 per cent thereby allowing time for the healthcare system to shore

up resources and infrastructure," said the study. In the scenario of intensified public health measures with 60 per cent effectiveness after lockdown, the demand can be met until the first week

of November.

After that, isolation beds could be inadequate for 5.4 months, ICU beds for 4.6 and ventilators for 3.9 months, projections by the health researchers showed.

However, this shortfall is estimated to be 83 per cent less than what it could have been without the lockdown and public health measures.

With sustained Government steps at increasing the infrastructure and different pace of epidemic in different regions, the impact of unmet need can be reduced. If the coverage of public health measures can be increased to 80 per cent, the epidemic can be mitigated, the researchers stated.

According to the model-based analysis for Covid-19 pandemic in India, with the additional capacity which has been built up for testing, treating and isolating patients during the lockdown period, the number of cases at the peak would come down by 70 per cent and the cumulative cases may come down by nearly 27 per cent.

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Testing to triple, 8K beds in 500 rail coaches in Delhi

Shah vows to keep Delhi safe from corona onslaught



Union Home Minister Amit Shah holds a meeting with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Delhi LG Anil Bajaj, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and others in New Delhi on Sunday PTI

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre and the Delhi Government will fight coronavirus together in the national Capital as on Sunday in a crucial meeting with Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajaj, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal along with the AIIMS Director, the Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Central Government is committed to check Covid-19 spread in Delhi.

Key decisions which were taken in the meeting included Covid-19 testing to double in Delhi in the next two days and subsequently increased by three times in six days.

Also, the Centre will immediately provide 500 converted rail coaches to the Delhi Government, which will increase the bed capacity by 8,000.

A committee has been set up to ensure availability of 60 per cent beds by private hospitals at lower rates and fix the

rate of corona testing and treatment and house-to-house health surveys will be conducted in containment zones.

According to an official statement, the Home Minister has directed immediate transfer of 4 IAS officers to New Delhi to assist the Delhi Government for management of Covid and public health. Two senior officers SS Yadav and SCL Dass, currently posted at the Centre, will assist the Delhi Government, it said.

Announcing a slew of measures to check the spread of the coronavirus in the national Capital after he held a meeting, Shah said Covid-19 tests will be started at every polling station in containment zones and a comprehensive house-to-house health survey will be conducted in the hotspots for contact tracing.

In view of shortage of beds for coronavirus infected patients in Delhi, the Modi Government has decided to immediately provide 500 rail-

way coaches which will be equipped with all facilities, he said.

Also, detailed guidelines will be issued for conducting the last rites of those who succumb to the deadly virus.

Shah said a joint team of doctors of the Union Health Ministry, the Delhi Government's Health Department, AIIMS and the three Municipal Corporations of Delhi will visit all Covid-designated hospitals in the Capital and prepare a report after inspecting the health systems and preparedness.

The development comes two days after the Supreme Court lashed out at the AAP Government, describing as "horrific" the state of affairs in Delhi hospitals with bodies being stacked next to corona patients. It had also expressed concern over fewer tests being conducted in the national Capital and had directed ramping up of testing.

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Ladakh sees virus spike amid stand-off; record rise in Delhi in a day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Facing the brunt of the month-long stand-off between the Indian and Chinese troops along its territory, the Union Territory of Ladakh is now struggling to cope up with another nemesis: Coronavirus.

During the last one week alone, the UT has seen a five-fold high in its number of positive cases, going up from 103 on June 7 to 549 on June 14. During the last three days the State has seen back-to-back three 100 plus spikes, recording the highest single-day spike with 198 positive cases on Saturday. On Sunday it recorded 112 new cases.

As per the media bulletin released by the Directorate of Health Services UT Ladakh, all of the 198 persons tested positive for Covid-19 in Kargil district.

With no marked change in the Covid-19 situation, Maharashtra on Sunday recorded 120 new deaths and 3,390 fresh infections, taking

the total number of deaths to 3,950 and infected cases in the State to 1,07,958 cases.

Delhi recorded 2,224 cases and 56 deaths on Sunday taking its total number of cases to 41,182, including 15,823 recovered/discharged/migrated, 24,032 active cases and 1,327 deaths. This is the highest single-day spike in the number of Covid-19 cases. The total number of containment zones in Delhi is now 242; total 67 zones have been de-contained till date.

A day after the number of deaths had come down to 113 and the number of new positive cases stood at 3,427, coronavirus claimed 120 more lives and left 3,390 others infected on Sunday in Maharashtra.

Having taken into account total 3,950 deaths reported so far and 50,978 patients discharged from various hospitals, ever since the outbreak of pandemic in the State, the State health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the State at 53,017.

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Man dies from natural causes onboard Air India repatriation flight

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A 42-year old man suddenly collapsed and died due to natural causes onboard Air India's Lagos-Mumbai flight on Sunday, the national carrier said. The flight was part of Vande Bharat Mission, under which the Central Government is operating special repatriation flights to bring back stranded Indians from abroad amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Air India's flight AI 1906 departed from Lagos in Nigeria at 7 pm Indian Standard Time on Saturday and landed in Mumbai at 3:45 am on Sunday. "A passenger aboard AI 1906 of June 13 from Lagos to Mumbai passed away due to natural causes today.

"A doctor onboard along with our crew, trained to handle such medical emergencies, made a valiant attempt to revive the passenger, aged 42, who had suddenly collapsed, through resuscitation etc but all their efforts went in vain," the airline's spokesperson said.

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India no longer 'weak', never compromise on national pride: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of month long stand-offs at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said India will never compromise on its "national pride" as it is no longer a "weak" country.

Stressing the point that the country's security capability has increased, he also assured the Opposition that talks with China were on to peacefully resolve the con-

frontation. Making these assertions in a virtual rally in Jammu & Kashmir, he also said no one will be kept in the dark about the issue.

"I want to assure that we will not compromise with national pride under any circumstance. India is no longer a weak India. Our strength in national security has risen. But this strength is not meant to frighten anyone but to secure our country," he said.

Continued on Page 2

Soaring corona getting less fatal, that's only hope!

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

Its contagious smite may be losing its killer sting.

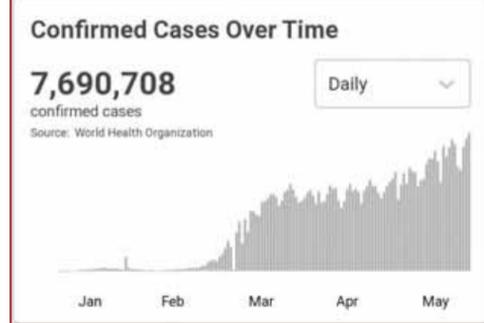
That may be the only speck of hope for a world haunted by talks of a possible second wave of Covid-19 in the US, its reappearance in Beijing, and the alarming spread of the deadly virus in South America, Asia and the Middle East.

The cases are shooting up, but the death curb is unmistakably on the bend.

On June 12, the total number of cases globally stood at 78,29,293 and the death tally at 4,30,813. In terms of Case Fatality Rate (CFR), this turned out to be 5.50 per cent.

A month ago on May 12, the number of positive cases worldwide stood at 43,06,378 and the death count at 2,92,946. This translated into a mortality rate of 6.80 per cent. It means during the one month period, the CFR came down by 1.21 per cent.

Now let's take a look at the one-month period between



May 12 and June 12. During this period the CFR further came down. The total number of cases globally stood at 43,06,378 on May 12, which went up to 77,27,232 with the addition of 35,28,915 new cases by June 12. Similarly, the death count went up from 2,92,946 to 4,27,698. Overall, during this period the CFR stood at a mere 3.81 per cent, nearly 1.70 pc less than the all-time CFR.

The global death count

peaked out on April 25 when the CFR stood at 7.28 per cent. From then on, it witnessed a steady decline from week to week, fortnight to fortnight. On May 10, the CFR stood at 6.99 per cent, on May 25 at 6.38 per cent, and on June 3 at 5.50 per cent.

Similarly, between May 31 and June 12 the global death

count rose by one per cent every day with the exception of just one day when it shot up by 2 per cent on May 27.

Compare this with the period between May 1 and May 15 when out of 15 days, death count rose by 2 per cent on 13 days and 3 per cent and one per cent each on two other days.

There is another way of

looking at this declining trend. On June 12, the world recorded 1,36,572 cases, the highest single-day spike so far. This included 8,000 more cases over the previous day count. On the same day, the global death count stood at 4,925. This was 419 less death than the previous day tally of 5,344.

Once again, the number of cases went up, but the death count came down.

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Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 3,32,901
DEATHS: 9,520
RECOVERED: 1,69,600
ACTIVE: 1,53,742

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	1,07,958	3,950	50,978
Tamil Nadu	44,661	435	24,547
Delhi	41,182	1,327	15,823
Gujarat	23,590	1,478	16,333
Uttar Pradesh	13,615	399	8,268
Rajasthan	12,694	292	9,566
West Bengal	11,087	475	5,060
Madhya Pradesh	10,802	459	7,677
Haryana	7,208	88	3,003
Karnataka	7,000	87	3,960
Bihar	6,475	36	3,975
Andhra Pradesh	6,152	84	3,316
Jammu & Kashmir	5,041	59	2,389
Telangana	4,974	185	2,377
Assam	4,050	8	1,961

CAPSULE

B'DESH MINISTER DIES OF CORONAVIRUS

Dhaka: A Bangladesh Government Minister died on Saturday due to the novel coronavirus, as tests conducted after his death at a hospital in Dhaka revealed he was suffering from Covid-19, officials said on Sunday.

PSYCHO KILLER HELD, SAYS 'LIKED' KILLING PEOPLE

Etah: A 30-year-old man, known to be a psycho killer, has been arrested while trying to hack his elder brother with an axe, police said.

EARTHQUAKE OF 5.3 MAGNITUDE HIT GUJ

Ahmedabad: An earthquake of 5.3 magnitude shook parts of Gujarat on Sunday night but no major damage to property or life has been reported as per preliminary assessment, the State Government said.

A beautiful mind that let in the devil

RINKU GHOSH ■ NEW DELHI

Back in the day when he was awaiting his big screen debut with *Kai Po Che*, actor Sushant Singh Rajput had sauntered into *The Pioneer* office with a casual ease, a winning smile, jeans and tees, totally playing down his heartthrob appeal among the younger women staff. In fact, he was acutely alert and disarming at the same time, controlling and spontaneous in bits and pieces. The young man had a sharp mind, playful, witty and deep, depending on the questions one fielded at him. It was this agility that helped this boy from small-town Bihar to score top grade as a mechanical engineer at the Delhi College of Engineering and carve his way to stardom as he

loved theatre. So it is difficult to understand that the same young man lost control of his mind and committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan after a night of partying with friends.

And amid the swamp of the pandemic, Sushant's suicide is a grim reminder of how clinical depression, for which he had been taking help for the last six months, got the better of him. Was it the insecurity of a profession, where he was actually delivering his comparisons with his idol Shah Rukh Khan as the next TV star who would conquer the big league of the film industry? Was it the fleeting and pyrrhic nature of fame or the meaninglessness of it? Failed

relationships? Was it the crumbling circle of his close friends who seemed to be in a Hemlock pact, his manager committing suicide just a few days before? Or was it his deep trauma at not having recovered from his mother's death when he was 16? Any which way his decision would be irreconcilable considering many years ago he had shared how he developed empathy, getting

into the skin of human characters at theatre director Barry John's workshops, how he was a spiritualist believing that we are on a journey that should be worth the end and how he loved star-gazing as it reminded him of the bigness of the universe around us. And yes, he loved reading books and writing. He did admit he was an introvert but one never thought that the devil would nest in the corners of a mind that was ever curious and probing.

One would tend to remember him by his short filmography but he stood out in each of his characters. Inspired by Jack Nicholson and Daniel Day-Lewis, he egolessly surrendered to fill the contours of the common Indian youth, complete with his anxieties and bravado. Though a buddy film, he stood

out among Rajkumar Rao and Amit Sadih in *Kai Po Che*. He even received a nomination for the Filmfare Award for Best Male Debut. As the titular detective in the action thriller *Detective Byomkesh Bakshy*, he brought out the crevices of an investigative mind with such angularities and pointedness at the same time that director Dibakar Banerjee said he was the true intellectual legacy interpreter of Bengal's cult fiction hero. Of course, his highest-grossing releases came with a supporting role in the satire *PK* (2014), followed by the biopic *MS Dhoni, The Untold Story*. It not only became one of the highest grossers of Bollywood but showed the maturity of an actor, who was not overawed by the aura of one of India's most loved cricketers, did not just

mimic his physicality but invested him with a humanity and emotion that shaped the Captain Cool he had become. Then there was *Kedarnath, Sonchiriya* and *Chhichhore*, where he brought alive people from the dustbowl with extraordinary grit, all of whom ended up rescuing humanity itself.

Perhaps, that's the reason why he set up a teaching academy to educate underprivileged kids from the hinterland. He had strong views on the education system and didn't believe that we should add more bricks to the wall. And at one of *The Pioneer* discussions, he even became passionate. "We shouldn't be telling the kids what to wear, what to eat or who to vote."

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SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT
JANUARY 21, 1986 — JUNE 14, 2020

Nepalese domestic politics, India's complacency reason for map Bill

New Delhi: The domestic political rumblings in Nepal, its growing aspirations and assertiveness driven by China's strong economic backing and India's "complacency" in engaging with it made the landlocked nation take the unprecedented step of escalating its decades-old border row with India to a new high, strategic affairs experts said on Sunday.

The communist Government of Nepal on Saturday managed to get a unanimous approval of the lower house of the country's parliament to a new map depicting disputed areas of Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as Nepalese territories, prompting India to say that such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claim is untenable.

The vote, notwithstanding the all-encompassing cultural, political and trade ties of seven decades between the two coun-

tries, is seen as a reflection of Nepal's readiness to take on the regional giant, India, and signals that it no longer cares about the old framework of relationship.

Rakesh Sood, who was Indian Ambassador to Nepal from 2008 to 2011, said both sides have allowed the relationship to come to a "very very dangerous point" and that India should have found time to engage with Kathmandu as it pressed for talks on the issue since November.

"I think we have displayed a lack of sensitivity, and now the Nepalese have dug themselves deeper into the hole from which they will find it difficult to come out," he told PTL.

Nepal shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states — Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. In sync with the unique ties of friendship, the two countries have a long tra-

dition of free movement of people across the border.

According to official data, nearly eight million Nepalese citizens live and work in India. The two countries also have solid defence and trade ties. India is the largest trading partner of Nepal, and the total bilateral trade in 2018-19 was ₹57,858 crore. Currently, about 32,000 Gorkha soldiers from Nepal are serving in the Indian Army.

Ambassador Ranjit Rae, who served as Indian envoy to Nepal between 2013 and early 2017, said Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli decided to go ahead with the new map just to consolidate his position and overcome rumblings in domestic politics.

"This sort of playing up anti-India sentiment had helped him in winning the elections and he thought it will again help him now as he is under lot of domestic pres-

sure," he said.

"I think it is related to Oli's insecurity domestically as his position in Nepal is quite weak. There have been a lot of demonstrations in Nepal for the government's failure in the economic front, on managing COVID-19. There have been rumours within Nepali Communist Party that there may be a change in leadership. I think this has been a lifeline for Oli," he said.

India's relations with Nepal came under severe strain following the 2015 economic blockade.

Since then, China has been pumping in huge amount of financial resources in Nepal, helping the landlocked country in laying new roads including connecting it to Chinese cities for transportation of petroleum and other essential products, ostensibly to help Kathmandu cut dependence on New Delhi.

China is also planning to lay an ambitious railway network connecting Kathmandu and Shigatse in Tibet where it would join an existing railway line to Lhasa. China has also offered Nepal four ports for shipment of goods to the landlocked country which previously had to rely heavily on routes through India.

Prof S D Muni, a noted strategic affairs expert, said China has been a factor in the whole issue as Nepal was more encouraged to raise the issues with India realising that Beijing has been supporting it.

However, he said the bigger message from Nepal was that the Nepalese are asserting themselves and the old framework of special relations is gone completely.

"They do not care about it. You will have to deal with Nepal differently, with little more sensitivity and with little more tact and understanding.

"It is a new Nepal. Over 65 per cent of Nepalese are very young people. They do not care about the past. They have their aspirations. Unless India is rel-

evant to their aspirations, they would not care," he said.

By going for a constitutional amendment for the new map, Ambassador Sood

argued, Nepal is converting what was a difference in terms of territorial perceptions into a dispute and making its position non-negotiable over it. **PTI**

Nepal's upper house endorses proposal to consider amendment to update new map

Kathmandu: Nepal Parliament's upper house on Sunday endorsed a proposal to discuss the Constitution amendment bill to update the country's new political map that includes three strategically key Indian territories, a day after the lower house unanimously voted in favour of the bill.

Nepal's ruling and opposition political parties on Saturday voted in unison to amend the Constitution to update the national emblem by incorporating the controversial map incorporating Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura in India's Utrakhland, a move described by New Delhi as "untenable."

Of the total 275 lawmakers in the House of Representatives on Saturday, all 258 lawmakers present in the house voted in favour of the Constitution amendment bill.

Now, the bill will undergo a similar process in the National Assembly, wherein the ruling Nepal Communist Party commands two-thirds majority.

Rajendra Phuyal, secretary of the National Assembly Secretariat, tabled the bill at the first meeting of the upper house on Sunday. The

Kathmandu Post reported.

During the second meeting of the National Assembly later on Sunday, Law Minister Shiva Maya Tumbahangphe tabled a proposal to consider the bill for discussions, the paper said.

After the discussions, the proposal to consider the bill was unanimously endorsed, it added.

The National Assembly will give lawmakers 72 hours to move amendments against the bill's provisions, if they have any.

"We are making necessary preparations to endorse the bill within the next four days," Phuyal was quoted as saying by the paper.

After the National Assembly passes the bill, it will be submitted to the President for authentication, after which it will be incorporated in the Constitution. After that, the new map will be used in all official documents, including the coat of arms.

Meanwhile, the main Opposition Nepali Congress has urged the government to intensify diplomatic efforts to ensure the country's rights in the Kalapani area after the country includes its updated political and administrative map in the Constitution, the

Himalayan Times reported.

In a press statement on Saturday, the party said the "campaign to reclaim encroached territories would enter the second phase after the revised map incorporating Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani areas as its parts, gets endorsed and this would mark a significant solidarity in the issue of nationality."

Reacting to Kathmandu's move, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said on Saturday "this artificial enlargement of claims is not based on historical fact or evidence and is not tenable."

It is also violative of our current understanding to hold talks on outstanding boundary issues."

The India-Nepal bilateral ties came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand on May 8.

Nepal reacted sharply to the inauguration of the road claiming that it passed through Nepalese territory. India rejected the claim asserting that the road lies completely within its territory. **PTI**

Earthquake of 5.3 magnitude, aftershock shake parts of Gujarat

Ahmedabad: An earthquake of 5.3 magnitude shook parts of Gujarat on Sunday night but no major damage to property or life has been reported as per preliminary assessment, the state government said.

The epicentre of the tremor was located near Bhachau in Kutch district, officials said.

An official of the Institute of Seismological Research (ISR) said that the tremor was recorded at 8:13 pm.

An aftershock of 3.1 magnitude was felt six minutes later, with its epicentre located 25 km west north west of Rapar in Kutch district, the ISR said.

In Kutch, Rajkot, Ahmedabad and Patan, many people rushed out of their houses.

While several parts of Gujarat felt the quake, its intensity was said to be more in Patan and Rajkot districts

neighbouring Kutch.

Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said a quake of such intensity was felt after a long time. "Entire Saurashtra and north Gujarat regions, including Ahmedabad, felt the impact of the quake with 5.3 magnitude. The after shock was of a lower intensity. There is no report of any major damage to life and property from any area after the quake," he said. **PTI**

Tiger kills two cubs in MP's Bandhavgarh

Umria (MP): Two tiger cubs, around 15 days old, were killed by an adult big cat in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) of Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Sunday.

A patrolling team reached the spot after being informed that an adult tiger has killed two cubs in Kathli beat of Tala area of the reserve on Sunday morning, BTR's director Vincent Rahim told PTL. Initial investigation and examination

of the carcasses confirmed that they were killed by an adult tiger. "The inspection of the spot revealed the presence of the cubs, a tigress and a tiger in the area," he said.

The tiger might have killed the cubs in the process of establishing a territory, he said. The carcasses were disposed of as per the directives of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), he said. **PTI**

PIOCCI helps virus-hit Indians abroad

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

PIOCCI, a body formed in 2018 to support the Indian diaspora has assisted Indians who have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and arranged several chartered flights between UAE and India.

"Overall we have sought permission for eight charter flights to South India in phase 1 and have already enabled a smooth departure of 3 flights so far.

Each flight managed to transport over 168 passengers. It is our endeavor to continuously support the wellbeing of our fellow Indians," said Siddharth Balachandran, PIOCCI Board Member.

As one of the many initiatives by PIOCCI they have been instrumental in not only seeking relevant permission from several Indian and UAE authorities to organise chartered flights, but also to raise funds and assist those in need.

"While Covid-19 has impacted many people, we have had to prioritise passengers that are in the late stages of pregnancy or medically unfit, those facing grievances in their family, as well as blue collar workers who have lost jobs and are struggling to make ends meet," says Yogesh Mehta, Vice Chairperson.

This has been possible as a result of the immense efforts of the dedicated PIOCCI and the FOI Events CSR team.

Testing to triple...

From Page 1

Taking note of the "gravity" of the Covid-19 situation, the Delhi High Court has also directed the AAP Government and the Centre to increase the number of beds and ventilators for the coronavirus patients.

The Covid-19 tally has reached nearly 39,000 in Delhi and the virus has claimed more than 1,200 lives so far in the Capital.

"To prevent coronavirus infection in Delhi, testing will be doubled in the next two days and after six days the testing will be increased to three times. Also, after a few days, the testing will be started at every polling station in the containment zones," Shah said in a series of tweets in Hindi.

According to the city Government's recent submission in the Delhi High Court, the combined daily testing capacity of 40 labs, 17 public and 23 private, is 8,600 per

day.

The number of containment zones in Capital has increased from 122 on June 1 to 242. The Home Minister, who was directed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday to look into the Delhi Covid-19 situation, said in order to carry out the contact tracing well in Delhi's containment zones, a comprehensive house-to-house health survey of every person will be done and its report will be submitted within a week.

For proper monitoring, he said, the Aarogya Setu app will be downloaded in every person's mobile phone.

With the railway coaches provided by the Centre, the number of beds will be increased by 8,000 beds. He said a committee has been formed to ensure reservation of 60 per cent beds for coronavirus patients in private hospitals at low rates and to fix rates of Covid-19 treatment and testing.

Covid peak in...

From Page 1

In terms of Covid-19 mortality, approximately 60 per cent deaths were prevented and one-third of this mortality prevention is attributed to the reduction in unmet need for critical care as a result of the intervention, the analysis showed.

The researchers said the management of Covid-19 will involve a dynamic review of policies and significant strengthening of the health-care system.

"While lockdowns will delay the onset of peak and will give the much needed time for the health system to respond, strengthening the health system response in terms of testing, isolation of cases, treatment and contact tracing, as is being done currently, will have to be the mainstay to reduce the impact of the pandemic in India until vaccine becomes available," it said. The overall economic health system cost of this pandemic is estimated to be 6.2 per cent of India's gross domestic product (GDP). As per the Ministry data on June 9, there are 958 dedicated Covid-19 hospitals with 1,67,883 isolation beds, 21,614 ICU and 73,469 oxygen supported beds.

A beautiful...

From Page 1

Instead we should be educating them on how to differentiate between what is wrong and right. That's the most important and fundamental wisdom."

Very few know of his philanthropic efforts. Or why he chose to co-own Delhi Gladiators, top draw in a professional boxing league. "I like boxing and Robert de Niro's *Raging Bull* of a complex boxer going through crests and troughs is my all-time favourite film. Besides sportsmanship is a virtue and can help you develop additional skills like team-spirit, focus, discipline, eglessness, all of which you can use in other spheres, no matter what you choose."

He credited his growth to his working experience with Dibakar Banerjee and Shekhar Kapur. "Acting was not a natural choice. I could not even say that I wanted to be an actor even if I wanted to be one. I came from a middle class family where I have four sisters and they are all super qualified, doctors and all. And I am the youngest. So I figured out

early that I had to do something important. I was told to be an engineer much against my hidden will. And then I figured out a way. First I forced myself to like what I was reading. And when I became good at it, the subject got the best of me. I was a class topper and a national Olympiad winner (Physics). Then I sat for all the engineering exams and DCE happened. I was ok with my life. But one thing was for sure, when I was studying, I was curious but not excited. Probably, I thought I liked it. In the first semester itself, I went to Shiamak Davar Institute for the Performing Arts (SDIPA) just to have an extra-curricular activity. And then when I was on stage performing for the first time, I realised the enormity of connecting with the world, the adrenaline gush and the achievement of owning a moment. I don't worry about Fridays, that's for the audience to decide. But come Monday, it is I who decides." Why didn't he own a feeble moment on a Sunday morning? And get to decide on a Monday?

India no longer 'weak', never...

From Page 1

Underlining efforts made to de-escalate tension on the LAC, Rajnath said talks between military commanders of the two armies were on. "China has expressed the desire to resolve the issue through dialogue and our effort too is to find a solution through talks at the military and diplomatic level," he said.

Moreover, "We will not keep anybody in the dark. We will tell everything at an appropriate time to Parliament and to everybody," he added while referring to the situation along the LAC.

In his speech, he also said abrogation of Article 370 giving special status to Jammu and Kashmir last year has led to all round development in the union territory.

The government will carry

out so much development in the region in the coming years that people of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) will demand to be part of India. This will lead to the fulfilment of our Parliament's resolution that PoK is an integral part of India, Singh said.

He also referred to former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement about finding a solution to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir through "Kashmiriyat, Insaniyat and Jamhooriyat."

"Through Vajpayee ji is no more, but we still believe in this principle of Kashmiriyat, Insaniyat and Jamhooriyat," Rajnath said, adding that "through Kashmiriyat, we see Hazratbal and Amarnath also".

Ladakh sees virus spike amid stand-off; record rise in Delhi in...

From Page 1

Of the 113 deaths on Sunday, Mumbai accounted for 69 deaths, while there were eleven deaths each in Pune and Jalgaon, seven deaths in Aurangabad, five deaths in Ulhasnagar, four deaths in Thane, three deaths each in Solapur and Nashik, two deaths each in Osmanabad and Akola, one death Palghar, Vasai-Virar and Ratnagiri.

After recording 97 deaths each on June 10 and 11 and 90 deaths on June 12, the number of deaths in Mumbai came down to 69 each on Saturday and on Sunday, taking the total number of deaths in the metropolis to 2,182 on Sunday. The number of Covid-19 positive patients went up by 1,395 cases to touch 58,226 now. The authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in Mumbai at 29,050.

Tamil Nadu reports 1,974 new cases and 38 deaths on Sunday, taking the total number of cases in the state to 44,661, including 19,676 active cases, 24,547 discharged and 435 deaths.

Haryana recorded 459 cases and 10 deaths, taking the number of cases in the State to 208, 88 deaths. Telangana recorded 237 cases and three deaths. The Total number of cases in the state is now

at 4974 and 185 deaths. Gujarat reported 511 fresh cases and 29 deaths during the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 23,590 including 16,333 recoveries & 1478 deaths.

West Bengal registered an increase of 389 new infections and 12 fatalities on Sunday, pushing the case count to 11,087 and toll to 475. According to a bulletin issued by the State health department, 5,060 patients have been discharged till date and the discharge rate stands at 45.63 per cent.

With 163 fresh cases of coronavirus and four deaths, the total tally of Covid-19 positive cases surpassed 5,000 mark and the death toll reached 59 in the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Sunday. Significantly, 120 patients recovered fully and were discharged from different hospitals during the day.

Ten CRPF personnel and five Jammu and Kashmir policemen tested positive for Covid-19 in the Union Territory on Sunday, officials said. While five policemen are from Shopian district police lines, 10 CRPF personnel were from different battalions posted in south Kashmir, they said. The officials said their tests were undertaken at SKIMS laboratory here and were among 92 positive cases in total detected at the laboratory on Sunday. None of these troopers or policemen had any recent travel history, they said.

According to the media bulletin, one patient died in Jammu while three deaths were reported from Kashmir on Sunday.

Meanwhile, out of 163 fresh cases 28 cases were reported from Jammu division while 135 from Kashmir division.

Out of 5,041 total coronavirus positive cases, the total number of active cases are 2,593. Out of these 2,593, 745 cases are active positive in Jammu division and 1,848 in Kashmir division. The total patients recovered in Jammu & Kashmir are 2,389, 411 in Jammu and 1,978 in Kashmir division.

On Sunday, the highest number of cases were reported from Shopian and Pulwama. 45 cases reported positive in Shopian while Pulwama reported 33 cases. In Kashmir valley, Kulgam district has reported the highest number of 631 cases so far followed by 538 from Shopian, 524 from Srinagar and 515 from Baramulla. As many as 293 cases and 10 deaths reported in Rajasthan on Sunday, taking the total number of cases to 12,694 and death toll to 292.

Kerala reported a marginal dip in fresh COVID-19 cases on Sunday with 54 people, including three health workers, testing positive, taking the overall case count to 2,460. As many as 56 people were cured of the deadly virus as the total active cases stood at 1,340, state Health Minister KK Shailaja said. Of the 54, a total of 23 had arrived from abroad and 25 others from other States, the Minister said.

Seventy more Covid-19 cases were reported in Gautam Buddha Nagar on Sunday. Total number of cases in the district is now at 935, including 510 cured, 413 active cases and 12 deaths.

PUBLIC NOTICE
My clients Sh. Vir Singh Rana S/o Late Sh. Prataap Singh Rana and Smt. Prem Lata W/o Sh. Vir Singh Rana both R/o House No. A-36, Street No. 22, Old Govind Pura, Near Parwana Road, Delhi-110051 have severed all their relations from his son namely Akash Rana @Lau and also debarred him from all their movable or immovable properties due to his misbehavior, delinquency and disobedient attitude towards my clients and their family members. My clients are not in touch with him since May 2019. My client shall not be responsible for any acts, deeds, transactions done by the above named son in future or after May 2019.
Amit Kumar Pandey, Advocate
Ch. No. 501, Pantia House Courts, New Delhi-110001, Mob: 9312895556

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Corrigendum - V to E-Tender Notice No. 238-M-4-LOCO-ADVT Dated - 25.02.2020
Opening date of above mentioned tender notice has been postponed to 31.08.2020 and pre-bid meeting has been postponed to 20.08.2020.
Changes in the above tender notice are hereby notified through this Corrigendum-V for all concerned advertisers and stakeholders. The remaining conditions of earlier NIT will remain same.
For details log on www.iraps.gov.in
Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer
Diesel, Hubballi
PUB/JOA/VP/PR/SW/R/2020/21

TACKLING CORONAVIRUS

Shah calls meet of all Delhi parties today

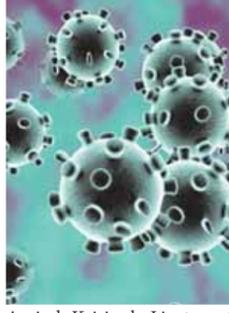
To review coronavirus situation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After the crucial administration level meeting, the Union Home Minister Amit Shah has called a meeting of all political parties of Delhi on Monday to review the coronavirus situation in the national Capital.

The meeting is important since Delhi has witnessed sudden surge in Covid-19 cases which could become even more words in the days to come, if urgent remedial measures are not taken.

While Shah took meeting with Delhi Chief Minister



Arvind Kejriwal, Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal, Union Health Minister Dr



Harshvardhan and senior doctors and experts (AIIMS), this will be plan B to discuss the preparation at ground level, an official said.

Delhi Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) President Adesh Gupta, Aam Admi Party Delhi con-

Gupta said, 'I am thankful to the Modi Government for important decisions that were taken in the meeting between the Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to keep the people of Delhi safe and to prevent the spread of Corona infection.

"I have received a message from Union Home Minister that an all-party meeting has been called for tomorrow over COVID-19 situation in Delhi and all over the country," said Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar Chaudhary. There was no official response from the AAP, though party officials said their leaders will be going for the important meet on Monday.

169 fresh positive corona cases in Gurugram

32 new containment zones

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The rapid increase of coronavirus cases in Gurugram continued on Sunday with 169 fresh positive cases emerging in the district.

The figures of COVID positive patients in Gurugram reached 3,294 and 1,998 are active cases. A total of 1,265 have been cured and discharged. Ten patients are in critical condition and are on ventilator support. The city has also reported 31 deaths in total including six deaths on Sunday.

As many as 21 deaths in Gurugram have been reported in the last 10 days.

A Gurugram Health department official said that a majority of corona cases are coming from containment zones where the situation remains precarious.

Meanwhile, Gurugram now has 98 containment zones and an equal number of buffer zones in the district after a review meeting at the Mini-Secretariat which was chaired by District Magistrate Amit Khatri.

The number of containment zones in the district has increased to 98 from 66. In which 94 containment zones have been set up in Gurugram block, 2 in Patanda and one-one

each in Sohna and Farrukhnagar. Thus a total of 98 containment zones have been made in the district.

"As per the guidelines of the ministry of health and family welfare, we have declared the same number of buffer zones along every containment zone. The review of these containment zones will take place only after no case would appear in the next 28 days," a health official said.

Apart from this, the administration in Gurugram has decided to build temporary quarantine centres in the residential societies and upscale condominiums. However, the officials of the health department have prepared a list of 61 such community centres which will convert into isolation centers.

The officials in Gurugram believe that next one month is very crucial as chances of spreading Covid-19 is maximum and at a very large scale.

"The basic idea is to isolate as much as suspected or positive patients from common people. Since, quick arrangements of beds are not possible, temporary quarantine centres in residential society will eventually help their own residents," said a health official.

Moreover, a 45-year-old security guard Amar Singh a resident of Etah, Uttar Pradesh posted at Sushant lock residential society allegedly commits suicide on Sunday 4.00 pm after shot himself with his service gun. According to the police the family where he was posted found Covid-19 positive five days back while his report yet to come but before that he took extreme step.



Body of 20-yr-old man found in Vijay Vihar area with stab injuries

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A body of a 20-year-old man was found in Delhi's Vijay Vihar area with multiple stab injuries. Police suspects involvement of at least two-three people in the killing of the man.

The deceased was identified as Suraj, a resident of Rithala village. Police police that Suraj was an e-rickshaw driver.

According to a senior police official, the body was spotted by the guard of the park who then informed police control room (PCR) at around 11.15 PM on Saturday.

"Police suspects involvement of at least two-three people in the killing. Initial investigation suggests that the man was brought to the park and was killed. The victim sustained severe stab injuries on his neck, stomach and chest. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead, said the senior police official.

"A case has been registered at Vijay Vihar police station in this regard and an investigation is underway to identify the culprits and ascertain the motive being the killing," he said.

"The family of the deceased, however, has not made any allegations so far. The body will be handed over to the family after post-mortem," he added.

Bara Hindu Rao Hospital designated Covid facility

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In an attempt to deal with the rising number of Covid-19 patients, the Delhi Government on Sunday designated Bara Hindu Rao Hospital run by North Delhi Municipal Corporation, a Covid-19 facility.

Medical superintendent of the hospital has been directed to make all 980 hospital beds available to admit coronavirus patients, a senior North

Corporation official said, adding that out of these, 37 beds are not available due to one wing of the building declared dangerous recently.

The official further said that besides 17 ventilators, three beds in 'Intensive Care Units' and 250 beds with oxygen facility are available in the hospital.

"In view of the projections of surge in COVID-19 cases and the necessity of augmenting bed capacity urgently, in

exercise of powers under Delhi Epidemic COVID-19 regulations and the Epidemic Act, 1897, Bara Hindu Rao Hospital running under North Delhi Municipal Corporation is hereby declared as designated COVID-19 Hospital," the government said the order issued on Sunday.

At least 209 patients are admitted in the hospital and will be shifted to Kasturba Hospital, he said.

"We will ensure certain

modifications in manpower deployment, infrastructure development and other facilities related to health care," he added.

The development came after Union home minister Amit Shah held a meeting with Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, union health minister Harsh Vardhan, Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal, AIIMS director Randeep Guleria to assess Delhi's preparedness to fight the disease earlier on Sunday.



Sarojini Nagar market in Delhi opened in New Delhi on Sunday

Ranjani Dimri | Pioneer

Two guards beaten to death with sticks in outer Narela area

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a tragic incident, two security guards, deployed at a company were allegedly beaten up with sticks by a group of men in outer Delhi's Narela and later succumbed to injuries during treatment. Police said that the incident occurred on the intervening night of Saturday-Sunday.

The deceased have been identified as Amit (22) and Sunil (24), both residents of Gautam Colony in Narela area.

According to a senior police official, on the intervening night of Saturday-Sunday, the two guards were on night duty when they were beaten up with sticks by few boys at second floor of the building. "Meanwhile, hearing noise, other guards also reached there but the boys after beating up the two managed to run away towards the forest area. Both the victims were rushed to MV hospital from where they were referred to BSA hospital where

they succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment, said the senior police official.

"The two did not suffer any apparent injury on head and other vital parts of the body but did sustain fractures in limbs which indicates that the assailants intended to severely beat them and not murder them outrightly," said police official privy to investigation.

"However, preliminary investigation suggests involvement of known persons including those who were deployed at the site. Even in past, there have been incidents of quarrel among the other guards as well on petty issues such as money settlement," he said.

The police, however, has not ruled out involvement of outsiders in the incident. "A case has been registered and an investigation is underway to ascertain the motive behind the incident while suspects are being rounded up," he added.

Man arrested for stabbing person to death

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a man for allegedly killing a 37-year-old man to death in front of his wife and 10-year-old daughter outside his house in Aman Vihar area of Rohini. Police said that the incident took place on June 11.

"The incident was caught on CCTV camera, where three person were seen stabbing the man to death in front of his wife and a daughter," said police.

The deceased was identified as Bharat Bhushan. Police said that one of the accused, Mukesh (31), a resident of Delhi's Kirari Suleman Nagar, has been arrested in connection with the killing, while his accomplices — Deepak and Suraj are absconding.

According to BK Singh, Additional Commissioner of Police, Crime, at around 11.40 pm, Mukesh along with Deepak and his brother Suraj reached the victim's house in Aman Vihar.

"They called him out and an argument ensued between them. Deepak and Mukesh caught hold of the victim, while Suraj stabbed him multiple times in front of his wife and daughter. Deepak kept on kicking the victim even after he had fallen down and later left the spot on their two-wheelers," said the Additional CP.

"The victim was rushed to the hospital where he was declared brought dead. A case of murder, was registered at Aman Vihar police station," said the Additional CP.

"After, our team received information on Saturday that Mukesh would be coming to Japanese Park, Rohini, sometime in the evening. A trap was laid and Mukesh was apprehended. During interrogation, he disclosed that he along with Suraj and Deepak had killed Bharat Bhushan for revenge," he said.

"Mukesh, is a taxi driver. He also runs Satta in Kirari and Begumpur area. Suraj and his brother Deepak are his partners. Interrogation revealed that Bhushan was a regular visitor at these satta rounds," he said.

"According to Mukesh, Bhushan would often get into fights under the influence of alcohol. About two weeks ago, a group of boys had assaulted Bhushan and he blamed Deepak and Suraj for the attack," said the Additional CP.

"However, on the evening of June 11, Bhushan and his friends had intercepted Mukesh and Deepak near Sector 20, Rohini. They had thrashed the duo before letting them go. On returning home, Deepak, Suraj and Mukesh hatched a plan to take revenge," he added.

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE CAMPAIGN

15,000 reusable sanitary napkins distributed



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As part of "Menstrual Hygiene Campaign" Minister for Social Welfare Rajendra Pal Gautam distributed 15,000 reusable sanitary napkins in various areas of the National Capital on Sunday.

"Women living in clusters and slums, as we know, do not have access to proper sanitation which poses serious health risks, especially during menstruation. Sanitary napkins are not easily accessible to women hailing from lower-income families. That is why we decided to distribute 15000 special sanitary napkins which are reusable for up to 2 years," he said.

"Masks along with sanitary napkins, nutritious snacks and

biscuits distributed in areas of Seemapuri, Sundar Nagri and Nand Nagri areas in Seemapuri assembly constituency, and cluster areas of Babarpur, Gokalpur and Rohas Nagar assembly constituencies," he said.

The Minister and DCPCR had launched "Menstrual Hygiene Campaign" in which they distributed 1 lakh sanitary Napkins to women in east and north east districts of New Delhi

"The progress of any society can be directly measured with the health of its children. We need to eradicate malnourishment in children. Healthy snacks and proper dietary supplements are essential for a child's growth and overall development," he added.

No more waiting for dead bodies of corona suspects in Delhi

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry on Sunday asked the Delhi Government to hand over the dead bodies of corona suspects to their family members without waiting for the test report.

Director General of Health Services, Dr Rajeev Garg told the Delhi Chief Secretary that the bodies should be immediately handed over to the family members without any delay. Garg, in the letter, said that it has come to light that dead bodies of Covid suspects are not handed over to their family members who are kept waiting for the final test reports. "I want to clarify that the bodies of such suspects should be immediately handed over to the family members. It is not necessary to wait for the results of corona test," he said. He also said that the cremation of the dead bodies should be carried out with utmost care and as per the guidelines issued by the Ministry. Garg said if the report of the deceased comes out positive, then appropriate action should be taken by tracing out their contacts and then isolating them.

Traffic Police holds webinar for contactless training programme

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In wake of Coronavirus outbreak, the Delhi Traffic Police, organised a webinar for contactless training program for its personnel. The webinar was aimed at briefing the field staff about their safety.

According to Anil Mittal, the Additional Public Relation Officer (APRO), Delhi Police, Dr Monica Mahajan, Medical Director - Max Multispeciality Hospitals conducted the 60 minute-long interactive session with 200 Delhi Traffic Police officers and men of Southern Range.

"Through this, the Delhi Traffic Police personnel were informed in detail about various facts and myths related to coronavirus and about various

known causes, symptoms, preventive measures, lifestyle changes and treatment for COVID-19 coronavirus," said Mittal.

"They were also informed about various physiological and psychological issues associated with the pandemic arising due to various misconceptions and also given expert tips to successfully handle such issues," said Mittal.

"Delhi traffic police is getting equipped and also training its personnel to face all the challenges arising due to the changing global scenario. Such Webinars and video-conferencing sessions are the need of the hour and Delhi Police will continue to use this tool as a new method to protect and empower the force," Mittal added.



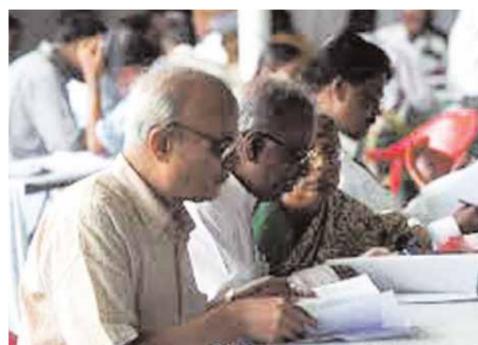
TACKLING CORONAVIRUS

'Work from Home' manual for Govt employees in works

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

With no sign of improvement in the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, a 'Work from Home' manual for Central Government employees is being prepared by the Centre. While the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has asked the States and UTs to send back the officers due for posting at the Centre, sources said the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has also been tasked to segregate and prepare a list of the IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS, IRTS etc and other Class I officers who are also medicos to enable both the Centre and State

Government to engage them accordingly in tackling the pandemic. Though the DoPT has prepared a draft framework for 'work from home' (WFH) which was practised during the lockdown period, the final WFH guidelines with certain legal validity seeking to facilitate operation of e-office in all Central Ministries and departments is being worked upon. Sources said that Minister of State for Personnel Dr Jitendra Singh last week in a meeting on June 12 advised the DoPT officials to expedite the process and also suggested for a separate list of MBBS background civil servants and that the Centre should write to



States to send back officers overstay in States and UTs. A senior DoPT officer said that now it is certain that with daily rise in COVID figures, the central government secretariat will have to continue for a staggered attendance and variable working hours to maintain social distancing at workplace

for quite long now. "A broad framework for work from home is important to standardize the operating procedure even post lock down situation and to ensure safety and security of information, while accessing government files and information remotely from home," said the official mentioning that a new set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been finalised for the employees which is differing from the norms prevailed during lockdown. Sources said the Department of Expenditure have been informed about the expenses to be borne towards employees requiring the logistic supports in the form of laptop/ desktop by the respective ministries/departments. Reimbursements like that for internet services for working from home may be added and that transport and refreshment expenses in physical offices may be dropped. DoPT sources said it is also figuring out the medical/MBBS background civil servants and other health policy experts who are into government departments so that they can quickly be engaged in the fighting the war against corona. "As of now we can say that there may be around 20-25 percent of total strength of civil servants who are also doctors or have undergone training in health policy and management. Once we have proper data this will be quite helpful in

this crisis and the same experts can be used or engaged in times of crisis," DoPT sources said. A senior official said it will be good if the Ministries of Health at the Centre and State engage the medico civil servants in their departments rather than people from technical and humanities' background as has been the case over the years. "The corona pandemic has made the government and other stakeholders realise that health care service is of utmost significance in nation building," said the official. Further, the DoPT has also written to State governments to spare officers for central deputation. In the letter it explains that every cadre is allowed a deputation reserve rule under which the officers are allowed to work on deputation including that under the Central Staffing Scheme (CSS). "The utilisation of this reserve is low and this under-utilization, particularly at Deputy Secretary/Director level, causes serious gaps in cadre management. It is, therefore, requested that larger number of officers may kindly be recommended for appointment at Deputy Secretary/Director/Joint Secretary level under the central staffing scheme (CSS) so that the central deputation reserve/deputation reserves are duly utilized for this purpose," said the letter.

Govt: Six Indian firms applied to CDSCO for permission to manufacture Remdesivir drug

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday said that six Indian companies - Hetero, Cipla, BDR, Jubilant, Mylan and Dr Reddy's Labs -- have applied to Indian Drug Regulatory Agency, Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for permission to manufacture and market the Remdesivir drug in India.

In a release here, the Union Health Ministry said that five of these have also entered into an agreement with Gilead, a biopharmaceutical company, which had applied to CDSCO, for import and marketing of Remdesivir on May 29. After due deliberations, permission under Emergency Use Authorization was granted on June 1 in the interest of patient safety and obtaining further data.

"The applications of these six companies are being processed by the CDSCO on priority and in accordance with the laid down procedures. The companies are at various intermediate stages of inspection of manufacturing facilities, verification of data, stability testing, emergency laboratory testing as per protocol. Being an injectable formulation, testing for assay, identity, impurities, bacterial endotoxin test and sterility become very critical for patient safety and this data needs to be provided by the companies," the release read.

The CDSCO is awaiting the data and is providing complete support to these companies. It has already waived off the requirement of local clinical trials for these companies by invoking emergency provisions.

The Ministry made it clear that as per its updated Clinical Management Protocol for COVID-19, drug Remdesivir has been included as an "investigational therapy" only for



restricted emergency use purposes along with off label use of Tocilizumab and Convalescent Plasma. The said protocol also clearly mentions that the use of these therapies is based on limited available evidence and limited availability at present. "Use of Remdesivir under emergency use may be considered in patients with moderate disease (those on oxygen) but with no specified contraindications. This drug has still not been approved (market authorization) by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), where like India it continues only under an Emergency Use Authorization. Additionally, the first three batches of imported consignments are to be tested and reports submitted to the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)," said the release.

Experts hail PM's decision to amend Essential Commodities Act

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Experts have hailed the Modi Government decision to amend the Essential Commodities Act and bring an ordinance to promote barrier-free inter-State and intra-State trade in agriculture sector, to usher in the path of creating 'One India, One Agriculture Market'. In a webinar titled the same, organised by Press Information Bureau on Sunday, several scientists, educationists and journalists were of opinion that this new initiative of the Union Government will open a new window of opportunity for the agricultural marketing

sector of the country, thus bringing a positive change in the rural economy. Dr. N C Nayak, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Kharagpur said, the agriculture sector would get a boost with the cabinet decision for rejuvenation of agriculture and food processing sector of the country and bring a change in the agricultural economy by encouraging private as well as foreign direct investment in the farming sector. He also hoped that such a positive initiative of the Union Government will also help encourage investment in cold storages and usher in modernisation in food supply



chain. Dr Kishore Goswami, another expert from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT, Kharagpur spoke on the merits of the decision with optimism for growth which is evident in the farming

They even spoke about the price stability and better productivity which are integral parts of the positive sides of the Cabinet decision. Taranjit Singh, Managing Director, JIS Group stated that the decision is a positive initiative from the perspective of industry, as it will empower the farmers for engaging processors, wholesalers, aggregators, large retailers, exporters and the like on a level playing field, while building capacity as well as fostering a resilient supply chain for the farm products to the global markets, thereby encouraging entrepreneurship in the agriculture and food processing sector. Dr Dipankar Gorai (Agriculture) and Dr Subrata Sarkar (Horticulture), both experts from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Burdwan opined that the decision would play a pivotal role in motivating farmers to produce and supply farm produces with better linkages among farmers, processors, warehouse and exporters among others.

IMD used ISRO's satellites to keep eye on Amphan

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) used ISRO's satellites -INSAT 3D, INSAT 3DR, polar orbiting satellites including SCATSAT, ASCAT, Oceansat-2 and Megha Tropiques kept a constant eye on the super cyclone Amphan along with available ships and buoy observations to study the intensity, locations and cloud cover around as it brewed into super cyclone. According to IMD report on super cyclone Amphan, the system has been monitored since April 23, a three week prior to the formation of a trough of low pressure over the southeast Bay of Bengal on May 13.

As it developed into a super cyclone, Indian satellites sent data every 15 minutes to the ground station helping track and forecast its movement and save hundreds of lives and helped the agencies to minimize the damages. Amphan has intensified into a super cyclone on May 19-20 and made its landfall in West Bengal between Digha and Hatiya on the afternoon of May 20 that caused extensive damages in West Bengal and coastal Odisha. The West Bengal Government has pegged financial loss to the

tune of Rs 1.02 lakh crore across the state due to Amphan. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) report on Super Cyclonic Storm "Amphan" that crossed West Bengal coast during May 16-21, as a very severe cyclonic storm across Sunderbans, said that from May 18 midnight Amphan moved from the southwest towards the southeast Bay of Bengal. It again reappeared as an Low Pressure Area on May 13 over southeast Bay of Bengal. Under favourable environmental conditions, it concentrated into a depression over southeast BoB in the early morning on May 16 and further intensified into a deep depression (DD) the same afternoon. It moved north-northwestwards and intensified into Cyclonic Storm "AMPHAN" (pronounced as UM-PUN) over southeast BoB in the evening on May 16. It further intensified into a Severe Cyclonic Storm (SCS) on May 17. The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has lauded the IMD for its accurate prediction of Amphan. This was the second time that WMO appreciated India Meteorological Department (IMD) for its accurate prediction. Earlier, during Fani cyclone in Odisha, the world body has hailed IMD forecast.

Cong seeks reduction in petrol, diesel prices

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Congress on Sunday demanded that the Centre go for an immediate reduction in the prices of petrol, diesel and LPG to August 2004 level. With the seventh rise in the fuel prices, the party in a statement said it is important to remind that the current crude oil prices at about 40 US Dollars is similar to August 2004 level and yet consumers are paying a heavier bill. In August 2004, Petrol was Rs 36.81 per litre, Diesel 24.16 and LPG Rs 261.60 per cylinder in Delhi but currently Petrol is being sold at Rs 75.78 per litre, Diesel at Rs 74.03 per litre and LPG at Rs 593 per cylinder. Congress chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala said Modi-Shah government must immediately rollback the excise duty hike of Rs 23.78 on petrol and Rs 28.37 on diesel. "Today 130 crore Indians are battling the Corona pandemic. The poor, migrant workers,



shopkeepers, farmers, small and medium businesses and those who have lost their jobs are struggling to survive the economic ruin unleashed by the Modi government. But instead of reducing their burden the draconian and anti-people BJP Government is fleecing the people by not just raising fuel rates on daily basis but also refusing to share benefits of lower crude with people," Surjewala said. Petrol and Diesel prices have been hiked by Rs 4.52 per litre and Rs 4.64 per litre respectively during the last 8 days itself despite crude oil prices being benign. "It is a matter of record that excise duty on Petrol was Rs 9.20

per litre and on Diesel it was Rs. 3.46 per litre in May, 2014 when Modi Government assumed office. In the last six years, the excise duty on Petrol and Diesel have been increased on Petrol by an additional Rs 23.78 per litre and on Diesel by an additional Rs 28.37. This translates into a 258 percent increase in excise on petrol and 820 percent hike in excise duty on diesel," the grand old party said in a statement. Congress alleged that between financial year 2014-15 to fiscal year 2019-20, the Modi government has hiked taxes on Petrol and Diesel 12 times and has collected a whopping Rs. 17,80,056 crore in just the last 6 years. "Will Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government explain why Petrol and Diesel that cost less than Rs. 20 per litre to India, is being sold at steep rates of Rs. 75.78 per litre for Petrol and Rs. 74.03 per litre for Diesel?" Surjewala asked. The party demanded that petrol and diesel should be brought under the GST.

India should revise 'One China' policy, exploit China's fault lines, say experts



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India should rethink and revise its 'One China' policy and exploit the geographic, ethnic, and economic fault lines within the Asian giant, such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang, a group of experts has said. At a webinar jointly organised by Law and Society Alliance and Defence Capital on 'Revisiting 'One China' policy: Economic and Political Options for India: Hong Kong, Tibet, Taiwan, and Xinjiang', the experts said India's non-interference when Tibet was

annexed by China 70 years ago, thereby changing its geographical boundaries, has come back to haunt India since 1962. The experts at the webinar were Arvind Gupta, former deputy national security adviser of India and now director of StratNewsGlobal International Foundation; Jayadeva Ranade, former additional secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat and present day President of Centre for China Analysis and Strategy; Seshadri Chari, secretary-general of Forum for Integrated National Security; Nitin A. Gokhale, editor of StratNewsGlobal and BharatShakti; and Abhijit Iyer-Mitra, senior fellow at Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Editor of Defence.Capital N C Bipindra moderated the session. In his remarks, Gupta said what 'One China' policy was considered as a reciprocity to the 'One India' policy. However, India gave up its influence on Tibet in the 1950s and accepted its annexation by China. This situation as far as Tibet is concerned continues till date. However, India has taken a flexible approach in the past few years on Tibet, Gupta said and pointed out to the 2010 India-China joint statement that didn't mention the 'One China' policy, then external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj's statement in 2014 on the reciprocity on the unity and sovereignties of each other, and the invite to the Taiwanese representative to join the 2014 Narendra Modi oath taking ceremony. He expressed his concerns about not taking a dynamic approach and said that we have not moved very much in revising policy and taking forward what was said in the statements. On Tibet, Gupta suggested that India should be supporting the effort of the Tibetans to have self-rule and should give the Dalai Lama more recognition and position in diplomatic engagements, apart from visibility in India's political circles. Nitin Gokhale, in his arguments, said China's actions regarding 'One India' policy such as stapled visas to Indian citizens from the states of Jammu and Kashmir and

Arunachal Pradesh, denying visa to an Indian military commander who was heading the army in Jammu and Kashmir and Beijing's opposition to Indian prime minister visiting Arunachal Pradesh were all reasons enough for India to rethink the 'One China' policy. "Taiwan is the low hanging fruit as far as a rethink on 'One China' Policy is concerned. We should think of increasing our economic and technological relations with Taiwan. They are wonderful in electronic chip manufacturing, semiconductors, and 5Gn technologies," Gokhale said. Jayadeva Ranade stressed the need to build up India's own capabilities in countering China - not only on the border, but on all fronts. He predicted that the tensions between the US and China will certainly either put India in a sweet spot or in a delicate position in the days to come. He said that the government should provide scholarships to those wanting to learn Mandarin from Taiwan instead of China, where the visitors are brain-washing into becoming slaves of Chinese supremacy. Seshadri Chari argued that India should never accept the 'One China' principle as propounded by Beijing. On Xinjiang, Chari pointed out that the region was annexed by China because of which it created borders for itself with Central Asian nations, Afghanistan, and India. Abhijit Iyer-Mitra classified three major problems of India with China - cutting off the Pakistan-China nexus, the need for a problems free border, and China's veto power at UNSC. He gave food for thought by flagging questions like - are we ready to give nuclear weapons to Taiwan? Can we support Taiwan strategically? Can we support the democracy movement in Hong Kong, given the fact that we already have many protests in India? Can we recognise Taiwan? Can we support Uighurs? Can we support Manchuria and Inner Mongolia? Can we support the minority rebels in Mongolia? Can we sell them weapons?

Don't want China, Pak land but peace, amity: Gadkari

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing face-off with China at the Line of Actual Control, Union Minister and senior BJP leader Nitin Gadkari on Sunday India is not interested in the land of China or Pakistan but wants peace and amity. "India (even) never tried to grab land of its neighbours like Bhutan and Bangladesh," he stressed. Addressing the virtual 'Jan Samvad' rally of Gujarat BJP from Nagpur in Maharashtra, he said India believed in peace and non-violence and does not want to be strong by becoming an expansionist. The Minister of Road Transport & Highways and MSME also said that COVID-19 crisis will not last long, as a vaccine is on its way soon. "India do not want land of either Pakistan or China. All India want is peace, amity, love, and (want) to work together (with neighbouring countries)," Gadkari said. His comments came at a time when India and China are engaged in a stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. Talking about the completion of one year of the second term of the Modi government, Gadkari said its biggest



achievement was to bring peace in the country by dealing with matters of internal and external security. "...Whether it is about almost winning over the Maoist problem or securing the country from Pakistan-sponsored terrorism...There is China on the one side of our border and Pakistan on the other side. We want peace, not violence," he said. During his speech, Gadkari referred to the famous novel 'Mrityunjaya' by Marathi novelist Shivaji Sawant, saying peace and non-violence can be established by only those who are strong and not weak. "We should not make India strong by becoming expansionist. We want to make India strong for establishing peace.

We never tried to grab land of Bhutan. Our country made Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the prime minister of Bangladesh after winning the war (with Pakistan in 1971), and our soldiers returned thereafter. "We took not a single inch of land. We do not want land either of Pakistan or China. All we want is peace, amity, love, and wanted to work together," he said. Gadkari also said the coronavirus crisis will not last long as scientists in India and abroad have been working to develop a vaccine. "This crisis is not going to last long. Effort is on in our country to develop a vaccine for coronavirus. Scientists across the world are working in this direction. As per the information received by me, I can say with confidence that very soon we will find vaccine. Once we develop a vaccine, we won't have to fear the crisis, Gadkari added. As per the Union Health ministry, India saw the highest single-day spike of 11,929 novel coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours, taking the number of infections to over 3.20 lakh on Sunday, while the toll crossed the 9,000 mark with 311 more deaths.

Andhra woes rise as record 253 afflicted

Amaravati: From the overnight tally of 186, the number of Covid cases jumped by 67 to record an all-time one-day high of 253 positive cases on Sunday. Incidentally, Saturday's tally was the previous highest single day record.

With the latest update, Andhra Pradesh's cumulative tally of Covid cases has zoomed to 4,841. The past week has witnessed daily rise by not less than 100 cases. The current trend has been taking shape since June 6, when the state reported a 3-digit tally of 161 cases for the first time.

On a positive note, 82 persons were discharged from hospitals on Sunday, raising the cumulative tally of cured per-

sons in the state to 2,723 from the overnight figure of 2,641.

Meanwhile, the cumulative tally of active cases in the state also climbed to 2,034 from Saturday's figure of 1,865 active cases, the state nodal officer reported.

With 2 deaths reported during the 24 hours ending 9 a.m., Sunday, the death toll in Andhra Pradesh climbed to 84. While one death was reported from Kurnool district, another one was reported from East Godavari district.

Over the past few days, the state's mortality rate has been improving steadily. On Sunday, Andhra Pradesh's mortality rate stood at 1.43, sharing the 9th position with Chandigarh

among the states of India. In comparison, India's mortality rate was 2.87 per cent on Sunday. In comparison to 14,477 samples on Saturday, 15,633 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, the state nodal officer reported.

Sunday also saw a rise in the cumulative tally of Covid-19 cases among returnees from other states. On Sunday, the tally stood at 1,107 compared to the Saturday figure of 1,068 cases. However, the tally of active cases dropped from 546 to 536 with 48 persons being discharged from hospital.

Two new cases were detected among foreign returnees, taking the cumulative tally to 204.

IANS

Jawan shot on LoC succumbs

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A critically injured Army jawan deployed along the line of control in Poonch sector succumbed to his fatal injuries in the wee hours of Sunday. The jawan had received splinter injuries during heavy exchange of firing after the Pakistan army resorted to 'unprovoked' ceasefire violation in the region. The jawan was airlifted from Poonch past midnight but could not survive.

In the last 10 days, three Indian soldiers have attained martyrdom in 'unprovoked' incidents of ceasefire violations in Rajouri and Poonch sectors.

According to Lt-Col Devender Anand, Defence PRO in Jammu, "Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation on the line of control (LoC) in Poonch Sector on 13 Jun 2020. Own troops responded strongly to the enemy fire. In the incident, Sepoy Lungambui Abonmei was critically injured and later succumbed to his injuries".



Martyred soldier Sepoy Lungambui Abonmei

Earlier, on June 10 Naik Gurcharan Singh, hailing from Gurdaspur district of Punjab and on June 4 Havildar Mathiazhagan P, hailing from Salem district of Tamil Nadu had sacrificed their lives in the line of duty in Rajouri sector.

Even as tensions between India and Pakistan are escalating the local

residents in the area have been living in the shadow of guns.

Fresh firing was also reported along the line of control in Rampur sector of North Kashmir's Baramulla district. According to reports, Pakistani army lobbed mortar shells on civilian pockets in the area. In response, Indian army gave them a befitting reply.

According to official sources, more than 2000 incidents of ceasefire violations have been reported in Jammu and Kashmir till the first week of June 2020.

"A total of 2027 ceasefire violations took place this year till June 10, with the highest number of 411 violations taking place in March.

During January, a total number of 367 ceasefire violations were recorded, 366 in February, 387 in April and 382 in May, while the first 10 days of June saw 114 incidents of firing and shelling from Pakistan.

Against this, 926 ceasefire violations took place in the same period in 2019.

TN tally at 44,661, death toll at 435

IANS ■ CHENNAI

As many as 1,974 people tested Covid-19 positive taking the tally to 44,661, and 38 patients breathed their last raising the toll to 435 over the past 24 hours in Tamil Nadu, the Health Department said, here on Sunday.

During the day, 1,138 Covid-19 people were discharged from various hospitals raising the number to cured people to 24,547.

The number of active cases in the state stands at 19,676. The number of infected children in the 0-12 age group went up to 2,270.

The state capital Chennai continued to head the Covid-19 infection table with 1,415 people testing positive and the tally stands at 31,896.

Homeopathy doctors upset over discrimination 'Immunity Sandesh' to fight corona in Kolkata

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI/KOCHI

Close on the heels of Ayurvedic physicians, homeopathy doctors in Kerala are up in arms against the State Government order banning them from attending to Covid-19 patients. Dr M Suresh Kumar, homeopathy physician with nearly four decades of experience said the Kerala Government in association with modern medicine practitioners is trying to destroy homeopathy system of medicine.

"Why and how they came to the conclusion that homeopathy is not fit for covid pandemic is not explained. The order says we should not attend to patients who call on us with cold, runny nose, fever, sour throat and breathlessness. It looks absurd," said Dr Kumar who had put in a total of six years of learning to get his diploma in homeopathy medicine.

Interestingly, hundreds of patients who were tested positive for covid have been cured by Dr Kumar

and his colleagues much before the Kerala Government issued the order banning the homeopaths from treating patients. As on date, modern medicine has no known medicine to cure the pandemic while Ayurveda and Homeopathy streams cure patients by strengthening their immunity and fortifying the resistance of the body from attacks by coronavirus, said Dr Kumar.

But Dr Jaswant Patil, A doctor of medicine in allopathy who is one of the leading homeopathic practitioners in the country has said that he along with his team of homeopaths cured six patients who were symptomatic. "All of them tested negative after they were administered with homeopathy medicine," said Dr Patil describing the achievement as proof of the effect of evidence based science. "This is the biggest evidence based science," he said.

Dr Patil expressed shock over the government order asking homeopaths not to attend to the covid patients who come to them. "This

has happened at a time when homeopathy has proved itself to be efficacy in treating covid-19. We have succeeded in curing the disease in places like Malegon and even in Mumbai," said Dr Patil.

He said the Department of Ayush, Government of India, had in a letter dated March 6 (DO No Shad waxed eloquence on the curing properties of Homeopathy. "The preventive aspect of Homeopathy is well known and historically Homeopathy has reportedly been used for prevention during the epidemics of Cholera, Spanish Influenza, Yellow Fever, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Typhoid etc. The Genus Epidemicus (GE) is the remedy found to be most effective for a particular epidemic once data have been gathered from several cases," wrote Rajesh Kotecha, secretary, department of ayush, Government of India to all State Governments. It remains a mystery why Kerala Government issued an order banning other medical streams from attending to covid patients in spite

of Kotecha's letter endorsing the Indian and Homeopathy systems.

According to Dr Patil, an integrated approach in the treatment of covid has been found to be effective. "Homeopathy medicines take care of chemicals secreted in the body following coronavirus attack. These chemicals damage lungs, kidney and arteries. It was homeopathy medicines administered as adjuvant therapy that saved many lives. There were instances when covid patients who were waiting outside hospitals to get admitted were administered homeopathy medicines and this saved hundreds of lives. We gave the medicine as a stop-gap arrangement and it turned out to be successful," said Dr Patil.

With no vaccine readily available to cure the pandemic and the number of coronavirus patients increasing on an hourly basis, the question being asked by doctors like Sureh Kumar is relevant: "Why this kind of discrimination and apartheid towards Indian system of medicine and Homeopathy?"

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as the political parties are ebaying for each other's blood over the deteriorating corona situation making the atmosphere bitter a vendor of sweets in Kolkata have come up with a new kind of 'Sandesh' (a dry and popular sweetmeat) with a message of peace and to stimulate friends and foes alike.

Known for keeping a sweet tooth the Bengalis will now be lured with a particular type of "sandesh" which will take care of their corona concern.

With the prevailing corona scare keeping a large section of people away from the sweet shops a sweetmeat chain in Bengal has discovered a new solution to address their virus concern.

Christened "Immunity Sandesh" by its makers, the descendants of Balaram Mullick and Radharaman Mullick — one of the ancient sweet chains in Kolkata started way back in 1885 — the new sweet dish promises to boost up its

eatery's immunity and prepares it to tackle diseases including corona insiders claim.

Sudipta Mullick a current owner of the stated shop says that the idea of preparing this special sweet came up at a time when people were becoming hesitant to visit sweet vendors for their fear of corona infection.

"We decided to innovate a special kind of sweet that will take care of the customers' immunity concerns because as we know boosting one's immunity is the only way we can fight the disease in the absence of any medicine till now," said Mullick. The new kind of sandesh can be had in 15 varieties and tastes, he said adding one such sweet will const Rs 25.

"We have consulted the experts, including those who have vast knowledge of Ayurveda to develop the ingredients of the sweet," he said informing the makers have "avoided adding sugar to it... Immunity Sandesh is purely made out of Himalaya honey"

The makers have included turmeric, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon saffron, black cumin, Mulethi, bay leaves, honey and a few others things to prepare this sandesh, he said adding the new sweat has become an instant hit. "There is a considerable demand of the sweet and we people are liking this new kind of sandesh," he said.

Sandesh or Sondesh is a Bengali dessert, with some of its recipes of calling for the use of chhena or ricotta cheese or paneer (made by curdling the milk and separating the whey from it). Some people in the region of Dhaka in Bangladesh call it Pranahara (literally, heart 'stealer') which is a softer kind of sandesh, made with mawa or khoya (prepared by simmering full-fat milk in an iron frying pan for a couple of hours over a medium flame) and the essence of curd.

The history of sandesh dates back to the medieval Bengali literature including Krittivasi Ramayan and lyrics of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of present Nadia district.

163 more test +ve, total crosses 5K mark in J&K 4 deaths, toll at 59

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

With 163 fresh cases of coronavirus and four deaths, the total tally of Covid-19 positive cases surpassed 5,000 mark and the death toll reached 59 in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on Sunday.

Significantly, 120 patients recovered fully and were discharged from different hospitals during the day.

According to the media bulletin, one patient died in Jammu while three deaths were reported from Kashmir on Sunday. Meanwhile, out of 163 fresh cases 28 cases were reported from Jammu division while 135 from Kashmir division.

Out of 5,041 total coronavirus positive cases, the total number of active cases are 2593. Out of these 2593, 745 cases are active positive in Jammu division and 1,848 in Kashmir division.

The total patients recovered in Jammu and Kashmir are 2,389, 411 in Jammu and 1,978 in Kashmir division.

On Sunday, the highest number of cases were reported from Shopian and Pulwama. 45 cases reported positive in Shopian while Pulwama reported 33 cases.

In Kashmir valley, Kulgam district has reported the highest number of 631 cases so far followed by 538 from Shopian, 524 from Srinagar and 515 from Baramulla.

Amid rising infections, K'taka tally touches 7K

Bengaluru: Domestic returnees and rising infections in contacts of earlier Covid cases in Karnataka made the state's tally touch the 7,000 mark with 176 new cases, an official said on Sunday.

"New cases reported from Saturday 5 p.m. to Sunday 5 p.m., 176," said a health official.

Like everyday, domestic returnees are the highest number of cases, 88, while 61 contacts of earlier cases also turned positive.

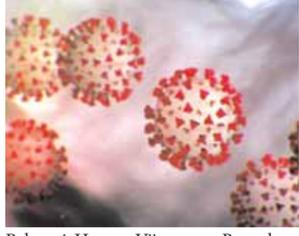
Among the domestic returnees, 82 or 93 per cent of the cases had travel history to Maharashtra.

There were also six cases with international travel history to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and the Philippines.

Meanwhile, contacts of earlier cases turning positive are showing an upward trend with 61 such cases reported on Sunday.

Cases spiked in Bengaluru Urban, Yadgir, Udipi, Bidar, Kalaburagi, Dharwad, Ballari, Kolar, Uttara Kannada, Mandya and Daskhina Kannada.

Among the new cases, Bengaluru Urban contributed 42, followed by Yadgir (22), Udipi (21), Bidar (20), Kalaburagi (13), Dharwad (10), Ballari (8), Kolar (7), Uttara Kannada (6), Mandya and Daskhina Kannada (5 each), Bagalkote (4), Ramanagara (3), Raichur and Shivamogga (2 each) and



Belagavi, Hassan, Vijayapura, Bengaluru Rural and Haveri (1 each).

Twelve patients are suffering from influenza like illness (ILI) and five from severe acute respiratory infection (SARI).

Meanwhile, five people succumbed to the virus, three from Bengaluru Urban, one from Dakshina Kannada and another from Bidar.

Among the new cases, 106 are males and 70 females, including 13 children below the age of 10 years.

Of the total cases, 2,956 patients have been discharged, 86 have died while 16 are admitted in the ICU. In the last 24 hours, 312 patients were cured and discharged.

On Sunday, the health department tested 7,451 samples out of which 6,835 turned negative.

In total, 4.43 lakh samples have been tested, of which 4.27 lakh have returned negative.

IANS

Goa taking note of Kerala's corona mgmt practice: Min

IANS ■ PANAJI

Goa is taking notes from Kerala on its efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic, Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said on Sunday.

"... Kerala is an ideal example. I am in constant touch with Kerala (Health) Minister, Madam (KK) Shailaja, on the new ways being practiced there," Rane told reporters in Margao while updating on Goa's efforts to tackle in creating corona cases in the State.

Goa currently has 54 active cases, even as Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has claimed that a vast majority of the infected persons are asymptomatic.

Earlier on Sunday, the state designated four additional facilities as Covid-19 care centres, where corona positive but asymptomatic persons will be admitted.

The care centres aim to separate symptomatic and asymptomatic patients.

120 die, 3,390 more test positive in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With no marked change in the Covid-19 situation, Maharashtra on Sunday recorded 120 new deaths and 3,390 fresh infections, taking the total number of deaths to 3,950 and infected cases in the state to 1,07,958 cases.

A day after the number of deaths had come down to 113 and the number of new positive cases stood at 3,427, coronavirus claimed 120 more lives and left 3,390 others infected on Sunday.

Having taken into account total 3,950 deaths reported so far and 50,978 patients discharged from various hospitals ever since the outbreak of pandemic in the state, the state health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the state at 53,017.

Of the 113 deaths on Sunday, Mumbai accounted for 69 deaths, while there were eleven deaths each in Pune and Jalgaon, seven deaths in Aurangabad, five deaths in Ulhasnagar, four deaths in



Thane, three deaths each in Solapur and Nashik, two deaths each in Osmanabad and Akola, one death Palghar, Vasai-Virar and Ratnagiri.

After recording 97 deaths each on June 10 and 11 and 90 deaths on June 12, the number of deaths in Mumbai came down to 69 each on Saturday and on Sunday, taking the total number of deaths in the metropolis to 2182 on Sunday. The number of Covid-19 positive patients went up by 1,395 cases to touch 58,226 now.

The authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in Mumbai at 29,050.

Of the 120 dead in the state on Saturday, 81 were men while 39 were women. Sixty six of them were aged over 60 years, 40 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 14 were aged below 40 years.

Eighty out of the 120 patients (67%) had high-risk comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

Currently, as many as 97 laboratories are functioning for Covid-19 diagnosis in the state currently - 55 government-run and 42 private ones. Out of 6,47,739 samples sent to laboratories, 1,07,958 have tested positive (16.3%) for Covid-19 until Sunday.

The recovery rate in the state is 47.2 percent while the case fatality rate in the state: 3.65 per cent. Currently, 5,87,596 people are in home quarantine. There are 77,189 beds available in 1,535 quarantine institutions while 29,641 people are in institutional quarantine.

One more 'Anamika' held in UP, real Anamika gets job offer from pvt school

IANS ■ LUCKNOW

The case of drawing of ₹1 salaries totalling over ₹1 crore in the name of Anamika Shukla in Uttar Pradesh is taking interesting turns with each passing day, with the police identifying two more accused women and arresting one of them.

In a positive twist to the whole scam, the 'real' Anamika Shukla, who has been jobless so far, has got a job offer from a private school in Gonda district after its management came to know about her.

During investigations in the case, authorities had identified two more women in the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) as masquerading Anamika Shukla and drawing salaries in her name.

While one was arrested by

Ambedkar Nagar police from her hometown in Bewar area in Mainpuri district, the other woman hailing from Kanpur Dehat is being traced.

Arrested woman Anita Singh, a widow from Lakhanpur Jaatmai village in Bewar police jurisdiction, told local reporters that an "area resident Pushpendra Singh Jatav had arranged the job for her without charging any money and that she was getting ₹10,000 every month from him out of her salary of ₹22,000".

She said: "I did not have money to even manage food for my child and my family at that time and hence accepted Pushpendra's offer." She said she was a postgraduate from Etawah and had returned to her hometown after relaxations in the lockdown. Police is now looking for Pushpendra.



Boys play football at waterlogged maidan, during fifth phase of Covid-19 lockdown in Kolkata on Sunday

Psycho killer held in UP, says 'likes killing people'

Etah (Uttar Pradesh): A 30-year-old man, known to be a psycho killer, has been arrested while trying to hack his elder brother with an axe, police said.

The accused had allegedly murdered two minors and was 'planning to kill three more'.

Radhey Shyam, the accused, is an intermediate pass youth and a resident of the Dharmpur village under in the Etah district.

The accused had strangled two of his nephews -- six-year-old Satyendra on February 4 and five-year-old Prashant on June 9. Satyendra was the son of Radhey Shyam's elder brother while Prashant was the son of his cousin Raghuraj Singh.

Sakrauli Station House Officer (SHO), Kritpal Singh,

said that late in the night of June 11, Radhey attempted to kill his elder brother Vishwanath Singh who was sleeping.

Fortunately, relatives caught him before the attack and brought him to the police station. During questioning, the accused claimed that he 'liked' killing people.

Etah Superintendent of Police Sunil Kumar Singh said, "The accused has confessed to have killed two of his nephews, and disclosed that he was about to kill three more people. He is a psycho killer and takes pleasure in killing people."

Significantly, the police had sent three people, including a woman, to jail for the murder of Satyendra, while three more were booked in Prashant's case.

IANS

No question of re-imposing lockdown: K'taka Minister

Bengaluru: There is no question of re-imposing a lockdown, a Karnataka Minister said on Sunday, seeking to dispel speculation over this issue.

"The question of re-imposing lockdown does not arise," said Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar told media persons as he toured Kalaburagi and Bidar districts to visit medical colleges, meet people and officials to discuss the Covid scenario.

Amid rising infections, there was speculation that the lockdown may be clamped down again as Prime Minister Narendra Modi plans to talk to Chief Ministers on June 16 and 17.

As part of World Blood Donors Day, Sudhakar also donated blood at Kalaburagi.

IANS

Trumping America

The US President might pander to his base but his illogical order on immigration will harm his country

It has not been a great couple of weeks for US President Donald Trump. As the "Black Lives Matter" protests have gathered steam following the brutal murder of a Black man, George Floyd, by a White Minneapolis police officer, Trump has been floundering, incapable of leading the reconciliation his nation desperately needs. Indeed, he has been pressing all the buttons that will lead to greater factionalism, possibly worsening the crisis. As he remains at odds with the US Congress as well, he has taken to ruling by executive fiat. While his options might be limited, he can

take action on immigration. Trump's crackdown on the US' southern border with Mexico has led to much human tragedy as well as a realisation that hundreds of those trying to sneak into the country from Mexico are from India. But now he wants to act against letting legitimate visa holders, particularly those on H-1B work visas, into the US in order to protect, preserve and even benefit American jobs. Particularly since millions of Americans have found themselves unemployed as the pandemic ripped through their economy. The COVID-19 outbreak and the economic downturn it engendered have swelled the ranks of unemployed Americans by more than 14 million, from 6.2 million in February to 20.5 million in May 2020. Trump has been a vocal critic of the H-1B programme. He had once vowed to "end forever the use of the H-1B as a cheap labour programme" and make it "an absolute requirement to hire American workers first for every visa and immigration programme" without any exception. But during the first three years of his presidency, the US economy created more than 6.5 million jobs. This weakened the argument that H-1B workers are depriving US citizens of livelihood. But now with the pandemic, as more than 33 million jobs have been lost, voices against H-1B are being raised more than ever. Recent data released by the United States Citizens Immigration Services revealed that the denial rate of this visa has soared since Trump took office.

The H-1B visa issue is particularly an emotive one in India. Thousands of Indian Information Technology (IT) professionals have used it as a lifeboat to migrate to the US and create a better life for their families. With more than half a million H-1B workers in the US, India is one among the main beneficiaries of these temporary work visas. According to reports, India is the only country that takes 70 per cent of the 85,000 H-1B visas applied annually. Not surprising then that IT firms such as Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro and Infosys have become behemoths. But with employment visas being suspended, these firms will be forced to increase local hiring. This would, in turn, eat into their margins. While Trump's administration has cracked down on these companies using the H-1B route since 2017, it is still used by large American tech firms such as Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Apple to bring in the best and brightest of Indian talent to the US. And in the case of the latter, it is clear that they are not just bringing in "cheaper" talent but the "best" one. This is where Trump's order might end up impacting American technology firms badly. The reason why those large corporations have not been hiring "Americans" is quite clear, they do not feel that America has enough talent to be hired. By restricting the entry of H-1B and other technical and work visa holders into the US, Trump might end up damaging American interests rather than helping them. As economies across the world remain in critical mode, thanks to the Corona pandemic, the US would need more such talent for its economy to rebound.

Roti vs paratha

Karnataka ruling on different GST slabs for common Indian flatbreads sparks a row over honouring regional choices



If the pandemic has not yet taught you the art of kneading dough, the tax authorities surely seem to be hell-bent on making you *atmanirbhar*. If your life still depends on ready-to-eat foods, particularly *rotis* and *parathas*, then prepare to shell out more money from your pocket or start upgrading your culinary skills. Geniuses at the Karnataka bench of the Authority for Advance Rulings (AAR) have classified the food system by categorically making the distinction between *roti* and *parota/parotha/parontha/paratha/parantha*

or whatever one may call it, just so that both forms of the Indian flatbread can be taxed differently. *Rotis*, which can be had immediately on opening the pouch, will have five per cent GST while *parathas*, which need to be heated before consumption, will attract 18 per cent. But the ridiculousness of the logic doesn't sit with the AAR, which believes that *roti* is an "essential" food item and, thus, would invite lower GST, while *parathas* are a "luxury." The latter, it argues, has a different taste and methodology of preparation. Since when has the cooking method dictated food grades?

Going by such nitpicking logic, netizens had a field day comparing other Indian essential foods and their GST. While some wondered what would happen to the *kulcha* and butter *naan*, others debated if a further classification between vanilla and chocolate ice cream, too, was on the cards. But on a more serious note, should such definitions be left to the judgements of bureaucrats and policy makers? India's cuisine map is more diverse than its people and it is difficult to quantify a uniform staple. Besides, food is the only democracy that works in our country. A *roti*, the soft and bouncy version, may be essential in some households in north India but *parotta*, for example, is *de rigueur* on the Malabar coast, where people prefer it flaky, layered and crisp. Why then not consider the layered *khakra*, the famous Gujarati snack, as a luxury? There can be no debate on the oil content of both as that can be regulated by the user, depending on his/her choice. So while up north, the *roti* without a swirl of ghee defeats its healthy nature, down south they may have a layered *paratha* in almost negligible oil. What then about a stuffed *parotta*? Would one stuffed with cottage cheese (dairy) be costlier than the one stuffed with potatoes (vegetable)? There cannot be a national diet for reference and GST should be decided on the quantity of ingredients and not whether one is soft and the other toasty. Besides, *roti* should be taken as a larger generic name for all types of Indian flatbreads. Further, with different slabs in the same categories of food items, it would be difficult to calculate the GST amount on a bill. More complicated than rolling out the perfect round flatbread.

Death of the middle class

It may have pedalled its way on the Atlas cycle to realise the post-liberalisation dream but now that the pandemic has killed the brand, it too is gasping without jobs and rehabilitation



RINKU GHOSH

I will always remember my first shot at being *atmanirbhar*, a much-chased moniker now, with my Atlas cycle. Senior school meant assuming some adult-like responsibilities and engaging with the world and my father gave me that first ticket to freedom. I trained on a friend's Avon cycle, seen by family elders as a wannabe that didn't have any of the toughness or elegance of a superbrand they had grown up with. So when it came to buying one for me, it had to be Atlas. Besides, back then it had a colour range that was not too pop-up. Mine actually was syrupy-shiny like Coca Cola, not brown exactly, the right choice I felt, like many peers caught in the cola wars of the time, wondering which company had the most fizz in its TVCs. And so began my upward mobility, beginning with meeting friends, hanging out with them, running errands with great joy, reaching out to my pupils as a home tutor and simply letting the wind blow through my hair in a gush of a new-found sense of self.

If the bicycle was with me, there was nothing that I could not conquer. Not even a deluge of a Kolkata monsoon could keep me home from finding my own way. Atlas was the reason that I learnt how to navigate the shortest routes through a maze of back alleys and lanes at a time when there was no Google map. And in Kolkata's bustling traffic, it taught me discipline and alertness. By the lake and the greens, it let me give in to gay abandon. And then the inevitable happened, life moved on at a faster pace than its wheels and in India's post-liberalisation era, I became part of a chase called aspiration and wish-fulfilment. I left behind the Atlas, donated it to an office clerk in my father's office, for whom it turned out to be a means of livelihood, sparing him bus fares to work. I had forgotten all about it till the other day, in the grim days of the pandemic, I read that its last unit at Sahibabad had shut down. The company had been doing badly for the last few years, given the penchant for Chinese or branded superbikes among today's youth. So when the lockdown came with the Coronavirus, the company lost its financial muscle and folded. Yet its legendary status came to haunt me and made me wonder if it was symptomatic of an India before and after 2020. The death of dreams that have been vacuous or rebirth of life as it should be and not what we liked it to be? In many ways, the death of Atlas signifies the death of the middle class dream, one that we had pedalled hard to realise and taken care to bubble-wrap, working our way through our many EMIs and propelling ourselves to personal conquests of the material kind — swanky car, eating out, a townhouse in the least and exotic vacations at the most. And now with the pandemic pushing us into a great depression on many fronts, social, economic and personal, many of my generation wish that Atlas was around to revive that old fearlessness of starting out from zero. One



that could battle job cuts, layoffs, furloughs, salary freeze and losses and help us reorder life again. The virus has flattened the self-made fortunes of India's surging professionals and turned their hard-earned indulgence into a sin. And as we cut corners of our upturned lives, which we had so lovingly crafted with our talent pool as the rich invested in our efforts and the poor serviced with their labour, we are no longer the happy mayonnaise layer. That is now spilling out badly and deepening India's haves versus have-not story. For India's middle class can no longer work towards becoming rich, to "have" a life or decide to slide down completely to its origins or "not have" a job as the migrant labourer. The rich can afford to pull through by raiding the buffer stocks of their wealth. And if the reverse migration has taught us anything, then the poor, dispossessed of opportunity and now even dignity, are determined to steer their life through another degree of penury that they have anyway been used to. Besides, the redistribution of wealth in the form of revised Government spending and crisis response has meant that the rural economy has got a booster shot. Yet with the middle class that connects both layers thinning out, the economy won't be catering much to either the "have" or the "have-not." Credit-based packages won't do much to rescue the

middle class. Besides nobody thinks it needs welfarism or break of any sort. The globalised world has always looked greedily at India's aspirant and rising middle classes as an engine of growth and a growing market but with urban consumption collapsing, the economy has completely shapeshifted. World over, the subsidiary and allied industries that depended on urban demand and consumption and fuelled a post-millennial, lifestyle economy have taken a deep dive. As people have stopped travelling, going to restaurants and cut down on shopping, the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors have been badly hit. Nobody is swiping the credit card of conspicuous consumption when survival is the only necessity supported by a debit card. Nobody may have documented it but there has been a reverse migration of the middle class along with the daily wagers and the homeless. Out of job, their savings flattened out in months and carrying the burden of EMIs, many have gone back to their home States, incapable of sustaining their lives in the big cities. The professionals find themselves at sea with a shrinking demand for their services. The "let's change the world" start-up owners are floundering. This group comprises mostly India's young — skilled, educated, talented, energetic and effi-

cient — qualities that have lent India the demographic edge. Yet, their home States, too, have no room for them. There have been shocking reports of Masters degree-holders in Uttar Pradesh signing up for road-digging work under MGNREGA. So those waiting in the wings for their flight in the world question why education should be seen as an empowering tool when it cannot even withstand three months of crisis. The Americans say that the middle class did not face such a serious economic threat since the 1930s. We could say that the Indian middle class is in its worst phase, having gone back by at least two generations in its rationing and privation. And that's going to last quite a while. It doesn't have the stomach to take the burden of our economy or feed it anymore. Without salaries, neither can the Government earn taxes, nor can industries find a market for their products. This vicious cycle and the erosion of the middle class will further entrench our deep socio-economic divides as it has earlier during disasters and pandemics. At least 49 million people across the world are expected to plunge into "extreme poverty" and India leads that projection. About 12 crore Indians have already lost their jobs, according to estimates by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. The virus has

not just recast economics but socio-cultural patterns. Women are losing jobs faster than men because more of them are in service sectors most affected by the virus. Think the hospitality industry, with a slew of women from the front desk to the kitchen, retail, fashion and beauty industries. Think aviation and its army of hostesses. Think receptionists and office administrators. Think IT operators. The average educated Indian woman, who had waged many battles to be where she wants, is back to square one. She is already retreating into a home life of baking for kids, cooking specials and rushing between the washing machine and chores, as that role hasn't changed and in a male patriarchal order, has been cemented further by the pandemic. All the dream-chasing young people from Tier 2 and 3 cities, who filled up service-industry jobs and even trained themselves to be worthy of it — in restaurants, bars, hotels, call centres — are out of work, not sure how they will retro-fit their lives back in their hometowns. They do not even have the Atlas cycle anymore. Even if I had one, would I be able to ride it in these middling years, what with the Government planning cycle corridors? Maybe it is time to pedal again after chewing on Parle G. Yes that company has posted record profits during lockdown. (The writer is Associate Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

I think probably we (India) have not been able to handle the pressure, probably other teams have been able to handle the pressure that way.



Former cricketer —Gautam Gambhir

My biggest learning has been that life can be simple. The world can function without religion and religious places, without war and hatred. There are larger battles to be fought.



Actor —Vikrant Massey

It is a chaotic time and no one can say with certainty what tomorrow looks like. But we find certainty, strength and peace taught to us by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*.



US representative —Tulsi Gabbard

India is firmly on its way to winning the wrong place. A horrific tragedy, resulting from a lethal blend of arrogance and incompetence.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safety in your hands

Sir — Shopping malls, restaurants, hotels and places of worship are now gradually opening up. Government guidelines for the opening up of such public places include controlling the number of visitors to the malls and disallowing touching of idols at religious places. Detailed rules have also been issued for offices that have reopened over the past few weeks. All establishments in containment zones will remain closed as will cinema halls, gaming arcades and children's play areas in malls. Despite these safety measures in place, it will be risky for people to visit public places. It is better to stay indoors. Office goers must be the most careful.

Najibullah Qasmi
Mumbai

Dignity in death

Sir — Heart-wrenching images of people suffering from COVID-19 infection being ill-treated and their dead bodies being manhandled have emerged. In Madhya Pradesh, for example, an elderly man suffering from COVID-19

The other threat amid pandemic

We know it for a fact that millions of people have become stressed, anxious and depressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic since its outbreak. With the authorities focussing entirely on containing the pandemic and saving people's lives, little attention is being paid to this brewing problem. Another dimension to it is that the sufferers hide their condition and do not want to seek help because of the stigma associated with it.

The reasons for psychiatric difficulties linked to the pandemic are many and varied. They range from fear of catching the disease, to the loss of livelihoods, economic hardships, restrictions imposed for containment, inability to continue treatment and disruption of daily routine among others. Ever since the outbreak of COVID-19, many people, who were receiving treatment for mental health conditions, have lost access to it.

Further, the pandemic has laid bare the fact that mental health care is only an insignificant part of the overall healthcare services, especially in poor countries. The exclusion of mental well-being from health coverage is



the norm in low-income countries. Obviously, physical survival should be given paramount importance in pandemic times. But it is worth emphasising that people's mental well-being even in these times is important and should receive the attention it deserves. This pandemic is strange but that doesn't mean we can't come out stronger.

G David Milton
Marathancode

Bihar stands betrayed

Sir — It is unfortunate that the BJP spent crores of rupees on the "virtual rally" for Bihar but not for the poor, who are struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown, unemployment and a failing economy which proves that the Government is

Vinayan Singh
Delhi

only interested in power and is not bothered about the State and its people. Bihar, under the Janata Dal-United (JD(U)-BJP rule, has become bankrupt and backward in all spheres. The people of Bihar have been betrayed.

Bhagwan Thadani
Via mail

Flouting norms

Sir — It is disheartening that in these crisis times, too, private hospitals have fared no better. Allegations of price gouging have been flying thick and fast. In the pre-pandemic period, too, they did not cover themselves in glory. No wonder, they have been milking the present situation. Though a few State Governments have capped COVID-19 treatment prices in such hospitals, the prohibitive prices are beyond the reach of the middle class. For the common man, prevention is better than no cure. People must not be given false hopes.

Rashmi Singh
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Our global standing matters

Under international law, India was not justified in denying visas to the USCIRF team which wanted to probe allegations of atrocities on minorities



MARKANDEY **KATJU**

Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar has denied visas to a delegation of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). The team wanted to visit India to investigate allegations of atrocities on minorities and assess religious freedom in the country. This denial is not valid under international law.

The Peace of Westphalia, 1648, gave birth to the concept of Westphalian Sovereignty. It is the principle in international law that each State has exclusive sovereignty over its territory, protected against foreign intervention into matters which lie within its exclusive domestic jurisdiction. This principle was also interconnected with the notion of a "nation State", which by the 18th century would be moulded to refer to a community which had a common descent or language. Eventually, these principles would age into the 20th century rise of ethnic nationalism, most infamously effectuated by the Nazi regime.

It is in this context that criticism of Westphalian Sovereignty emerged when international legal scholars saw the extent of horrors unleashed by the Nazi regime upon its Jewish citizens under the cover of sovereignty over its subjects. The ignominious premise of such a regime was that the State had absolute authority to cleanse for itself, any identity which did not assimilate within the idea of the dominant majority.

After the end of the Cold War, States began to contemplate a post-Westphalian order whereby they would intervene in human rights abuses by nations. Humanitarian intervention gained ground as a prime exception to principles of absolute sovereignty. On the flip-side, for a post-colonial nation such as ours, the term "intervention" often carries reminders of imperialist invasions. Humanitarian interventions have also been criticised by some to be Trojan horses for justifying or veiling invasions by foreign powers. This debate has been brought to India with the Government's denial of visas to the USCIRF team, a non-governmental advisory body to the US Congress, after its denouncement of the state of religious freedom.

Jaishankar stated that a foreign entity "lacks *locus standi* to pronounce on the state of Indian citizens." His ire is grounded in the USCIRF's recommendation to the US administration in April that India be designated as a "country of particular concern", the first time since the 2002 Gujarat pogrom. Pointing out that religious freedom had taken a downward turn in India, the USCIRF referred to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) issue, scrapping of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and the Delhi riots in February, creating a "culture of impunity for nationwide campaigns of harassment and violence against religious minorities." According to Jaishankar, statements on the fundamental rights of Indian citizens are "misrepresentation" and "unwarranted."

However, it cannot be disputed that persecution is being collectively experienced by the minorities in this country. The names of Akhlaq, Pehlu Khan and Tabrez Ansari evoke bitter remembrances of hundreds of victims of mob-lynchings still awaiting justice. NRC-CAA protesters, who voiced concerns against fundamentally-discriminatory laws, continue to be arrested on trumped-up charges with a singular focus on activists such as Safoora Zargar, Kafeel Khan and Sharjeel Imam.

These are sharply contrasted with the "culture of impunity" which sees Union Ministers garlanding lynchings, communalising instances of violence against animals and sheltering individuals such as Kapil Mishra and Minister Anurag Thakur, who incited their supporters with hate speeches like "desh ke gaddaron ko, goli maro saalon ko" (shoot the traitors)" and yet their names do not even figure in the chargesheet of the Delhi riots case. Investigations into any individual who pledges allegiance to the Right-wing seem woefully compromised. A textbook weaponisation of the media, which is complicit in demonising minorities, is also seen when the religious congregation of the Tablighi Jamaat is covered as Muslims being the carriers of COVID-19.

In today's world, neither can a State claim total impunity relying on an absolute Westphalian principle of sovereignty, nor can foreign nations claim the right to invade a country giving the pretext of a humanitarian crisis. A middle ground has to be found in international law, that while foreign countries cannot intervene in another nation to the extent of invasion, at the same time a country cannot claim absolute reliance on the Westphalian principle for denying any kind of intervention by foreign countries altogether. We live in a global village today and what happens in one country invariably affects another.

Therefore, the correct international law principle is that a foreign country can certainly track the happenings within a country where there is *prima facie* proof of oppression of minorities or other such atrocities. In this uneasy slope towards violent and institutionalised oppression of the minorities, where no organ of the State seems to be upholding accountability, the idea of right to know takes root. It is the middle ground recourse between Westphalian sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. After all, States cannot reserve sovereignty over systematic persecution of citizens.

Vehement denial and disparagement of questions does not bode well for our international standing. It is a minimum requirement to ensure that the detention centres which are being built across the country are not another version of the "final solution" in this atmosphere of intolerance. Jaishankar was not justified under international law in denying visas to the USCIRF delegation which wanted to assess the allegations of atrocities on minorities in the country.

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India.)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

WE'RE NOT GOING TO LET THIS HAPPEN IN SEATTLE. IF WE HAVE TO GO IN, WE WILL. LET THE GOVERNOR DO IT. HE'S GOT GREAT NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS —US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



IT IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND ILLEGAL TO SEND THE MILITARY INTO SEATTLE. THERE IS NO IMMINENT THREAT OF AN INVASION. —SEATTLE MAYOR JENNY DURKAN

China's failed video war

Beijing adopted Sun Tzu's strategy of 'winning without fighting' little realising that India is the land of the grand strategist Krishna and political adviser Chanakya



ANIL **GUPTA**

Amid the continuing military stand-off in Ladakh and a series of failed bilateral meetings at varying military-diplomatic levels, Beijing embarked upon the familiar "video war", releasing clips showcasing China's modernised and digitised military prowess. The video, released a few days before the scheduled Corps Commander-level meeting, featured a task force doing "infiltration drills." It showed troops operating at night, crossing the border in the dark to avoid detection with only a laser to guide them and the destruction of en route threats through drones. It showed a sniper team destroying enemy spotlights and a fire strike team neutralising the enemy's light armoured vehicles with anti-tank rockets. Thus the enemy's defences were neutralised and thereafter the task force launched the final assault on the enemy headquarters, in which a vehicle-mounted infrared reconnaissance system was used to guide the troops to accurately lock on the targets and destroy them.

The exercise, as per the Chinese mouthpiece *Global Times*, was done at 4,700 metres, simulating the border with India, deep in the Tanggula mountains. However, seasoned defence strategists and military experts in India were not impressed by it as the video had glaring mistakes. Apart from not displaying the timeline, the troops were wearing summer combat fatigues and not the winter clothing essential to survive at that altitude. China watchers, who refused to be misled by the Chinese media, revealed that a similar video was released by Beijing in July 2017 at the peak of the Doklam crisis. Only it was claimed to be filmed at a different altitude then.

To grasp why the Chinese media resorts to such tactics and propaganda offensives, we have to understand the Chinese strategy of "winning without fighting." It goes to the credit of the Chinese army that it has not depended on foreign armies to define its military doctrine but has used indigenous knowledge and experience to draft its war strategy.

China is a one-party State with undisputed supremacy of the Communist Party of China (CPC). The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the army of the communist party and not of the State. It has a political task to defend China's national interest which entails providing "strategic support for consolidating the leadership of the CPC and the socialist system." It is the legacy of Mao's Red Army, which was "an armed body for carrying out the political tasks of the revolution." The PLA is controlled by the CPC through the Central Military Commission (CMC) and the Chinese security doctrine as enunciated by the CMC is referred to as "political warfare."

Adhering to Chinese general and military strategist Sun Tzu's dictum of "winning without waging a war", the CPC's Central Committee and the CMC have laid out the concept of "Three Warfares" as a set of codes for the PLA to conduct political warfare. Referred to as the "political work guidelines of the PLA" the "Three Warfares" strategy entails: Public opinion warfare (through the media), psychological warfare and legal warfare. Their main focus is on control of public opinion; psychological warfare to include blunting an adversary's determination; transformation of emotions; psychological guidance; collapse of (an adversary's) organisation; psychological defence and restriction through law.

Of the three strategies, two have direct bearing on subverting the enemy, playing mind games, coercion and psychological domination

INDIA CANNOT BE BROWBEATEN NOR SUBVERTED THROUGH A MOTIVATED MEDIA WAR BECAUSE IT HAS THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY TO STAND FIRM AND RESOLUTE. CHINA NEEDS TO REALISE THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH NATIONS TO RESOLVE THE BOUNDARY DISPUTE THROUGH MUTUAL NEGOTIATIONS AND CONCENTRATE THE COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL POWER TOWARDS BUILDING STRONGER ECONOMIES IN A POST-CORONAVIRUS ERA



using different platforms. It is a subset of the more widely-known "Information Warfare." It aims at shaping the international image of China by influencing foreign decision-makers' perceptions and their approach towards Beijing. It is operated by means of pre-confronting posturing by the military/paramilitary forces or application of other national capabilities (diplomatic, economic, and cultural) with the intention of intimidating adversaries and encouraging acquiescence to Beijing-desired outcomes.

These are not just used against an adversary but also citizens and friendly countries, for building public opinion favourable to the CPC and perception management. In doing so, the well-tried policy of "carrot and stick" is scrupulously adhered to. The same is very visible in the current stand-off as well. A careful scanning of various articles, videos and tweets emanating from China related to the current face-off bears testimony to the fact. These can easily be termed as instruments of propaganda warfare. Most are prepared under simulated conditions not only to scare the adversary but to motivate the PLA since morale is a big issue with the Chinese armed forces.

With this in mind, the Central Committee of the CPC has given the responsibility of implementing China's "Three Warfares" strategy to the Political Work Department after the recent organisational reforms. The department, which is subordinate to the CMC, works in coordination with the PLA with the aim to create and safeguard the legitimacy of the CPC's political power from any international as well as domestic threat.

Another facet of psychological operations is sowing discord and a sense of hopelessness in the adversary nation's army and populace. Not only will this help in breaking their will to fight off adversary forces and demoralise the population, it will discourage resistance in case of an actual conflict and promote mental fatigue and

demoralisation in case of a longish stand-off. This also helps in seeking concessions at the negotiating table. "When one defeats the enemy, it is not solely by killing the enemy, or winning a piece of ground, but is mainly in terms of cowering his heart." In order to undermine the opponent's morale, the Chinese believe in peddling information favourable to oneself through various forms of media as well as through third parties, friendly elements in the opponent's society and similar outlets.

Fortunately, the current face-off has exposed many such Chinese moles in our society, including veterans, columnists and defence analysts. They spared no effort to multiply the Chinese effort but were defeated in their efforts to create the "China bogey" by those who wanted the nation to ignore the alarmist and exaggerated reporting which has been proved wrong.

The Chinese, in their bid to coerce India, launched a full-fledged "psychological operation" but had to eat humble pie. The mirror deployment by the Indian Army, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Navy took the Chinese by surprise. Coupled with this is the firm and rock-solid politico-diplomatic stand taken by India that has not only rattled the Chinese but sent them a clear-cut message regarding the "no-nonsense" approach of the Indian Government.

In order to buy time, China has been insisting on a series of meetings so that it can prolong the face-off because early resolution would hit its global image. An important meeting was held at the Moldo post (opposite the Indian post of Chushul) between the two delegations led by the Corps Commanders. Even before the outcome of the meeting was known, the PLA once again resorted to mind games by releasing a video displaying China's operational readiness, mobilisation and capability of switching combat-ready troops from one theatre of command to another.

A couple of days later it was revealed that both armies have agreed to disengage from a few areas and also pull back additional troops and weapon platforms deployed on their side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The intent of the video is now becoming clearer. The Indian side would have asserted to their counterparts the local superiority enjoyed by our forces in the designated areas. The video was meant as a counter but failed to have the desired impact because India is in a better position to muster a larger number of fully-acclimatised combat-ready troops.

Thereafter the pullback took place. Interestingly, it has now been acknowledged by a Chinese military expert Huang Guozhi in a Chinese military magazine that, "At present the world's largest and most experienced country with plateau and mountain troops is neither the US, Russia nor any European powerhouse, but India."

The timing and content of the article written in Mandarin is self-explanatory. *Global Times*, the CPC's mouthpiece, writes in English and is obviously not meant for the larger domestic audience.

China must be thinking of emulating Sun Tzu by adopting his strategy of "winning without fighting" against New Delhi without realising that India is the land of the grand strategist Krishna and political adviser Chanakya.

India cannot be browbeaten nor subverted through a motivated media war because it has the capacity and capability to stand firm and resolute. China needs to realise that it is in the interest of both nations to resolve the boundary dispute through mutual negotiations and concentrate the comprehensive national power towards building stronger economies in a post-Coronavirus era.

(The author is a Jammu-based veteran, political analyst, columnist, security and strategic analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Digital libraries and copyright confusion

There aren't any provisions specific to digital libraries and frameworks such as controlled lending have not yet been tested in courts in the country



AISHWARYA **GIRIDHAR**

The pandemic has required us to reorganise our lives and rethink how several laws operate. While much of the intellectual property rights (IPR) debate has been about patents in the medical context, the boundaries of copyright are being tested as well. With teaching moving online, there have been many questions on how copyright laws and "fair use" provisions extend to online uses. These are exceptions to copyright law,

which allow the use of materials without the permission of copyright holders in some contexts. While the use of content by teachers solely for education would generally be covered under "fair use" exceptions, what of institutions such as libraries that serve public interest in a broader way?

An interesting debate has shaped up in the US in this context. In March, the US-based Internet Archive suspended wait-lists for the 1.4 million books in its catalogue by creating a "National Emergency Library" meant to last until the end of the lockdown. As per the Archive, this was done to give students access to assigned readings and library materials.

However, four major publishing houses sued the Archive in early June, claiming that it amounted to copyright infringement and piracy. For the

uninitiated, the Archive is an NGO that describes itself as an internet library for "offering permanent access for researchers, historians and scholars to historical collections that exist in digital format." It uses a system of controlled digital lending that partly relies on the first sale doctrine, which gives the buyer of a book the right to sell, lend or dispose of it. The Archive states that it only digitally lends as many copies as it has in its possession and further lends to each user only for two weeks at a time. It maintains an "owned to loaned" ratio and puts in place measures to prevent redistribution or copying. However, the National Emergency Library temporarily amends this system to remove the wait-list, an action that the Archive asserts would be covered by the "fair use" exception under US copyright law.

It argues that the lockdown made physical books in libraries inaccessible to the public and it is trying to fill this "unprecedented need" for books. Plus, its catalogue focusses on material published during the 20th century and not on contemporary bestsellers.

On the other hand, the publishing companies argue that the Archive is making books available in full for download without paying any licence fees or other payments, and that its actions exceed legitimate library services. The firms also dispute the Archive's non-profit status and argue that the controlled digital lending system is not permitted under copyright law. Given the differences in physical and digital books, the complaint asserts that the latter are governed by different terms and conditions than the former. The American Association of

Publishers also highlighted measures that publishers have already undertaken to enable access to resources, including by providing complimentary passes, flexible licences and other initiatives.

The Authors Guild, too, argued that the Emergency Library would divert income from authors by preventing them from introducing their books in digital formats when their books go out of print. It also contested that many of the books on the Archive were in-copyright books that authors/publishers rely on for revenue.

This issue essentially strikes at the core of the IPR law, which aims to incentivise innovation and progress for society by balancing the economic rights of copyright holders while also enabling access for public good. Therefore, user rights are an important

component of copyright law as well, since enabling access may better serve the larger goal of innovation and progress. "Fair use" provisions are an important way in which this balance is struck in copyright systems globally. The ruling in this case will have significant implications for all users of the Archive and is likely to inform how the issue is examined in other jurisdictions as well. It also touches on the issue of what users are entitled to under copyright law. Publishers and rights holders taking measures to enable easier access during emergencies like the pandemic is certainly welcome. However, copyright law is meant to account for user rights as well, which are not dependent upon the largesse of rights holders. In the US, "fair use" analysis generally considers the nature of the copyrighted work, how and how

much of the work is used and its effects on the copyright owner's market.

In India, the Copyright Act has a limited clause in its "fair dealing" provision allowing libraries to store digital copies of works already in their possession. But there is no clarity on whether access to and distribution of such work is permitted.

There aren't any provisions specific to digital libraries and frameworks such as controlled digital lending have not yet been tested in courts here. This leads to uncertainty on the legality of providing digital library access in India. As part of ensuring inclusion and access to resources and services, it is vital to assess how copyright law must adapt to digital technologies and how existing rights should operate in a digital context.

(The writer is Fellow, ESYA Centre)

Atlanta officer fired after fatal shooting of black man

Atlanta: An Atlanta police officer was fired following the fatal shooting of a black man and another officer was placed on administrative duty, the police department announced early Sunday.

The moves follows the Saturday resignation of Atlanta Police Chief Erika Shields, who stepped down as the Friday night killing of Rayshard Brooks, 27, sparked a new wave of protests in Atlanta after turbulent demonstrations following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police had simmered down.

The terminated officer was identified as Garrett Rolfe, who was hired in October 2013, and the officer placed on administrative duty is Devin Brosnan, who was hired in September 2018, according to a release from police spokesperson Sgt. John Chafee.

The police department also released body camera and dash camera footage from both officers. More than 40 minutes

elapses between the time Brosnan first knocks on Brooks' car door while he's in Wendy's drive-thru and when gunshots ring out; Rolfe arrives on scene about 16 minutes in.

The shooting is audible in footage from Rolfe's dash camera and both officers' body cameras, but wasn't captured on any of the four recordings provided by police.

Both body cameras fall off during the struggle that ensues when Rolfe moves to handcuff Brooks after speaking to him for about 20 minutes, although Brooks is briefly glimpsed being Tased before he's shot.

Protesters on Saturday night set fire to the Wendy's restaurant where Brooks was fatally shot the night before and blocked traffic on a nearby highway. The fire was out by 11:30 p.m., but video from local news stations showed it again aflame around 4 a.m. Sunday. Atlanta police said 36 people were arrested at protests as of midnight.

Atlanta Mayor Keisha

Lance Bottoms announced the police chief's resignation at a Saturday afternoon news conference, and had called for the immediate firing of the officer who opened fire.

"I do not believe that this was a justified use of deadly force," Bottoms said.

She said it was Shields' own decision to step aside and that she would remain with the city in an undetermined role. Interim Corrections Chief Rodney Bryant will serve as interim police chief.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation, which is probing the shooting, said the deadly confrontation started with a complaint that a man was sleeping in a car blocking the restaurant's drive-thru lane. The GBI said Brooks failed a field sobriety test and then resisted officers' attempts to arrest him.

Rolfe is seen on body camera video administering the field sobriety test, followed by a breathalyzer test with Brooks' permission.



Hawa Traore chants during a march against police brutality and racism in Marseille, France

Japan marches to mourn George Floyd

AP ■ TOKYO

Holding handmade signs that read "Black Lives Matter" hundreds of people marched peacefully in Tokyo on Sunday, highlighting the outrage over the death of George Floyd even in a country often perceived as homogeneous and untouched by racial issues.

Mitsuaki Shidara, standing in the crowd at Yoyogi Park, where the march began, said Japan has plenty of discrimination problems, but they're overlooked.

"We are all human first, but we are divided by nationality, gender, religion, skin color," he said, wearing a pendant with the Japanese character for "love," which he said was his favorite word.

Beijing reports 8 new virus cases

Beijing: The total number of COVID-19 cases in Beijing reached 54 after eight new cases were reported on Sunday, all linked to a wholesale food market supplying vegetables and meat to 90 per cent of the city, prompting authorities to go into a "wartime" mode to stem the spread of the virus in the Chinese capital, officials said.

Significantly, the Beijing Centre for Diseases Prevention and Control (Beijing CDC) has said the genome sequencing of the strain of the coronavirus which caused the new COVID-19 outbreak in the Chinese capital at the Xinfadi wholesale food market shows it originated from the imported cases from Europe.

With the new cases, the total number of cases in China has gone up to 74 since Saturday, the highest in the country after the virus was brought under control in the first COVID-19 epicentre in April, this year.

The number of cases included 57 new confirmed COVID-19 infections and nine asymptomatic cases, the officials of the China's National Health Commission (NHC) said.

Beijing Municipal author-



Workers in protective suits check people's names on the list who were either living surrounding the Xinfadi wholesale market or have visited to the market to get a nucleic acid test at a stadium in Beijing, Sunday

ity on Sunday said eight new cases were reported in the capital city.

China's civil aviation regulator on Sunday that China Southern Airlines' flight from Dhaka to Guangzhou would be suspended after 17 passengers had tested positive for COVID-19 on a June 11 flight, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Also on Saturday, nine new asymptomatic cases were reported, it said.

Currently, 103 people with asymptomatic symptoms are kept under quarantine.

Asymptomatic cases are also known as silent spreaders 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.

As all the new cases in Beijing were linked to Xinfadi market in south Beijing's Fengtai District, health officials appealed to people who had visited the market since May 30 to undergo nucleic acid tests.

The sudden increase in cases has sparked concerns that China may be on the cusp of rebound of COVID-19, belying experts' predictions that a second wave may hit the country during the winter starting from October.

All hospitals in Beijing have been ordered to perform nucleic acid and antibody tests, a CT scan and a routine blood test on patients with a fever, Gao Xiaojun, spokesperson of Beijing's health commission told the media on Sunday.

So far, the local government has closed six wholesale markets and made alternate arrangement for vegetable supplies to the retail stores.

Beijing has tightened COVID-19 control measures and officials in the Chinese capital have initiated "wartime" measures, focusing on a wholesale food market where the new cluster of infections was reported. The Beijing local government said earlier that health workers detected the virus in 40 samples collected at Xinfadi, including from cutting boards used to prepare imported salmon.

Wu Zunyou, the chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention said the source of the latest outbreak could be either contaminated seafood or meat from the market, or a visitor or worker who had contracted the virus unknowingly.

Covid survivor gets whopping \$1.1 mn hosp bill

Washington: A 70-year-old man in the US, who nearly died from the coronavirus, received another shock after he was given a whopping \$1.1 million (over ₹8.14 crore) bill for his medical expenses, according to a media report.

Michael Flor was so sick from COVID-19 that his wife and kids called him to say good-bye.

But he managed to pull through while being treated at Swedish Medical Center in Issaquah, the Seattle Times reported. "I opened it and said 'holy [bleep]!'" Flor says. The total tab for his bout with the coronavirus: USD 1.1 million.

Michael Flor battled with coronavirus for 62 days at Swedish Issaquah, making him the longest coronavirus patient at the hospital. Flor has a Medicare Advantage insurance policy that normally covers all charges after the roughly \$6,000 deductible, the paper reported. Special financial regulations enacted by Congress for COVID-19 patients, however, might keep Flor from paying one red cent, the Seattle Times said.

Trump rally called 'dangerous move' in age of coronavirus

Washington: After months away from the campaign trail, President Donald Trump plans to rally his supporters this coming Saturday for the first time since most of the country was shuttered by the coronavirus. Trump will head to Tulsa, Oklahoma — a state that has seen relatively few COVID-19 cases.

But health experts question the decision, citing the danger of infection spreading among the crowd and sparking outbreaks when people return to their homes. The Trump campaign itself acknowledges the risk in a waiver attendees must agree to absolving them of any responsibility should people get sick.

Trump's rally will be held indoors, at a 19,000-seat arena that has canceled all other events through the end of July. Scientists believe the virus spreads far more easily in crowded enclosed spaces than it does outdoors, where circulating air has a better chance of dispersing virus particles.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention out-



lines the highest risk events for transmission of the coronavirus this way: "Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area." The CDC recommends cloth masks in places where people might shout or chant.

Trump's rallies typically draw tens of thousands of supporters.

They usually stand outside in line for hours before passing through airport-style security and cramming into an arena, where they sit side by side or stand shoulder to shoulder. The rallies are typically rau-

cous, with much shouting, cheering and chanting. Some people dance and jeer at reporters. Sometimes protesters are met with violence before they are removed by security.

Many attendees are older, which would put them at higher risk of severe complications from COVID-19. It's not unusual for several individuals in the crowd to require medical attention when the temperature rises.

The rallies also typically draw supporters from surrounding towns and states. Some die-hard fans travel across the country from rally to rally like groupies for a band.

Dr. Ashish Jha, director of Harvard's Global Health Institute, called the upcoming Trump rally "an extraordinarily dangerous move for the people participating and the people who may know them and love them and see them afterward." Trump supporters coming from neighboring cities and states could carry the virus back home, Jha said. "I'd feel the same way if Joe Biden were holding a rally."

Around the Globe

Beijing: Chinese vaccine-maker Sinovac Biotech has announced "positive preliminary" results of phase I and II clinical trials for its COVID-19 vaccine candidate, CoronaVac, saying it can induce a positive immune response. The phase III clinical trials was designed as randomized, double-blind and placebo-controlled studies.

Islamabad: Pakistan has recorded its highest number of coronavirus cases in a single day with 6,825 new patients, taking the tally to 1,39,230, while more than 80 people lost their lives in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said on Sunday.

Kathmandu: Nepal has registered 425 new coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours, taking the nationwide COVID-19 tally to 5,760, the health ministry said on Sunday.

Europe reopens many borders but not to Americans, Asians

Berlin: Europe is taking a big step toward a new normality as many countries open borders to fellow Europeans after three months of coronavirus lockdowns — but even though Europeans love their summer vacations, it's not clear how many are ready to travel again.

Tourists from the US, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East will just have to wait for now. Europe is expected to start opening up to some visitors from elsewhere next month, but details remain unclear.

The European Union home affairs commissioner, Ylva Johansson, told member

nations last week that they "should open up as soon as possible" and suggested Monday was a good date.

Many countries are doing just that, allowing travel from the EU, Britain and the rest of Europe's usually passport-free Schengen travel area, which includes non-EU countries like Switzerland.

Europe's reopening won't be a repeat of the chaotic free-for-all in March when panicked, uncoordinated border closures caused traffic jams that stretched for miles. Still, it's a complicated, shifting patchwork of different rules.

AP

Russia's low virus death toll still raises questions in West

Moscow: When Leonid Shlykov's father, Sergei, died in a Moscow hospital last month after 11 days on a ventilator, the death certificate listed the coronavirus as an underlying condition but not the actual cause of death.

"Yes, he was suffering from impaired kidney function and diabetes, but if it hadn't been for COVID-19, he would've been alive," the son wrote on Facebook. "If we had known the real number of infections and deaths ... it would have helped us make the decision to hospitalize (dad) earlier."

The way Russia counts fatalities during the coronavirus pandemic could be one reason why its official death toll

of 6,829 is far below many other countries, even as it has reported 520,000 infections, behind only the United States and Brazil.

The paradox also has led to allegations by critics and Western media that Russian authorities might have falsified the numbers for political purposes to play down the scale of the outbreak. Even a top World Health Organization official said the low number of deaths in Russia "certainly is unusual."

Russian authorities have bristled at the suggestions.

"We have never manipulated the official statistics," said Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova.

Finding the true numbers

during the pandemic is difficult, since countries count cases and deaths in different ways and testing for the virus is uneven. Still, several factors could contribute to Russia's low virus mortality rate, including the way it counts deaths, a tendency among some officials to embellish statistics, its vast geography and the shorter life expectancy of its population.

An autopsy is mandatory in Russia in every confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19, with a determination on the cause of death made by a commission of specialists, said Dr. Natalia Belitchenko, a pathologist in the medical examiner's office in the region around St. Petersburg.

Trump planning to cut US troops in Germany by 25%

AP ■ BERLIN

After more than a year of thinly-veiled threats to start pulling US troops out of Germany unless Berlin increases its defense spending, President Donald Trump appears to be proceeding with a hardball approach, planning to cut the US military contingent by more than 25 per cent.

About 34,500 American troops are stationed in Germany — 50,000 including civilian Department of Defense employees — and the plan Trump reportedly signed off on last week envisions reduc-

ing active-duty personnel to 25,000 by September, with further cuts possible.

But as details of the still-unannounced plan trickle out, there's growing concerns it will do more to harm the US's own global military readiness and the NATO alliance than punish Germany.

The decision was not discussed with Germany or other NATO members, and Congress was not officially informed — prompting a letter from 22 Republican members of the House Armed Services Committee urging a rethink.

Pandemic leads to a bicycle boom, and shortage, around world

Portland, Maine: Fitness junkies locked out of gyms, commuters fearful of public transit, and families going stir crazy inside their homes during the coronavirus pandemic have created a boom in bicycle sales unseen in decades.

In the United States, bicycle aisles at mass merchandisers like Walmart and Target have been swept clean, and independent shops are doing a brisk business and are selling out of affordable "family" bikes.

Bicycle sales over the past two months saw their biggest spike in the U.S. since the oil crisis of the 1970s, said Jay Townley, who analyzes cycling industry trends at Human Powered Solutions.

"People quite frankly have panicked, and they're buying bikes like toilet paper," Townley said, referring to the rush to buy essentials like toilet paper and hand sanitizer that stores



saw at the beginning of the pandemic.

The trend is mirrored around the globe, as cities better known for car-clogged streets, like Manila and Rome,

install bike lanes to accommodate surging interest in cycling while public transport remains curtailed. In London, municipal authorities plan to go further by banning cars

from some central thoroughfares.

Bike shop owners in the Philippine capital say demand is stronger than at Christmas. Financial incentives are boost-

ing sales in Italy, where the government's post-lockdown stimulus last month included a 500-euro (\$575) "bici bonus" rebate for up to 60% of the cost of a bike.

But that's if you can get your hands on one. The craze has led to shortages that will take some weeks, maybe months, to resolve, particularly in the U.S., which relies on China for about 90% of its bicycles, Townley said. Production there was largely shut down due to the coronavirus and is just resuming.

The bicycle rush kicked off in mid-March around the time countries were shutting their borders, businesses were closing, and stay-at-home orders were being imposed to slow the spread of the coronavirus that has infected millions of people and killed more than 450,000.

Sales of adult leisure bikes tripled in April while overall U.S. bike sales, including kids'

and electric-assist bicycles, doubled from the year before, according to market research firm NPD Group, which tracks retail bike sales.

It's a far cry from what was anticipated in the U.S. The \$6 billion industry had projected lower sales based on lower volume in 2019 in which punitive tariffs on bicycles produced in China reached 25%.

There are multiple reasons for the pandemic bicycle boom.

Around the world, many workers were looking for an alternative to buses and subways. People unable to go to their gyms looked for another way to exercise. And shut-in families scrambled to find a way to keep kids active during stay-at-home orders.

"Kids are looking for something to do. They've probably reached the end of the internet by now, so you've got to get out and do something,"

said Dave Palese at Gorham Bike and Ski, a Maine shop where there are slim pickings for family-oriented, leisure bikes.

Bar Harbor restaurateur Brian Smith bought a new bike for one of his daughters, a competitive swimmer, who was unable to get into the pool. On a recent day, he was heading back to his local bike shop to outfit his youngest daughter, who'd just learned how to ride.

His three daughters use their bikes every day, and the entire family goes for rides a couple of times a week. The fact that they're getting exercise and enjoying fresh air is a bonus.

"It's fun. Maybe that's the bottom line. It's really fun to ride bikes," Smith said as he and his 7-year-old daughter, Ellery, pedaled to the bicycle shop.

The pandemic is also driving a boom in electric-assist bikes, called e-bikes, which

were a niche part of the overall market until now. Most e-bikes require a cyclist to pedal, but electric motors provide extra oomph.

VanMoof, a Dutch e-bike maker, is seeing "unlimited demand" since the pandemic began, resulting in a 10-week order backlog for its commuter electric bikes, compared with typical one-day delivery time, said co-founder Taco Carlier.

The company's sales surged 138% in the U.S. and rocketed 184% in Britain in the February-April period over last year, with big gains in other European countries. The company is scrambling to ramp up production as fast as it can, but it will take two to three months to meet the demand, Carlier said.

"We did have some issues with our supply chain back in January, February when the crisis hit first in Asia," said Carlier. But "the issue is now with demand, not supply." AP

Fuel prices rise over ₹4 per litre

SINCE RESUMPTION OF DAILY REVISION

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Fuel prices recorded eighth consecutive hike on Sunday, taking the total increase since the resumption of the dynamic price revision system to more than ₹4 per litre.

In the National capital, petrol price rose by 62 paise on Sunday to ₹75.78 per litre, and that of diesel by 64 paise to ₹74.03 per litre.

Since the dynamic price revision resumed on June 7, prices of petrol and diesel have increased by ₹4.52 and ₹4.64 per litre respectively.

Fuel prices in the other metro cities have also increased on similar lines since the oil marketing companies (OMC) resumed the dynamic pricing system for daily revision of fuel prices after over 83 days of break during the nationwide lockdown.

In Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, petrol was priced at ₹



82.70, ₹79.53 and ₹77.64, higher from ₹82.10, ₹78.99 and ₹77.05 per litre respectively.

Diesel prices in these cities were ₹72.64 (Mumbai), ₹72.18 (Chennai) and ₹69.80 (Kolkata), compared with ₹72.03, ₹71.64 and ₹69.23 respectively on Saturday.

The increase in prices varies across metros, depending on the tax structure on products in various states.

Prices of transportation fuel were halted under the dynamic pricing policy after March 16 and post that there were few instances of price hike

only when the respective state governments hiked VAT or cess. In a bid to increase revenues during the nationwide lockdown, several state governments raised taxes imposed on transportation fuel. Already, the gap between cost and sale price of petrol and diesel for OMCs reached around ₹5-6 per litre.

If this has to be covered over a period of time, given there is no further increase in global prices, auto fuel prices may be increased by 40-60 paise per day for a few more days to cover the losses.

DigiVidhyapeeth to enhance youth skills: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of major demand for digital skill training amid Coronavirus pandemic, various online platforms like DigiVidhyapeeth are making foray in the sector to help youth enhance their skills as well as earn livelihood which is a good endeavour, said Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Mahendra Nath Pande here.

"The Govt has been promoting Digi Vidya Programme in a big way wherein youth in the country are not only enhancing their skills but also earning livelihood. "it's a matter of satisfaction and encouragement that online platforms like DigiVidhyapeeth are entering into the sector in a large number to provide employment to the needy," the Minister said recently while launching the online initiatives of the organisation engaged in providing e-learning courses."Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 outbreak is the major accelerator that has led to a mega shift in digital teaching and learning approach," DigiVidhyapeeth head Pradeep Khatri said adding that three types of courses digital marketing, personnel finance management and soft skill development wherein personality development is included have been launched at nominal fees."

SBI closes 3 branches in Mumbai, Thane

Spike in Covid cases among staff

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The nation's largest lender State Bank of India has temporarily closed three branches - two in Mumbai and one in adjoining Thane - after eight staff tested positive for COVID-19, bank employees said. The bank's main branch in Thane was shuttered last week after seven of the 25 staff were found to be COVID-19 positive, according to a senior bank employee.

A cash officer at the local cheque processing cell (LCPC), also known as the clearing department, in the northwestern Mumbai suburb of Jogeshwari (East) was found COVID-19 positive, leading to temporary closure of the branch early last week, said another employee.

As a precautionary measure, the bank temporarily stopped operations at its LCPC located in the Andheri area, after a gardener working there was found to be infected with the virus, the employee said. When contacted, SBI said, "Our quick response team headed by a general manager is continuously monitoring the situation in the entire country and due protocol is followed in

case of any infection. Many of our staff members, who got infected, have recovered and are contributing to the functioning of the bank in these trying times".

Banks are classified as essential services to provide uninterrupted services even when the entire country was under lockdown. Over the past few days, three SBI employees -- Sandu Borade of the Churchgate branch; Anirban Datta of the Belapur CBD branch; and Ramesh Rane of the Ghatkopar branch were lost to the new coronavirus infection. On the death of these staffers, the SBI statement said, "A few unfortunate deaths have happened and we are deeply saddened by the incidents. The compensation (including COVID compensation amount) is paid as per the established rules of the bank".

"Safety protocol is complied with and all possible support is provided. We salute our employees who are contributing to the nation in these trying times." It can be noted that Maharashtra is the worst affected state with over 1 lakh infections and Mumbai as the epicentre. On Saturday, the state reported 3,427 new cases and 113 deaths, including 69 from Mumbai.

The latest count in the state stands at 1,04,568 and fatalities at 3,830, according to the state health department. Of the total cases, 78,134 are concentrated in the Mumbai



Metropolitan Region (MMR), which has reported 2,650 deaths, including Mumbai with 56,831 cases and 2,113 fatalities. Another SBI employee said despite such a high number of cases being detected, the bank management is asking them to come in full strength and branches are back to normal operations.

A third employee said that the mortgage divisional headquarters in Thane is carrying out "full documentation" and let applicants visit the branch where no social distancing is possible because of the large number of applicants, but putting the lives of bankers at risk.

"Working with the PPE kit (given to us by the bank) on is practically not possible," the staffer cited above told PTI.

The employee stated that they are being asked to report only on alternate days and

forced to apply for CLs on the rest."We are asked to apply for casual leave on days we are not going to the branch, or for working on alternate days," he said, adding "we are not even given commuting allowance or pick-up and drop since the lockdown was lifted on June 1".

"I pay over ₹ 400 a day on two-way auto fare alone as the bank had long ago stopped the pick-up and drop facility which was there in the initial weeks of the lockdown," the employee averred. SBI did not respond to the specific PTI query on the management asking staff to be fully present and also asking them to apply for CL for every absentee-day. Recently, bank unions had written to the dept of financial services demanding regular sanitisation of branches, ₹1,000 daily allowance and ₹50 lakh insurance cover for bank staff as provided to healthcare workers.

S&P to weigh labour, agri market reforms, improvement in financial sector for future ratings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rating agency S&P will give credence to reforms in agriculture and labour market as well as easing of bad loan stress of banking sector while deciding future rating action on India, a senior official has said.

S&P Director & Lead Analyst Sovereign & IPF Ratings APAC Andrew Wood also said return of insolvency provision under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), which was suspended for at least six months, and stronger regulator framework would be important in improving the health of Indian banks.

Last week, S&P Global Ratings had retained India's rating at lowest investment grade 'BBB-' for 13th year in a row, saying risks to India's long-term growth rate are rising, ongoing economic reforms, if executed well, should keep the country's growth rate ahead of peers.

To a PTI query on what specific reforms the rating agency would look at while determining the future rating action, Wood on Fri said the rating agency would give cre-



dence to reforms to domestic agriculture sector, liberalisation of labour market thereby job creation in manufacturing sector, improvement in infrastructure and business friendly foreign investment policy.

"The reforms that we will give credence to is reforms in agriculture sector, into domestic markets. Those have been introduced and that's somewhat path breaking in history of India. It would help address the supply side bottlenecks that have cropped up in the economy in the past as well as to make agriculture sector

more efficient," Wood said. He, however, emphasised on the need to create jobs in the manufacturing sector. "In order to achieve that labour market reforms are going to be important. Govt appears to be making some headway in this issue." Stating that in India, states decided on labour laws and related reforms, Wood said, "But the BJP Government has a strong mandate and appears to be pushing harder on the states to get this done. We would be looking at liberalisation of labour markets further". Efforts to bring in foreign

capital, private sector in infrastructure and improving business environment through that route is going to be very crucial, he said, adding attracting FDI is also very important.

With regard to financial sector, Wood said it is a specific weakness for India and IBC was "very constructive" in terms of starting to address issues and leading to more prudence in lending by PSBs.

Also fund injection into public sector banks have led to improvements in their capital position over past few years, he said. "But more work is probably needed here." The Govt earlier this month promulgated an ordinance to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code whereby fresh insolvency proceedings will not be initiated for at least six months starting from March 25 amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Default on repayments from March 25, the day when the nationwide lockdown began to curb coronavirus infections, would not be considered for initiating insolvency proceedings for at least six months.

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Health insurance claims not contestable after 8-yr of premium payment: Irdai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Health insurance companies will not be allowed to contest claims once the premium has been paid for a continuous period of eight years, regulator Irdai said in a fresh set of guidelines.

Irdai said the objective of the guidelines is to standardise the general terms and clauses incorporated in indemnity based health insurance (excluding personal accident and domestic/overseas travel) products by simplifying the workings of general terms and clauses of the policy contracts and ensure uniformity across the industry.

"All policy contracts of the existing health insurance products that are not in compliance with these guidelines shall be modified as and when they are due for renewal from April 1, 2021 onwards.

"After completion of eight continuous years under the policy no look back to be applied...After expiry of moratorium period (of eight years) no health insurance

claim shall be contestable except for proven fraud and permanent exclusions specified in the policy contract," Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (Irdai) said.

The policies will, however be subject to all limits, sub-limits, co-payments, deductibles as per the policy contract.

This period of eight years is called as moratorium period.

The moratorium would be applicable for the sums insured of the first policy and subsequently completion of 8 continuous years would be applicable from date of enhancement of sums insured only on the enhanced limits, the regulator said in the guidelines on "Standardization of General Terms and Clauses in Health Insurance Policy Contracts".

On claim settlement, Irdai said the insurance company should settle or reject a claim, as the case may be, within 30 days from the date of receipt of last necessary document.

In the case of delay in the payment of a claim, the com-

pany will be liable to pay interest to the policyholder from the date of receipt of last necessary document to the date of payment of claim at a rate 2% above the bank rate.

It also said the policy will become void and all premium paid will be forfeited to the company in the event of misrepresentation, misdescription or non-disclosure of any material fact by the policyholder.

On portability, the guidelines said the insured person will have the option to port the policy to other insurers by applying to such insurer to port the entire policy along with all the members of the family, if any, at least 45 days before, but not earlier than 60 days from the policy renewal date.

If such person is presently covered and has been continuously covered without any lapses under any health insurance policy with an Indian general/ health insurer, the proposed insured person will get the accrued continuity benefits in waiting periods.

Northern Railway Hosp Starts Covid-19 Testing Facility

ENABLE TO DO AROUND 300 TESTS IN A DAY

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi, the zonal hospital of Northern Railway added a feather in its cap on 13.06.2020 and became pioneer amongst all Railway Hospitals to start in-house COVID - 19 testing in the newly established Molecular Microbiology Lab after obtaining approvals and authorization from ICMR and Delhi Govt. The name of the Hospital is listed on date at s.no.130 on ICMR portal for Govt. Labs under CBNAAT category of Delhi. The Biosafety level -2 lab is equipped with GENEXPERT-XVI (CBNAAT) platform and TRUCLAB QUATTRO (TRUNAT) System. GENEXPERT-XVI lab has the capacity to process 16 samples at a time with final result in a COVID positive case in around TWO hours.

NFL signs MoU with training institute to skill youth

PNS ■ NOIDA

To give thrust to the 'Skill India' initiative of the Government of India, NFL has started tying up with Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) located near to its plants to train youth in various trades so as to enhance the chances of their employability in heavy and process industry.

The Nangal plant of the company in Punjab has signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ITI, Nangal to train youth in 12 trades. The students will be skilled under Dual System of



Training Scheme under which they will learn theoretical skills

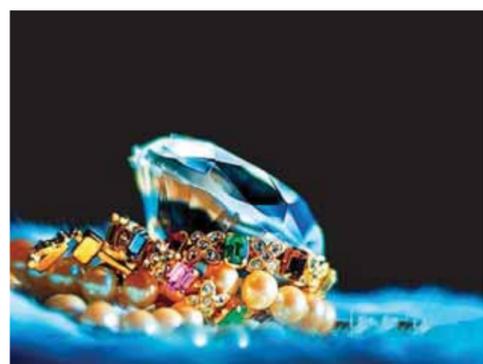
in the institute and on-the-job training in NFL Nangal plant.

Govt looking at suggestions to boost jewellery sector

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is looking at suggestions of the gems and jewellery industry such as setting up of common facility centres and facilitating shipments through e-commerce with a view to promote manufacturing and exports, sources said. The industry has also asked for extension of the interest subvention scheme to the entire gems and jewellery sector, and providing level-playing field to foreign mining companies to encourage them to start sales/auction of rough diamonds at special notified zones, they said.

The Govt has identified champion sectors including



leather, gems and jewellery, renewable energy, pharmaceuticals and textiles, to provide

hand-holding for investors with a focus on improving India's manufacturing capabilities.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations Director General Ajay Sahai said the industry holds huge potential to boost manufacturing and exports and certain suggestions have been made to the commerce ministry to further push the growth of the sector.

He said that for further easing the working capital financing, manufacturers and exporters should be permitted to import loose diamonds without duty and SEZ (special economic zones) manufacturers should be permitted to sell loose diamonds and jewellery from SEZ to the domestic market without any duties and taxes to contain slowdown.

"The industry has asked for

increasing the subvention rate from 5% to 7% to protect the trade and forex (foreign exchange) earning of the country and for business fraternity to be competitive against other suppliers in the international market," Sahai said. Another industry expert said there is a need for implementation of a risk management system in precious cargo customs clearance centre, Mumbai, to ensure ease of doing exports and imports. "We have also asked for facilitating setting up of more common facility centres and mega CFCs to enable MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) to use capital-intensive modern technology," the expert added.

Nafed procures 25,000 tonnes of onion so far to create buffer stock

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nafed on Sunday said it has procured 25,000 tonnes of onion so far from farmer producer organisations (FPOs), cooperatives and direct purchase centres at the prevailing rates for creating a buffer stock on behalf of the Government.

Last year, the Nafed purchased a total of 57,000 tonnes of onion from the 2018-19 rabi (winter) crop. The target this time is to buy 1 lakh tonnes of key kitchen staple from the major producing states, it said.

"This initiative will have dual benefit of stabilising the domestic prices of onion in the

COVID-19 time as well and create an all-time high buffer stocking of 1 lakh tonne which may be utilised for the lean months," National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (Nafed) said in a statement.

It has already purchased 25,000 tonnes at the prevailing rates. Onion is being purchased from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat from FPOs, cooperatives as well as direct purchase centres.

Currently, the onion prices for fair average quality are ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹1,400 per quintal, depending on the location. The retail prices in major cities at present are ruling

❖ This initiative will have dual benefit of stabilising the domestic prices of onion in the COVID-19 time

❖ It will create an all-time high buffer stocking of 1 lakh tonne which may be utilised for the lean months

ing in the range of ₹20 to ₹30 per kg.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nafed said regular virtual review meetings are being held with FPOs, member cooperative societies and branches to monitor the progress of procurement, as ground challenges remain due

to the deadly disease. At some places, pre-monsoon showers are affecting the pace of procurement.

This season, the services of technical experts for better maintenance of the stock are also being taken in an attempt to cut into the storage losses, it said.

Further, a pilot is being conducted for storage of onion after irradiation in Madhya Pradesh to evaluate the gain on account of shelf life and quality keeping. "It is hoped that this initiative of Nafed will help both the onion growers as well the consumers," it added.

About onion storage, Nafed said the cooperative this year has added its own operational storage capacity for onions in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh by 30,000 tonne, with the support of state governments.

It is in the process of creating more storage space on cluster models at farm gates in the onion growing regions

since 2018, it said, adding that this initiative has enabled the Federation to enhance the procurement target, providing market support to the onion growers.

Meanwhile, Nafed said it has also approached the state governments to send their requirements of lean months in advance. This will facilitate timely evacuation of the stored onion in a planned manner to have a salutary effect on the retail prices, which tend to go up in the period late August to November.

Further, this will help in cutting the storage losses, as long duration of storage entails

higher storage loss to the extent of 35 per cent, which gets compounded due to adverse weather conditions, as reported last



year, it said. Besides onion, Nafed is procuring pulses for buffer stock.

Trend Blazer

Sunny is tired of feeling blue

Actor **SUNNY LEONE** doesn't want to be blue anymore. She took to Instagram, where she is seen in a blue denim dress, standing in front of a blue background. "Tired of feeling blue!!! Ready for you," wrote the actor, who is currently isolating with her husband Daniel Weber and three children — Nisha, Asher and Noah — in the US. Sunny and her family travelled back to the US in May amid the outbreak of the global COVID-19 outbreak.



'Manorama 6 feet under released in 2007. They say it was ahead of its time for India. I got tired of hearing, 'I saw it on DVD, I loved it, when was it released? If I had a rupee for every time someone said that I'd be a multi millionaire. At the start of this century no one believed that experimentation would work with Indian audience.' —Abhay Deol

Actor **KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN's** lips do more workout than her because she does at least 100 pouts a day. In an Instagram post, Kareena, in a black sports bra, is seen pouting at the camera. "I think my lips exercise the most... Well, I do at least 100 pouts a day!" she wrote alongside the image. On the work front, Kareena was last seen in *Angrezi Medium*, starring the late Irrfan Khan. She will next be seen in the Aamir Khan-starrer *Laal Singh Chaddha*, which is an adaptation of *Forrest Gump*.



Taylor sick of racist historical monuments Singer **TAYLOR SWIFT** is sick of the monuments of "racist historical figures" in Tennessee. "As a Tennessean, it makes me sick that there are monuments standing in our state that celebrate racist historical figures who did evil things. Edward Carmack and Nathan Bedford Forrest were despicable figures in our state history and should be treated as such," she tweeted. Last month, she slammed President Donald Trump for tweeting that protesters in Minnesota should be shot.



A few friends laughed over the video call and wished to hug each other soon, sisters celebrated their parents' anniversary by singing songs online and colleagues recalled their chats in the office canteen over a Zoom meeting during the lockdown period. People are excited to meet and celebrate their belated occasions now as the lockdown has been relaxed but not only do they need to slow down a bit, they need to be extremely mindful. The recent example of the popular eating joint of West Delhi — Qubitos — where 38 people were found celebrating a birthday party without abiding by social distancing norms shows how we will never learn despite the unprecedented scale of human tragedy around us. Life post-lockdown is not the same as it used to be earlier. The world has welcomed the 'new normal' and people need to act according to that. For now, we don't have treatment or vaccines, all we've got is using our social behaviour and codes as a preventive. There are various social distancing norms that we need to maintain while meeting people —

KEEP DISTANCE

For the well-being of all, TEAM VIVA analyses how social distancing norms can be maintained even while meeting friends and family

not just strangers but familiar ones as well. We usually don't take precautions while meeting friends and family as it is all about that one hug in that very moment but in order to stay safe, it's crucial to adapt ourselves to new ways of life. Other nations are doing that. Initially in France, it was announced that gatherings of more than 10 people in public or private places would be prohibited during the first phase of deconfinement. But later, it was said that the ban only concerns public places and does not apply to homes. In all situations for any gathering of people, even just two, social distancing measures and barrier gestures should be respected. This involves keeping a distance of one metre between each other, coughing and sneezing into your elbow and no kissing or shaking hands.



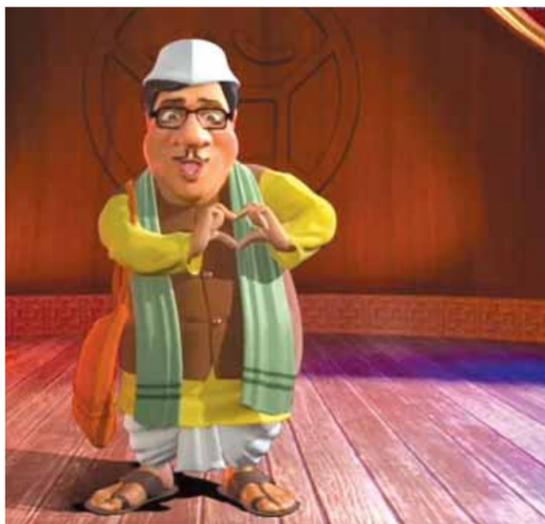
UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson shared how the rules on social distancing are being relaxed gradually. He announced that adults who live alone or with children under the age of 18 but no other adult can form a 'support

your support bubble once it is formed. "Groups of up to six people from different households can meet outdoors, or in a garden, while continuing to practise social distancing with those who do not live in the same household. These measures should allow people to reunite with their parents or grandparents, provided that they are not shielding or to see multiple friends from different households, while keeping a safe physical distance," said he. It is still against the law to visit friends and family inside their homes or spend time indoors with anyone you do not live with in most circumstances. The exceptions include where two households are part of a support bubble or where this is necessary for work, emergency assistance or caring for the vulnerable. You are not allowed to stay overnight anywhere that you do not live without a "reasonable excuse." Though we don't have a specific law regarding meeting our closed ones here, but it is upon us to lead these tough times carefully, with our behaviour. And there is evidence that the behaviour works, if we're diligent about it. The easing of lockdown and allowing of e-commerce operations, industries in rural areas, manufacturing in special economic zones and transport of goods, among others, are only to revive a battered economy. The virus is still lurking even more dangerously. And people need to understand that. A video was making rounds on the internet where an old woman and a man wrapped in plastic hugged each other. Certainly, giving a glimpse of the world none of us had ever imagined. Experts suggest that we shouldn't enter anybody else's home, unless urgent and that too, after proper sanitisation. The idea is only to distance ourselves physically and not emotionally. Use social media to engage with your loved ones for a few more months. Plan things for the future as it will give you something to look forward to. The world will no more be surprised at solo wine nights and movie marathons.

TIDE OVER WITH HUMOUR

Through the series, *Hasya Kavi Potliwala*, theatre and film director **FEROZ ABBAS KHAN** wanted to create an animation character who is instantly relatable, likeable, charming and highly entertaining. By **SAKSHI SHARMA**

Imagine sitting with a basket of homemade popcorn, coffee and watching *Hum Saath Saath Hai* with your family on television. Suddenly, there's an advertisement that tells you to wash your hands thrice a day for at least two minutes. In the very next moment, you have a mobile phone ad, which says that all its proceeds will be used for COVID relief. Irritated with similar ads, you look for some news as little did you know it's the same everywhere. As the sad and repetitive news has taken a toll on you, you finally settle yourself with some comedy and fun content online.



In this pandemic-hit world, almost every other advertisement, actors in daily soap and even online films are doing their bit by making us aware about the severe consequences of the virus and ways to be safe. But people are certainly looking for some shift to get over the prolonged gloominess. Do you remember the old days when the puppet theatre, cartoons and animated shows subtly talked about social issues right from gender biasness to environment, politics, pollution and much more? Well, nowadays, we don't get to see the puppet theatre but there are modern day memes, which has certainly forced us to think and drive conversations in an informed direction.

"There is an overload of information on social media and it is extremely hard to sift the truth from falsehood. We felt that in such sombre times, we need the right information to empower ourselves and some humour to tide over these grave times."

Humour has often been used in a witty and sarcastic way to depict inequality, ignorance and injustice. For instance, Sanitary Panels, an Indian web comic analyses various issues related to social justice in four panels or less. Another in line is *Green Humour*, which raises environmental concern. *BoJack Horseman* (2014) is a Netflix animated sitcom, which addresses contemporary matters of American sexism. It has separate episodes dedicated for depression, abortion and other similar issues, which are often swept under the carpet.

For the campaign, they have created a series of short animation films on key issues related to the pandemic. The series features a poet called Potliwala, who recites short poems in each film on issues related to COVID-19. These include necessary issues such as the use of masks, social distancing, precautions, stigma and discrimination. It uses entertainment education to share messages in an impactful and entertaining manner. The first of these animation shorts is a bi-weekly series titled, *Hasya Kavi Potliwala*, conceptualised and produced by theatre and film director, Feroz Abbas Khan.

A similar idea was used by the Population Foundation of India when they had an urgent mandate to produce communication material to deal with stigma and myths arising due to Coronavirus as part of a national level campaign. They had to curate and create verified, reliable, and updated communication materials on COVID-19, along with the Government of India. Executive director of the Population Foundation, Poonam Muttreja said,

Here are the excerpts of our conversation with him, telling us about how he went about with this idea. **◆How did you conceptualise it?** Messaging through films is a tricky business and particularly when so many are attempting to be heard on Corona. A lot of stuff we saw on the internet were sincere in its intentions but not effective in communication. Therefore, I decided to create an animation character who is instantly relatable, likeable, charming and highly entertaining. He, Potliwala, delivers a powerful message and performance in 30 seconds cloaked as a beautiful poem.

ter who is instantly relatable, likeable, charming and highly entertaining. He, Potliwala, delivers a powerful message and performance in 30 seconds cloaked as a beautiful poem.

◆Since the series is a part of a campaign that caters to all age groups, why did you think of disseminating information through an animated series and not a usual one? The lockdown has been a barrier for most of the shootings. So due to this, we couldn't shoot with actors, which made way for animations as the best route possible. In hindsight, I believe it was a blessing in disguise because it forced us to think harder and push our boundaries. With the main character, who is an old man, we have been able to transcend all age barriers.

◆What do you think about combining humour with social issues? Does it help reach a wider audience? We have been bombarded with constant messaging about Coronavirus everywhere that a certain fatigue has set in. The lockdown too had its effect on the mood of the people and we felt that humour will cheer them up and the message will be more effective.

◆As the series has short clips, how

challenging is it to convey strong and impactful messages in such a restricted time frame?

With shorter attention span and massive content in the digital world, anything long lands up in the bin. Short and entertaining messages have more recall value and it's consumed in huge numbers. It goes viral very quickly and everyone wants to share — that is its power.

◆You said that "We want to trigger a behaviour change through humour, poetry and instantly likeable character of Potliwala..." What more do you intend to achieve through it?

Along with this, we want a positive behavioural change particularly towards the growing stigma. Our frontline health workers including doctors are being stigmatised and that is unacceptable. The COVID patients are ostracised and even recovered patients are boycotted. We hope this attempt can help change attitudes.

◆Since you are a theatre director primarily, have you worked on something like this before? How different was it?

Yes, this is very different from theatre but honestly, I just jumped into it without fearing the consequences. I found some wonderful collaborators in writer Iqbal Raj and the animation team led by Supreet and Taruna at Doublexstudio. (The series was launched on the MyGov's COVID-19 platform.)



Start to reset

London Fashion Week Digital was seasonless and gender-neutral showcasing both men's and women's collections and a mix of new launches that will be in stores in the future

Fashion for sure has the power to spark joy in challenging times. Amid the global health crisis, London Fashion Week (LFW) takes a new form — a digital-only platform merging womenswear and menswear. "Canceling London Fashion Week was never an option. The big question was around what sort of format it would take in lockdown," said Caroline Rush, CEO of the British Fashion

Council, in an interview recently. "We see London Fashion Week June 2020 as a moment to listen, reflect, communicate and start to reset. This global platform was seasonless and gender neutral showing both men's and women's collections and a mix of new collection launches that will be in stores in the future as well as collections people can buy now. We wanted to create a platform



that flexes to audience and business needs and that gives a 360 view of fashion today," added she. Bringing fashion, culture and technology together, the platform hosted exclusive multime-

dia content from designers, creatives, brand partners, media, retailers and cultural institutions enabling collaboration. This new digital experience worked as a global meet-up point, offering

interviews, podcasts, designer diaries, webinars and digital showrooms, providing the opportunity for designers to tell their stories and share their experiences from the last few months.

This platform put storytelling at its heart, bringing the fashion community together. Caroline said, "Fashion is a unifying force and now, more than ever, it is essential that we collaborate and come together to support each other through difficult times. Our ambition is to contribute to the fight against COVID-19, while protecting vital PPE supplies reserved for the NHS. Through this project, we will not only celebrate British designers but also champion sustainability in a time of crisis." The pandemic has heightened the urgency with which we need to address a range of issues from finding clean, fair and transparent supply chains to reducing carbon emissions, tackling pollution, textile waste, single-use plastic and the stark challenges of over production. Some of these key topics were discussed during the fashion week.

Growing organic together

Various farmers from six tribal villages of Chhattisgarh have taken to natural farming methods and are producing different varieties of millets and rice. By SURYAKANT DEVANGAN

Located 66 kilometres from Kanker district in North Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, Gotulmuda village in Durgkondal block is witnessing an 'organic' revolution. In this nondescript village, over 450 farmers have chosen 'Collective Organic Farming' as the way forward. Working together, these farmers, besides cultivating nine different varieties of aromatic rice, are producing millets and other pulses and oilseed crops in the region.

The seeds for this revolution were sown in the year 2016-17, when around 200 farmers, supported by the Agriculture Department, had formed a coalition called *Kisan Vikas Samiti*. Protecting the natural ecosystem, maintaining soil fertility and producing good quality crops were the shared goals of these farmers that inspired them to work together. With mission *Swasthya Ugaenge, Swasthya Khilaenge* (produce healthy, serve healthy), these 200 farmers from six tribal-dominated villages collectively started employing organic techniques of farming. Seeing their dedication, District Administration linked the committee with schemes such as the Green Revolution Scheme, Farmer Prosperity Scheme and Soil Health Card Scheme. The administration also provided training to the farmers.

In the initial phase itself, the committee had laid down a diligent process to ensure good quality of the organic

crops. The first step was to analyse the land each farmer possessed. Based on the specific qualities, farmers planted crops which were suitable for their land. This was followed by preparation of organic manure which was also done jointly by the farmers. Instead of burning cow dung, plant leaves, wheat and rice residue, they mixed and decomposed all of it together to make manure. Understanding the harm done by chemical pesticides, they adopted organic pesticides like Karanja (Indian Beech), eucalyptus, garlic and chillies to keep insects away from the harvest. These natural pesticides had no harmful effects on either the crop or the land. Next was to ensure hassle-free irrigation of the fields. For this, the committee installed a pump in the water canal and dug tube wells at some places in the village.

Even after almost four years, the committee makes regular visits to the field of every farmer and inspects it. The proactive inspection allows for quick response and resolution of any kind of problem at the committee level. Post harvesting, members bring their crops to the committee and sell it collectively in the market or to the government. The amount received is equally distributed among all the farmers.

"Each one of us works dedicatedly in the entire process. Right from composting, preparing natural pesticides to



seed production for farming - every activity is accomplished by all of us together. This decreases the input cost and increases the profit margin," shares Ratni Bai, a farmer and a member of the committee.

The farmers of Gotulmuda produce nine varieties of aromatic rice - Chirainakhi, Vishnubhog, Ramjira, Bastabhog, Jawafool, Karlagato, Sundarvarnim, Luchai and Dubraj. In the recent times, the demand for locally grown millets like Kodo, Kutki and Ragi has also increased. Earlier considered to be food grains of the poor, the medicinal and nutritional benefits have made these millets popular among the

rich across the globe today. To fulfill the demand of Kodo in the International Market, 'Kisan Vikas Samiti' has received an order to produce 20 metric tons of Kodo from the government.

D K Bhaskar, coordinator of the *Kisan Vikas Samiti* said that in the first year, there were 200 farmers but today over 456 farmers are benefitting from this concept of collective organic farming. "Use of chemicals causes damage to the environment. And, humans are responsible for it. The purpose of our committee is to eliminate the utilisation of such harmful chemicals and promote benefits of organic farming by making it profitable."

Agricultural scientist, Birbal Sahoo of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kanker says that, "Our farmers are returning to this ancient cultivation technique called organic farming. With increased demand of organic products all over the world, this natural method is gradually being accepted as a profitable deal among Indian farmers. Our objective is to provide them both recognition and profit."

Farmers in Gotulmuda village, who follow the organic farming techniques, have to spend ₹ 4,000 per acre to produce 10 to 12 quintals of rice. On the other hand, chemical farming costs farmers anything between 8,000 to 9,000 for production of approximately 17 to 18 quintals of rice. The negative impact of chemicals on soil productivity, on health of humans and environment is immense. The monetary, environmental and health benefits of the organic farming are being recognized at national as well as international platforms. Farmers in Chhattisgarh are undoubtedly benefitting from this recognition, however, they still feel that they are not receiving the right price for their crops. Other than making organic farming popular by announcing various schemes, both the state and central government are required to take steps to provide farmers fair price for their organic crops.

—Charkha Features



Colour of love

It's time to pick spirituality as a tool to awaken love in the minds of people and eliminate hatred and discrimination, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, was deeply revered by the world over when he spoke against his encounter with racial discrimination in Africa, when he was thrown out of the railway compartment for which he had a valid reservation. Similarly, when Nelson Mandela took over as the president of South Africa, the hopes rekindled about the end of the sad chapter of racial discrimination. It felt like the birth of a new era of good will and amity.

However, looking at the scenes that are being played out on various news channels since last few days, makes one think, reflect and ask - Which force has once again brought back the sad episode of racism? Are we going forward or backward? People would give different answers to these questions. But the fact remains that we are still a racist society at large.

Now, let us put the question as to 'why has there been mass protests and why are the echoes getting ever louder in the UN and in high councils of various countries? Some would say that the person who died or rather was killed, reignited the spirit of self-respect in a community who has suffered insults, incarceration and persecution for decades. While others would say that the voice raised by many nations and its loud echo and resonance in the media and different fora of the UN ultimately became so loud that the majority community and the ruling party there could no longer refuse to listen and yield.



All these answers might be correct but the basic question yet remains unanswered. Well, a simple yet valid answer for that would be that racial discrimination was, is and will always be wrong. But what is wrong with it? It insults the very dignity of a human and his rights. It is based on hatred and arrogance on the part of those who consider themselves to be superior on the basis of the colour of their skin. It leads to cruelty, injustice, inhuman treatment and conflict.

The colour of the body should not be the basis for fragmentation of humankind and of injustice and rancour. One should remember that we are all one and belong to one great family of humankind and colour should not divide or alienate us.

So, saying it feebly or loudly, our real identity is not determined by our skin colour. Hence, it is sheer ignorance of human rights or insanity to discriminate on the basis of its colour. The body is of flesh, blood and bones whereas we are made with dots of consciousness and experience and intelligence. In short, we are souls, point of light and we belong to one family or fraternity of beings.

Thus, what the world needs today is the spiritual response, which can break the psychological barrier of racial discrimination and bring down with it the high walls of hatred and injustice. It is spirituality, which is different from religion that works as a uniting factor whereas discrimination, based on body or materialism, divides the society on the basis of colour, gender, territory, language, etc. Spirituality generates or awakens love in the minds of people and eliminates hatred, narrow-mindedness and enmity whereas identification with the body or its various aspects, leads to conflict, based on caste, country or culture. Our present predicament thus is due to this missing element which should elicit the soul-conscious or the spiritual response.

It is a blend of such benign values as universal love, goodwill, co-operation, concern for the well-being of the whole family of mankind, based on the constant and living awareness that we are souls and we belong to one family or fraternity of the beings-of-light. We must thus remember that without this kind of spiritual response, no problem, whether you call it political, economic, ethnic or by any other name, can be solved.



Undoubtedly, the pandemic has brought about new as well as various challenges for all of us. Everybody is facing economic, financial, personal and professional issues besides a lot of anxiety about one's own well-being and that of the closed ones. There is a lot of fear about the future. A lot of people are developing a high degree of negative energy by seeing the misery around us. Simultaneously, the constant bombardment of information, data, advice and magical solutions through social media, are leaving many of us confused, worried and helpless.

Under these circumstances, it is natural for us to seek help from experts. But people need to understand the stark difference between life coaches, counselors and a clinical psychologist as it will be extremely unfortunate for anyone having any mental health issue to 'fall into' the wrong hands. One of the most common misconceptions about life coaching is that it is therapy in disguise or, worse yet, therapy from an unlicensed practitioner.

Here are a few facts which we must know. A life coach is essentially a certified profession-

Understand the difference

Although life coaches and psychologists occasionally help clients with similar problems, their work differs. To get the right advice, it is very important to learn which kind of guidance will serve you the best, says DR PRERNA KOHLI

al who is trained in coaching his/her clients on different issues that could relate to personal growth, business expansion, professional growth and personality development. In general, a professional life coach would typically help a client understand his/her current situation, set up short/medium/long-term goals and push the client towards the achievement of these objectives. The work of a life coach revolves around showing the path of progress, setting milestones and providing positive cues to the clients. However, a typical life coach cannot and does not have the ability to handle mental health issues of the clients. While a life coach can also be a certified professional in the field of psychology (as two separate streams of professional qualifications), most of the life coaches operate based on their



own professional training and experience.

On the other hand, a clinical psychologist is a profession-

al, who is qualified in the field of psychology with at least a master's degree. An online certification in Psychology doesn't

make one a psychologist. A psychologist is specifically trained to deal with emotional and mental health issues of the patients, where the diagnosis is completely clinical in nature. The psychologist assesses the patient and his/her situation (including state of mind) from an independent perspective and based on this clinical assessment, a line of therapy is specifically devised for the patients so as to cure the mental health issues entailed therein. Through this therapy, the psychologist aims to bring about a change in the cognition and behavioural patterns of the patient so that he/she is healed out of the ailment.

The reason for writing this is not to discriminate between the two categories of professionals or make any value judgment about the utility of the two pro-

fessionals. The objective here is to create awareness regarding the fact that the two professionals are supposed to deal with completely different situations and it may be risky for an unaware person to mix up the two.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people claiming to be coaches and counselors, often without the required qualification and training, intending to encash the opportunity provided by the lockdown. Although life coaches and psychologists occasionally help clients with similar problems, their work is not at all the same. To get the right advice, it is very important to learn which kind of guidance will serve you the best. It's a sincere advice to seek professional help from only certified experts for mental health and emotional issues pertaining to yourself and your loved ones. Please do not seek help on these matters from any self-styled life coach and counselor, who is not a certified expert in the field of Psychology.

(The author is a clinical psychologist, an adviser to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR), a member of Niti Aayog and founder of Mind Control Solutions.)

For all things difficult to acquire, the intelligent man works with perseverance.

—Laozi

COVID MAY TRIGGER DIABETES IN PEOPLE

In a significant find, a new study has said that the novel Coronavirus may actually trigger onset of diabetes in healthy people, apart from causing severe complications of pre-existing diabetes.

According to the researchers from King's College London, given the short period of human contact with new Coronavirus, the exact mechanism by which the virus influences glucose metabolism is still unclear.

"Diabetes is one of the most prevalent chronic diseases and we are now realising the consequences of the inevitable clash between two pandemics. We don't know whether the acute manifestation of diabetes in these patients represent classic type 1, type 2 or possibly a new form of diabetes," said study researcher Francesco Rubino, Professor at King's College London.

Clinical observations so far show a bi-directional relationship between COVID-19 and diabetes.



SMARTPHONE-BASED AI CAN MANAGE DIABETES

Using artificial intelligence (AI) and automated monitoring, the researchers have designed a smartphone-based method to help people with type 1 diabetes better manage their glucose levels.

Paired with a smartphone app called DailyDose, the recommendations from the algorithm were shown to be in agreement with physicians 67.9 per cent of the time.

"Our system design is unique. We designed the AI algorithm entirely using a mathematical simulator," study researcher Nichole Tyler from Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in the US, said in a paper published in the journal *Nature Metabolism*.

"When the algorithm was validated on real-world data from people with type 1 diabetes at OHSU, it generated recommendations that were highly similar to recommendations from endocrinologists," Tyler added.



45% COVID PATIENTS MAY BE ASYMPTOMATIC

Asymptomatic patients may account for as much as 45 per cent of all COVID-19 cases, playing a significant role in the early and ongoing spread of the novel coronavirus, according to a new research.

The study, published in the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine*, suggests that an extraordinary percentage of people infected by the ongoing deadly COVID-19 pandemic never showed symptoms of the disease.

The report highlights the need for expansive testing and contacts tracing to mitigate the pandemic.

"The silent spread of the virus makes it all the more challenging to control," said study researcher Eric Topol from the Scripps Research Translational Institute in the US.



NEW GENETIC TOOL DIAGNOSES DIABETES

A new genetic tool could pave the way for better diagnosis and treatment of diabetes among Indians, shows a study conducted by the CSIR-Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.

A new publication by researchers at the KEM Hospital, Pune, CSIR-CCMB, and the University of Exeter in the UK shows that a genetic risk score is effective in diagnosing type 1 diabetes in Indians.

The genetic risk score, developed by the University of Exeter, considers detailed genetic information known to increase the chance of developing type 1 diabetes. The score may be used at the time of diabetes diagnosis to help decide if someone has type 1 diabetes.

The authors found nine genetic areas (called the SNPs) that correlate with type 1 diabetes both in Indian and European populations, and can be used to predict the onset of type 1 diabetes in Indians.



ASPIRIN LINKED TO LOWER BOWEL CANCER RISK

Researchers have found that effects of a regular dose of aspirin taken to reduce the risk of inherited bowel cancer lasts at least 10 years after stopping treatment.

The international trial, known as CAPP2, involved patients with Lynch syndrome from around the world and revealed that two aspirins a day, for an average of two-and-a-half years, reduced the rate of bowel cancer by half.

The study, led by experts at the Universities of Newcastle and Leeds in the UK, published in the journal *The Lancet*, is a planned double-blind 10-year follow-up, supplemented in more than half of recruits with comprehensive national cancer registry data for up to 20 years. "I had an idea 30 years ago that people with a genetic predisposition to colon cancer could help us to test whether aspirin really could reduce the risk of cancer," said study researcher Sir John Burn from Newcastle University.



Messi is back

Argentine superstar nets one & assists two in Barca's 4-0 win over Mallorca on La Liga return



Lionel Messi celebrates with teammates after scoring Barcelona's fourth goal against Real Mallorca at Son Moix Stadium AP

AFP ■ BALEARIC ISLANDS
Lionel Messi returned without a beard and with a goal and two assists as Barcelona resumed their La Liga title challenge on Saturday with a thumping 4-0 victory over Real Mallorca.



LaLiga

After three months away because of the coronavirus pandemic, Barca exploded into the lead with just 64 seconds played when Arturo Vidal headed in and Martin Braithwaite struck a second from a Messi headed assist.

Jordi Alba latched onto a Messi pass to add a third and Messi then scored a fourth in injury time for his 25th goal of the season.

"I'm happy because starting like this is an enormous

boost for what's to come," said Barcelona coach Quique Setien.

Victory extends Barca's advantage at the top of La Liga to five points over Real Madrid, who can reduce the gap back to two when they restart at home to Eibar.

Messi will be crucial to Barcelona's hopes of holding off Madrid but their captain, who turns 33 this month, may have to pace himself, especially after an injury-interrupted season.

Clean shaven, and without any sign of the thigh problem that prevented him from training earlier this month, Messi played 90 minutes and looked like he had never been away.

His goal was set up by Luis Suarez and the sight of the

Legal action against pitch invader

MADRID: La Liga have said they will launch criminal proceedings against the pitch invader who ran on during Barcelona's match against Real Mallorca on Saturday.



In the 52nd minute at Son Moix, a man wearing an Argentina shirt with Lionel Messi's name on the back entered the pitch and posed for a picture on his phone near Jordi Alba.

He was not wearing a mask, gloves and was chased before being caught and escorted away by security.

"La Liga will file crimi-

nial actions against the invader who entered the pitch without permission and broke the protocols established in current health legislation and disobeyed the orders of private security personnel," a statement from the league said. "His actions constitute a crime." **AFP**

Uruguayan coming off the bench would have been welcome for coach Setien too.

Suarez has not played since undergoing knee surgery in January and was able to recov-

Atletico held by Bilbao

AFP ■ BILBAO

Diego Costa scored his first goal since October but Atletico Madrid missed the chance to move into top four by drawing 1-1 away at Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

Costa celebrated by holding up the shirt of Virginia Torrecilla, a player from Atletico's women's team, who underwent surgery on a brain tumour last month.

His gesture of support for Torrecilla did not go unnoticed either. She posted a message on *Twitter* with a picture of Costa's celebration that said: "I have no words...You are amazing! Thanks from the bottom of my heart".

Costa's equaliser came two minutes after the excellent Iker Muniain had given Bilbao the lead towards the end of the first half and neither side could find a winner at the empty San Mames, with Athletic defender Santiago Arias missing the best chance late on.

This was always going to be one of the tougher games in Atletico's run-in but it

played. Starting like this is very important for him and for the team as well."

Mallorca, who sit 18th in La Liga, were never going to offer the sterner of tests but this was a useful outing for both Barcelona's fitness and morale.



Diego Costa celebrates goal by holding up Virginia Torrecilla's shirt. ATM/Twitter

was still an opportunity missed after fellow top-four hopefuls Valencia and Getafe both failed to win on Saturday.

Diego Simeone's side stay sixth, now level on points with both Getafe and Real Sociedad in front of them, although La Real have a game in hand against Osasuna.

Athletic Bilbao remain 10th, five points behind Valencia in seventh.

Mertens makes Napoli history

NAPLES: Dries Mertens fired Napoli to the Coppa Italia final on Saturday after netting the goal which gave his side a 2-1 aggregate semi-final win over Inter Milan and made him the club's all-time top scorer.

Napoli will face Juventus in Wednesday's final in Rome thanks to Belgium forward Mertens, who slotted home his 122nd goal for Napoli four minutes before half-time to make the score 1-1 on the night and give them overall victory after a 1-0 first-leg win at the San Siro in February.

Christian Eriksen had levelled the tie for Inter straight from a corner in the second minute and the away side continued to dominate the first half, but Mertens ended a lightning counter-attack to put the hosts through at the Stadio San Paolo.

"We wanted the final at all costs and we achieved that. Now we need to recuperate and be ready for the final in a few days," said Lorenzo Insigne, who set up Mertens' winner.

Mertens, 33, overtakes Marek Hamsik and moves seven clear of Diego Maradona, who scored 115 goals in all competitions and won two Serie A titles and the UEFA Cup over his seven tumultuous years in southern Italy.



Dries Mertens celebrates after scoring. AP

Although there were no fans in the stands at the San Paolo, broadcaster RAI reported that a small number of Napoli supporters that had gathered outside the San Paolo set off fireworks throughout half-time in celebration of Mertens' goal and after the match.

Mertens moved to Napoli from PSV Eindhoven in 2013 and has become so settled in Naples that fans have nicknamed him *Ciro*, a hugely common Neapolitan name. Sporting director Christian Giuntoli said pre-match that both club and player want to extend his contract, set to expire at the end of the month. **AFP**



Thiago Silva and Edinson Cavani will leave French champions when their contracts expire at the end of this month. PSG/Twitter

Silva, Cavani to leave PSG

AFP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain sporting director Leonardo has confirmed that veteran duo Thiago Silva and Edinson Cavani will not stay with the French champions with their contracts due to expire at the end of this month.

"Yes, we are coming to the end," Leonardo said in an interview with newspaper *Le Journal du Dimanche*.

"It has been a very difficult decision to reach. These are players who have marked the history of the club and you wonder if you should carry on a little longer together or if it's best to avoid staying a year too long.

"We needed to make the right decision, including in economic terms and in terms of the next generation of players coming through."

It was widely reported earlier this week that Brazilian centre-back Silva, the PSG captain who turns 36 later this year, would not be kept on at the Parc des Princes, where he arrived from AC Milan in 2012.

Silva's contract is due to expire at the end of this month, as is that of Uruguayan striker Cavani.

Now 33, Cavani joined PSG from Napoli for 64 million euros in 2013 and has gone on to become the club's all-time top scorer with 200 goals.

However, his place in the side came under threat following the arrival of Mauro Icardi on loan from Inter Milan at the start of the season.

Silva and Cavani have played a major role in establishing PSG as the unrivalled force in French football, but their time at the club will also be remembered for disappointing results in Europe.

Several other PSG players out of contract this summer, including full-backs Thomas Meunier and Layvin Kurzawa, and striker Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting, are also set to leave the club.

'New sub rule favours big clubs'

AFP ■ SHEFFIELD

Sheffield United defender Chris Basham fears the introduction of the five substitutes rule for the rest of the season will favour the Premier League's big clubs.

Chris Wilder's side are pushing for an unexpected place in the Champions League as the English top-flight season resumes on Wednesday with the Blades' trip to Aston Villa.

But concern over players suffering injuries due to the coronavirus long lay-off has convinced the authorities to allow five substitutions to be made instead of the usual three for the remainder of the campaign.

Basham, whose team are just five points behind fourth-placed Chelsea, is concerned the new FIFA rule, designed to help clubs better manage the hectic fixture list, will favour those sides with bigger squads.

"I think the substitutes thing that has come in will affect us a little bit because we are not going to be as strong as the



Sheffield United players in training session. PL

top six sides, Basham told *BBC Radio* on Sunday. "But we are going to give it a good go and the manager would not let us do anything other than that."

"The manager said we can go from just being in the Premier League, staying up, or we can go and do something we've never done before and that is getting into Europe and getting into the Champions League."

AFP ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich moved to within just one win of an eighth straight Bundesliga title as a late Leon Goretzka goal sealed a 2-1 victory over Borussia Moenchengladbach at the Allianz Arena on Saturday.

Teenage striker Joshua Zirkzee put Bayern ahead before Benjamin Pavard's own goal levelled for Gladbach, but Goretzka netted his third goal in five league games with four minutes remaining.

"Turning such a late goal into a victory that will allow us to win the title on Tuesday makes me overjoyed," said the 25-year-old.

Even without the suspended Robert Lewandowski and Thomas Mueller, Bayern earned their 13th straight win in all competitions to re-establish their seven-point lead over Borussia Dortmund at the top of the table with three matches left.

Victory at relegation-threat-

Goal-retchka on point again



Leon Goretzka celebrates after he scores Bayern's second goal against M'gladbach. AP

ened Werder Bremen on Tuesday will confirm Bayern as German champions for the 30th time in Hansi Flick's first season in charge.

"We want to win there and bring this thing home," added

Goretzka. While coach Flick said, "I'm happy that the team got the job done with some hard work — those were three important, 'big' points."

Bayern had to dig deep again, having also laboured to

victory by the same margin in Wednesday's German Cup semi-final win over Eintracht Frankfurt.

Gladbach made a fast start but were denied an early lead as Jonas Hofmann's strike was ruled out for offside.

But visiting goalkeeper Yann Sommer gifted Bayern a 26th-minute advantage when his dreadful pass across the edge of his area was met by the 19-year-old Zirkzee, who coolly found the net to score his fourth Bundesliga goal from just eight appearances.

Gladbach deservedly drew level though when Pavard turned Patrick Herrmann's cross into his own net eight minutes before the break.

Both sides had second-half chances, but Goretzka settled matters when he turned home Pavard's low cross.

Chhetri was one of those who glorified Indian football: Stimac

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National team head coach Igor Stimac on Sunday hailed Sunil Chhetri, saying the talismanic captain was one of those who "glorified" Indian football with his dedication in the 15 years of his illustrious career.

According to Stimac, Chhetri is someone who always runs the extra yard, breaks some more sweat during training sessions, which encourages youngsters to emulate him.

"I see him as someone who always pushes the bar in training and never compromises with the regime. He drives the team and he is the character who defines the team. Numerous characters have glorified the Indian football history and he's definitely one of them who



Sunil Chhetri celebrates after he scores in Asia Cup match. Indian Football/Twitter

have made his country proud," the Croatian tactician said. "Dedicated, workaholic and team man — those are some of

the attributes which define Sunil Chhetri," he said in AIFF release.

The former Croatian World Cupper, who took charge of the national team last year, recalled seeing Chhetri during the preparatory camp ahead of the King's Cup 2019 — his maiden assignment with the Blue Tigers.

He pointed out that despite being the senior-most member of the team, Chhetri toiled maximum to achieve positive results after the heartbreak in AFC Asian Cup.

"When I first saw him last year, they were back to the National Team camp after a long gap following the AFC Asian Cup. A few boys were new but the fire under his belly probably was more than anyone else. That's the secret of his long career. Congratulations!" Stimac said.

Rohit wants to play both WT20 & IPL

NEW DELHI: India's limited overs vice captain Rohit Sharma wants to compete in both the T20 World Cup and the IPL this year as chances are that only one of the two tournaments could be salvaged due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ICC is yet to decide on the fate of the World Cup, scheduled to be held in October-November in Australia, while the BCCI has postponed Indian Premier League indefinitely.

It is being speculated that if T20 World Cup is postponed, the IPL can be held in that window.

Rohit initiated an *Instagram* chat session to engage with his fans and said he would "preferably play both" when asked which event he would prefer this year.

Rohit leads four-time champions Mumbai Indians in the IPL.

The star opener also said that it will be challenging to play the pink ball Test when the Indian team travels to Australia later this year.

India will engage in a four-Test series with hosts Australia with the first



PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Test to be played at the Gabba from December 3. The second Tests will be a Day/Night affair at the Adelaide Oval. Asked to describe Mahendra Singh Dhoni in one word, Rohit said, "Legend".

The Indian vice captain also said that he enjoys watching the batting of Australian Steve Smith and England's Jason Roy. **PNS**



Saliva ban may upset balance b/w bat & ball: Taylor

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia captain Mark Taylor on Sunday warned that ban on the usage of saliva, to combat the Covid-19 threat, runs the risk of upsetting balance between bat and ball in Test cricket.

"I think it is a bit of a concern because I like, particularly in Test matches, to see the ball slightly dominate the bat, it is much better game when Test cricket is played that way," Taylor told *Channel 9*.

The 55-year-old former opener is concerned about the fact that no saliva means a delivery would become predictable for a batsman.

"My concern will be that if the players can't shine the ball and the ball does get very straight and very predictable we are going to see more and more runs, more and more high scores in Test match cricket," Taylor said.

"And that is not the best Test match cricket. Test cricket is much better when the score is around 300," he added.

The ICC has also introduced the system of issuing two warnings per innings to players found violating the saliva ban. Any further violation will result in a five-run penalty.

"They have said try and be lenient which I'm sure they will be but eventually one umpire is going to stick his neck out and say 'that's a five run penalty,'" Taylor said.

Closed-door matches will give us edge: WI coach

MANCHESTER: West Indies coach Phil Simmons feels playing behind close doors against England will favour the visiting side when international cricket resumes next month in a "bio-secure" environment.

"I don't know if it will increase our chances, because both teams are under the same umbrella," Simmons said in a video conference.

"The nice part for us is that 20,000 Englishmen raving for England, and that crowd support, it's not there for them. So that in a way will help us, so it's good from that point of view."

Besides the absence of hostile English fans, Simmons said lack of competitive cricket could also hurt the hosts in the series. "...England hasn't come from a tour recently, and we've just been playing cricket at home. Because in a normal situation we would have been coming from camps and England would have been



Windies batsman in nets session. WI/Twitter

halfway through their season and the series would have been going on right now.

"So, I think that is a plus for us, because it eases out things a little bit, with the fact they haven't been playing competitive cricket for a while also," he observed.

Having beaten England 2-

1 in the Caribbean 18 months ago, a tied series would be enough for the West Indies to retain the Wisden Trophy.

But Simmons admitted that the West Indies would miss the services of Shimron Hetmyer, Darren Bravo and Keemo Paul in the series after the trio decided against travelling to UK.

"Unfortunately a few guys decided not to come but we are here with the best squad that we can have here. And from the way we've started our work, the guys have been putting in, I think we'll be ready and looking to defend our trophy."

"...We know what we'll be missing. But in situations like this we have to work hard with the guys who are here and make sure that what we're doing is putting them in a position to fill those two shoes for the series," he said.

"Hopefully whoever fills the shoes can go on and be as great as they want to be." **AFP**

The Reel Dhoni: Cricket was a theme in Sushant's life

NEW DELHI: There was a part of Mahendra Singh Dhoni in Sushant Singh Rajput.

It made the World Cup-winning former Indian captain's *Untold Story* a guilty indulgence for masses and the actor, who played the titular role, a household name in his short and eventful career.

It wasn't a cinematic masterpiece like late Irrfan Khan's *Paan Singh Tomar* but there was hardly anyone who disliked Neeraj Pandey's feel-good blockbuster either.

Sushant, who committed suicide at his Mumbai home on Sunday, took fans to places where an introvert Dhoni, fiercely guarded about his private life, never took anyone.

To that school match he won, to those tennis ball *khep* (term used for games in Bengal) in Kharagpur or dealing with selection heartbreaks or romancing his wife Sakshi,



Sushant was the gateway to the Dhoni no one knew before or never knew after.

He gave everyone a sneak peek into Dhoni's life.

He got that gait, the mannerism and the helicopter shot

so perfectly, that he became Dhoni. He was believable.

"Dhoni after watching me play had said that Sushant can easily play Ranji Trophy," Sushant had said with a wide grin during promotion of his last released film *Chhichhore*, where cricket was a part of the climax.

In fact, Digvijay Deshmukh, who played the role of young Ali in Abhishek Kapoor's *Kai Po Che* is still not able to fathom that the actor is no more.

"I don't know what to say," Digvijay said in a choked voice.

"Sushant *bhaiyya* was the nicest of human beings. Six eventful months of my life was shooting for *Kai Po Che* where he played the role of my coach (Ishaan). Trust me he was a good cricketer."

"We played so much cricket off camera. I was a kid and he would keep me entertained," Digvijay, who is now a professional cricketer and will play in

IPL for Mumbai Indians, remembered.

Digvijay remembers his last conversation good eight years back after the shoot got over.

"Sushant *bhaiyya* asked me what would I like to become when I grow up. I told him just like in film, I would become a cricketer."

"*Maine kahaan tha jab cricket mein kuch karunga uske baad hi aake aapse miloonga*. Since MI picked me at IPL auctions, I thought once IPL starts and I am in Mumbai, I will go and meet him. That won't happen anymore," Digvijay wasn't able to gather his thoughts beyond this.

Call it the irony of life, in his last film, Sushant counselled his on screen teenage son, who tried to commit suicide after failing an entrance exam, telling him stories of underdogs.

Real life is brutal than 120 minutes on 70 mm. **PTI**