

OPINION 8
RESET TIES WITH NEPAL

WORLD 11
HONG KONGERS HIT PANIC BUTTON, BIG SPIKE IN IMMIGRATION INQUIRIES

SPORT 14
SL CRICKETERS TO RESUME TRAINING

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EVERY ROLE HAS TAUGHT ME: JACQUELINE 12 VIVACITY

Alternate LS, RS sittings in Central Hall

Parliamentary proceedings in ample space will ensure social distancing

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

If the current spate of corona pandemic goes unabated, then it is likely that both Houses of Parliament — Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha — may function from the Central Hall and that too on alternate days.

Well-placed sources said considering the need to maintain the social distancing norm, the Monsoon Session beginning next month will conduct its proceedings from the spacious Central Hall in a staggered manner and on a rotational basis. For instance, if the Lok Sabha meets on Monday then the Rajya Sabha will sit on Tuesday, in such a scenario, Parliament will function six days a week with three each for both the Houses.

Sources said the option of conducting Parliament sittings from the Central Hall is being worked upon. "This (Central Hall) is a bigger place which has a seating capacity of 776 members. While the Lok Sabha has 545 Members of Parliament (MP), Rajya Sabha has 250 MPs. While it will be easier to conduct the Upper House within



the social distancing norms in the Central Hall, feasibility to accommodate all Lower House members while maintaining social distancing norms is being looked upon," Parliament sources said.

A senior official said a separate SOP for the functioning of Parliament is also being deliberated.

The Central Hall for decades is being used for joint sittings of both the Houses addressed by President of India

(twice annually) or any visiting dignitary. In normal days, the space is used by members of both the Houses to spend time and interact and is also a coveted place for journalists who have restricted access to the Central Hall where they are privileged to exchange greetings.

As per the Parliamentary rules, both the Houses should be convened at least once in six months after the President prorogues it. The last time

when Parliament functioned was on March 23 after which the Centre imposed a complete national lockdown in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic. The Budget Session of Parliament which began on January 31 was supposed to end on April 2.

"The last Parliament was adjourned sine die on March 23 and we have time till September 22 to convene Parliament for the Monsoon Session. However this prerogative is with the Government of

India when to begin its legislative business. We will be prepared to welcome the members and keep the democratic norms ahead," sources privy to the development said.

The other option the Government and Parliament is also examining is to allow only half strength of each House on rotation basis and connect the remaining members through various virtual modes to the either House. Members will be able to present themselves on virtual screen mode and raise questions, discuss, participate all in normal functioning of the House.

"We just got to know that the United Kingdom Parliament conducted the proceedings in recent times through mix of virtual-real mode and it worked well," sources added.

In order to corner the Narendra Modi Government on issues like handling of coro-

na pandemic, labourers and migrants problem, the economic issue etc, the Opposition parties have been putting pressure on the Centre to call either a Special Parliament Session or an early Monsoon Session.

"We want to raise several issues and expose this Government on the floor of Parliament. Our constant demand is the Centre convene a Session at earliest and honour the democratic and social principles of our country and the Constitution above all," said Congress national secretary Sanjay Singh.

After much pressure, the first meeting of a parliamentary panel on Home headed by Rajya Sabha member Anand Sharma is scheduled on Wednesday. Top officials of the Union Home Ministry are scheduled to brief the panel members on corona related issues.

UP govt lifts many restrictions

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after the Central government announced that the lockdown will be lifted across the country in three phases, Uttar Pradesh government on Sunday released its guideline, lifting almost all restrictions and allowing opening of shops, plying of local transport and inter-district buses.

The guidelines said that government offices would function in the state with 100 per cent workforce but with staggered timings — 9 am to 5 pm, 10 am to 6 pm and 11 am to 7 pm — to maintain social distancing.

The government order specified that night restriction on movement would be strictly enforced between 2100 hours to 0500 hours and that senior citizens and children below 10 years age should avoid public places.

Restrictions would be strictly enforce in containment zone and except for health, police and delivery persons no one would be allowed to move there.

In the 11-page guidelines, the government, however, did not allow opening of sectors restricted by the Centre and announced that religious places, shopping malls, hotels and restaurants would open from June 8.

The decision to open educational institutions, coaching centre will be taken in July.

"The guidelines will be

enforced from June 1 and will be enforced for the next 30 days. But social distancing, face mask and sanitising would be compulsory for shops, public transport and business establishments and any violation will attract severe punishment and fine under the Epidemic Diseases Act," Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said here on Sunday.

"The government has lifted ban on pillion riders on two-wheelers while autos, taxis and buses will be allowed to ply only after proper sanitising and autos and taxis would also follow the health guidelines.

The guidelines say that all markets will remain open from 9 am to 9 pm. Supermarkets are allowed to open with condition of social distancing and other precautionary measures. Weekly markets are allowed in rural areas but weekly markets in urban areas will not be allowed.

The vegetable mandis will open from 0400 hours to 0700 hours while fruit mandis will open from 0800 hours to 2000 hours daily. Awasthi said that street vending would be allowed with proper guidelines. Parks will now open from 0500 hours to 0800 hours and 1700 hours to 2000 hours. "Though the stadium and sports complexes have been

Continued on Page 6

India 7th worst hit now, pips France

US, Brazil, Russia, Spain, UK and Italy ahead of India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India raced to seventh spot in the global list of the worst affected countries after it left behind Germany and France on Sunday following a spike of over 8,000 confirmed cases during the day. India has now 1,90,536 cases, while France has 1,88,625 cases and Germany has 1,83,420 cases.

On Sunday, India saw a rise of 8,677 cases and 221 deaths. Now the US, Brazil, Russia, Spain, the UK and Italy are ahead of India.

Maharashtra witnessed another harrowing day on Covid-19 front on Sunday, as the pandemic claimed 89 more lives and another 2,487 people tested positive in various parts of the State. With the fresh fatalities and infections, the total number of deaths mounted to 2,286 and infected cases jumped to a staggering 68,655.

With as many as 29,329 patients having been discharged, the State health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the State at 36,031.

Of the total deaths reported on Sunday, Mumbai accounted for 52, while there were nine deaths each in Navi Mumbai and Pune, six deaths in Malegaon, five in Thane, four in Kalyan-Dombivli and two in Solapur and one each in

Osmanabad and Yavatmal. Gujarat on Sunday reported 438 cases and 31 deaths, taking the tally of infected people to 16,794 and the number of the deceased to 1,038.

Continued on Page 6

Noida-Delhi border to remain sealed

Noida: The Noida-Delhi border will remain sealed for movement of people to and from Delhi, the Gautam Buddha Nagar administration said on Sunday even as 48 new corona cases on Sunday raised total to 453 in the NCR district.

2 policemen die, highest single-day spike in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi witnessed the highest single-day spike of about 1,300 coronavirus positive cases on Sunday and with the Delhi Police lost two Assistant Sub-Inspectors to the pandemic since Saturday evening, taking the overall coronavirus casualty figure in the force to three.

While a 52-year-old ASI died around 11.30 am on Sunday during treatment at the Army Base Hospital here, another officer of the rank posted away at the same facili-

ty on Saturday evening, officials said. A Delhi Police spokesperson said that nearly 500 personnel have tested positive for the deadly virus so far.

ASI Vikram was declared negative for the virus in two tests — conducted on May 11 and May 22. However, he felt unwell on May 25 and went to the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital where the doctor advised him one week of medical rest, the official said.

Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava has spoken to all SHO on preventive measures.

Covid-19 in India

TOTAL CASES: 1,90,536
DEATHS: 5,406
RECOVERED: 91,621
ACTIVE: 93,498

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	67,655	2,286	29,329
Tamil Nadu	22,333	176	12,757
Delhi	19,844	473	8,478
Gujarat	16,794	1,038	9,919
Rajasthan	8,831	195	6,032
Madhya Pradesh	8,089	350	4,842
Uttar Pradesh	8,075	217	4,843
West Bengal	5,501	317	2,157
Bihar	3,807	21	1,311
Andhra Pradesh	3,571	62	2,340
Karnataka	3,221	51	1,218
Telangana	2,698	82	1,428
Jammu & Kashmir	2,446	28	927
Punjab	2,263	45	1,987
Haryana	2,091	20	1,048

U'khand Minister Satpal Maharaj, family members test corona +ve

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Tourism Minister Satpal Maharaj, his wife Amrita Rawat and 21 others, including members of his family and staff, tested positive for coronavirus, an official said on Sunday.

Satpal Maharaj had attended a meeting of the State cabinet on Friday.

Asked whether other Cabinet Ministers who attended the meeting will be quarantined, State Government spokesman Madan Kaushik told reporters that they will follow the advice given by the Health Department as per the guidelines of the Centre.

According to State Health Department spokesperson JC Pandey, the Minister's wife tested positive for the infection on Saturday while his two sons and their wives, along with 17 others, were found infected with the virus on Sunday.

Lockdown 1.0 to 4.0: 8-times corona jump

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The fourth phase of the countrywide lockdown ending May 31 witnessed a much bigger jump in the number of cases compared to the previous three phases.

The number of positive cases went up by 10,828 in the first lockdown, 30,407 cases in second lockdown, and 49,624 cases in third phase of the lockdown. The fourth phase saw addition of nearly 80,000 cases between May 18 and 30.

The rise in case during this period account for over 47.20 per cent of the total 1.90 lakh coronavirus infection cases. India has reported over 5,400 fatalities, doubling in the last sixteen days.

When India went into the first lockdown on March 25, it had reported 618 confirmed cases and 13 deaths. The number of infections

LOCKDOWN	DURATION	NO OF DAYS	CASES
1st	March 25-April 14	21	10,828
2nd	April 15-May 3	19	30,407
3rd	May 4-May 17	14	49,204
4th	May 18-May 31	14	78,000

is now twice what it was fourteen days ago, and given the rate of growth in this period, it could hit the 2,00,000-mark by Tuesday, according to experts who said enforcing the use of masks and social distancing norms and isolating everyone with cough and fever is the only protection against infection.

Dr Randeep Guleria, professor of pulmonology, and director of the Delhi-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) said while the lockdown 4 was stringent, the continuation of migration of workers from the metros to their native towns led to steep rise in the cases.

He said the numbers will continue to spike. "The numbers will spike. The only way you can decrease the numbers from spiking is by aggressive isolation, community participation in terms of very strict wearing of masks, social distancing and hand-washing.

"There's lockdown fatigue now, people have got fed up, they don't seem to be bothered (about infection spreading), and my fear is that people don't realise what we are headed for. There are still people who are dying, and the pandemic is yet to peak," he said.

Continued on Page 6

14 more test +ve in city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Fourteen more people tested positive for coronavirus infection in the state capital on Sunday even as the woman who died a day earlier tested positive after death.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Narendra Agarwal said an audit of her death was being carried out.

The CMO said the woman from Phoolbagh was admitted to a private hospital after stroke and she died on Saturday. He said after her report came positive on Sunday, directions were given to sanitise the hospital where she was admitted. "Her death audit is being carried out which will reveal whether she died due to coronavirus infection or not," he added.

Dr Agarwal said those who tested positive on Sunday included seven GRP personnel, one RPF cop, two children of GRP cop who tested positive

Continued on Page 6

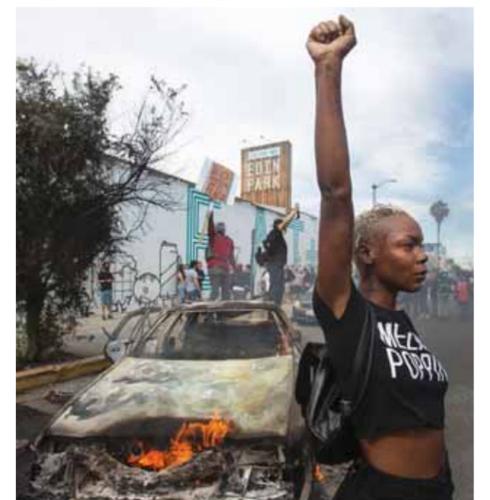
Floyd rage engulfs US

AP ■ MINNEAPOLIS

Another night of unrest in every corner of the US left charred and shattered landscapes in dozens of US cities on Sunday as years of festering frustrations over the mistreatment of African-Americans at the hands of police boiled over in expressions of rage met with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Cars and businesses were torched, the words "I can't breathe" were spray-painted all over buildings, a fire in a trash bin burned near the gates of the White House, and thousands marched peacefully through city streets to protest the death of George Floyd, a black man who died Monday after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee on his neck until he stopped breathing.

His death is one of a litany of racial tragedies that have thrown the country into chaos amid the coronavirus pandemic that has left millions out of work and killed more than 100,000 people in the US,



A protestor poses for photos next to a burning police vehicle in Los Angeles AP

including disproportionate numbers of black people. "We're sick of it. The cops are

out of control," protestor Olga Hall said in Washington DC. Detailed report on P11

CM: No new tax in UP to offset economic impact of COVID-19

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Predicting that revenue collection would go up in the coming months, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that no new tax would be imposed in the state to deal with the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis as the Uttar Pradesh government had charted out an elaborate programme for revival of economy through speedy industrial development.



opportunity. If we are able to do so, we will open the doors of opportunity for our migrants who have returned and unemployed people of the state," he said.

Yogi, however, took a jibe at the opposition parties for starting a campaign against the government. "There is no doubt that the number of coronavirus positive cases has gone up. But the number of testing too has increased. Now, 10,000 tests are being done per day. By June 15, we will conduct 15,000 tests per day and by June 30, 20,000 tests daily," the chief minister said, adding that 2.72 lakh tests had so far been done in the state.

"This is a global fight against a virus, not against a political party. But it is unfortunate that some parties have started a negative campaign. People who do politics through twitter should have come out of their houses and helped poor. What is more unfortunate is that a political party which asked for fuel price and money to transport UP students from Kota to UP is now giving us sermons," he said.

Voicing concern over coronavirus explosion during unlock 1.0 which will start from Monday, the chief minister said that mass gathering need to be stopped. "We need to restrict social gatherings. Religious places will open up after June 8 but we should take extra care of elderly persons, small children and pregnant women," he said.

Yogi also congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for completing one year of his 2.0 rule. He said India had taken a big stride towards prosperity and self-reliance under Modi regime.

Talking to a select group of reporters through virtual conferencing here on Sunday, the chief minister said that revenue collection in UP for the month of May was better compared to previous months because the state had opened up industrial and construction activities with gradual relaxation after every extension of lockdown.

"This is time to ensure we provide additional relief to the people. Therefore, the state has decided not to impose additional tax," Yogi said.

On May 6, the UP government had increased value added tax (VAT) on fuel by imposing additional tax on petrol at the rate of Rs 2 per litre, and on diesel at the rate of Re 1 per.

"Many economic activities are likely to improve. The MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) sector will prove to be the job and money spinner for the state. We have schemes that will come up at the local level. Our migrant workers will prove to be an asset for us. They built fortunes of for other states and now they have got an opportunity to write a golden chapter for Uttar Pradesh," Yogi said.

When asked how the state, which already is grappling with unemployment, can accom-

modate such a big work force, the chief minister said the Investors' Summit of 2018 followed by two groundbreaking ceremonies had brought investments of around Rs 3 lakh crore in UP.

"Many companies have started production and this working style has carved out a niche for us and the word is spreading very fast," he said.

Yogi said many companies were willing to re-locate from China and for them Uttar Pradesh was a dream destination. A German company has already decided to come to UP. Many more companies will set up units in the state. A committee of ministers has been formed. We have set up separate desks for US, Korea and Japan. We are talking with the companies. We are looking at their requirements and trying to provide them the best facilities," the chief minister said.

"We are committed to changing this crisis into an

PGV slams rlys remark over migrants' deaths

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Continuing her tirade against Bharatiya Janata Party government over the pathetic condition of migrant labourers, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday flayed the "irresponsible remarks" of the Railways over several deaths of passengers and trains taking different routes, causing great problems to the travellers.

"Eighty passengers died so far on Shramik Express as per the figures given by Railway Protection Force (RPF), 40 per cent trains are running late, many had taken a wrong route," tweeted Priyanka, saying how irresponsible and insensitive railway ministry officials are evident from the fact that they issued advisory that weak persons should not travel on trains. She said that from the beginning, the Railways were never serious or sensitive about running Shramik special trains.

Priyanka alleged that the Central as well as Uttar Pradesh governments had ignored the plight of the migrants and had left women, children, old per-



Congress leaders Aradhana Mishra 'Mona' and Pramod Tiwari addressing a press conference on Sunday

Pioneer

sons and others to walk down for several hundred kilometres to reach their homes.

"The government even failed to provide food or water for these migrants," she added while targeting the BJP government.

It may be mentioned that as per the figures given by the

RPF, 80 passengers died while travelling on Shramik special trains between May 9 and May 27. However, the Railways claimed that the passengers died of various illnesses and not due to any laxity on their part.

Meanwhile, Congress Legislative Party leader Aradhana Mishra 'Mona', said

she had written a letter to Assembly Speaker Hriday Narayan Dikshit informing him how a member of the House was harassed and tortured by the state government in a fake and fabricated case.

Mona said on Sunday that she informed the Speaker how UPPC chief Ajay Kumar Lallu

was first arrested for raising voice against the Agra administration which was "illegally" stopping movement of buses to Ghaziabad despite Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Awanish Awasthi saying permission had been given for the movement of the buses.

She said that not only this, when Lallu was released on bail the very next day, Lucknow police acted as if the Congress state president was a listed criminal and rushed to Agra to again take him into custody in another fabricated case registered in the state capital.

Mona claimed that as the UP Police had no evidence against Lallu so now they were unnecessarily delaying the legal process by not providing the Case Diary in the court concerned so the UP Congress president could not get bail. She also alleged Lucknow police tortured Lallu who has been sent to judicial custody.

Mona demanded that the case against Lallu be immediately withdrawn, the guilty policemen be punished and Lallu be immediately released from jail.

Maya hits out at MoUs signed by Yogi govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Terming the memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed by the government to facilitate jobs to migrant workers as nothing but a "photo opportunity", Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Sunday said that the Centre and Uttar Pradesh government should try to develop special economic zones (SEZ) like that at Shenzhen in China to make India self-reliant.

"The Centre and the Uttar Pradesh government should try to become self-reliant instead of waiting for companies to shift base from China. The reason is that there are no facilities like the Shenzhen Special Economic

Zone in India. Roads, water supply, electricity supply and arrangement of accommodation near the workplace as in Shenzhen SEZ are not there in place here," Mayawati tweeted on Sunday.

"But by providing facilities like Shenzhen Special Economic Zone to Indian entrepreneurs to ensure their use for the production of quality goods, it will become a little easier to develop small and medium industries and make India truly self-reliant," the the Bahujan Samaj Party chief added.

Mayawati hit out at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, saying that his government was engaged in just signing MoUs instead of thinking about helping labourers.

"Instead of providing the necessary effective help to lakhs of workers who have returned home due to unemployment and lockdown, the deception campaign has started once again by MoU signatures and announcements, etc. in UP. Very sad. Without concrete measures of public interest, the problem will become more acute," she tweeted.

"It would have been better if the government had told what happened to the old MoUs before signing new MoUs. If the MoU is not just for persuading the public and for photo opportunities, then it is better because millions of workers are waiting for employment at the local level," the Bahujan Samaj Party supremo added.

उपरोक्त पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड, ई-निविदा विधि विस्तार सूचना

इस कार्यलय की ई-निविदा संख्या 166, 169, 167 व 168 - वि.प्र.सं. / 2019-20 जो कि पूर्व विचारित दिनांक में किसी कारणों से परिवर्तन होने के कारण अब ई-निविदा संख्या 169 व 166 दिनांक 04.06.2020 को 16.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 05.06.2020 को 12.30 व 13.00 बजे खोली जायेगी तथा ई-निविदा संख्या 167 व 168 दिनांक 15.06.2020 को 16.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जायेगी एवं दिनांक 16.06.2020 को 14.00 व 13.30 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा की अन्य नियम व शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी। **अधिसूचना अतिरिक्त, विद्युत परियोजना मंडल-प्रथम, उपरोक्त पावर ट्रान्समिशन कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड का सं-111 से 114, पू-तल, परियोजना नकल, निविदा खण्ड-11, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ पत्रांक-891 दिनांक- 30.05.2020** "राष्ट्रहित में विजली बचाओ"

CITYBRIEFS

CMS STUDENT EXCELS



Vinayak Dalmia, a class X student of City Montessori School, Gomti Nagar Campus I, has secured 100 per cent marks in Science in International Benchmark Test (IBT) and brought laurels to the institution by securing first rank on world level. IBT is organised by Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) once a year in many countries. In India, thousands of students of several noted schools appeared for IBT in which Vinayak secured 100 per cent marks in Science amidst tough competition. CMS will honour him with a cash prize of Rs 50,000.

WEBINAR

A national webinar on 'Methods of legal research' was organised by the department of Law, School of Legal Studies, BBAU, Director, Institute of Legal Studies, Punjab University, Ratan Singh was the guest speaker who shared his thoughts on the relationship between law and society and the impact of judicial judgment in society. Dean and head of the department Sudarshan Verma gave the welcome address and said everyone has to always remain committed to education in every situation.



सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है मैं जय प्रकाश पुत्र निरंज सिंह निवासी ग्राम व पोस्ट मानपुर तहसील हथौन जिला फरीदाबाद हरियाणा मेरे आर्मी सर्विस रिकॉर्ड में मेरा नाम जय प्रकाश JAI PARKASH दर्ज है जो गलत है मेरा सही नाम जय प्रकाश JAI PRAKASH है जो कि सही है।

Bharatiya Janata Party to start virtual rallies from today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh unit of Bharatiya Janata Party will start its virtual rallies from Monday (June 1) to celebrate the completion of one year of Modi 2.0 with leaders and prominent members of society addressing these rallies to highlight the achievements of the Narendra Modi government.

BJP general secretary Vijay Bahadur Pathak said that 98 rallies would be held in the first three days with 34 rallies being held on June 1 followed by 35 on June 2 and 29 on June 3. "Prominent members of society, including doctors, engineers, professors, advocates, sports persons, traders, teachers and social workers will address these rallies besides prominent party leaders," Pathak said.

On June 1, BJP state president Swatantra Dev Singh will address a rally of Lucknow city while state general secretary (organisation) Sunil Bansal will address rally of Ayodhya city.

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya will address rally of Ayodhya district the same day.

In Kashi Kshetra, BJP national general secretary Arun Singh will address rally, while

"Prominent members of society, including doctors, engineers, professors, advocates, sports persons, traders, teachers and social workers will address these rallies besides prominent party leaders"

Dr Anil Jain will address rally in Varanasi and national spokesperson Sudhanshu

Trivedi in Mirzapur.

In Gorakhpur the virtual rally will be addressed by senior minister Suresh Khanna, in Kushinagar by Cooperative Minister Mukut Bihari Verma and in Azamgarh by MSME Minister Sidharth Nath Singh. Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma will also address a virtual rally.

The first year of Modi 2.0 is full of achievements which includes abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir and creation of Ladakh as Union Territory. Besides, the long wait for construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya ended as the government paved the way for construction of huge temple there, Pathak said.

Besides sanction of Rs 20 lakh package to boost the economy during lockdown, free travel for around 10 million migrant workers and free foodgrains and cash money to the poor during coronavirus pandemic were other highlights of the Modi government," Pathak said.

UPPCL EE dies in road accident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A senior officer in the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited was killed in a road accident in Bachhrawan township of Rae Bareilly. He was coming to Lucknow from Prayagraj on Saturday night to meet his children who had come home in Lucknow after a long gap. Reports said that Mukesh Kumar Kakhaneval, an executive engineer in the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited and posted at George Town office in Prayagraj since 2017, was coming to Lucknow on Saturday night. His family is living at Bawani Bazaar in Jankipuram area. His son Himanshu, who is pursuing engineering course, and daughter, Twarit, who is working with a multinational company, had come to Lucknow on Saturday morning and had called their father to come home for a day on Sunday so that they could meet him. However, when Mukesh was crossing Rae Bareilly, his speeding car rammed into a truck parked at the roadside in Paurawa hamlet of Bachhrawan late Saturday night.

The police rushed him to a nearby community health centre from where he was referred to district hospital but he died on way to hospital. The family members rushed to Rae Bareilly soon after learning about the accident.

The body was brought to Lucknow after post-mortem and cremated on Sunday afternoon.

IAS Rani Nagar alleges attempt on her life

Lucknow (PNS): Rani Nagar, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of 2014 batch (Haryana cadre) alleged an attempt was made on her and her sister Reema Nagar's life in Ghaziabad.

Interestingly, instead of filing a formal complaint, she again preferred her twitter handle to share the incident after which the local police got a case registered.

Sources said that with the help of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) footage, the cops also took one of the neighbours in custody and said that the attack was made over a dispute over dog. Nagar on Saturday night tweeted that she and her sister were standing outside their house at Panchwati Colony in Ghaziabad when an unknown man came out from a neighbouring house with an iron rod in his hand and tried to hit her on the head but she somehow saved herself and ran inside the house. Nagar said the man however hit her sister on the leg with the rod, seriously injuring her. She also posted photos of her sister's injured leg.

CO (City-I) Ghaziabad claimed that they took cognisance of the tweet and also identified the assailant. He said that further investigations were on in this regard.

It may be mentioned that Nagar had resigned from the service in April, alleging harassment and threat to her and her sister's lives from some senior officers. Her resignation was, however, not accepted by the government.

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Hotels, religious places gear up for re-opening

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hotels and religious places in the city are gearing up to welcome visitors. General secretary, Hotels and Restaurant Association, Girish Oberoi said 50 per cent of the hotels opened because people in the sector were not expecting much business. He said there were some standard operating procedures which the association has developed in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism.

"The basic guidelines are there and that is where the preparations are being made. But the challenge is that the movement of people has still not started and hotel owners are left with no option but to wait and watch," he said.

He added that a containment area or a floor would be developed in hotels where any guest testing positive could be shifted. He said the systems are in place and the basic precautions which the hotels will be following include disinfection of property, segregation and sanitisation of luggage, rooms, distribution of masks and face shields and availability of sanitisers at different points. The hotels have to ensure minimum stay at the reception as IDs and other details will have to be sent online and guests must be taken directly to their rooms. "Minimum things will be kept in the rooms and extra



LMC workers sanitising Hanuman temple near Hazratganj crossing on Sunday

Pioneer

stuff will be removed so that there is minimum chance of infection. There will be no housekeeping when the guests are inside the room and all the cleaning and housekeeping will be done after guests are shifted other rooms. The buffets at the breakfast will be done away to begin with," he said. Oberoi said that 50 per cent of the staff has been laid off by hotels because of the

financial crunch. "The hotels will be restarting with the minimal staff and guests," he said. Oberoi said they did not see business happening for at least next 2-3 months.

"People are watching how many flights are operating because there have been instances of pilots testing positive. However, people have to move on at some point of time.

Meanwhile, Mahant of Mankameshwar Temple Devyagiri said they are concerned that the sanctum sanctorum should not be made accessible to people as it might lead to rise in the number of cases. "We are also concerned about flower sellers who sit outside the temple and it can also be a source of infection," she said. She added that arrangements of masks and

sanitisers for devotees have been made. "We will make arrangements even though we have limited resources and would appreciate if the state government provides us some support. Our budget has been impacted by the lockdown and the funds have been spent on arrangements of food for the inmates," she said. She said they would ensure social distancing by making circles for the devotees to stand. The temple has been closed since March 19.

Father Donald Desouza from St Cathedral Church said that in the next three days, Bishops from across the country would be meeting to chart out a common policy.

INTRA-STATE BUS SERVICES TO BEGIN FROM TODAY

The intra-state bus services of Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation will begin from 8 am on June 1. UPSRTC media spokesperson Anwar Anzaar said all precautions would be carried out at bus stations. "Thermal scanning of the passengers will be carried and masks have to be necessarily worn by the passengers. The number of passengers will be equal to the that of seats in the buses. The buses will be regularly sanitised and drivers as well as the conductors have to also wear gloves," he said.

Control rooms in markets for real-time monitoring

Lucknow (PNS): Divisional Commissioner Mukesh Meshram said Lucknow will be adhering to the directives issued by the state government regarding lockdown 5.0. District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash issued directions for setting up of control rooms in markets and installation of CCTV cameras and public address systems.

Meanwhile, in a meeting held on Sunday, the DM said a monitoring mechanism should be developed at market levels and include officials from the district administration, police, LMC and representatives of local trade organisations. He said the monitoring should be carried out in an organised manner with special emphasis on masks, sanitisers and social distancing.

"The CCTV cameras installed in the markets will help in real time monitoring," he said. He added that officials should use technology even for meetings to save time and focus on more responsibilities. The DM also laid stress on sanitisation of the market areas before their opening.

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RNA-based test to detect coronavirus infection in 30 mins

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Molecular Medicine and Biotechnology department of SGPGI has developed a rapid RNA-based test that can detect coronavirus infection in less than 30 minutes and will be the cheapest in the country. It is a single-tube lab test with high specificity and sensitivity. Dr Swasti Tiwari, who is also the head of the department, said they have developed an efficient technology that can screen active coronavirus infection at a much lower cost. It has been temporarily named 'Hi-Screen' test but the real name will follow after commercialisation of the technology.

"The estimated cost is not more than Rs 100 per test but post commercialisation, it may go up to Rs 500 if we scale it up for commercial use. However, it will not exceed this cost," she said. It may be noted that the regular RTPCR test costs Rs 5,000 per test.

The test uses the same process of RNA virus testing which is used in RTPCR technology and that is currently being used on the directions of ICMR. Admitting that they cannot share details as they are in the process of transfer of technology. "The technology was already available but nobody had thought it could be used for Covid testing, but we modified it for this very purpose" she said. "The test does not require sophisticated instrumentation or any expertise for result interpretation. The data related to test development and optimisation has recently been communicated for publication in a scientific journal. The technology can be made available for commercialisation through proper channel and requires ICMR approval for

use in public," she added. Dr Tiwari said they had filed patent for this technology in April and it took them one-and-a-half months to optimise it for Covid-19 screening. Dr Tiwari said they have already got an ethical approval for the technology but have to get a company partner so that it can be taken to the next level where the sensitivity in humans can be tested.

"This point-of-care test will have a direct impact on mass screening and will benefit people in screening and holding areas of various service centres such as hospitals and airports," she added.

"Next week, we will get expression of interest from all the companies interested in the technology. We can go in partnership through the process of getting all the regulatory approvals so that we can do human testing along with human sensitivity that has to be done before we scale up after commercialisation and ICMR approval. These are the few things which the company should take forward and it's not our mandate, but we will be hand-holding the company for the commercialisation and getting approval from ICMR," she added.

On how they got the idea of using the technology for Covid-19 testing, she said as Molecular Medicine and Biotechnology department, they have the mandate for predicting the disease at an early point. "We were in the process of optimising different techniques and it was one of them which we were trying to use for something different, but then Covid-19 happened," she said. Dr Tiwari works in the area of kidney research and has been involved in development of technologies for placental disorders.



Migrant labourers and their families continue to arrive at Charbagh railway station from other states and districts

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- A scheme worth Rs. 10,000 crore is dedicated to over 2 lakh unorganized Micro Food Processing Enterprises. This will help in them establishing their own brand.

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- A provision of Rs. 20,050 crore financial assistance has been made under PM Matsya Sampada Yojana to give an unprecedented boost to marine and inland fisheries.

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14 new COVID-19 patients found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 14 new COVID-19 patients including three police personnel, one woman trader and 10 migrants have been found in the district here on Sunday. According to the District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma, 200 reports have been received from Microbiology Lab of BHU and 186 of them are negative, while 14 are positive. It included follow-up reports of six patients including one being treated at Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital and five at ESIC Hospital. Later, all these patients have been discharged. They belong to Premchand Nagar, Garkhada, Jagdishpur, Haribhanpur, Sujabad and Pahadpur. With this, the total number of positive patients in the district has increased to 182 and out of them, 117 have been discharged and four have died. There are 61 active patients. Among the 10 migrants, one aged 60 is from Umraha Barai (Choubeypur) who returned home in a car from Mumbai along with an earlier found patient from same hotspot. The second is a youth (30) from hotspot Hiranpur (Phoolpur) who also returned in a car from Mumbai along with her already found patient who is his wife. The third patient (42) is from hotspot Mokulpur (Choubeypur) who came here from Mumbai along with an earlier found patient.



Security at new hotspot Praga Nagar Colony (Lanka) in Varanasi on Sunday

He works at a dairy in Mumbai. The fourth patient (30) is from Chittampur (Choubeypur) who came here by a train from Surat where he works at a powerloom. The fifth (23) is from Amilo (Badagaon) who works in Mumbai and came by a train. The sixth (48) is from Sarai Tikri (Choubeypur) who is a vegetable trader and came here from Bharatpur (Rajasthan). The seventh (36) is from New Colony Soyepur (Cantt.) who came here by a flight from Delhi. The eighth (32) is from Ratanpur (Badagaon) who came here by a train. The ninth (35) is also from Ratanpur (Badagaon) and returned by a train. He is a trader. The 10th (27) is from Hariharpur (Jansa) who is a cameraman and returned from Mumbai. Besides, a woman saree

trader aged 40 has also been found positive. She belongs to Mohani area (Jaitpura). The rest of three patients are cops, came into the contact of earlier found positive police personnel attached to CO (Sadar). All three cops live at Barrack No. 8 at Police Lines and they were being quarantined at CHC Shivpur. Now they have been shifted to isolation ward. The number of hotspots has increased to 92 in the district with seven new ones including Chitampur (Choubeypur), Amilo (Badagaon), Sarai Tikri (Choubeypur), Soyepur (Cantt.), Ratanpur (Badagaon), Hariharpur (Jansa) and Mohani (Jaitpura). Out of which 28 have become green zones, while among the 64 active hotspots, 24 are in orange zones, while 40 are still in red zones. In the district, as

many as new 101 samples were collected on Sunday and sent for testing. Out of total 5,735 samples, the reports of 5,367 have received, while of 368 are awaited. Out of received reports, 5,185 were negative and 182 positive.

Meanwhile, when the nation is all set to enter Unlock 1.0 since more than two months long lockdown imposed since March 25, the cases in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) continued increasing to an alarming stage. Azamgarh is also inching close to touch the three figure mark, as six new corona patients have been detected there, increasing the number to 94 in the district with 83 patients are active. Nine have been recovered, while two have died. Besides, seven new patients have been found in Ballia, increasing the number to 49 with 37 active patients as 12 have been discharged from the hospital. In Bhadohi, four new cases have been found, increasing the number to 43.

Apart from this, one more patient has been detected in Sonbhadra, increasing the number to nine. In Mau, six more patients has been found, increasing the number to 29 with 28 active patients. Earlier, first positive patient of Chandauli died. His report was received after his death. He belonged to Amra village under Dhanapur block. His cremation was done at Harishchandra Ghat in Varanasi on Saturday.

Migrants sent to Rajasthan by bus from Kanpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur City District Magistrate BR Tiwari while sending off the buses to Rajasthan on Sunday from Jhakarkati said the UP government was committed to sending all the stranded migrant workers to their respective states and home town.

He said these buses would take the migrant labourers to their respective destinations. He said the service was provided by the UP government.

Dr Tiwari asked the migrants returning to their home states to sit as per the

social distancing norms and refrain from spitting or breaking the norms on the way.

He said officials had been asked to inform the administration if there were more stranded migrant labourers so that more buses could be arranged to send them to their destinations.

Meanwhile, Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Shukla on Sunday said that two new coronavirus positive cases were found, one in Kakadev and the other in Tikra Kalyanpur.

He said only one COVID-19 patient was discharged from hospital on Sunday and there were 54 active cases in the dis-

trict. He said as on Sunday, 304 COVID-19 patients had been cured in the district, which witnessed 11 deaths.

NIINE MOVEMENT FOCUSED ON QUALITY

Niine Movement founder Amar Tulsyani said Niine sanitary napkins were launched in 2018 and in a short time they had become the most popular and most sought for product.

Tulsyani said Niine sanitary napkin was totally indigenous and focused on quality and affordable menstrual hygiene. He said it not only

looked into the problem of the modern and traditional woman of the country but also taught them to care for environment and thus provided them with special disposable bags.

He said the Niine Movement focused on all the institutions of many cities and had launched an educational programme to apprise the school girls about menstrual hygiene.

Niine Movement CEO Richa Singh said these sanitary napkins were manufactured as per the Indian needs and the Movement had joined hands with organisations like JCI and FOGSI.

Youngsters urged to shun tobacco use

KANPUR (PNS): Kanpur City District Magistrate BR Tiwari on Sunday appealed to people, especially youngsters, to refrain from the use of tobacco and tobacco products like cigarettes and biri etc.

He said especially in view of the COVID-19 pandemic it was more necessary for people to refrain from direct and passive smoking as both could impact their lungs. He said use of tobacco and tobacco related products compromised ones immunity and was a potent reason for spreading TB, heart related diseases, pulmonary diseases etc.

He said in view of the pandemic, it was necessary that people need to refrain from spitting as it could spread coronavirus.

He said it was not the responsibility of the government alone to ensure people do not smoke or consume tobacco products but each individual had to ensure that whoever smoked in their homes should be asked to stop it permanently.

Dr Tiwari said this year the World Health Organisation focused on protecting youth from industry manipulation and preventing them from

being lured into tobacco and nicotine use. He added that it was extremely important to save the present and future generations from the devastating health consequences of tobacco use. He said this year the theme of World No Tobacco Day tried to empower youth to understand the evil strategies used by the tobacco industry to promote and sell their products. He said people should understand the negative effects of tobacco use and the need to stand up against it. He appealed to parents to educate children about the harm smoking could do to their bodies.

It may be mentioned here that there are approximately 120 million smokers in India.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), India is home to 12 per cent of the world's smokers and more than 10 million die each year due to tobacco in India. In 2015, one in 10 deaths globally was caused due to smoking and over 50 per cent of them took place in just four countries, one of which was India. As per prevalent trends of tobacco consumption in India, 34.6 per cent of adults (out of which 47.9 per cent are males and 20.3 per cent females) are smokers.

Economic compulsions force govt to unlock restrictions

RAMESH K SINGH ■ VARANASI

Though the views differ over the decision taken by the Central Government to reopen many prohibited activities in phased manner in Unlock 1.0, the experts feel that it was economic compulsions for the government to increase the relaxations, otherwise, the nation may face serious economic slowdown. Many are of the opinions that undoubtedly, the number of COVID-19 cases is rising alarmingly in the country with setting of new records, almost daily, but it is also true that during more than two months long lockdown, the government has succeeded to a great extent to create awareness among the people towards worldwide coronavirus pandemic.

The continuous lockdown has forced many, especially the petty traders and daily wage workers, to face serious financial constraints. Even the big business houses are also passing through crisis so it was the need of the hour to start the process of unlocking restrictions in phased manner, felt Prof Abhijit Singh of Institute of Management Studies, Banaras Hindu University (IM-BHU).

Not only this, he further said that many patients who are also suffering from other diseases had no option except to bear their increasing pains as in almost all the advanced level hospitals, there were several restrictions to look after the patients other than COVID-19 positive cases. 'Many who needed dialysis and surgeries were suffering with increasing multiple complications,' said Prof Singh, adding that despite all the instructions and expectations, even many teachers of private institutions were facing financial crisis and sale of shops which remained opened even during lockdown period saw sharp decline in their overall business.

A retired IPS officer Prateep Kumar Mishra is also of the view that lockdown cannot be extended for indefinite period because restrictions on many activities would pose other bigger problems than that of corona. 'It is a fact the during the lockdown, the government got sufficient time to strengthen its overall health sector to deal with the pandemic because in the beginning, the country had a capacity of testing just around 10,000 COVID-19 samples but today the same has extended to over a lakh per day. Besides, we had

no facilities to make PPE kits but today we're in position to produce huge number of same like many other necessary equipment, sanitisers, masks etc. required to prevent infection of coronavirus,' he stated, adding that revival of economy is also a need of the hour in view to avoid facing the serious ill-effects of financial slowdown.

Yet another retired Central Government officer Amrendra Nath Singh also felt that unlocking the restrictions in phased manner is a compulsion for the government to avoid any unrest and panic-like situation. 'The country is already seeing the impacts of such panic in the manner millions of migrant workers have seen in hurry to reach their home, through any means without waiting to respond when the situation returns to normalcy,' said the septuagenarian, adding that however, seeing the present scenario of rising cases of COVID-19 in country, the period of lockdown should be extended at least till the end of this month.

Joint Director of a research institute, Parshwanath Vidyapeeth Dr SP Pandey expressed fear that the sudden opening of malls, restaurants

and other such places seeing gathering of crowds may pose yet another big challenges before the authorities.

'Many senior international health experts had already warned countries like India that withdrawal of lockdown restrictions might pose serious problems to the country with huge population,' he said, adding that the relaxations should be given when the graph of corona patients starts declining but the restrictions are being withdrawn when the same is sharply rising to a new high.

Similar views were also expressed by a local trader Jahangir Alam. 'In the manner the government has decided to start process of unlock restrictions it just showed its rigid attitude,' he said, criticising the government for showing surrender when the spike in number of cases is setting new high records every day and the country which is at ninth place in all set to beat many other countries in days to come. He felt that the government should see the situation till June 15 and then take such decision because many fear that by the time, the number of corona cases in the country may reach among the top 5-6 countries of the world.

Criminal arrested after encounter with cops

KANPUR (PNS): Vidhnu police arrested a criminal wanted under the Gangster's Act in an encounter on Sunday morning.

During the exchange of fire, the criminal sustained bullet injury and was admitted to hospital. He was involved in many cases of loot, murder and theft registered at different police stations of Kanpur and

Unnao. Vidhnu Station Officer Pushpraj Singh said around 4 am on Sunday, when he was checking vehicles with New Azad Nagar outpost incharge Shiv Prakash Singh and a force near Sakrapur village turn, a they spotted a motorcycle-borne youth coming from Parsauli village.

On seeing the police force, the youth tried to escape. On

being chased, he slipped in a puddle and on finding himself cornered by the cops, he opened fire on the police party.

During the exchange of fire, the youth was hit by a bullet and fell unconscious. He was admitted to Vidhnu community health centre in police custody. He was later identified as Ram Dayal, a criminal who is a native of Lalganj in Rae

Bareilly. At present, he was living in Taudhakupur village under Vidhnu police station.

Meanwhile, two youths riding motorcycles were killed and one was injured when they collided head-on after a truck hit one motorcycle near a petrol pump in Shahjahanpur town under Satti police station of Kanpur Dehat on Saturday night.

5 more test +ve for coronavirus

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Five new positive cases of coronavirus were reported in Prayagraj. One of these patients is a prisoner of Naini Central Jail. At the same time, one more case of COVID-19 has also come to light in Raniganj, Pratapgarh.

At the same time, the family and relatives fled the scene leaving body of the young man on Saturday night near Dumdum village of Raniganj in Pratapgarh in anticipation of corona virus infection.

Dr Rishi Sahay, the nodal officer for coronavirus in

Prayagraj, said that a 25-year-old youth of Tulsipur Kareli area was sent to Naini jail on May 24. In the sample tests of 21 detainees, his report has come positive. Meanwhile, two brothers have been found infected in Faridabad village of Phulpur block. Both came from Mumbai on May 26. Apart from this, a woman from Kareli has also been infected with corona. In addition to these, a five-year-old girl has also been found corona positive. On the other hand, reports of 245 samples were negative till late Saturday night.

The family members and

relatives, near Dumdum village in Raniganj area of Pratapgarh district, fled after leaving the body of the youth late Saturday night. The youth had come here from Mumbai three days ago. When he had trouble in breathing on Saturday night, he was taken to Prayagraj immediately. Here the doctors on duty declared him as brought dead. The youth's sample for corona test was not taken. Fearing an infection due to coronavirus, the family did not go home with the corpse and ran away after placing it on the roadside near Dumdum village.

Villagers informed the health workers and the police about the incident. On receiving the information, the health workers reached the village Dumdum, where the body was lying.

Although the youth was expected to have been infected with coronavirus, hence, they did not touch the body due to not having the security kit.

On getting information in this connection, MP Sangam Lal Gupta directed the DM and CMO to ensure the arrangement for the funeral of the young man.

Basketball player dies in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

National level female basketball player lost her life in the heavy rain and hailstorm that had lashed the city at night on Saturday last.

It may be noted here that the heavy rain and hailstorm had lashed the city on Saturday night. It was said that Anushka Singh, resident of Chuppepur in Shivpur area, was first year student in Parmanand premises of Shree Agrasen Girls PG College. She was a part of the basketball team of Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth (MGKV) and was also national level player.

It was said she was in the garden, situated nearby her house, during the heavy rains and a heavy branch of mango tree fell on her head. She died on the spot. Dr Mridula Vyas of college informed that her two sisters are also players and students of college. The Vice-Chancellor of MGKV Prof TN Singh mourned the untimely death of varsity player and termed it as irreparable loss to sport field and university as well. The college manager Dr Anil Kumar Jain, Principal Dr Kuukum Malviya and staff of college expressed their condolence and prayed the almighty



House damaged as tree uprooted due to storm in Shivpur area in Varanasi on Saturday night

for the lasting peace to departed soul and give strength to bereaved family members to bear this great loss.

Meanwhile, the Cantt police succeeded in unearthing a sex racket being run at a house in a colony situated on Pandeypur-Lalpur route. The police took five including two females in their custody for interrogation.

According to information, the cops at this police station

were receiving complaints about sex racket being operated at a house in this colony for last many days.

It was said that the incharge of Pandeypur police outpost Rajkumar Pandey reached the house as a customer on Sunday morning and found the complaint true. He reported to his seniors about this. Thereafter, the police personnel led by CO, Cantt Mohammed Mustaq raided the

house and took house owner and four others including two female in their custody for interrogation. The police recovered mobiles, photos and diary from the house.

It may be noted here that it is not the first case when the police unearthed the sex racket run in colony. Earlier, the Cantt police had unearthed the sex racket run at a colony in Pahadia area. And when the police had raided the house three girls had jumped from rooftop in an attempt to escape from there and one had lost her life. The police had come to know during investigation that even the foreigners used to visit this house. The police had arrested some in this connection and slapped NSA against them on this month.

Meanwhile, the Chowk police made arrest of a wanted criminal identified as Shivam Sahani of Brahmna area. The criminal was at a lane near Scindiya Ghat when the police arrested him. The Cantt police made arrest of an auto lifter from Aidhe village on Ring Road when he was waiting for someone to sell a lifted two-wheeler. The police recovered the lifted two-vehicle and the auto lifter was identified as Dara Rajbhar of Chaubeypur.

30 detainees shifted to Naini Jail

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

As many as 30 detainees, including Allahabad University professor, foreign national Jamaati members, have been shifted to Naini Central Jail. All were kept in Gauhania's Green Field Academy School which has been made as a temporary prison due to the coronavirus.

After about 35 days the detainees were sent to Naini jail on the instructions of the District Magistrate here on Sunday. They have been kept there like other prisoners. All were jailed on April 21 in a case of Epidemic Act, violating

the Foreign Act. The detainees were shifted to a temporary prison in view of the possibility of spreading coronavirus to the prisoners. However, the school's managing director Arvind Pandey said that sanitisation operation has been carried out in the school on Saturday after the detainees were sent. Former block pramukh Dilip Mishra, who was lodged in the central jail, his son Shubham and Neeraj Singh carrying a reward of ₹ 1 lakh on his head have been quarantined. All three have been kept in temporary prison. Senior Jail Superintendent HB Singh said that the three detainees have

been quarantined for 14 days to protect against coronavirus infection. The new detainees are not being held directly in the main prison, he added.

Meanwhile, Rakesh's innocent daughter Anamika, a resident of Vikas ka Pura village, under the Soraoon police station, died on Saturday night under mysterious circumstances. When the family members reached the police station and accused the 'pattidar' of murder.

SHO Soraoon Ramcharan Verma said that Rajkumar had quarrelled with his brother and others in an inebriated state. Due to the same reasons he accused them of murdering the innocent girl. However, the autopsy suggested that the minor had died due to illness, the SHO added.

HC to resume functioning from June 8

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Allahabad High Court will resume functioning from June 8 with few restrictions to keep a check on spread of COVID-19. Earlier, the court was hearing only urgent and important matters.

The important feature will be that lawyers will appear without robe and elderly lawyers aged 65 or above are advised to stay at home.

Besides, only those lawyers will be permitted to enter the High Court through ePass whose cases are likely to be

taken up by the court.

In new guidelines issued on May 30, the High Court administration has provided that advocates will enter the High Court through separate gates but their chambers in the court premises will not be opened.

The administration has clarified that advocates aged 65 years or more will not be permitted to enter in the High Court as under the revised guidelines, they will be provided video conferencing facilities to argue the case.

Advocates appearing in the

court will be required to wear face cover/mask and gloves. Further, they will adhere to physical distancing.

Besides, not more than six advocates will be permitted to remain in the courtroom at any given time and they will be required to leave the High Court after hearing of their cases. In addition to it, advocates residing in the containment zone shall not come to the High Court, as per guidelines issued by central as well as state government.

The High Court administration has warned that spitting

in the premises of court is strictly prohibited and anyone found violating it would attract punishment. 'Consumption of paan, gutka, tobacco inside the premises of the High Court will be prohibited and will attract punishment, guidelines further warned.

Emphasising that the guidelines regarding COVID-19 must be followed, the High Court administration has provided that the thermal scanning, handwash and sanitiser will be made at the operational entry and exit points and common areas.

Officials inspect quarantine centre

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Divisional Commissioner Preeti Shukla and Inspector General Range Piyush Srivastava inspected the quarantine centre located at Shivlok Srinet Shikshan Prashikshan Sansthan Padari.

During the visit the officers thoroughly inspected the arrangements like medical facilities, civic amenities, quality of the food, kitchen, store etc. The officers interacted with the quarantined people in which most of them were migrants. Inspecting the kitchen the officers gave the tips to the staff to maintain the sanitation.

Divisional Commissioner asked to the sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Sadar to keep the complete information about the inmates, including the mobile numbers with the purpose for a regular follow up. During the visit the DM and SP also accompanied the officers. Prior to the quarantine centre the officers visited the trauma centre at the district headquarters to be aware about the preparations for Covid-19 L-3 hospital. During the visit Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr OP Tiwari briefed them about the progress.

MEETING HELD

District Magistrate Sushil Kumar Patel has asked the



Divisional Commissioner Preeti Shukla and IG range Piyush Srivastava during the inspection of a quarantine centre in Mirzapur

officials to prepare projects on priority which help in ground water recharging.

These directives were given by him during a meeting of coordination committee to finalise the projects related to groundwater recharging convened by Minor Irrigation department.

During the meeting the executive engineer apprised that the department had already constructed 182 checkdams which needed repair and 23 had been proposed for new construction. The District Magistrate asked the department to put the proposal without delay which could be sent

to the government for sanction. He asked the departments that the projects of under ground-water recharging could be taken under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) too so that the departments could submit the proposal for approval.

Chief Development Officer (CDO) Avinash Singh directed the officials concerned to prepare projects after knowing the condition of the site during all seasons and its utility.

The meeting was attended by the officials of the Irrigation, Minor Irrigation, Forest and Horticulture departments.

FOUR CAUGHT

The Kachhawan police arrested four accused wanted under the Gangster Act. As per the received reports, Station Officer Kachhawan Manoj Kumar Singh during his routine patrolling was tipped off by an informer about the presence of two gangsters at their residences. Thereafter SO swung into action with his team and arrested Jawahar Seth from Majhawa village and Ajay Yadav from Nayapur Hansipur. Under very tight drive another police team arrested Baaul Nat and Chokhad Nat from Karsada village.

Loot case worked out; 3 nabbed

CORRESPONDENT ■ BANDA

Three persons were arrested from Pangara, Naraini area, in connection with a case of loot recently. Station House Officer (SHO) Naraini Kotwali Girendra Singh, senior sub-inspector (SSI) Brajesh Kumar Mishra along with constables Ramesh Kumar and Aseem Kumar worked out the case of loot and arrested the three accused from Pangara, Naraini area.

This information was given to mediapersons by Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Banda LKB Pal here. Lal said that these accused had committed a loot in a petrol pump in Pangara village under the Naraini police station. ASP said that the accused Kaleem Khan, son of Sher Khan, Ramjani Khan, son of Kallu Khan, and Pappu alias Sameer Khan, son of Haneef Khan, residents of Pangara village, had committed loot in Chandel filling station Pangara under Naraini kotwali on May 28. They had looted ₹4,500 from the salesman of the petrol pump. He said that FIR was lodged against these accused under Sections 392, 323, 504 and 506 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) with Naraini kotwali. ASP Pal said that the police had recovered ₹4,500 from their possession. ASP said that a Kawasaki Bajaj motorcycle used in this loot



SHO Naraini Kotwali Girendra Singh along with the three arrested accused in a loot case in Naraini in Banda

incident had also been recovered. ASP said that the accused had been sent to jail.

FIR LODGED AGAINST CONGRESS LEADERS

City Kotwali police had lodged a first information report (FIR) against 18 Congress leaders for violation of lockdown guidelines here recently. Station House Officer (SHO) City Kotwali Dinesh Singh said that these Congress workers were protesting against the arrest of their state president Ajay Kumar Lallu on Wednesday. SHO City Kotwali said that FIR was registered

under Sections 188 and 269 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). He said that the police prevented them from protesting but they did not listen. SHO City Kotwali Singh said that Superintendent of Police Banda Siddharth Shankar Meena had instructed him to register an FIR against those who violated the lockdown guidelines. Singh said that FIR had been lodged by officer incharge of the Civil Lines police outpost.

NINE INJURED

As many as nine persons were injured in clashes which took place in areas under

Bisanda and Naraini Kotwali recently. The police had admitted the injured to district hospital Banda.

According to a report received here, the first incident occurred in Bisanda town when two groups fought over a petty dispute. Station House Officer (SHO) Bisanda Pratima Singh said that Brajmohan (55), Sheelapati (45), Pushpa (22), Aarti (15) and Vijaybhawan (25) were injured when their adversaries attacked them and fled from the spot. In the second incident Kunta (70), Prahlad (35), Sushila (18) and Vimala (16) were attacked with sharp-edged weapons by their relatives in Tarai village under the Naraini police station. They all were admitted to the district hospital Banda, last reports received here said. Police said that the victims were attacked by their relatives. In yet another incident a migrant labourer committed suicide in Jauharpur village under the Tindwari police station recently. The police sent the body of the deceased for the post-mortem examination. ASP Banda LKB Pal said the deceased Jagdish Nishad had come to his inlaws' place in Jauharpur village from Surat. The deceased belonged to Nari village under the Pailani police station and was living in his inlaws' place for the past three years. The police had sent the body for the post-mortem examination.

Four felicitated on superannuation

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Four National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Vindhyachal employees, Mohammad Yakub Khan, Engineer (SLPS), TAD, Dudh Nath Prasad, sub-engineer, Operations, Kathrina Kujur, sub-officer, Medical and Mohar Singh, sub-engineer, Operations, were felicitated for superannuating from India's largest power station. Taking into consideration the delicacy of the situation posed by the pandemic, the employees were honoured for their dedicated service by their heads of



departments (HoDs) in their respective departments while strictly following social dis-

pushing NTPC Vindhyachal to the zenith of success, the HoDs handed over a letter of commendation and a token of appreciation to them. Wishing the superannuating employees good health, ED (Vindhyachal) Debashis Sen, thanked them for doing their duties with utmost determination and sincerity. The stars of the day took a trip down the memory lane and shared their memories with their HoDs. The team NTPC Vindhyachal wished the superannuating employees good health and blissful experiences in their second innings of life.

In his address DS Tripathi said that the tradition of Hindi journalism which started on May 30, 1826, through the daily 'Udand Martand' needed to be maintained with more honesty and boldness in today's environment. Democracy could be called truly alive only when it's journalism was bold and impartial, he added. Prashank Chandra also expressed his views on the occasion.

HONOURED

Senior journalist DS Tripathi of Bijpur was honoured and a memento was presented to him on the occasion of Hindi Journalism Day by the Public Relations Section of NTPC's Rihand Station on Saturday.

Bid to provide relief from heat

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Providing cold drinking water to people is most

Vartika Mahila Mandal, Ladies' Club of NTPC Rihand 80 litres capacity water cooler was installed near the Swagat Gate



on Saturday to provide relief from heat during the summer.

important, especially in summers. With the support of

Corona warriors' praiseworthy commitment

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Keeping the Covid-19 infection in mind the North Eastern Railway (NER) administration was making several effective efforts to prevent it and ensure protection from it in which its employees are engaged with full enthusiasm. During the countrywide lockdown besides the freight and parcel trains Shramik special trains are also being operated for the past few days to take migrant workers to their native place. Apart from it face masks and relief materials are being distributed among the needy people by the railwaymen in this situation. Railway workers doing commendable work under such circumstances are being declared 'Corona Warriors of the Day' daily by the NER administration for boosting their morale. In this series as many as two railwaymen on NER were honoured on May 29, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said.

TP Mall working on the post of Senior Section Engineer (Works)/East in Gorakhpur got the barricading done to ensure that the passengers coming to Gorakhpur Junction via Sharmik Special trains being operated during the lockdown period reached the determined exit gate from the station premises and got the marking done within a short period of time there for maintaining social distancing. He maintained the continuity of drinking water for the migrant workers and the staff working at the station. Apart from it on platform numbers 3/4 and 5/6 of Gorakhpur Junction he made additional arrangements for drinking water for 24 passengers at a time from six tanks in a very short time. For these commendable works of TP Mall he was honoured by being declared as 'Corona warriors of the day' of Lucknow division.

Likewise Akhilesh Kumar, who works as senior section

engineer/Work at Rudrapur city station coordinated with the district administration during the lockdown period and got the employees to construct



TP Mall, Senior Section Engineer / Work, Gorakhpur, Lucknow division

the sub-way of limited height and other works done by ensuring social distancing among them. Besides he got the work of LHS approach road completed. He made the employees aware about how they could protect themselves from Covid-19 infection and distributed soaps, mask and sanitisers among them. For these commendable works of Akhilesh Kumar, he was honoured by being declared as 'Corona warriors of the day' of Izzatnagar division. The railway administration was indeed proud of its such personnel.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION

Rajan Kumar, station direc-



Rajan Kumar

tor of Gorakhpur Junction of North Eastern Railway, was awarded the certificate of excellence by Chairman, Railway

Board, Vinod Kumar Yadav, for his outstanding contribution in the fight against Covid-19. Station Director Rajan Kumar ensured better coordination



Akhilesh Kumar, SSE / Works, Rudrapur City, Izzatnagar division

with the district administration by following the social distancing among migrant labourers who had arrived via Shramik Special trains got their thermal screening done. He also monitored the Sharmik Special trains passing from here. Rajan Kumar retired on May 31.

SHRAMIK SPECIALS

For migrant labourers, pilgrims, students and tourists etc. stranded in various places of the country the Railways was operating Shramik Special trains continuously since May 1 this year whose number had increased constantly. Of the Shramik Special trains run by the Indian Railways as many as 853 reached various stations of NER till May 29 through which about 8,81,850 migrant workers could be taken to their respective destinations, CPRO said. Till May 29 more than 275 Shramik special trains arrived at Gorakhpur Junction of North Eastern Railway which was more than any station through which 2,81,400 migrant workers reached Gorakhpur and they were sent by bus by the district administration to their respective destinations. The NER administration was working day and night to ensure that the food, water and medicines and other requirements of the

migrant workers travelling via the Sharmik Special trains which were arriving here were fulfilled. Due to these efforts migrant workers travelling by trains passing through North Eastern Railway are getting all kinds of facilities and they are very satisfied. In order to ensure availability of food and water to the workers, railway personnel and officers of the North Eastern Railway are working as a team. Food stoppages have also been made where after the Shramik Express stopped special care was being taken of food, water etc for its passengers. The NER administration said that while providing all facilities the railway administration was committed to ensuring that the migrant labourers reached their destinations safely.

PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN

The movement of trains for the general public was cancelled due to the lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19. In order to make the general life of the people normal the railway administration is starting the movement of some trains for the general public in view of some relaxation in the lockdown. For safe travel, passengers have to take special precautions at the beginning of the journey, during it and at the end of it. Entry will be allowed at the station only when the passengers had a confirmed/RAC ticket. Downloading the Aarogya Setu app in the mobile of each passenger will be necessary. Passengers are requested to travel with minimum luggage during the journey and follow the instructions given by the government to prevent infection of Covid-19, CPRO said. Meanwhile the entry of passengers at Gorakhpur Junction will be through gate No 01 and 02 while their exit will be from gate No 04 and 05. Apart from it no entry/exit from any entry/exit gate will be allowed.

Woman's body found hanging

CORRESPONDENT ■ HAMIRPUR

The body of a woman was found hanging from a fan in Bewar police station on Saturday. According to the police, Abhay Singh's wife lived separately from her husband for a year and a half in Bewar township. Her husband used to work in Delhi. She had filed a divorce suit in the court after a quarrel with her husband. On Saturday everyone was surprised on seeing her body. Her two children were crying outside the house. The parental family of the deceased said that

she has been strangled to death. On getting information the police reached the spot, took the body of the deceased into custody and sent it for the post-mortem examination.

ONE HELD WITH PISTOL

One person was arrested with a countrymade pistol from Pahra village. According to a report, Rohit, a resident of Bhaissain under the Muskarra police station, was arrested by Jariya police along with countrymade pistol from Pahra village. Police station incharge

Vikramajit Singh said that the accused was walking in the village with a pistol. Action was taken against him under the Arms Act.

Meanwhile the Jalalpur police arrested an accused who was evading arrest in connection with a theft case for the past four months from Mamma trifurcation. Police sub-inspector Nandkishore said that the theft had taken place in a liquor shop situated in Puraini village on January 28. Two accused had been already been arrested in this connection. The third accused, Lalit Lodhi,

GIRL SCORCHED

Manisha (18), daughter of the late Premchand Ahirwar, a resident of Hatwara Muhali in Sarila town, was connecting a wire of the pump to fill water on Saturday when she got an electric shock and was badly burnt. Her family members brought her to the community health centre (CHC) where her condition was better.

Mishap victim succumbs to injuries

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

Rajesh Nishad (36), a resident of Hyderganj village under the Pipraich police station who was injured in a road accident died in the medical college during treatment on Saturday. According to the information received here Rajesh, a contractual lineman, met with an accident near Lala Bazaar under the Pipraich

police station on Friday night while returning home from duty at 10 pm. Police took his body into custody and sent it for the post-mortem examination.

DATE EXTENDED

The last date for filling the online form for admission in various courses in Madan Mohan Malaviya University of Technology (MMMUT) for the

academic session 2020-21 has been extended once again by its administration. Candidates can now apply online through admission portal till 5 pm on June 15.

FIRE IN WAREHOUSE

A devastating fire broke out in a furniture warehouse situated near Saket Nagar under the Gorakhnath police

station on Saturday night. On getting information the fire brigade team managed to control the flames after hectic efforts. Everything kept in the warehouse was reduced to ashes. According to the information received here, the local people saw the flames around 7 pm on Saturday and immediately informed the police. The fire soon assumed an alarming proportion.

Girl meets tragic end

CORRESPONDENT ■ CHANDAULI

A girl who had gone to switch on the tullu pump as she suffered an electric shock in Jagdishpur (Hingutargarh) village and died on Saturday. On getting information about her tragic and untimely death a pall of gloom descended on the village.

It is learnt that the victim, Sangeeta (18), daughter of Birbal Rajbhar, a resident of the village, went to switch on the tullu pump around 4 am when she suffered an electric shock due to a short circuit and slumped on the ground. Her family members hurriedly rushed her to the community health centre in Dhanapur for treatment where the doctors on duty declared her dead. As soon as the news of her death was received a pall of gloom descended on the village and her family members were inconsolable.

CHAIRMAN VISITS PALIKA OFFICE

Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP) Chairman Santosh Kharwar reached the Palika office on Saturday morning. The chairman first went to the office of the Tax department and reviewed the arrangements for cleanliness there.

He then examined the attendance register of employees and looked at each record. The chairman also checked the records of the Health, Waterworks and Accounts departments and issued necessary instructions to the authorities concerned to keep all important registers in an orderly manner. He took the attendance register along with him to his office.

2 accused arrested

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The Lalganj police arrested two accused in a murder case. As per the received reports, Station Officer (CO) Harishchandra Saroj was during routine patrolling when he was tipped off by an informer that two wanted accused were hiding in Dubar village. Thereafter the SO raided the said place along with police team and arrested Bhola Nath and Rajbali, residents of Uska village. The two accused were sent to jail.

AWARENESS ABOUT SOCIAL DISTANCING

In order to create awareness among the people about social distancing, route march was taken out by the police throughout the district in each police station area. At the district headquarters the march was led by Circle Officer (City) Sudhir Kumar who appealed to the people to follow the norms of lockdown voluntarily because it was implemented in the larger interest of the society. Interacting with the people he stressed on maintaining social distancing and taking necessary precautions to check the spread of coronavirus.

He told the people to feel free to contact the police without any hesitation and not break the norms of lockdown. During the march the officer was accompanied by the station house officers (SHOs) Katra and City Kotwali along with the heavy force.

Illicit liquor recovered

CORRESPONDENT ■ MAHOBA

Shilochana (42), wife of S Maniram, a resident of Bijouri village under the Ajnar police station, was arrested along 12 litres of illicit liquor from Bijouri village on Saturday. The police team which made the arrest comprised S-I Yagyannarayan Bhargava and the excise team consisted of excise inspector Yogesh Kumar Gupta, constable Mushtaq Ullah and woman constable Sangeeta Devi.

Earlier Ramkali (55), wife of Ayodhya, a resident of Kabutaradera station road in Belatala under the Kulpahar police station, in the district, and Anupa (30), wife of Suraj Kabootara, a resident of Kabutaradera station road, under the Kulpahar police station in Mahoba were arrested along with 10 litres and 15 litres of illicit liquor respectively. The police team which made the arrest comprised S-I Sunil Kumar Tiwari, head constable Suraj Singh and constable Rahul Agnihotri.

Body of missing collection agent recovered from river

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A missing collection agent of a private finance company was found dead on Sunday and the body was recovered from Gomti river in Madaon on Sunday. Ashutosh (22) of Langda Phatak in Manak Nagar police station area was reported missing on Thursday after he left for his workplace but did not return home. His family contacted him and found his phone switched off. They went out in search of him but could not find him. Later, they lodged a case of missing at Manak Nagar police station.

On Saturday evening, passersby in Madaon spotted a body in the river at Ghaila bridge and alerted the police, following which a team reached the scene. The deceased was identified as Ashutosh and the police contacted his family.

Deceased's brother Dharmendra reached Madaon and identified the body. Kin of the deceased suspected foul play and demanded a probe into the case. They said Ashutosh's mobile phone and bike were missing. Ashutosh had left his house on his bike the day he went missing.

Meanwhile, a group of men thrashed a Dalit woman and also damaged a car parked near her house in Thakurganj on Sunday. Police registered a case of brawl and booked the accused under SC/ST Act.

The complainant, identified as Asha Devi, alleged that her neighbours Abhishek Gupta aka Bunt, Badal and Mintu Gupta and their family members stormed her house on Saturday night and thrashed her. "They hurled casteist slurs at me and also used swear words. The attackers also pelted my

house with bricks, damaging a car parked near my house," she stated in the FIR.

Meanwhile, founder of a social organisation accused the Madaon SHO of forcing her to sit in the police station for hours for petitioning the case of a rape victim. In her statement, Usha Vishwakarma said she sought help of senior police officers in the case and went to meet the Madaon SHO along with the family of the rape victim. She alleged that she and the rape victim's kin were made to sit at the police station for over six hours. "The cops taunted me for petitioning a case which they termed fake," she alleged. Refuting the allegations, ADCP Rajesh Srivastava said the process of registering a case took time and this the NGO owner had to wait at the police station. In the case, a 70-year-old man has been accused of rape.

Fraudster lands in police net

Lucknow (PNS): The Kaiserbagh police on Sunday nabbed a fraudster, who was absconding since February 2018. According to the police, the accused identified as Bachchu Lal of Unnao was masquerading as Kamlesh (of Sarojininar), who was killed by his rival Kaushal Kishor of Unnao in year 2018 on land dispute.

Working as an aide to Kaushal, Bachchu Lal identified himself at Kamlesh in registry court at the time of getting Kamlesh's land registered in the name of Kaushal's mother. The police worked on the case and reached Kaushal and other involved in Kamlesh's murder but Bachchu Lal could not be identified as he had presented fake ID papers. In February 2018, the police unravelled the mystery behind Bachchu Lal's real name. On the revelation, he hid a vanishing act.

Meanwhile, a 30-year-old employee of Sachivalaya Suraksha Dal (SSD) died while his colleague sustained grievous injuries in a road mishap in Cantonment police station area on Saturday night. The Cantonment SHO said Pradeep Yadav of Mainpuri, along with his colleague Indrajeet Yadav, was coming to Cantonment from Arjunanj and met the mishap at the overbridge in Arjunanj around 8 pm on Saturday. "Both the injured were rushed to hospital where Pradeep died while Indrajeet is under treatment at KGMU Trauma Centre," the SHO said. He added that the family of the deceased was informed about the incident. He said the police were finding out further details related to the incident.

Amid corona pandemic, Dussehri may cost just ₹20-30 this season

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Dussehri may cost just Rs 20-30 per kg this season, thanks to the mayhem that coronavirus has unleashed. Chairman of Mango Growers Association Insram Ali said though the production of mango has been less this year, the cost will not increase because the fruit is selling at a minimal rate of Rs 10-12 per kg from orchards.

The total production of mango is 25-30 lakh metric tonne in the state and in the Malihabad belt, it is only three lakh metric tonne as against the usual 6-7 lakh metric tonne. In the normal circumstances, the cost should have increased because of low production but it has reduced this year due to the current situation caused by Covid-19 pandemic.

"In Uttar Pradesh, the losses this season are estimated to be Rs 3,000-4,000 crore," he said. However, he said though it is a poor scenario for orchard owners, it would be an advantage for the buyers.

"The fruit which is being sold at Rs 10 per kg from the orchards will sell at Rs 20-30 per kg in the market. The buyers are scared that if they buy at the rate of Rs 20 per kg from orchards, they may not be able to sell at Rs 40 per kg in the market," he said.

He added that Dussehri would hit the market in the second week of June. The fruit currently available in the market is not of good quality, he said.



Mangoes up for sale in a city market on Sunday

Pioneer

Ali pointed out that regular traders from Maharashtra, Punjab, Delhi and Kolkata have not come to the state because of lockdown. "Merely 10-15 per cent of the traders from within the state have turned up to purchase mangoes," he added.

He further pointed out that orchards have not been purchased by buyers. "Only 10-15 per cent orchards have been sold and people are not com-

ing forward owing to economic problems. Till this time last year, 80-90 per cent of the orchards have been sold. Traders purchase the orchards and then sell the mangoes throughout the season. Traders of the other states also invest in orchards but this is not happening this year," he said.

Dussehri is transported by road and if it does not reach other states, it will add to the losses, he said. "We are still

waiting for traders from the other states to show up," he added.

Ali said they have already put forth their demands to the state government. "The mango belt was made several years back but there have been no facilities provided. We face the problem of electricity and the state government should also purchase mangoes the way it purchases other agricultural produce," he added.



Huge rush in Alambagh on Sunday with people caring two hoots about social distancing

Pioneer

Cases peak in TN, total breaches 22,000 mark

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Tamil Nadu saw an all time high of 1,149 persons testing positive for coronavirus on Sunday since the pandemic broke out in the State in March 2020. With Sunday's figure of 1,149 covid-19 patients, the number of persons tested positive till date rose to 22,333 in the State. The day also saw 757 persons getting discharged from various hospitals in Tamil Nadu, making the number of active cases in the State 9,400.

This is as per the medical bulletin released by the Government on Sunday. The release said that death toll in the State rose to 173 as 13 persons succumbed to the pandemic on Sunday. Out of the 1,149 persons tested positive on Sunday, 95 were people who came back to the State from various countries and other places in the country. Chennai has till now tested 14,802 positive cases and the district tested 802 positive cases on Sunday.

The data shows that there has been nearly nine-fold increase in the number of active cases reported in Tamil Nadu in the last 30 days.

According to the government release, there were 1,183 active cases and a total of 2,526 cases in Tamil Nadu as on May 1. Interestingly, C Vijaya Basker, the health minister of the State had told reporters on May 1 that the lock down which was to end on May 3 and which was extended by the Centre to May 17 would help Tamil Nadu in flattening the curve.

Chennai and three neighboring districts of Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur and Chengalpattu would continue to be no-go areas while the remaining 33 districts have been freed from the shackles of restrictions imposed as part of controlling the spread of coronavirus.

IT companies and other major industrial units outside Chennai city limits have been allowed to function with full strength while companies within the limits of Chennai Police could function with 50 per cent of their workforce.

A government release on Sunday said the re-opening of schools and colleges have been postponed to July 1 as the lockdown has been extended to June 30. The move by the Government to alter the rules

concerning lockdown is in the backdrop of the unabated hike in the number of coronavirus cases in the State, especially in the four districts including capital city Chennai.

While there would not be any public transport worth its name in these four districts, buses, trains and cabs would operate in other districts which have been categorized into eight zones. But the public transport services could operate only as per the guidelines and restrictions which have been put based on the intensity of the spread of the pandemic in these zones, said the release.

Religious places amusement parks will continue to be out of bound for general public till the end of June while restaurants, hotels and other business premises could function by observing social distance norms. Only 50 per cent of seating capacities will be allowed in hotels while there are no restrictions in sale of food parcels. Postponement of reopening of schools and colleges means that the Government is likely to postpone public examinations for 10th standard students which were scheduled to begin on June 15.

Maharashtra cases spike by 2,487; 89 die

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra witnessed another harrowing day on the Covid-19 front on Sunday, as the pandemic claimed 89 more lives and another 2,487 people tested positive for coronavirus in various parts of the State.

With the fresh fatalities and infections, the total number of deaths mounted to 2,286 and infected cases jumped to a staggering 68,655. With as many as 29,329 patients having been discharged, the State health authorities pegged the num-

ber of "active cases" in the State at 36,031.

Of the total deaths reported on Sunday, Mumbai accounted for 52, while there were nine deaths each in Navi Mumbai and Pune, six deaths in Malegaon, five in Thane, four in Kalyan-Dombivli and two in Solapur and one each in Osmanabad and Yavatmal.

There have been a total of 591 deaths in Maharashtra during the six days. On May 26 (Tuesday) the State had witnessed 97 deaths, while there were 105 deaths on Wednesday, 85 deaths on

Thursday, 116 deaths on Friday and 99 deaths on Saturday. Sunday's Covid-19 toll was 89. Of the dead, 46 were men while 43 were women. Forty seven of them aged over 60 years, 35 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 7 were aged below 40 years.

"Fifty six out of 89 patients (63 per cent) had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease," a State health bulletin said. Out of the total deaths ported today, 39 deaths occurred in the last two days and the rest are

from the period April 27 to May 27, 2020.

Out of 4,62,176 laboratory samples tested so far, 67,655 samples tested have positive for Covid-19.

There are 44 Government and 34 private (78 total) laboratories functioning in the state currently. As many as 3585 tests per 10 lakh population are being conducted. At the national level, it is 2722 tests per 10 lakh population.

There are 3157 active containment zones in the state currently. Total 18,490 surveillance squads worked across the state on Sunday

and surveillance of 70.14 lakh population was done.

Some key observations made in the State health bulletin were: Patient doubling time for the State was 11.7 days in the last week, it has now improved: to 17.5 days. The same for the country is 15.7 days. Recovery rate in the state is 43.35 per cent. Case fatality rate in the State: 3.37 per cent. Currently, 5,58,100 people are in home quarantine. There are 72,704 beds available in quarantine institutions and 34,480 people are in institutional quarantine currently.

FROM PAGE 1

INDIA 7TH WORST HIT NOW ...

Active cases in the State stand at 5,837 of which 61 patients are on ventilator.

As many as 1,149 new Covid-19 positive cases and 13 deaths were reported in Tamil Nadu on Sunday. The total number of positive cases stands at 22,333 and death count is 176.

Delhi on Sunday reported a sharp rise in cases with 1,295 new infections taking the tally to 19,844. The toll rose to 473 with 57 casualties during the last 24 hours.

Rajasthan reported 76 new Covid-19 infections, taking the total count of infected persons to 8,693. One death on Sunday due to the pandemic took the total fatalities to 194.

West Bengal registered the highest single-day spike with 371 more testing positive for the disease. The total number of coronavirus cases in the State currently stood at 5,501, while active cases rose to 3,027.

Bihar reported 242 new cases stretching the tally to 3,676 where a total of 21 people have succumbed to the disease. There are 2,475 active cases in the State.

Corona cases recorded the biggest spurt in a single day so far in Andhra Pradesh as 110 new infected persons were added in the list of the people hit by the pandemic, taking the overall tally to 3,571. Two more deaths were reported on Sunday, taking the toll in the State to 62.

Karnataka also witnessed a major spike of 299 cases on Sunday, taking the tally of infected people to 3,221. Two more persons died due to the disease on Sunday in the State that has a total death count of 51. As many as 3,221 cases are active in the State.

Haryana also recorded a surge of 168 cases on Sunday, jacking up the tally to 2,091. There are 1,023 active cases and 20 persons have died due to the disease in the State.

Likewise, Odisha added 129 fresh Covid-19 cases where the tally has reached 1,948. Nine persons have died till now and 813 cases are active.

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir added 105 more Covid-19 positive cases on Sunday, taking the tally of those hit by the pandemic to 2,446. A total of 28 fatalities have been recorded in J&K that has presently 1,491 active cases.

The hill State of Uttarakhand on Sunday reported 158 new cases, taking the total number of infected persons in the State to 907. The State has reported five deaths till now while 907 cases are active till date. The total number of Covid-19 cases in Indore district of Madhya Pradesh mounted to 3,486 as 55 more people were found infected in the last 24 hours. The district's toll due to the virus also went up to 132 with three more persons, including a 65-year-old woman, succumbing to the infection in the last three days.

LOCKDOWN 1.0 TO 4.0 ...

He said he is more worried about the deaths than the cases. "In my mind, we have reached a stage where

we will not be able to sustain the lockdown in its current form for a long period of time. People will now not be able to stay cooped up indoors. We will need measures like malls and restaurants still being shut, but gradually opening up for businesses," said Dr Guleria.

The biggest concern is what happens when things open up. "We need to aggressively work on asking people with even mild symptoms of cough and fever to quarantine and isolate themselves even if they don't get tested. Of course, testing must be expanded because it gives you an idea of how things are and whether new clusters are emerging, but even if testing is low, the strategy must be that people self-quarantine if they have symptoms," he said.

A group of public health experts too felt that returning migrants have served as super spreader of the disease and that the current spike in the infections could have been avoided if migrants had been allowed to go home before the imposition of the lockdown when the disease spread was very low.

"The returning migrants are now taking the infection to each and every corner of the country, mostly to rural and urban areas, in districts which had minimal cases and have relatively weak public health systems [including clinical care]," they said in a report submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The report has been compiled by experts from the Indian Public Health Association (IPHA), Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine (IAPSM) and the Indian Association of Epidemiologists (IAE).

India's nationwide lockdown from March 25 till May 30 has been one of the most "stringent" and yet Covid-19 cases have increased exponentially through this phase, that is, from 606 cases on March 25 to 138,845 on May 24, they said.

"This draconian lockdown is presumably in response to a modeling exercise from an influential institution which presented a 'worst-case simulation'. The model had come up with an estimated 2.2 million deaths globally.

"Subsequent events have proved that the predictions of this model were way off the mark. Had the Government of India consulted epidemiologists who had better grasp of disease transmission dynamics compared to modelers, it would have perhaps been better served," the report stated.

14 MORE TEST +VE IN CITY

earlier and the daughter of the woman from Golaganj who died of COVID-19 recently.

According to a senior official, Valmiki Mohal in Sadar, where 11 members of the same family have been found coronavirus positive, has been declared a hotspot. Teams from CMO office sanitised Pandariba, Durgapuri, Bansmandi, Charbagh, Kamala Devi Ashram, Akbar Hata, covering 1,422 houses, in which 6,000 people live. Swab samples of 148 people

were sent to KGMU for testing.

Across the state, 378 people tested positive for coronavirus on Sunday, taking the tally to 8,075.

Four deaths were also reported in the state, one each in Agra, Meerut, Deoria and Gorakhpur, taking the toll to 217.

On Sunday, 192 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals. With this, 4,843 infected people have recovered in the state.

UP GOVT LIFTS MANY CURBS

allowed to open, entry of spectators would be banned," the additional chief secretary said.

He also said that salons and beauty parlours would be allowed to open but social distancing would have to be practised and the staff working there would have to wear face shields and gloves while working.

The government has allowed marriage halls to open but only 30 people will be allowed permission at a function held there and no one will be allowed to enter with firearm.

The government said that containment zone would have strict norms but in the rural areas in containment zone, farming activity would be allowed with the use of tractor and other machines.

Redefining containment zone, particularly in the high-rise buildings, the guidelines say if there is one coronavirus positive case, the entire tower will be sealed and if positive cases are found in other towers, then the common area like park, sports arena, gym, swimming pool, banquet hall and other places will also be identified as containment zone.

In offices, if a positive case is detected, the office will be sealed for 24 hours and after sanitising the entire office it will be reopened but the expenditure of sanitisation will be borne by the office.

Similarly, in the offices in multi-storied buildings, if one coronavirus positive case is found, that entire floor will be sealed and if the infection spreads in more than one floor, then the entire building will be sealed.

The government in its guidelines said that traffic restrictions in Noida and Ghaziabad would be sorted out by the local district authorities as per the Central guidelines.

NEPAL TABLES BILL FOR NEW 'BIASED' MAP

map that depicted Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territory

"India is open to engaging with all its neighbours on the basis of mutual sensitivity and mutual respect, in an environment of trust and confidence. This is a continuous process and requires constructive and positive efforts," Srivastava said. The Lipulekh pass is a far western point near Kalapani, a disputed border area between Nepal and India. Both India and Nepal claim Kalapani as an integral part of their territory - India as part of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district and Nepal as part of Dharchula district.

India opening up slowly, but be extra alert: Modi



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Head of Unlock-1 as Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday advised more carefreeness and alertness due to the opening of a major segment of the economy, he dwelt at length on the "distress of the workforce" which, he said, was "representative of India's eastern region" that needs to be developed.

"The last time I spoke to you through 'Mann Ki Baat', passenger train services, busses and flights had come to a standstill. This time around much has resumed-Shramik special trains are operational; other special trains too have begun. With utmost precautions, flights have resumed; industry too is returning to normalcy...whether it's the mandatory two yards distancing, wearing face masks or staying at home to the best extent possible, there should be no laxity on our part in complete adherence," he said.

On the issue of migrant labourers, he said: "Today, the distress our workforce is undergoing is representative of that of the country's eastern region. The very region which

possesses the capacity to be the country's growth engine, whose workforce possesses the capability and the might to take the country to greater heights...the eastern region needs development. It is only the development of the eastern region that can lead to a balanced economic development of the country.

"We have accorded priority to the development of eastern India. In the last few years, much has been done in this direction which gives me inner satisfaction. And now, considering the migrant labourers, the need of the hour is devising a new solution - paradigm...We are ceaselessly taking steps in that direction. For example, at places skill mapping of labourers is being carried out; at other places start ups are engaged in doing the same...the establishment of a migration commission is being deliberated upon. Besides that, recent decisions taken by the Central government have opened up vast possibilities of village employment, self employment and small scale industry."

While Modi cited the examples of many people willing to give their all in the service of others in the ongoing crisis, he also revealed how leaders from across the world have been asking him if Yoga and Ayurveda could be of

help in this calamitous period of Corona. Referring to the International Yoga Day on June 21, the PM urged people to participate in an online yoga competition being organised by the Ayush Ministry.

Ahead of the World Environment Day on June 5, the PM highlighted how the lockdown, sans little pollution, has led to the revival of biodiversity and called for deriving inspiration to live life in harmony with nature.

Modi spoke about how people in West Bengal and Odisha have collectively faced Cyclone Amphan, and at the same time also cited the ongoing locusts' attack across States.

"Several states in the country have reported locust attacks. These attacks have reminded us that a small creature can be immensely harmful. These attacks can go on for several days, affect large parts," he said.

"Be it at the level of Government of India, state government, agriculture department or administration, all are involved using modern techniques and new inventions to not only help the farmers but also lessen the loss accruing due to this crisis," he said adding the government will provide aid to all those who are affected by locusts attack.

Video of Indian, Chinese soldiers exchanging blows not real: Army

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As efforts are on to defuse the stand-offs on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, videos have surfaced on the social media purportedly showing some Indian soldiers trussed up in one instance and soldiers from India and China exchanging blows in another incident. While these clips are not dated, the Indian army has said the videos are not authenticated and attempt to link them with the current situation is malafide.

The strong rejection came after a video was doing the rounds on Sunday showing some soldiers with their feet tied and faces bruised lying on ground with some Chinese soldiers looking on. Unconfirmed reports said this incident took place in early May when an Indian patrol was accosted by the Chinese and detained for some time near Pangong Tso (lake), Ladakh. However, the army had at that time too denied such an incident had taken place.

Incidentally, out of the four face-offs now in various parts of the LAC in eastern Ladakh, Pangong Tso is one of them. Soldiers from both the sides engaged in fistfights on May 5-6 at this site leading to the stand-off. Three-fourths of the lake at a height of 17,000 feet is with the Chinese and they patrol it with high-pow-



ered boats.

Since the eye ball to eye ball confrontation, the Chinese have increased patrolling by bringing in more boats besides troops on the banks of the lake. India has also bolstered its troop strength at the lake besides the other three stand-off sites after the Chinese brought in more soldiers and heavy vehicles.

Despite the talks at military and diplomatic levels, the situation has not eased off with more than 5,000 Chinese now at the four spots.

Meanwhile, the second video shows the Indian and Chinese troops jostling with each other and this clip is also not dated. Soldiers are also seen armed with batons.

Responding strongly, the Indian army said here on Sunday "it has been brought to our notice that a video is doing rounds on social media on an incident on borders. Contents of video being circulated aren't authenticated. Attempt to link it with situation on Northern borders is malafide. Currently,

no violence is happening."

It also said differences are being addressed through interaction between military commanders, guided by established protocols on management of borders between the two countries. "We strongly condemn attempts to sensationalise issues impacting national security," it added.

On the current situation on the LAC, sources said another round of talks at the Major General level between the two armies is likely shortly besides ongoing diplomatic parleys at various levels. At least seven rounds of military level talks have already taken place between officers of the rank of Brigadier in the last fortnight.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday had said the two countries are engaged at the military and diplomatic levels to resolve the tense situation in Ladakh. He also admitted that "the Chinese soldiers had come in a little further than they used to earlier" at the LAC to "make the situation different this time."

Cong questions SG remark 'HC running parallel Govt in country'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday questioned Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's remarks that high courts are "running a parallel Government in the country", and asked whether the statement was meant to browbeat the courts.

Accusing the Government of displaying an arrogant attitude, former law minister and Congress leader Kapil Sibal said, "I wonder if this is meant to browbeat the courts. This is certainly a very arrogant attitude that should not be articulated in this fashion."

The Congress also said that the Government had displayed a similar arrogance in the past, with Sibal citing instances and alleging that some judges were transferred after they delivered judgements that were "uncomfortable".

"This Government has in the past displayed this kind of arrogance", he said, noting that both the courts and the Government should take note of this.

"Unless the courts are alive to what is happening on the ground, this kind of attack and expression is not conducive to a democratic environment," he said.

Sibal added that this Government also called a journalist a "vulture", and in saying so "I feel the government has forgotten its culture and we condemn this".

He said journalists are committed by their profession "to clean up the vicious environment" in this country.

Noting that March 24 (when the nationwide lockdown was announced) was a "watershed moment", he said the

people of the country have forced the Government to forget its agenda of polarisation and instead focus on problems posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

Sibal also took a swipe at the Centre, saying, "The Government's social distancing with people has increased so much that it does not know what is happening on the ground and how to address the problems faced by people, especially the poor."

"The future history books will recognise this government as the harbinger of doom. The prime minister talks about protecting democracy, until March 24 they throttled democracy," he alleged. The former law minister said prior to March 24, the agenda of the government was about Article 370, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, National Register of Citizens (NRC), population register, Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Triple Talaq, and not education, healthcare, concerns of the poor.

"Had this Government in the last six yrs concentrated on issues concerning people, India would have been different today," he said.

Sibal noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the Government's helplessness and the rift that was created in the society has been bridged by people themselves as they stand in solidarity with one another to overcome the current challenges.

"I want to ask PM that at least now tell us what is your definition of your fellow Indians. Does that definition fit into what happened prior to March 24. At least now change the way you are handling the future of this country," the Congress leader asked.

Moms should continue breastfeeding despite corona: WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Moms should continue breastfeeding even if they have confirmed or suspected Covid-19 and should not depend on infant formula milk as the nutrition to baby, a new report by WHO, UNICEF, and the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) has said.

However, the report noted that despite efforts to stop the harmful promotion of breast-milk substitutes, many countries are still falling short in protecting parents from misleading information.

In the report, "Marketing of breast-milk substitutes: National implementation of the International Code - Status report 2020", the UN bodies said that current evidence indicates that it is unlikely that Covid-19 would be transmitted through breastfeeding or by giving breastmilk that has been expressed by a mother who is confirmed or suspected to have the infection. Women with confirmed or suspected Covid-19 can therefore breastfeed after following some precautions like putting on masks.

Of the 194 countries analysed in the report, 136 have in place some form of legal measure related to the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent resolutions adopted by the World

Of the 194 countries analysed in the report, 136 have in place some form of legal measure related to the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes

Health Assembly.

However, the legal restrictions in most countries do not fully cover marketing that occurs in health facilities while only 79 countries prohibit the promotion of breast-milk substitutes in health facilities.

Only 19 countries have prohibited the sponsorship of scientific and health professional association meetings by manufacturers of breast-milk substitutes, which include infant formula, follow-up formula, and growing up milks marketed for use by infants and children up to 36-months old, as per the report.

"The aggressive marketing of breast-milk substitutes, especially through health professionals that parents trust for nutrition and health advice, is a major barrier to improving newborn and child health worldwide," said Dr Francesco Branca, Director of WHO's Department of Nutrition and Food Safety.

Babies who are exclusively breastfed are 14 times less

likely to die than babies who are not breastfed. However, today, only 41% of infants 0-6 months old are exclusively breastfed.

"As the Covid-19 pandemic progresses, health workers are being diverted to the response and health systems are overstretched. At such time, breastfeeding can protect the lives of millions of children, but new mothers cannot do it without the support of health providers," said Dr. Victor Aguayo, UNICEF's Chief of Nutrition.

"The fear of Covid-19 transmission is eclipsing the importance of breastfeeding - and in too many countries mothers and babies are being separated at birth - making breastfeeding and skin to skin contact difficult if not impossible. All on the basis of no evidence."

Meanwhile the baby food industry is exploiting fears of infection, promoting and distributing free formula and misleading advice - claiming that the donations are humanitarian and that they are trustworthy partners," said Patti Rundall, of IBFAN's Global Council.

"Breastfeeding is the best way to protect the baby, particularly from hospitalisation due to severe gastroenteritis or lower respiratory tract infection," said Dr Arun Gupta from Breastfeeding Promotion network of India (BPNI).

e-cigarettes users could be at risk of developing oral diseases: Researchers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Individuals who use e-cigarettes could be at risk of developing oral diseases in the future, which could range from gum disease to cancer, according to researchers at The Ohio State University.

In a study they looked at a group of 123 people with no signs of oral disease. The group included 25 smokers, 25 non-smokers, 20 e-cigarette users, 25 former tobacco smokers who used e-cigarettes and 28 people who smoked both tobacco cigarettes and e-cigarettes.

The team collected plaque samples taken from under the gums of the participants to analyse the bacteria in this part of the mouth; bacteria here is the last line of defense against disease as it is the least likely to be disrupted by environmental changes in the mouth, such as food, toothpaste and tobacco.

The researchers then carried out DNA deep sequencing of the bacteria's genomes to identify what types of



microbes were living in participants' mouths and what their functions were.

The findings, published in the journal Science Advances, showed that although the e-cigarette users didn't have signs of active disease, their oral bacteria composition was similar to that of people with severe periodontitis, a severe gum infection that can lead to health problems such as tooth loss, and, if left untreated, is a risk factor for serious conditions such as heart and lung disease.

The effect of e-cigarette smoking was also seen with or without nicotine, which the researchers say suggests that it is the heated and pressurized liquids in e-cigarette cartridges that are making vapers' mouths a welcoming environment for a dangerous

combination of microbes.

Even long-term current and former cigarette smokers had worse oral profiles linked to using e-cigarettes after just three to 12 months of vaping.

"Vaping is such a big assault on the oral environment, and the change happens dramatically and over a short period of time," said Purnima Kumar, senior author of the study.

"If you stop smoking and start vaping instead, you don't move back toward a healthy bacterial profile but shift up to the vaping profile," Kumar explained. "Knowing the vaping profile is pathogen-rich, you're not doing yourself any favors by using vaping to quit smoking."

The researchers said this is the first human study on the effects of e-cigarette exposure in the mouth, and like previous research into e-cigarettes, also questions their safety.

India has already banned vaping or e-cigarettes in the country, but according to reports it is available in the black market.

Coronavirus pandemic will impact political narrative

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus pandemic will not only impact campaigning for elections but also bring changes in the political narrative with issues of sustainable development, healthcare and self-reliant India getting more prominence, BJP general secretary and key poll manager Bhupendra Yadav said on Sunday.

With Assembly elections in Bihar due later this year, Yadav asserted that the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government has performed well on the development front and ably handled the coronavirus crisis including the return of migrant workers.

"The impact of coronavirus would, however, be seen not just on the mode of communication but also on the political narrative. In terms of issues and the discourse on development, there will be a greater focus on sustainable development, healthcare infrastructure and building an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India)," he told PTI in an interview.

At the same time, he said, the BJP has always prioritised issues of governance and developmental politics which has been appreciated by the people, and the results of 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls are a testimony to it.

Yadav, whose skills have been used by the BJP in strategising and handling many crucial state assembly elections including Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Jharkhand, feels political parties may now use digital platforms even more vigorously.

"Previously, it was the print media, loudspeakers and public rallies that served as means of political communication. In recent decades, social media, which has had a big impact on echoing political narratives, has emerged as a potent medium to reach out to people," he said.

Asked about the plight of migrant workers during the coronavirus lockdown, Yadav said the movement of workers was minimal in the first three phases and the government used that time to build healthcare facilities in villages to deal

with the influx.

"The Government did not allow migrant movement in the initial phases to ensure villages had required healthcare facilities to deal with the influx. Once it was in place, the government arranged trains to take the migrants back home," he said.

Yadav emphasised that it was necessary to ensure that there were adequate quarantining and isolation facilities at the village level.

Stressing that the pandemic was an "unforeseen disaster" that had caught the world off-guard, the BJP leader said, "The Modi government is tackling the crisis with utmost sincerity in consultation with experts and complying with every possible healthcare criterion."

On the situation in Bihar, the BJP's in-charge for the state said more than 10 lakh migrant workers have returned mostly through Shramik Special trains and the state government has been making all necessary arrangements for their quarantine and other requirements,

Miffed at State police forces wearing RAF pattern blue uniform, CRPF to take up issues with State authorities

New Delhi: Unhappy with State police forces wearing Rapid Action Force (RAF) pattern blue uniform, the CRPF has decided to take up the matter with State authorities.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) said that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had issued directions to all states saying only RAF is authorised to wear it.

Even after the MHA issued directions to all state secretaries (Home) for not using blue combat uniform by local police, some states are still using the uniform which is only for Rapid Action Force (RAF).

The matter was raised at a high-level meeting chaired by Director General (DG) Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) a few days back.

According to an official communication accessed by ANI, police wings of West Bengal, Bihar, Haryana and Delhi are wearing combat uniforms.

"Police wings Of West Bengal, Bihar, Haryana and Delhi are wearing blue combat uniform (RAF Pattern). In some recent news/social media pictures/videos, police per-



CRPF said that the Home Ministry in its letter of May 9 to states and UTs said that Rapid Action Force (RAF), CRPF is authorised by it to wear dark and light blue patches uniform which cannot be used by any other police force

sonnel wearing blue combat uniform (RAF Pattern) were shown chased by mob in Kolkata (WB) and similarly personnel of Anti-Riot Battalion of Bihar Police were shown stopping commuters.

This is creating confusion in minds of media personnel and denting professional image of RAF/CRPF," say minutes of the CRPF meeting.

CRPF said that the Home Ministry in its letter of May 9 to states and UTs said that Rapid Action Force (RAF), CRPF is authorised by it to wear dark and light blue patches uniform which cannot be used by any other police force.

CRPF has decided to take up the matter with state authorities.

According to the minutes of the meeting, IG RAF will take up the matter with IG concerned of state under intimation and provision directorate will submit the proposal to MHA in this connection. Agencies

Imputations against judiciary shows intolerance prevalent in all sections of society: SC judge



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul on Sunday said imputations against the judiciary or its grading is a reflection of the intolerance prevalent in all sections of society against all kinds of institutions and also indicates the "after me the deluge" view of some retired judges.

"Criticism of a view point or a judgement is not a problem, but when imputations and grading start being made, I think we damage the very institution," Justice Kaul said.

"The unfortunate part is that in some of us, those who have been part of the institution itself, there is a problem of 'after me the deluge'. Which is that since we (retired judges) are gone, everything is going wrong. I will say that itself is a danger."

He further said "we" are an evolving society and things have evolved over a period of time. "People in the past, who speak about it, also have committed many mistakes and blunders."

Justice Kaul was speaking at an online lecture on "Freedom of speech in times of COVID-19", organized by the Madras High Court Bar Association.

His comments appear to be a response to former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B Lokur's recent article, on a blog, which said the apex court deserved an "F" grade for the manner in which it handled the migrant crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justice Kaul is part of the bench hearing the migrant crisis issue.

A day before the Supreme Court had taken cognisance on its own of the "unfortunate and

miserable" plight of migrant labourers, twenty prominent lawyers from Delhi and Mumbai had written a critical open letter to Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and other judges saying the apex court's "apparent indifference" to the humanitarian crisis and its "institutional deference" to statements of the executive would amount to abdication of its constitutional role if not rectified immediately.

When the matter was heard by the apex court on May 28, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had complained to the court that there were "prophets of doom" in the country, who were spreading negativity and there were "arm-chair intellectuals" who were not recognizing the nation's effort in dealing with the migrant workers' crisis during the Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Justice Kaul, in his lecture, further said to remain in the news has become a problem and therefore, "there is a tendency to be critical in a manner which crosses certain lines".

He said this was to some extent a "misinformation pandemic".

He said that members of the public, bar and the judiciary must appreciate the challenges of any time and any system and added that "while criticism is always information that must come to us, I think some boundaries need to be maintained".

"Otherwise, it (criticism) becomes part of disinformation which causes doubt on the institution. I don't think that is good for any system, because if you mistrust everybody, mistrust the system, then we have no system, we only have anarchy. To prevent anarchy, faith in institutions is important," Justice Kaul said.

One year of ills

The PM may be still popular in the afterglow of last year's verdict but he needs to take bold moves in managing a pandemic-hit nation



The best part about "forces of nature" is that they obfuscate human effort or even the lack of it. They are simply too tidal and overwhelming, swamping our reason, judgment and mind. They are an opportunity to prove ourselves and excuse our failings at the same time. Which is why the shroud of the Corona pandemic, which has left our nation distraught, has kept us busy grappling with the "before" and "after" scenario that could spare Prime Minister Narendra Damodar Modi from a rigorous assessment of his first year in office. Perhaps, his familiarity in an upending, unfamiliar scenario is the reason why he continues to be the preferred leader in opinion polls of the moment. And

it is this familiarity which could be his biggest shield for what he could not deliver, saying he tried his best, despite the tokenism of empathising with the migrants and common people. Under the shadow of India's biggest health and economic crisis, he is still drawing on his "before" seen muscularity to retain popularity among the masses, which is desperately looking to clutch on to a reassuring and paternal figurehead in the "after" phase. And having won a monolithic verdict last May, he is playing up his perceived deliverer image by addressing the nation, writing letters to his citizens, relying on shared emotions and even praising and consulting Chief Ministers in a new-found spirit of cooperative federalism. Except such optics are not enough for a nation gasping for breath, squeezed by the pandemic on one side and a collapsing economy on the other. And the mammoth surge of a human tragedy unfolding, in the form of deaths due to disease, joblessness, starvation and migration, clearly needs superhuman action, not just humane reactions. Truth be told, India's pandemic is now a people's war, being waged by not just the Government but cumulatively by doctors, scientists, police, Samaritans, activists, citizens, NGOs and corporates. And it is this combined "let's save our nation" spirit unitedly and inclusively that has triumphed over the imposed idea of "One India" that thrives on eliminating and filtering all kinds of otherness. So yes, the memories of attacks on minorities, dissenters and students are off the board at the moment, excused even in the pandemic era as aberrations of a party that has to feed its core majoritarian voter base rather than being an assault on democracy. That's what the "after" scenario does, pushes back the "before."

But the after-effects of what is not done now could be disastrous. The nation will have to pay for the gross insensitivity of an ill-planned lockdown to contain the pandemic in the long-term. The Prime Minister may be commiserating with migrant woes but did not plan a concrete relief and rehabilitation package that could have stopped an urban exodus of people who depend on daily wages to just survive. Unannounced fallback during the lockdown has pushed them to penury. Had evacuations by trains and buses been planned even back then, when the infectivity curve hadn't shot up, we could have saved on passing the disease burden to the hinterland as is happening now. We could have easily avoided the deaths on roads and highways and even trains, which are now chronically under-served in terms of food and water provisions. The economy is whooshing down the sink hole with the RBI admitting our GDP could go into negative territory, the demand horribly low and joblessness at an all-time high. Then there is spiralling inflation. Frankly, the Modi Government's self-sufficient growth model, released with fanfare over days with credit-based offerings and structural changes in many sectors, is gestational and not responsive to the current calamity. It must increase spending and put money in people's hands. That alone would close the demand-supply gap across all sectors. Without this infusion now, any reformatory plan, no matter how well-intentioned, won't make sense at all, particularly to the 12 crore people who lost their jobs in April alone. More people have slid below the poverty line over the last two months and inequity is at its sharpest. The Government was anyway carrying the albatross of a slowing economy before the pandemic, the GDP at five per cent in 2019-20, lower than what it was in 2018-19. So if not now, then when? Not to forget that self-sufficiency or *atma nirbharata* has to begin with sound health and education, both of which need a lot of investment and reprioritising. And no matter how opportune a moment this is to woo the West to shift its bases from China to India, we still do not have enough ease of business. In fact, for all the "vocal for local" talk and even convincing international companies to "Make in India" and lend their expertise, China still has the manufacturing edge and we will need some time to catch up. Yes, we have done well with agriculture, with a good output and now enabling policies on agri-businesses but without feeding urban hubs and demand, there could be a problem of too much for whom. As for our engagement with the world, the abrogation of Article 370, the reorganisation of Kashmir and the religion-based citizenship law have not been accepted very well by our Western allies, including the US. And now we have an enraged China snapping at our heels. Perhaps in notching up too many firsts, the Government has been in a bit of a hurry that has cost us the battle of perception. Even now, when most conservative economies are loosening their purse strings, we are still holding back. And this saviour-like will cannot be ascribed to the "forces of nature" if legacy is what Modi wants.

Racist attack

The White supremacist police force in the US never seems to change. And it acts brutally because it has societal sanction



There's a sense of *déjà vu* about the Minneapolis protests that come on the back of the use of excessive force by a White policeman Derek Chauvin, resulting in the death of a peaceful, 46-year-old Black man George Floyd, who was not resisting arrest. Remember the 2014 death of unarmed Black teenager Michael Brown by the police in Ferguson, Missouri and the race riots that it sparked off? Nothing seems to have changed since then. White supremacists in the US police force continue to slaughter innocent law-abiding Black people with impunity. Floyd's death has also prompted action in other US cities like New York City, Denver, Columbus and particularly Louisville in

Kentucky, which witnessed the death of an innocent Black woman Breonna Taylor in March. Here the victim was shot in her own apartment by police officers for an investigation that she wasn't involved in. Relations between police and citizens of colour have been bad for years in the US, yet only one in every 100 citizen complaints leads to disciplinary action. So, the big question is when will America learn its lesson and reform the police force? Or practise diversity from the heart and not as a ritual?

It is not enough that the video of Chauvin kneeling on the neck of a prostrate, handcuffed, dying Floyd, pressing his considerable weight down with a bland, almost bored look on his face has drawn condemnation from police departments across the US. What matters is the indifferent attitude of the officers standing next to the murdering cop with a past record of brutality and use of excess force against Blacks and their failure to stop the cold-blooded killing. What is even more chilling is the fact that his sadistic act was being recorded on a mobile phone by a bystander and it did not worry Chauvin one bit. He just assumed that he could get away with murder! This episode reeks of a systemic cultural rot, one that is being fanned by supremacist President Donald Trump who called the protesters "thugs." He even suggested that they'd be shot for looting. What is even more worrying is the fact that the Minnesota Department of Public Safety has said that State leaders have intelligence that White supremacist groups and drug cartels are possibly playing a big role in the anarchy. Maybe to turn a genuine outpouring of public anger over injustice into a more sinister "us" vs "them" confrontation. All this as a nation battles COVID-19, the management of which has robbed the sheen off Trump's presidential campaign. Little wonder then that he is aggressively playing to his own gallery.

ASHOK K MEHTA

Some back-channeling and rethinking between Nepal's ruling party and the Opposition (despite the Nepali Congress agreeing to support the amendments) has deferred the Constitutional Amendment Bill to sanctify the country's new map. This has created an opportunity for it to return to diplomacy. It's for the first time that Nepal has altered the geography of its map. Its Foreign Minister "summoned" the Indian Ambassador and its Prime Minister even used unkind words for us. New Delhi, too, was high-handed: It dragged its feet in giving a date for talks, announced a tarmac road to Lipulekh Pass while the Army Chief, who is the honorary General of the Nepal Army, made unwarranted comments on Nepal's internal affairs, too. This certainly is not the civilisational bonding that defined relations between India and Nepal. The Kalapani dispute has to be settled politically, too. Any further delay will only widen the trust deficit.

In my 60th and counting treks from Mahakali to Mechi since 1959, I have come across scintillating names of villages and places: Chisopani, Tatopani, Ratopani, Junlepani, Pokhripani and also the contested Kalapani, not Kalopani. In India, Kalapani is a curse and is associated with banishment, jail or exile. Still, it has been the bone of contention between India and Nepal for many years and for Kathmandu, it denotes an area of 335 sq km, encompassing Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh Pass and Kalapani. For it, the source of the Mahakali river, which delineates its western boundary, is Limpiyadhura.

For India, Kalapani is the origin of the river near where military posts have existed since the mid-1960s and from where the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) patrols regularly up to the Lipulekh Pass. When King Tribhuvan invited the Indian Military Mission in 1952 to Nepal, besides training the Royal Nepal Army (RNA), it had established, according to border expert on Nepal, BN Shrestha, 18 border check-posts on the Tibet border start-

Reset ties with Nepal

India-Nepal relations are too precious to be damaged by territorial nationalism. It's time for New Delhi to break the ice



ing from Tinker Pass in the west to Chhayangthap in the east. These posts were vacated in 1969 under pressure from the communist lobby in the palace. Conspicuously, Kalapani and Lipulekh Pass were not part of the border surveillance scheme and, therefore, there was no question of India vacating them. Trade between India and China across Lipulekh Pass started in 1954 and an agreement in 2015 ratified the border trade.

Kalapani has a spiritual and strategic value since it is the gateway to Kailash Mansarovar, dominates Lipulekh Pass and can monitor the People's Liberation Army (PLA) camp at Taklakot. It appears in Nepal's official and tourist maps and its adverse military possession is a highly emotive issue. Twenty-six years of field reconnaissance by a joint technical boundary committee and negotiations since 1997 have failed to find a mutually-acceptable solution. Protests in Nepal over Kalapani started in the mid-1990s when a communist Government was in power. It has since become a political football.

India's new map in November last year, after the nullification of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir, showed Kalapani in Uttarakhnad without any change in the boundary with Nepal. It was very much similar to the old map. But this triggered countrywide protests and exchange of diplo-

matic notes. India announcing the black-topping of the road to Lipulekh Pass in May reignited protests at a time when the power struggle in the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) peaked.

It was only with Chinese intervention that Prime Minister KP Oli was able to retain his seat. Adept at using ultra-nationalism for India-bashing and reviving his political stock, Oli published a new map of Nepal, incorporating claimed areas. He wants a national consensus on the legitimacy of the new map through a Constitutional amendment. The Bill should pass muster as the Government needs just nine lawmakers to secure a two-third majority but that will damage irreparably India-Nepal relations, which have been on the mend since 2015 following the economic blockade.

Nepal has deployed its armed police force on the western border near Kalapani with the Nepal Army building a new road to Tinker Pass. These developments, coupled with a parliamentary resolution to reclaim all land and the Constitutional Amendment Bill are likely to escalate tension. The beneficiary from this diplomatic stand-off will only be a third country with whom troubles along the India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are mounting. Nepal's political class must realise that the move to unilaterally alter, validate and internationalise

the new map, especially at the height of a pandemic, is unwise. Both sides need to cool off.

Any adverse and escalatory steps will also undermine the long-standing and embedded Army-to-Army relations, which were initiated by King Tribhuvan and his son, King Mahendra, for modernising the RNA. The Chiefs of the two Armies are honorary Generals in each other's armies, an unprecedented exchange of military honour started by the legendary Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw in 1969. Gorkha soldiers from Nepal have served the Indian Army with valour during all the wars post-independence, winning high gallantry awards. More than 40,000 Gorkha soldiers serve the Indian Army and another 1,50,000 ex-servicemen are privileged by unique welfare services in Nepal that are not available to other soldiers in India. These are 22 district soldier boards, two pension paying offices along with the Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), Kendriya Vidyalayas and numerous other assistance and grants projects. Gorkha remittances are upwards of ₹15,000 crore (NC), almost one-third of Nepal's total remittances of \$8 billion.

India-Nepal relations are at a tipping point due to map-making and the political row it has generated is at the height of a pandemic. Nepal's new map has broken the agreement

between the two countries to maintain status quo till negotiations help resolve the border dispute. India had initially said it would resume Foreign Secretary-level dialogue mechanism after the COVID-19 emergency. After Nepal issued its new map and Oli's imperate reference to India in Parliament, New Delhi has urged Kathmandu to create a positive atmosphere for dialogue. After deferment of the Bill, New Delhi says it is open to engaging to solve border row.

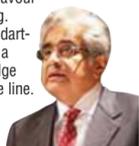
The media on both sides should call a truce. On Wednesday afternoon, Nepali TV channels were playing patriotic music centred on Kalapani and showing clips of its legendary military prowess that extended the Himalayan Kingdom from the rivers Chenab to Teesta, inducing fears of "Greater Nepal." Nepal's decision to put on hold the second Constitutional Amendment Bill is a prudent step welcomed by India that has averted a showdown. Already, strained India-Nepal relations are too precious to be damaged by territorial nationalism. Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla must call up his counterpart Shankar Das Bairagi and break the ice.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander IPKF South, Sri Lanka and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff.)

SOUNDBITE

To say judgement is to favour a political party is wrong. Supreme Court is not a dart-board. You can criticise a judgment saying the judge has taken a conservative line.

Jurist — Harish Salve



Social distancing is necessary to beat Coronavirus, not social boycotting. It's not a crime if someone tests positive for COVID-19.

Actor — Kiran Kumar



We're talking about doing a lot of things and we're very, very saddened by what happened to our relationship with China. They should have never allowed this to happen.

US President — Donald Trump



India's policy has been clear that we should have good relations with all neighbours. But sometimes, circumstances arise with China and things like this happen.

Union Minister — Rajnath Singh



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No end to woes

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Labour woes" (May 29). It was surprising to note that over 91 lakh migrants have been sent back to their home States since May 1. Arranging basic screening facilities for the safety of passengers in trains has been a Herculean task. Besides, the migrants need not just protection from the pandemic but jobs, too.

By the Government's own admission, we simply do not have data on the migrant workers. This reason is often cited by officials for their failure to provide generous cash relief in the economic package to the migrant workers. It is welcome that several States are setting up migrant commissions. This will not only capture data on the number of workers but also generate employment for workers. State Governments must ensure that they provide adequate wages, a safe work environment, a sound skill development ecosystem and universal social safety coverage.

Sravana Ramachandran
Chennai

Mounting problems amid pandemic

It has been a worrying time for us all. First came the Coronavirus pandemic, then cyclone Amphan and now the plague of locusts that has spread into five States across the country. Crisis after crisis has been blighting the country, causing immeasurable suffering to the people, especially the poor. The invasion of swarms of desert locusts in western and central India in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic is the latest challenge for us to contend with. The damage to the crops caused by burgeoning swarms of locusts is inestimable. Still, there is some comfort due to the fact that the standing crops are now not very abundant for them to feast on. The eastward flight of the locusts will be barricaded by the east-to-west blowing winds. At the same time, rains could result in their proliferation and "dampen" the attempts made to stamp them out.

The Coronavirus lockdown restrictions have hampered efforts made for the control of the "migratory pests." Drones are being used to spray pesticides over the infestation zones, otherwise inac-



cessible to tractors and trucks. We cannot afford to be complacent because of overflowing granaries. All efforts need to be made to eliminate the plague of locusts lest we run out of food supplies or even face a famine. Meanwhile, scientists are probing the possible link between the outbreak of locusts and the rise in temperature.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Open colleges

Sir — With the easing down of lockdown norms, life is limping back to the new normal. But schools and colleges remain closed. Online education system has become the norm. The side effects of long exposure to

screens on children are known. Besides, the poor have been left out of the ambit of online learning due to the digital divide. A classroom environment provides equal learning opportunities. Schools and colleges must reopen with caution.

Sritoma
Via email

Look back at home

Sir — New Delhi was right to reject US President Donald Trump's offer to mediate between India and China. Instead, Trump must focus on putting his own house in order first with regard to China.

Besides, he has the pandemic to tackle, too. While the number of new cases is declining in parts of the US, several models indicate the death toll will continue rising in the next weeks.

The Indian Government must be complimented for making it clear to China that it would not settle for anything less than the withdrawal of its troops from the LAC. New Delhi must stand firm.

SC Agrawal
Delhi

Border matters

Sir — India has done well to not pay heed to US President Donald Trump's offer to mediate between India and China to end border standoff. It is always wiser to settle burning issues with China amicably and individually without bringing in an outsider or introducing irritants. It is better for India to strengthen ties with China with sobriety of mind.

Prakash Saini
Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Making hay during a crisis

Venture capitalists are seeking stronger deal terms as the leverage has shifted back to investors during the pandemic



SONAM CHANDWANI

The countrywide lockdown has dealt a severe blow to the economy of the country. The consequent fall in stocks, which in turn has affected the private equity (PE) market, has resulted in conspicuous devaluation of companies. Start-ups are currently in a strong presence of leverage on the side of investors as the weakness in the market has led to a fall in fund-raising by 78.6 per cent as compared to last year. In such a scenario, it is smart to conserve energy otherwise expended in fund-raising to manage liquidity and the current cash flow. As monetisation of assets through exit activities will see a consequential hold before their prices recover and economic activity returns to normal, investors will want to protect their assets through insertion of restrictive covenants. Owing to the pandemic, venture capitalists are seeking stronger deal terms as the leverage has shifted back to investors.

For the purpose of hedging the risk that presents itself during this time, it is important that both the investors and the start-ups cooperate to maximise efficiency and solve the liquidity crisis that has hit the market currently. The contractual clauses so drafted depend upon the factual matrix of each start-up, made up of the bargaining power of either side. Often, it is a tussle between either side to include clauses that are more favourable either to the start-up or the investor. Such bargaining power resides in the potential of the assets that the start-up creates. There is an inverse relation between the strength of the company and the bargaining power of the investors to introduce such clauses that hedge the risk faced by the lender at the cost of the company. For those companies that are doing well amid the Coronavirus pandemic, these investor-friendly terms come up less. The strongest companies don't see those tough provisions.

Such methods that hedge the risk by cannibalising the control of the start-up and inserting provisions that dilute the risk for the investor are detrimental to the relations between the two parties. Mostly, the survival of the firm shall be determined by various factors. Among them is the low burn rate through liquidity, adaptability and the basic strength of the start-up and its baseline health before the pandemic hit the world.

However, unique times require unique solutions and the same is reciprocated by legal measures so sought to reflect the mood of the start-ups and the venture capitalists. Conservative measures are on the rise across various industries to either protect the existing values/assets or to drive the economic activity up once the lockdown ends. Therefore, the conservative protective clauses that were prevalent during the dotcom phenomenon are rising again.

Full ratchet anti-dilution protection: This prevents the dilution of the shareholding of the investor in different scenarios. It is a form of protection against the dilutive events that the companies might face, as it completely protects the value for the investors by new stock issues at a price that is lower than the investor's original investment. It changes and updates the price of conversion in order to maintain the investor at the same level of ownership stake in terms of the percentage owned.

Liquidation preferences: This gives one class of shareholders the right to be paid back first in the event of an exit. Though investors exiting during this time period will be exceptionally harmful but the fact remains that many firms will not survive this pandemic. Then in the case of exit by the investors such a provision would be an area of conflict, especially in this scenario.

Pay-to-play provisions: This enables a firm to penalise investors that don't invest in later rounds. It is done to assure an investor that his/her firm isn't the only investor in future rounds.

Pull-up provisions, discounts on bridge loans: Similar to the pay-to-play provisions, these are designed to provide a strong incentive for existing investors to participate in future financing. Heightened rewards are only affirmative of the unequal bargaining power of the investor against the start-up.

Blocking rights on exits: This gives investors more control of a company so that they can block an acquisition of a firm. This can be used if an investor thinks his/her firm isn't making enough money in an exit.

At this stage of the Coronavirus pandemic and its resultant impact on the economy of the country, it is imperative for the investors and the firms to amicably cooperate in order to effectively guide the firm out of troubled waters. The devastating effect that the pandemic has had on the bottomlines of firms, especially start-ups is not something that can be wished away overnight.

It will take a concerted effort, on the side of the investors, the start-ups and all stakeholders to steer companies out of the current storm. More measures aimed at reinforcing the moral fabric of the company by providing the right treatment to the employees should be adopted and the firm should not be seen as a lamb being fattened up only to be slaughtered at the apt time.

(The writer is the Managing Partner at KS Legal and Associates)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

EITHER THE VERY WEAK MAYOR GET HIS ACT TOGETHER AND BRING THE CITY UNDER CONTROL OR I WILL SEND IN THE NATIONAL GUARD AND GET THE JOB DONE RIGHT.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



TRUMP KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF MINNEAPOLIS. WE ARE STRONG AS HELL. THIS IS A DIFFICULT TIME BUT WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS.

—MINNEAPOLIS'S MAYOR JACOB FREY

Make (in) India great

Self-reliance in defence could have the best advantages for us as, besides the economic benefits that will accrue, it will also result in strategic independence, which is a key ingredient of national security



ANIRUDDHA CHAKRAVARTY

Every war brings death and destruction in its wake. It also opens windows of opportunities for those who seek it. Though the global war on the COVID-19 is by no means over it has brought a host of opportunities with it. So, do we Indians continue to remain in the abyss of poverty or do we take a plunge into the new world that is opening up? It needs to be remembered that in the past, India was a leader in manufacturing. As per William Dalrymple's book *The Anarchy*, in 1608, India "was producing about a quarter of global manufacturing; indeed in many ways it was the world's industrial powerhouse and world's leader in manufactured textiles." Whatever happened thereafter is history and during the British rule, India lost the leadership role in manufacturing. We missed the Industrial Revolution and it had a telling effect on impoverishing India.

Thankfully, we did catch the train of Digital Revolution but the gains were not inclusive enough to pull us out of poverty. The opportunity that the COVID revolution is presenting needs to be grabbed with everything that we have. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi put across to the country, his vision of "Atma nirbhar (self-reliant)" India and rolled out financial packages to support the vision, many opportunities could open up, particularly in defence production.

India is one of the biggest arms importers in the world. In 2013-2017, India topped the list as it accounted for 12 per cent of the world's arms imports. The US was the highest arms exporter amounting to 34 per cent of the global share. Even Netherlands, which is 79 times smaller in size than India, was the tenth-largest exporter of arms, accounting for 2.1 per cent of the global arms exports. Surely, a renewed Make in India will provide the country with unparalleled benefits. Self-reliance in defence could have the best advantages for India, as, besides the economic benefits that will accrue, it will also result in strategic independence, which is a key ingredient of national security.

Threat perception is mostly what drives force structuring and weaponisation. With the break-up of the USSR, the threat perception reduced significantly and it was possible for some European nations to scale down their armed forces. However, in the Indian context, the perceived threat from the Northern and Western neighbours does not appear to be reducing in the foreseeable future. While the spectrum and type of conflict that may manifest can be debated, what is of importance is that the preparedness has to be long-term in the interest of overall national security.

Though there has been indigenisation in the field of defence production for the last decade, its output has obviously not been as desired. Also, in terms of quality, there have been instances of the product not being suitable for combat conditions. One can take the case of the INSAS rifle with problems of moving parts and magazines. Time taken for developing a product is also important — as in the case of MBT Arjun.

Indigenisation for defence is simply not "Made in India" or "Manufactured in India." To be successful, "Make in India" has to include the entire process and this includes: Identification of the weapon or equipment or platform to be manufactured; technology; design; patent/IPR and related issues; manufacturing ecosystem and operational maintenance and logistics.



THROUGH 'MAKE IN INDIA,' WE CAN ACHIEVE TO GET WHAT WE NEED FOR OUR OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS AND NOT WHAT SOME OTHER COUNTRY WANTS TO SELL, WHICH COULD BE QUITE UNRELATED TO OUR REQUIREMENTS. NO OTHER COUNTRY WOULD BE FIGHTING WARS IN THE VARIED TERRAIN AND OTHER CONDITIONS THAT PREVAIL ALONG OUR BORDERS



Identification of the weapon/equipment/platform: Based on the threat perception and a long-term integrated plan, each weapon/equipment/platform is to be decided. This is an important process, needing strategic perception and long-term capability development and would be in the realms of the armed forces, with inputs from sources as desired by them. The process also includes formulation of General Service Qualitative Requirements (GSQR), which need to be realistic while meeting the operational requirements of the armed forces.

I am reminded of the days when I was serving in the Siachen glacier, in one of the most challenging posts, in 1992. Since our post was on an ice-wall and was partially under enemy observation, the helipad was located some distance away. Due to the restriction of the valley width as also very limited availability of landing ground, only the smallest helicopter, the Cheetah (French Alouette engine) could fly there. In its first sortie, with full fuel load, all that it could carry was either one man without his equipment or his equipment or a jerrican (20 litres) of kerosene oil.

I wondered at that time as a young Major, that, whereas a sizeable portion of our army is deployed in high altitude and super high altitude areas, why is it that we don't have an Indian helicopter to meet our operational requirements?

Through "Make in India," we can achieve to get what we need for our operational conditions and not what some other country wants to sell, which could be quite unrelated to our requirements. No other country would be fighting wars in the varied terrain and other conditions that prevail along our borders.

Technology and Design: For the success of "Make in India," the process of technology and design would probably be the

most significant one. This applies equally to both, i.e. platforms made by large industries or smaller sub-systems manufactured by MSMEs. Technology must drive the equipment to be unfailingly combat-effective, be it a platform like the aircraft carrier, an aircraft, main battle tank; or a small part like the magazine of a rifle; each needs combat-worthy technology.

Fortunately, India has enough technology experts in this field but their expertise needs to be harnessed in a highly organised manner.

A conducive ecosystem needs to be created, wherein they can contribute to national security as a matter of pride, while their individual aspirations are also taken care of. There is also a need to harness Indian technology experts who may have moved to the US/Europe or other countries, giving them the option of repatriating, including those who may have lost their jobs in the current situation. Alternatively, they could work on a project basis in India. An opportunity can thus be created for them to "give back" to their country which, in a large number of cases, would have given them basic education to achieve success.

There are, of course, products utilising very high-end technology, which may not be readily available. There is a need to acquire such technology leveraging India's other strengths. For the long-term success of "Make in India," such borrowed/acquired technology cannot be an answer. Dedicated investment must be made on R&D of short and long-term defence equipment requirements, taking advantage of the technology experts of the entire country, on a project basis. Such research projects and their byproducts could also be utilised for civilian purposes, in the long-term.

Patent/IPR: All existing patent/IPR rules/regulations must be fully implement-

ed. Excellence/innovation needs to be honoured and rewarded. Even individual interests of scientists, where applicable, in relation to patents must be respected. Clauses of national security, where desirable can be enunciated.

Manufacturing Ecosystem: With the "Make in India" friendly packages announced by the Government, including items that cannot be imported, both large industrial houses and MSMEs have an unprecedented opportunity. However, to compete, their standards have to be real-world-class. For long-term success, the manufacturing capabilities need to be upgraded where required, to supply fail-proof combat equipment. Promising manufacturing units, including start-ups, could be provided appropriate efficiency and output-based support.

Operational Maintenance and Logistics: In the varied terrain conditions that Indian Armed Forces operate in, including a major portion in high altitude and super-high altitude areas, operational maintenance and logistics would play a significant role. In situations where feasible, the original equipment manufacturer could take on the responsibility of logistics and sustenance. The design of the weapon/equipment must take into consideration the requirements of field maintenance in extremely challenging situations and terrain.

The 21st century has presented India with an unique opportunity, which could fulfil the requirements of inclusive growth as well as meet many other existing challenges. Through "Make in India," the country gains strategic independence, the industry makes progress, jobs are created and most importantly the soldier gets indigenously-manufactured equipment meeting world standards.

(The writer is former Director-General of the National Cadet Corps)

The age of judicial populism

How did judicial activism evolve into populism? And does the judiciary really represent the people's will and interests more than the elected politicians?



NADEEM PARACHA

Judges rule on the basis of law, not public opinion." This take on the role of judges by the former Chief Justice of the US, Warren Burger, was taken as a maxim across the world. However, in the last decade or so, things in this context seem to have gone the other way. Now, one often hears terms such as "judicial populism" and "judicial activism" used in commentaries and political rhetoric. In none of the two books by Justice Burger that I read did he even mention any of the two aforementioned terms. There is thus enough evidence to suggest that "judicial populism" is a current coinage. However,

the term "judicial activism" is much older but it was not used as frequently as it is being now.

The American attorney Keenan Kmic writes that the first time the term "judicial activism" was used was by the US historian Arthur Schlesinger Junior in 1947. But since he was a staunch liberal and supporter of the Democratic Party, one can conclude he was vaguely criticising the Supreme Court judges who had initially overturned the many unprecedented economic policies outlined by President Franklin Roosevelt to address the economic depression in the US in the 1930s.

Ever since the 1950s, there have been at least seven well-known cases in the US which experts have described as being influenced by judicial activism. But even though some of these judgments have been hailed as bold and timely, the idea of judicial activism has largely been criticised by law experts and many sitting governments. The Black's Law Dictionary, one of the most used law dictionaries in the US, explains judicial activism as a deci-

sion-making process whereby judges allow their personal views about public policy to guide their decisions. Other critics have claimed that it intrudes in the workings of the executive and legislative branches of the Government and disturbs democratic order.

But there are also those, such as the US professor of law Brian Tamanaha, who says that an absolute, objective interpretation of law is impossible and, therefore, a judge's personality and/or views are bound to influence his/her judgments.

The debate around the idea and act of judicial activism is now decades old. But many commentators are of the view that, instead of aiding the judiciary to come to a middle-ground, judicial activism has broken away and sprinted towards populism. Eight years ago, the Pakistani academic and author Mohammad Waseem more-than-hinted that judicial activism in Pakistan was transforming into "judicial populism" in his essay for the 2012 edition of the *Journal of Contemporary South Asia*.

Dr Waseem was writing when Chaudhry Iftikhar was the country's Chief Justice (CJP), brought back to this position by a "lawyers' movement" against the Pervez Musharraf regime that had ousted him on charges of corruption.

On the former CJP's style of judging, Dr Waseem says: "Confrontation between the executive and judiciary under him led to speculation about the imminent collapse of the democratic system. The use of judicial review by him was widely criticised as an attempt to encroach on the territory of the legislature. The court's pursuit of public interest litigations through frequent *suo motu* actions taken in a populist mode led to brinkmanship on the part of the judiciary. However, the court's pursuit of judicial reform relating to speedy justice and accountability of the higher judiciary remained far from satisfactory."

In order to explain what a "populist" judge is, SOAS University of London's Yasser Kureshi in an essay for *Dawn* writes: "The populist judge embraces a more aggressive form of

judicial activism, prioritising not only policy over precedent but also outcomes over processes. The populist judge is unbound by precedent and procedure, interpreting away any constitutional limitations on what the judge can and cannot do."

Indeed, a lot has been written on judicial populism in Pakistan since the return of Chaudhry Iftikhar. Saqib Nisar, who was CJP from December 2016 till January 2019, was also described by many as a populist judge. Only recently, when the current CJP, Justice Gulzar Ahmad, ordered the Sindh Government to allow the opening of shopping malls in Karachi — when the number of COVID-19 infections were on the rise — critics of the decision explained it as populist and even ill-informed.

But is judicial populism squarely a Pakistani phenomenon? Not quite. A similar decision was delivered by the Supreme Court of the US State of Wisconsin. The US has the highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. So it was understandable that this decision was roundly criticised.

The Supreme Courts of Israel and Brazil are also seen as dealing in judicial populism, even though they haven't yet said much on the COVID-19 pandemic. The Brazilian professor of law, Diego Werneck, published an insightful essay, exploring why judicial activism mutates and becomes judicial populism. According to Werneck, courts have traditionally been targets of populists who criticise them for being elitist and bureaucratic. To counter this, especially in an era of rampant populism and unabashed populists heading governments in various countries, Werneck writes that courts have begun to preserve their authority by adjusting their decisions to trends in public opinion. Werneck then adds: "By adopting the populist vocabulary, the courts claim to represent and vindicate current majority sentiment against what are perceived as corrupt politicians."

Werneck writes that this can be triggered by general discontent or a protest movement. He gave the example of the mass 2015 protests in Brazil, during which its Supreme Court

judges and some trial judges did not hold back in castigating "corrupt politicians" in the media and gained significant popularity. This encouraged their populist style.

This scenario is remarkably similar to how the higher judiciary evolved in Pakistan after the 2007 lawyers' movement and then again, after the 2014 protests held by Imran Khan's PTI. But Dr Waseem adds another dimension to this. He writes that when elected representatives clash in developing countries, non-elected State institutions are invited by both to mediate. In the past, the military used to be that sole mediator, despite the fact that it often ended up getting rid of both the bickering parties. Waseem then adds that, ever since the time of Iftikhar, the judiciary, too, has been approached by politicians to settle scores against opponents. But, the more this happens, the more space the executive and the legislative lose, because the judiciary now believes it represents the people's will and interests more than the politicians. (Courtesy: Dawn)

ITR forms for 2019-20 notified

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has notified income tax return forms for 2019-20 and made it mandatory for entities to file ITR if deposits in a current account exceed ₹1 crore or electricity bill in the fiscal is over ₹1 lakh or spent above ₹2 lakh on foreign travels.

entities to furnish details of specified high spend transactions, such as deposit of ₹1 crore or more in a current account, expenditure of ₹2 lakh or more on foreign travel or spending of ₹1 lakh or more on consumption of electricity. Also, joint owners of a house property can file ITR-1 Sahaj.

The CBDT has introduced new column in ITR-1, 2, 3 and 4 wherein it has asked three specific questions to the assessee - have you deposited amount or aggregate of amounts exceeding ₹1 crore in one or more current account during the previous year? Have you incurred expenditure of an amount or aggregate of amount exceeding ₹2 lakh for travel to a foreign country for yourself or for any other person?

Schedule DI which requires taxpayers to furnish details of tax-saving investments or donations made between April 1, 2020, and June 30, 2020, for 2019-20 separately.

Andersen Consulting Director Shailesh Kumar said the Govt has introduced seventh proviso to the Section 139(1) under which a person will be required to file ITR though not liable under 139(1).

Disclosure of electricity bill over ₹1L mandatory

which are easier to fill. The Government has already extended the deadline for filing all ITRs for the financial year 2019-20 till November 30. Also the deadline for filing the tax audit report has been extended by a month till October 31.

Indian economy is on path of revival: Pradhan

Women to play leading role in post Covid-19 economy

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday said Indian economy is on the path of revival and women will play a leading role in the post Covid-19 economy. "Women's economic contribution will be included going forward, which has been close to negligible till now," he said adding that women entrepreneurs can become business aggregators in the country.

Covid-19, technology has brought equalisation in the society. There will be an exponential growth in the use of technology for conducting business. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and with the stimulus packages being announced, the Central and State governments are working towards securing both lives and livelihoods of people. He also spoke about the city gas distribution network in the country.

UNLOCK 1 India Inc welcomes norms, expects revival

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

India Inc welcomed the Centre's norms — Unlock 1 — meant to ease restrictions on businesses and other daily aspect of life. Accordingly, the fifth phase of the nationwide lockdown was announced which would last in the containment zones from June 8-30.

Hotel industry welcomes move, will follow health safety SoPs

India's hotel industry has welcomed the Centre's norms under 'Unlock 1', which allow them to re-commence operations. These norms are part of the fifth phase of the nationwide lockdown which was announced on Saturday for the containment zones till June 30, providing relaxations for the hotel industry from June 8 onwards.

Hotel Association of India Vice President K.B. Kachru said: "The pandemic and consequent lockdowns have had disastrous impact on the hotel sector." "We welcome the government's decision to allow restaurants, hotels and malls to open in areas outside the containment zones from June 8. We hope this landmark decision will pave the way for graded reopening of the hotel industry," Kachru said.

consider setting up of a Tourism COVID 19 Fund for enabling the tourism industry to meet its salary and working capital needs. Major Industry player such as Ritesh Agarwal, Founder & Group CEO - OYO Hotels & Homes said: "We welcome the government's decision to reopen hotels. We are excited and prepared to host guests with the new sanitised stay experience. A Similarly, Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC, and Chairman of the

Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality, thanked the Centre for realigning the commencement of business operations of hotels, restaurants and other hospitality services under Unlock 1. "We welcome the government's decision to reopen hotels. We are excited and prepared to host guests with the new sanitised stay experience. At OYO, our topmost priorities are maintaining health, hygiene & well-being of our guests and staff.

Goyal asks pharma firms to explore exports opportunities in Eastern Europe, Russia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday asked pharmaceutical companies to explore export opportunities in untapped markets of Russia and Eastern European nations. The Minister also advised the firms to bring to his notice if the companies face any roadblock or unfair competition in a country, with which India has a free trade agreement (FTA).

bilateral FTAs, if any roadblock or unfair competition is being noticed, the Government may be informed and prompt remedial action will be taken." Pharma exports in 2019-20 grew by 8 per cent to USD 20.7 billion as against USD 19.14 billion in 2018-19. Eastern European nations include Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Moldova. Calling upon a collaborative route in the R&D efforts, Goyal said academicians, universities, ICMR and private sector should join hands.

It has already approved the scheme on promotion of bulk drug parks for financing common infrastructure facilities in three such parks. Also, production linked incentive scheme for promotion of domestic manufacturing of critical KSMs (key starting materials)/drug intermediates and APIs in the country has been given a go ahead, he said.

Industry body Assocham's Secretary General Deepak Sood said the phased re-opening of activities from June 1, termed as 'Unlock 1' with an economic focus, has come in as a great relief for the industry and trade, including millions of MSMEs which should steadily return to normalcy while maintaining vigil against the spread of Covid-19.

large part of the economy outside the containment zones. With these measures, the Indian economy should bounce back steadily but surely," he added. However, he pointed out that states need to work in a well-coordinated manner to ensure that the movement of goods and persons, restrictions on which have now been lifted, must be adhered to.

the desired results," Sood said. Exporters' body EEPIC India's Chairman Ravi Sehgal said: "Substantial lifting of lockdown is a sentiment booster for exporters, after months of difficulties and challenges. Even as we count our losses, easing of restrictions on economic activities would save millions of jobs, though an arduous task of re-building the business lies ahead."

confidence apart from opening opportunities for jobs and incomes. It is important to understand that the unprecedented high global unemployment is the product of the great lockdown and not due to any economic crisis. "Therefore, we can expect jobs and incomes to bounce back sharply. However, managing the spread of the disease arising out of opening would be a challenge."

economic damage. We welcome government's move to allow us to operate." In a statement, Zubin Saxena, Managing Director and Vice President, Operations, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, said: "We are looking forward to resuming operations within government guidelines. Apart from hygiene, our go forward business model is concentrated on leveraging the synergies of our network which we believe will work in a sustainable manner to ensure business uplift overtime. We remain dedicated to exceeding guest expectations in the new era of hospitality that awaits us."

CAIT supports call to boycott Chinese products

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Trader's body CAIT on Sunday expressed solidarity with Ladakh-based educational reformer and visionary Sonam Wangchuk's appeal to boycott Chinese goods. Amid tensions between India and China, Wangchuk, the man who inspired the Bollywood block-buster '3 Idiots', has appealed and asked Indians to boycott all Chinese companies. In a tweet, engineer-turned-educational reformer asked people to boycott all Chinese products to stop Beijing's "bullying" in Ladakh and liberate 1.4 billion bonded labourers in the country. Confederation of All India

Traders, which claims to represent 7 crore traders, said it has identified about 3,000 categories of heavily imported Chinese products "which must immediately be replaced by Indian products as good quality Indian replacements are available for such products". CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said it will educate traders across the country to stop importing as well as selling these products, and more products will soon be verified and added to the list. The trader's body said, "The whole country understands the importance of hurting China economically and therefore we wholeheartedly welcome this great initiative."

Toyota Kirloskar sales dip 86% in May

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Sunday reported a 86.49 per cent decline in domestic vehicle sales to 1,639 units in May. Company had posted sales of 12,138 units in May 2019, TKM said in a statement. "We are conscious of the dealer business conditions in various parts of the country and we have been prioritising production at our end as per dealer requirements, both in terms of quantity as well as the grades that they require," TKM Senior Vice president, Sales & Service, Naveen Soni said.

PM Modi to share his vision on 'Getting Growth Back' with India Inc on Tue

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will share his vision on 'Getting Growth Back' with India Inc during an address at the annual session of industry body CII on Tuesday, sources said. The address comes at a time when companies are resuming operations following relaxations and gradual easing of the nationwide lockdown, which was imposed on March 25 to curb spreading of coronavirus infections.

MFs invest ₹1,230 crore in equities during lockdown

Keeping high liquidity for possible redemptions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mutual funds have invested just ₹1,230 crore in stock markets during the lockdown and industry experts believe they are still waiting for a good "entry point" and maintaining high liquidity for any possible redemptions by corporate houses. Going ahead, the primary factor that will determine mutual fund (MF) investment into equity will be their own inflows from investors. This will be put to test as many retail

investors are facing risk of pay cuts and job loss over the next quarter or so, said Vidya Bala, co-founder of Primeinvestor. In Overall, mutual funds have made a net investment of ₹1,230 crore in stocks since the nationwide lockdown was announced on March 24 to tackle the coronavirus, latest data available with the Securities and Exchange Board of India showed. MFs invested ₹6,363 crore in stocks in the last week of March, while they pulled out ₹7,965 crore in April. Reversing the selling trend in May, they put in ₹2,832 crore, the data showed. Amit Jain, co-founder and CEO at Ashika Wealth Advisors, said mutual funds are not investing big amounts in equities as they are waiting for a good entry point, which he believes will come within two months.

RIL- REs: Big game window opens Mon

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The rights entitlements created nearly ₹9,500 crore worth for Reliance Industries Limited shareholders. This has set the tone for the final leg of

the rights issue process beginning Mon. With trading in right entitlements (RIL-REs) closed on Friday, May 29 (ended 41% higher than Day 1) ushering the final leg of the RIL rights Issue process.

Macro data, global cues to set equity market trend: Experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Equity market sentiment this week will be guided by macroeconomic data, global cues and COVID-19 trends amid the phased reopening of the economy, analysts said. The Home Ministry on Saturday said 'Unlock-1' will be initiated in the country from June 8 under which the nationwide lockdown effectuated on March 25 will be relaxed to a great extent, including opening of shopping malls, restaurants and religious places.

will go a long way in boosting business confidence apart from opening opportunities for jobs and incomes. It is important to understand that the unprecedented high global unemployment is the product of the Great Lockdown and not due to any economic crisis. "Therefore, we can expect jobs and incomes to bounce back sharply. However, managing the spread of the disease arising out of opening would be a challenge," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services. Bourses may also react to the GDP numbers released post market hours on Friday. India's economic growth

slowed to 3.1 per cent in January-March and to an 11-year low of 4.2 per cent for the full fiscal 2019-20, reflecting the early impact of the coronavirus crisis. Fiscal deficit soared to a seven-year high of 4.6 per cent of GDP in 2019-20 mainly on account of poor revenue realisation. "Auto monthly sales data for the month of May will start coming from Monday which would reflect consumer sentiment. On the positive side, as per IMD, monsoon is likely to reach Kerala early this week which would be closely tracked," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Religare Broking Ltd, VP-Research, Ajit Mishra, said the US-China tensions would also be on the radar of market participants. "India PMI Manufacturing for May will be announced on June 1, PMI May services data will be out on June 3. US non farm payrolls data for May will be announced on June 5," said Deepak Jasani, Head Retail Research, HDFC Securities. Quarterly earnings from companies such as InterGlobe Aviation, Motherson Sumi Systems, BPCL and Larsen and Toubro will also be tracked. During the last week, the Sensex rallied 1,751.51 points or 5.71 per cent.

Noida leads NCR market in office space leasing: 360 Realtors

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Noida witnessed a surge in office space leasing in the third and fourth quarters of 2019 and recorded the highest leasing in the NCR, according to a report by 360 Realtors. Around 80% of the total supply of office spaces was leased out during July-December of 2019. In Q3 and Q4 of 2019, the Noida market witnessed unprecedented growth in leasing, leading in NCR & becoming the front runner with around 80% leasing," it said.

Infosys among UK firms accessing Rishi Sunak's Covid-19 job saving scheme

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian software major Infosys is among the many UK companies to benefit from UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, it emerged on Sunday. Infosys, co-founded by Sunak's father-in-law Narayana Murthy, said it had used the furlough - or forced leave - option for 3 per cent of its staff in order to tide through the lockdown imposed to curb the spread of the deadly virus. "In light of the current situation, Infosys has furloughed 3 per cent of its UK workforce.

We are reviewing this on a weekly basis," Infosys told "The Sunday Times". The scheme was unveiled by the Indian-origin Finance Minister, married to Murthy's daughter Akshata, at the peak of the crisis and is set to gradually wind down until it is fully closed at the end of October. Under the provisions, the Govt covers 80 per cent of salaries of furloughed staff, up to the value of GBP 2,500 a month, in order to prevent companies having to resort to redundancies. In a latest set of announcements earlier this week, Sunak had added more

flexibility into the programme so that employers can make use of the scheme in the most effective way. "Our top priority has always been to support people, protect jobs and businesses through this crisis. The furlough and self-employment schemes have been a lifeline for millions of people and businesses," said Sunak, who is leading the UK Government's economic response to the coronavirus pandemic. "We stood behind Britain's businesses and workers as we came into this crisis and we stand behind them as we come through the other side."

'We're sick of it': Anger over police killings shatters US

Minneapolis (US): Another night of unrest in every corner of the country left charred and shattered landscapes in dozens of US cities on Sunday as years of festering frustrations over the mistreatment of African-Americans at the hands of police boiled over in expressions of rage met with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Cars and businesses were torched, the words "I can't breathe" were spray-painted all over buildings, a fire in a trash bin burned near the gates of the White House, and thousands marched peacefully through city streets to protest the death of George Floyd, a black man who died Monday after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee on his neck until he stopped breathing.

His death is one of a litany of racial tragedies that have thrown the country into chaos amid the coronavirus pandemic that has left millions out of work and killed more than 100,000 people in the US, including disproportionate numbers of black people.

"We're sick of it. The cops are out of control," protester Olga Hall said in Washington DC. "They're wild. There's just been too many dead boys."

People set fire to police cars, threw bottles at police officers and busted windows of storefronts, carrying away TVs and other items even as some protesters urged them to stop.

In Indianapolis, police were investigating multiple shootings, including one that left a person dead amid the protests



A Los Angeles Police Department kiosk is seen ablaze in The Grove shopping center during a protest over the death of George Floyd

— adding to deaths in Detroit and Minneapolis in recent days.

In Minneapolis, the city where the protests began, police, state troopers and National Guard members

moved in soon after an 8 pm curfew took effect to break up protests, firing tear gas and rubber bullets to clear streets outside a police precinct and elsewhere.

At least 13 police officers were injured in Philadelphia when peaceful protests turned violent and at least four police vehicles were set on fire. In New York City, dangerous confrontations flared repeatedly as officers made arrests and cleared streets. A video showed

two NYPD cruisers lurching into a crowd of demonstrators who were pushing a barricade against one of them and pelting it with objects.

Several people were knocked to the ground, and it was unclear if anyone was hurt. "The mistakes that are happening are not mistakes. They're repeated violent terrorist offenses and people need to stop killing black people," Brooklyn protester Meryl Makielski said.

Few corners of America were untouched, from protesters setting fires inside Reno's city hall, to police launching tear gas at rock-throwing

demonstrators in Fargo, North Dakota. In Salt Lake City, demonstrators flipped a police car and lit it on fire. Police said six people were arrested and a police officer was injured after being struck in the head with a baseball bat.

Police have arrested at least 1,669 people in 22 cities since Thursday. Nearly a third of those arrests came in Los Angeles, where the governor

declared a state of emergency and ordered the National Guard to back up the city's 10,000 police officers as dozens of fires burned across the city.

The damage in US cities came as many Americans plan

to return to in-person church services on Sunday for the first time in several weeks since the pandemic forced a ban on large gatherings. Pastors in pulpits across the country will likely be urging peace amid the rubble of riots. Trump appeared to cheer on the tougher tactics Saturday night, commending the National Guard deployment in Minneapolis, declaring "No games!" and saying police in New York City "must be allowed to do their job!"

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden condemned the violence as he continued to express common cause with those demonstrating after Floyd's death.

"The act of protesting should never be allowed to overshadow the reason we protest," Biden said in a statement Saturday night.

Overnight curfews were imposed in more than a dozen major cities nationwide, including Atlanta, Denver, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, San Francisco and Seattle.

This week's unrest recalled the riots in Los Angeles nearly 30 years ago after the acquittal of the white police officers who beat Rodney King, a black motorist who had led them on a high-speed chase.

The protests of Floyd's killing have gripped many more cities, but the losses in Minneapolis have yet to approach the staggering totals Los Angeles saw during five days of rioting in 1992, when more than 60 people died, 2,000-plus were injured and

thousands arrested, with property damage topping \$1 billion. But not all protests were marred by violence. In Juneau, Alaska, local police joined protesters at a rally in front of a giant whale sculpture on the city's waterfront.

"We don't tolerate excessive use of force," Juneau Police Chief Ed Mercer told a gathering where most people wore masks and some sang Alaska Native songs.

The show of force in Minneapolis came after three days when police largely avoided engaging protesters, and after the state poured in over 4,000 National Guard troops to Minneapolis and said the number would soon rise to nearly 11,000.

National Guard called in to quell violence in Los Angeles

Los Angeles: A fourth day of violence in Los Angeles prompted the mayor to impose a rare citywide curfew and call in the National Guard after demonstrators clashed repeatedly with officers, torched police vehicles and pillaged businesses in a popular shopping district.

Mayor Eric Garcetti said Saturday he asked Gov. Gavin Newsom for 500 to 700 members of the Guard to assist the 10,000 Los Angeles Police Department officers. The Guard members were expected to arrive early Sunday.

Garcetti said the soldiers would be deployed "to support our local response to maintain peace and safety on the streets of our city." Firefighters responded to dozens of fires, and scores of businesses were damaged. One of the hardest-hit areas was the area around the Grove, a popular high-end outdoor mall west of downtown where hundreds of protesters swarmed the area, showering police with rocks and other objects and vandalising shops.

Biden condemns violence overshadowing protests

Washington: Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden condemned the violence in a statement, as he continued to express common cause with those demonstrating after Floyd's death.

"The act of protesting should never be allowed to overshadow the reason we protest," Biden said in a statement Saturday night.

"It should not drive people away from the just cause that protest is meant to advance." Officials in Minneapolis

say they've succeeded for now in stopping the violent protests that ravaged parts of the city for several days after the death of George Floyd.

Police, state troopers and National Guard members moved in to break up protests after an 8 p.m. curfew took effect, firing tear gas and rubber bullets to clear streets outside a police precinct and elsewhere. The show of force came after three days where police mostly declined to engage with protesters. It also came after

the state poured in more than 4,000 National Guard members and said the number would soon rise to nearly 11,000. As Minneapolis streets appeared largely quiet, Corrections Commissioner Paul Schnell said the heavy response would remain as long as it takes

to "quell this situation." Floyd, a handcuffed black man, died after

a Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for several minutes.

AFTER CHINA'S SECURITY LAW

Hong Kongers hit panic button, big spike in immigration inquiries

Beijing/Hong Kong: The promulgation of new security law for Hong Kong by China has resulted in a sharp increase in inquiries for immigration from the former British colony especially the city's residents who emigrated en masse there when it returned to the Chinese control in 1997.

Immigration consultants have fielded hundreds of new calls since China's legislature - the National People's Congress (NPC) - unveiled the controversial plan on May 21, bypassing the local legislature, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Sunday.

The legislation was subsequently approved by the NPC, much on the expected lines with an overwhelming majority on May 28, prompting US

President Donald Trump to order the removal of exemptions that gave Hong Kong special status.

Trump said on Saturday that Hong Kong has no longer sufficiently autonomous from China to enjoy the special privileges with the US, in place since it left the British control in 1997.

The new law under which China can establish the presence of its security forces in Hong Kong for the first-time evoked strong protests from thousands of local people. The protests were expected to be intensified in the coming weeks.

China says the new law is aimed at throttling secession, subversion, terrorism, foreign interference or activities that threaten national security.

With Hong Kong now becoming the centre of the

emerging Cold War between the US and China, a number of local people especially the city's rich are looking to migrate to different countries.

Some are accelerating their decision to buy property overseas, while others are cutting their asking price for local properties, immigration consultancy firms in Hong Kong said.

"The day after that proposal, we received over a hundred calls," said Andrew Lo, chief executive at Anlex, a Hong Kong-based immigration consultancy firm. "People are restless. They ask if they can leave the next day," he told the Post.

Requests for emigration advice have jumped as a result, breaking a lull caused by the coronavirus pandemic, according to Midland Immigration Consultancy.

While the latest number in applications for good citizenship is not yet available, analysts expect them to rise with political temperature, the report said.

"People who were just engaging us on basic information before are now firmly committing by putting down deposits," Gillott said, citing one customer who asked to move his "millions and millions of dollars" to Portugal. "Never seen that before."

The political factor has encouraged some high-net-worth individuals - defined as those having more than HKD 10 million (USD 1.29 million) of wealth - to diversify their assets into other cities like London, Singapore and Taiwan.

Taiwan, which is having a stormy relationship with China

as Beijing claims the territory to be part of the Chinese mainland, is an attractive destination for many seeking to flee the turmoil in Hong Kong. The self-ruling island allows foreigners to gain citizenship with USD 199,680 in investments in a business that hires local staff.

Almost 2,400 Hongkongers filed residency applications for Taiwan from January to April this year, compared to 948 last year in the same period, said Midland's director of strategy Tina Cheng, citing government data. In all, 5,585 people left Hong Kong for Taiwan in 2019, an increase of 41 per cent, the government said.

Despite the interest in Taiwan, the top destinations remain English-speaking countries such as Ireland, Canada, and Australia.

Trump postpones G7 summit, wants to expand it to G10 or G11, including India

Washington: US President Donald Trump has postponed the G7 Summit till September and expressed his desire to expand the "outdated" bloc to G10 or G11, including India and three other nations to the grouping of the world's top economies.

Trump has been over the weeks suggesting that there is "no greater example" of reopening amid the COVID-19 pandemic than holding an in-person G7 summit in America by the end of June.

The president, in an interaction with reporters traveling with him aboard the Air Force One from Florida to Washington DC on Saturday, said that he is "postponing it (the summit) until September

and plans to invite Russia, South Korea, Australia and India.

"I don't feel that as a G7, it properly represents what's going on in the world. It's a very outdated group of countries," he said.

"So it might be a G10, G11, and it could be after the election (in the US) is over..." Trump said.

He said the G7 Summit could happen before the UN General Assembly session in September. "Maybe I'll do it after the election. I think a good time would be before the election," he said. The presidential election in the US is scheduled for November 3. Trump is seeking a second term in the White House.

Communal tension in Quetta over mob lynching of youth

Karachi: Communal tension and protests have erupted in Pakistan's Quetta city after a mob, most of them believed to be from Shia Hazara community, allegedly lynched a Pushtun youth and severely injured his two friends. The capital city of the restive Baluchistan province remained tense and partially shut down on Sunday after the brutal lynching of the youth named Bilal Khan at a hair dresser's shop in Hazara town area on Friday night.

The incident was filmed on mobile phones and the footage was shared on social media, triggering protest. Police have arrested 12 people in connection with the lynching which is said to have occurred over a monetary dispute while another version is that the three youths had filmed some women of the Hazara community on their mobile phones.

Around the Globe

Bogota: The mayor of Colombia's capital is planning to shut down one of the city's largest neighborhoods as cases there continue to rise.

Islamabad: The total coronavirus cases in Pakistan has increased to 69,474, while the death toll reached 1,483, according to figures released by the health ministry on Sunday.

Kathmandu: The Nepal government has extended the nationwide lockdown until June 14 amid a surge in the number of COVID-19 cases and decided to deploy the Army in the worst-hit areas.

Kathmandu: Two medium intensity earthquakes within a span of 20 minutes hit Nepal, though no casualty or property loss was reported. Officials said. The first tremble measuring 4.8 was felt in Dhading, 75 km west of capita Kathmandu, at 9:36 pm on Saturday, the National Seismological Centre said.

Dhaka: Traffic jams returned on Dhaka streets as Bangladesh on Sunday reopened offices and transport services in a restricted manner after two months even as the country recorded 40 more coronavirus deaths, the highest number of fatalities in a single day.

Paris: Notre Dame Cathedral's forecourt is being opened up to the public for the first time since the devastating fire of April 15 last year.

Moscow: Russia reported 9,268 new cases of the coronavirus on Sunday, the first time in a week that the daily tally exceeded 9,000, but the lowest death toll in several days: 138.

Melbourne: COVID-19 restrictions are easing in most of Australia, but authorities say they'll be watching carefully to ensure the country's success in containing the pandemic remains on track.

Spanish PM wants state of emergency extension

Madrid: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez says he will ask Spain's Parliament for a final two-week extension of the nation's state of emergency that has allowed the government to take lockdown measures to control its coronavirus outbreak.

Sánchez says this will be "the last, definitive extension of 15 days." The current state of emergency is set to expire on June 7. The government will ask for the extension in the coming days.

The lockdown measures have succeeded to reining in a COVID-19 outbreak that has claimed at least 27,000 lives in Spain.

Sánchez says this final stretch of the lockdown will include the handing back of



control over health care to the regions that have shown the most progress in containing the virus.

"We have almost reached safe harbor," Sánchez said.

The central government is slowing rolling back confinement measures depending on which areas have fewer infections and are better prepared for a possible second outbreak.

The focus is now on maintaining the virus in check while reactivating an economy that Sánchez's said will shrink by over 9% this year and take two years to recover.

Greece to allow incoming tourists from 29 countries

Athens: Greek officials said Sunday said that the country will not limit incoming tourists to those from a list of 29 nations, but travelers from countries not on the list will be subject to mandatory testing on arrival and a period of quarantine depending on test results.

The policy will only be applied during the final two weeks of June, although Greek authorities left open the prospect of additional restrictions after that date.

The list announced on Friday includes Albania, Australia, Austria, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Estonia, Japan, Israel, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lebanon, New Zealand and others.

Israeli Def Min apologises for Palestinian's death

Jerusalem: Israel's defense minister apologised on Sunday for the Israeli police's deadly shooting of an unarmed, autistic Palestinian man.

The shooting of Iyad Halak, 32, in Jerusalem's Old City on Saturday, drew broad condemnations and revived complaints alleging excessive force by Israeli security forces.

Benny Gantz, who is also Israel's "alternate" prime minister under a power-sharing deal, made the remarks at the weekly meeting of the Israeli Cabinet. He was sat near Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who made no mention of the incident in his opening remarks.

"We are really sorry about the incident in which Iyad Halak was shot to death and we share in the family's grief," Gantz said.

"I am sure this subject will be investigated swiftly and conclusions will be reached."

Halak's relatives said he had autism and was heading to a school for students with special needs where he studied each day when he was shot.

In a statement, Israeli police said they spotted a suspect "with a suspicious object that looked like a pistol." When he failed to obey orders to stop, officers opened fire, the statement said. Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld later said no weapon was found. Israeli media reported the officers involved were questioned after the incident as per protocol and a lawyer representing one of them sent his condolences to the family in an interview with Israeli Army Radio.

Decoding of black box of crashed Pak plane to begin on June 2: Investigators

PTI ■ KARACHI

The work on the flight and the cockpit voice recorders of the Pakistani airplane that crashed in a densely populated area, killing 97 people, will start from June 2 in France, the French aviation investigation authority has said.

The Airbus A320 aircraft of the national carrier Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) had 91 passengers and a crew of eight when it crashed into the Jinnah Garden area near Model Colony in Malir on Friday, minutes before its landing.

Ninety Seven passengers were killed. Eleven people on the ground were injured.

An 11-member team of

experts from an Airbus facility in the French city of Toulouse arrived in Pakistan last week to conduct an independent probe into the crash involving its aircraft.

"@Airbus #A320 AP-BLD @Official_PIA. Technical work on FDR & CVR will start at @BEA_Aero 02/06/20. @BEA_aero thanks a lot AAIIB from Pakistan for the coordination, organization and support provided," BEA, France's Civil Aviation Safety Investigation Authority, said in a tweet on Saturday.

The flight data recorder (FDR) records time, altitude, airspeed, heading, and aircraft attitude and other in-flight characteristics.

Scientists develop method to reduce virus count in plasma, blood products

Houston: Researchers have demonstrated that exposing the novel coronavirus to the vitamin riboflavin and ultraviolet light reduces the viral count in human plasma and whole-blood products, an advance that may help lower the possibility of transmission of the virus via blood transfusion.

The scientists from Colorado State University (CSU) in the US, said it is still unknown if the novel coronavirus, or SARS-CoV-2, behind the COVID-19 pandemic, can be transmitted by blood transfusion.

In the study, published in the journal PLOS ONE, they used a device called the Mirasol

Pathogen Reduction Technology System to treat nine plasma and three whole-blood products.

"We eliminated a huge amount of virus and we could not detect the virus post-treatment," said Izabela Ragan, study co-author from CSU.

The device, invented by Ray Goodrich, senior author of the study from CSU, works by exposing the blood product or plasma to UV light.

Heather Pidcoke, another co-author on the study, explained that the blood product or plasma is placed in a specially designed storage bag, following which riboflavin solution is added to this, and the mixture

is then exposed to UV light.

The device gently shakes the bag to circulate the blood cells, so the cells come to the surface where they are exposed to the UV light, the study noted.

However, the authors caution that this is not an experiment to try at home.

They said the light does not penetrate the entire bag, so it's not the same as exposing body parts to UV light. The researchers said the device may help avoid what happened in the 1980s, when HIV was transmitted through blood and blood products while scientists were still trying to isolate and identify what might be causing the spread of the virus.

New York Governor signs bill granting death benefits to deceased front-line workers

New York: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill Saturday granting death benefits to the families of police officers, public health workers and other front-line workers who have died of the coronavirus.

The bill passed by state lawmakers provides an accidental death benefit that is more substantial than the regular death benefit that public workers' families receive.

Dozens of police officers, public health workers, transit workers and paramedics have died of COVID-19 in the months since New York became the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States. Cuomo said 67 people died of COVID-19 in the state on Friday, the same number as Thursday and a steep drop from the height of New York's outbreak in April, when more than 700 people were dying of the disease daily.

Nawaz Sharif's leaked photo sparks debate over his health

Lahore: A fresh picture of Pakistan's 'ailing' former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif taking tea at a London café along with some members of his family went viral on social media, sparking a debate on his health with the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf members demanding his return to face corruption cases.

In the picture, the 70-year-old three-time premier is seen sitting at a roadside café with his granddaughters. He sported a blue shalwar kameez and a cap and apparently looked in better health.

Some ministers got skeptical about the serious nature of his health, saying Sharif is roaming on London streets and he even did not bother to wear mask in this COVID-19 testing time.

"This picture of Sharif having tea in café is exposing our law, justice and judicial system. This picture also tells how

much people can trust on the accountability system in the country," Science Minister Fawad Chaudhry said.

Prime Minister's adviser Shahbaz Gill said that Sharif had gone abroad after lying in the court. "The Sharifs think the people are fool," Gill said and asked Mr Sharif to return Pakistan to face corruption cases against him.

Punjab Information Minister Fayyazul Hasan Chohan said that how come Sharif roam on London's streets without a mask. He should be brought back to face corruption cases against him. As the picture went viral on social media on Saturday it became top trend, sparking a debate about Sharif's health with his detractors asking why he does not return to Pakistan if he is well while his supporters expressed joy at seeing their leader in good health and spirits.

Trend Slazer

Salman donates hand sanitisers

Actor SALMAN KHAN has donated hand sanitisers to the Mumbai Police department.

Praising the actor, Yuva Sena member Rahul Kanai tweeted: "Thank you @BeingSalmanKhan bhai for being there for our frontline warriors."

Fans were moved by Salman's gesture.

He has been doing his bit all through the COVID-19 lockdown. A while back, he provided financial help to 32,000 daily wage workers and helped 90 vertically challenged wage workers associated with All India Special Artistes Association (AISAA).



'I feel blessed to have worked with renowned people from the industry. Additionally, I'm ecstatic

and grateful to have got the opportunity to do different, exciting and challenging roles. I have learned a lot with every role and film I have done so far, which has further helped me evolve as an artiste and an individual.'

—Jacqueline Fernandez

Actor ALI FAZAL is standing by theatre artistes in Mumbai who have been rendered jobless owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.



He is backing an initiative that has put together a video raising awareness towards the plight of theatre actors in current times. The music for the video has been scored by Nishant Raja. It is written by Amitosh Nagpal, who has also conceptualised the video with Maneesh Verma.

Speaking about it, Ali said: "It was important to talk about the situation of theatre actors at a time when the lockdown has gone on for almost eight weeks."

'This time has brought balance'

Pop star KATY PERRY says the lockdown has helped her bond with her family at a deeper level.

"This time has brought in some balance.

Probably necessary balance. It is in a way good for me, to have brought to this kind of mindset because even after quarantine is done, and probably when everyone goes out and celebrates, I will be still at home," Perry said.

Amid the lockdown, Perry, who is expecting her first child with fiancé and actor Orlando Bloom, is also keeping herself busy with work.



THEATRE IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

Artistes tell SAIMI SATTAR that the stage will have to be reinvented and built anew for this social art to thrive and continue

"In the dark times Will there also be singing? Yes, there will also be singing. About the dark times."

—Bertolt Brecht (German theatre practitioner, playwright, and poet)

At no other time in living memory do these lines hold as much truth as they do now for art, is but, a reflection of life. Or so they say. And theatre, more than any art form has tried to hold up a mirror to the society. But then, it is also a social medium, where people come and perform while the audience congregates in an auditorium to witness something live as it happens. But in Covidian times of staggered visits, little circles on the floor to ensure social distancing, how would theatre unfold? Would there be masks and sanitisers on stage or will we see plays on the migrant misery?

EFFECTS ON THE ART FORM

Bhanu Bharti, theatre director, playwright and the founder of Aaj Rangmandal theatre group is of the view that the pandemic will affect it positively in a big way. "Modern society was disintegrated and we were becoming self-centered. Ironically, it was social distancing that made us realise the worth of society and the importance of social interaction. Whenever the threat of the pandemic ebbs, people will return to the theatre with a vengeance because they have realised its value."

However, playwright and director M Sayeed Alam, who leads the Pierrot's Troupe, is concerned about the people for whom theatre is a means of sustenance and whom he calls "white collar labourers" as they lack pension and the other perks that come with a job. "Compared to any other industries, we will be more affected. Even if things normalise around January 2021, people would not start coming to theatres before June as they would be afraid of crowds initially."

REFLECTION OF TIMES

Theatre is often the first to tap into any significant occurrence in history whether it is the Partition of the country or wars that we have fought with our neighbours. It is certainly the go-to art form to experience the time in depth.

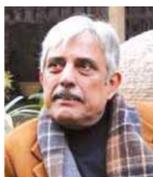
Shivani Wazir Pasrich, founder of Commonwealth Cultural Forum and director of Study School, says, "Theatre is a reflection of life. It is a way of cataloguing history. It evolves according to the time. The first theatre performance was the dance in a temple, which was a prayer to God, and these evolved over time to be put on stage. So theatre, as it existed, would change according to the times."

Bharti says that theatre would not step back when documenting the misery that is being witnessed among the migrant labourers during the lockdown.

Alam on the other hand points out that existing plays would have to incorporate changes to reflect the new reality. "One of our most popular comedy, *Ghalib in New Delhi* will see the poet take rebirth in Corona times and would probably be seen with a mask in the first scene itself," he says with a laugh. Besides masks becoming a new normal on stage, there could also be change in the script to include no shaking of hands, sitting at a distance and certainly no touching, feels the director.

Papipa Desai, theatre artist, dancer and choreographer who leads the Indian Revival Group, a dance ensemble, says that there could be masks which match the outfits of the actors. The other change that she sees is, "Solo performances taking centre stage for sometime to come. The ones with ensemble cast would pick up slowly after the audience gains confidence and starts coming in."

Mauraya Sharma, Director, Painting Tongue Productions agrees that masks would be the new accessory and a prop during performances. Foreseeing



Bhanu Bharti



Amal Allana



M Sayeed Alam



Shivani Wazir Pasrich



Papipa Desai



Mauraya Sharma

that these might prove to be a hindrance in delivering dialogues, he says, "We have tools which can pre-record dialogues though, I agree, the seal of authenticity might go from a performance."

He goes on to add that there could be a new form of theatre where the audience will be the spectacle. "Theatre based organisations in New York are releasing reading materials and performance clips for people to watch at home and take part in. Actors ask questions in a pre-recorded performance and the audience has to respond to it."

However, Amal Allana, theatre director, scenic and costume designer who was the chairperson of National School of Drama for two consecutive terms believes that there would be innovation with technology which would lead to a different kind of performances that might be more exciting. "One can easily use technology, light and music for creating visuals."

However she feels that theatre really can't bring the despair of the people on the roads to life — for a reason. She says, "Even me, no play can equate with even one shot of masses of people walking in heat. Should we duplicate it when we can see what is happening so blatantly in

front of our eyes? Can it be encapsulated? There are too many questions."

REHEARSALS

To put together any production needs at least a month of practice with the ensemble cast and the interactions during it are likely to be affected. Alam says, "It is not like I go on stage one day and use a sanitiser or keep washing hands frequently. We would be rehearsing for days in a smaller space as compared to a theatre. Earlier, a drawing room was enough for the rehearsals. But now the RWA or my neighbours could object to it. We would have to rehearse in park or hire a large space so that social distancing can be maintained."

SOCIALLY DISTANT AUDIENCE

For any play to be successful or for that matter just be put together on the stage requires an audience which would applaud the effort and also, fund it. However, the days of packed shows, where two people sitting besides each other were jostling for space on the arm rest, can be considered a scene of yore. Alternate seats to ensure some distance in between two people is an option. However, Alam points out, "The auditorium

would have to reduce the rent if we do enforce something like this. If that is not done and we sell 100 tickets instead of 300, we would be incurring a loss unless we are funded by the government or have a sponsor."

IS ONLINE AN OPTION?

When the lockdown started, many of the popular theatre companies started putting their content online. So one could see Bolshoi Theatre's *Swan Lake* or the past performances of National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai sitting in the comfort of our homes. Allana says, "Theatre is a lived experience. But given the times, art, dance performances and more can be put online with the help of technology. There are multiple things we can actually do in theatre. Musicals, where musicians are at different locations or even solo performances online are some options that are already being explored."

Pasrich feels that this time is a tremendous opportunity for theatre to go online. "Be it the actor or the audience, the opportunity lies in curation. It is a tool to be integrated in people's lives and to further the profession. As an economic activity, we have to reinvent this space. Now is the time to see what will people do sitting at home. Maybe, you can start online theatre or reading and have fees or contributions for those."

Desai says that discussions with artistes, performances and more has already moved to the web space and that is the way forward. "Sangeet Natak Akademi is getting senior artistes for discussions as it is evident that there would be no performances for at least a year and a half. Moreover, countries are closing borders, so there wouldn't be any performances abroad as well. Humankind knows how to innovate and adapt in order to survive and that is the way forward."

However many feel that, while this option is fine for the time being, it is not viable in the long run. Bharti says, "I see a lot of my friends doing things online

and even though it is something very interesting but that is not theatre. Theatre is coming together for putting up a deeper and more meaningful play."

Alam too has reservations about the online path which he feels, "is a poor alternative and won't survive as there are so many things to watch online. The speciality of an auditorium is that you cannot watch anything else." He also points out that he made a three-minute film which many people, who love his two-hour plays, found long and lacking in pace. "So, logically how can they watch a two-hour online play?"

REINVENTION: WILL THAT BE THE BYWORD?

Will theatre be born in a new avatar or will the pandemic give it a new direction? The practitioners believe that changes are inevitable. Sharma says, "Theatre has been something very temporary. So the big question is whether it wants to remain transient or record itself?"

Pasrich on the other hand is all for a stepping up of content. She says, "In order to sustain their passion and homes through the love they have for theatre, artistes would have to come out with exceptional work which usually happens during challenge times and situations. This is the time to write and create and reinvent. We have the tools, which are unbelievable, to do so." Beyond the economic dimensions, the creator of plays like *Draupadi* and *Tiger* says that at home theatre can offer the option to heal. "By means of role play you might be able to react differently to a situation and keep your sanity in these trying times by scripting your response and being in control."

Allana too feels that the activities around theatre do not have to be centered around just putting a performance on stage. "This is a good time to create archives of theatre, engage in research, write books, discuss plays — all of which theatre needs. It will give us a good time to reflect on the art and see the direction we want to take."

We all look forward to that.

WEBBED

SPELLING THE DREAM

Following four hopeful competitors, this documentary explores Indian Americans' decades-long success at the biggest spelling contest in the US. The film releases on June 3 on Netflix.



CAN YOU HEAR ME?

Three friends in a low-income neighbourhood find humour and hope in their lives as they grapple with bad boyfriends and their dysfunctional families. Starring Mélissa Bédard, Eve Landry and Florence Longpré, season 1 releases on June 4 on Netflix.

THE LAST DAYS OF AMERICAN CRIME

A bank robber joins a plot to commit one final, historic heist before the government turns on a mind-altering signal that will end all criminal behaviour. Starring Edgar Ramirez, Michael Pitt and Anna Brewster, the film releases on June 5 on Netflix.



Allies from 28 nations come together for 21 mini-challenges to create a global movement for equal rights of the LGBTQ community

Push for inclusion



In a first of its kind initiative, Incorporates, academia and individuals from across the world have signed up to advocate for inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community. The #21DaysAllyChallenge, an initiative by Pride Circle, aims to bring a holistic social change by building a community of passionate allies, across the world. The campaign will start from today as it marks the beginning of the Global Pride Month.

As the world is trying to stabilise in the current circumstances, this is an effort to push forward for inclusion. The movement is joined by individuals, influencers from 28 nations and 70 organisations, and also academic institutions such as IIMS, IITs, NMIMS, MICA, Tagore International School. This will also led to creating safer schools, workplaces and society for the next generation.

Under the initiative, allies from across the world will engage in a series of 21 mini-challenges spread over a period of 21 days in the month. This is

based on science that it takes 21 days to form a new habit.

"We know that the future of workforce inclusion is dependent on culture change — made of seemingly small but vital everyday acts of allyship and support. The challenge is a fun and innovative way to spur individual action for change," says Deena Fidas, Managing Director, Chief Programme and Partnerships Officer, Out & Equal Workplace Advocates (USA).

"People across the world can come together in support of equality for lesbian, gay, bi and

trans people. Visible allies to the LGBTQ community make a huge difference, whether that's championing LGBTQ rights in your work, or supporting LGBTQ family members or friends. Now, more than ever, we encourage everyone who believes in their equality to come out for equality and find out more about how they can be an ally," says Pete Mercer, Head of Global Programmes, Stonewall (UK).

"In our country where homosexuality legalisation is yet to complete two years, this is our leap of faith to create a

large-scale, global movement to advocate for equal rights and fair treatment for the LGBTQ+. We believe that allies are some of the most effective and powerful voices for this movement. The contribution of allies in terms of helping create a space of comfort, help bridge the gap in understanding of others with respect to the importance of equality, fairness, acceptance and mutual respect, can be vast," says Ramkrishna Sinha, Co-Founder, Pride Circle, commenting on this empowering initiative.

BEYOND BORDERS

The training provided to Self Help Groups has not only helped members but also the vulnerable sections of society across the country, says NARENDRA SINGH BISHT

According to a recently published World Bank report, "Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in India have risen to the extraordinary challenge of COVID-19 pandemic. They are meeting the shortfalls in masks, sanitisers and protective equipment, running community kitchens, fighting misinformation and even providing banking and financial solutions to far-flung communities." The data from the same report suggests that around 20,000 SHGs across 27 Indian states had produced more than 19 million masks, over 1,00,000 litres of sanitiser and nearly 50,000 litres of hand wash by April 11.

This is not the first time that SHGs have come forward to help the nation in dealing with a disaster. In four decades, they have helped our country survive through droughts, floods, famines, earthquakes and riots. Started with the purpose of promoting financial independence among rural communities, especially among women, and offering them loans on special rates, SHGs have come a long way.

It was in 1980s that the self-help group movement had begun in India when several NGOs mobilised and organised poor communities in rural areas to provide formal channels for social and financial support." According to researchers, Misha Sharma and Shreya Chatterjee, "This programme gained momentum with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) linking a small number of groups with banks. Called the Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Programme (SBLP), the revolutionary initiative connected group members — many of whom never had a bank account before — to formal financial services in a sustainable and scalable manner."

Today, SHGs are at the core of development in rural societies, helping those below poverty line secure loans to sustain their micro and small-scale agriculture and agriculture-allied endeavours. In hilly areas, where earning opportunities are meagre (and even lesser for women), SHGs have become a platform synonymous with financial independence. According to Ministry of Rural Development's website, of the total 64,53,268 SHGs in the country, 30,802 groups are working in the hill state of Uttarakhand.

They have changed the outlook of women in this state. "Earlier, my family could not afford to fulfill even the simplest of its wishes. Whatever little we earned, was spent on meeting our basic needs. After becoming a member of the SHG, I learnt the art of saving money and that has helped me become financially independent," shared Parvati Devi, an active member of Parvati Self-Help Group which is active in Toli, a small vil-



lage. With over two decades of existence, the SHGs have become more than just a medium for securing loans and savings. Several livelihood schemes are launched by government every financial year to empower women economically — these groups act as delivery mechanism for implementation of such programmes. Their active presence in every village helps both, government and non-government organisations, to reach out to maximum number of women and encourage them to participate in livelihood and skill trainings, community development programmes and much more.

One of the many organisations in Uttarakhand, the Central Himalayan Environment Association (CHEA), Nainital, adopted 33 women SHGs in Almora and Nainital districts in 2018 under its project funded by Department of Science and Technology. With the participation of 345 women, these adopted groups were able to save '4,75,000 under this project. This money was then

offered as a loan to its group members to fulfill their urgent household needs. A part of the amount was also borrowed by members for agriculture-related activities. The low-interest rates and smooth process of returning money through EMIs without going to the banks helped villagers pay back their loans on time.

In the last two years, CHEA has helped us to grow — right from educating and encouraging us to save money and invest the borrowed amount in livelihood generation activities — and guided us at every step. Attending their group meetings has improved our knowledge about several schemes. We are informed about different government and non-government projects running in our areas and have benefitted from them," shared Deepa Devi, a member of a SHG group adopted by CHEA.

The SBLP has helped rural communities in Uttarakhand and in other states, especially the women, become financially empowered. Women and men working as small and marginal farmers, farm labourers, artisans have found guidance



in these SHGs which promote the concept of mutual support among the communities. Their collective strength becomes even more visible during difficult times such as these when the entire country is fighting the pandemic. It is the SHGs across the country which have come forward to help the most vulnera-

ble sections of their respective societies. This proves that the training provided to them over the years is not only for 'self-help' but to serve others in difficult times like the ones we are witnessing.

(This article has been written under Sanjoy Ghose Media Fellowship 2019-20.) —Charkha Features



SEARCH YOUR SOUL

Humans need cordial relations with their fellow beings based on rights and duties, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

We live in a society that appears increasingly numb to the causes and effects of human suffering," pens popular author Michelle Mary Lelwica. So what exactly is ailing the world we live in? Today, if one turns on the television to watch news, the level of misery shown through the visuals is simply unprecedented. Despite so much distress around, we still fail to take any action. Our hearts ache for the tragedies, we witness, but only temporarily. For if we were to absorb the misery, then we would no longer be able to function in everyday life. Isn't it?

Many people have tried to diagnose the present ailments of society from their own stand-point based on their discipline. For example, if you ask an economist, he would say that all the present-day social, political and biological maladies emerge mainly from economic disparities and inequalities. The two economic systems are mainly responsible for poverty, malnutrition, armament race, political strife and what not. He might say that the rest of the problems are the offshoots or the other sufferings could be eliminated once humans are free from their economic burdens. Some other person would emphasise that a proper political system is the need of the hour as it, alone, can act to remove economic inequalities, end armament race, safeguard human rights and eliminate disharmony between various sections of society.



Similarly, others will give their point of view and explain their own theories and justify their significance for eliminating the present miseries. However, most of these views are quite illusory and depressing. In response to these, we have become defeatist regarding complex issues, yet we jump on to the more trivial causes to deliver equally trivial solutions. Our perceptions have been so undermined that the most pertinent issues remain as they are. Whereas, the bulk of activism that gains mass attention and hype focuses on the superficial. The media provides ridiculous distractions, which the public responds to with excitement. At a time where we, as a society, should be discussing about real issues affecting lives of millions of our brethren, we entertain ourselves watching the so-called important people fight during news channel debates.

Amid this chaos, the real issues are being swept under the rug because they are too complex and they require some critical analysis. The mainstream media avoids tackling these because they are too boring and puzzling for the audience. A spectacle has seeped into our culture and into our very way of life. We are constantly inundated with illusions and pretense. In front of the curtain is entertainment, distraction and superficiality, while behind the curtain lurks the truth and the critical voice that is often silenced. So who is to blame for this? If we go deeper within, our analysis would reveal that the root cause of all these sufferings is identity crisis. Yes, it's a truth that man does not know himself, nor does he correctly know his place in the cosmic scheme. As a result, he does not know his correct relationship with other human beings. This, in turn, leads to a lack of moral or spiritual values and it is that which has ultimately led to the break-down of all the systems. We should understand that nothing can work unless man has a cordial relationship with his fellow beings based on some values, which determine his rights and duties. So what is utmost necessary in the present crisis is the rational, practical knowledge of the self that can serve as the correct basis for all human relationships. So start some soul searching and embark on a wonderful journey of self discovery.

One of the greatest challenges facing the medical world today, is mental health. The stress of modern life has been taking a great toll on the peace and inner happiness of the human beings. Modern life and the pressure of material acquisitions have taken away the sense of deep harmony and values which once pervaded the lives of men and women in society. As Sujata Chatterji and I travelled across the world to 10 countries for shooting our film Yoga for Health & Global Harmony, we saw how this ancient system has helped to restore a sense of balance and happiness in practitioners. Truly, in a world being torn by mental ill-health and an all-pervasive sense of dissatisfaction as well as disorientation, yoga appears today to be the one workable solution.

Journey through the self

Through his film, *Yoga for Health & Global Harmony*, filmmaker, art historian and photographer BENOY K BEHL found that the ancient system has helped to restore a sense of balance and happiness in practitioners



the biological changes in the brain and other organs of the body. It should be conducive for better emotional recovery as well as mental health promotion.



Yoga can help repair the brain. There is an inbuilt system by which the brain could dynamically keep getting 'repaired' and one of the chemicals required for this is called the 'brain derived neurotropic factor'. We have demonstrated that the practice of yoga produced an increase in its level. So it means that the brain started developing some inherent strength to repair itself."

Esther Seegers, Teachers Training Course Student, Sivananda Yoga Farm, USA, explains, "I have seen the chaos among teenagers, especially the substance abuse in high schools.

They need help. They have no idea about whom they should turn to and they are basically numbing their feelings and their true nature because they feel that they are not able to be who they

are. And yes, there is not enough compassion or it's just that they need help at the end of the day. It is yoga that can give us that."

Yoga researcher and expert, Dr Sat Bir Khalsa from Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, USA, believes that yoga has a relevance. "It provides skills and outcomes that society currently doesn't have. These are essentially behavioural skills that allow us to manage our minds, bodies and emotions in very effective ways," shares he.

In another interview, Landon Gallant, sportsman and Teachers Training Course Student, Sivananda Yoga Farm, USA, says, "I played soccer for 28 years and the last half of that time was very aggressive. The physical nature of game called for a certain body type. So as I have slowly evolved away from that, I have completely surrendered to the practice of yoga. I was able to transform myself from an animal warrior to a spiritual warrior. This allows your ego to soften and become like water. Your life, your heart will open up and so will your mind."

Never bend your head. Always hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye. —Helen Keller

DRINK COFFEE TO CUT DIGESTIVE DISORDERS

Drinking coffee may help reduce the risk of certain digestive disorders, including gallstone disease and pancreatitis, a new study has suggested.

The study from the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC) also highlighted other beneficial effects that coffee consumption may have on the process of digestion, including supporting gut microflora and promoting gut motility.

"Data indicates benefits against common digestive complaints such as constipation as well as a potential reduction in the risk of more serious conditions like chronic liver diseases," said study author Carlo La Vecchia from the University of Milan in Italy.

While the mechanism by which coffee may protect against gallstone disease is not yet known, it has been observed that the risk for the condition declines with increasing daily consumption of coffee, the researchers said.



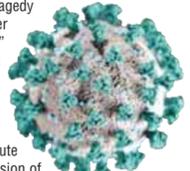
LACK OF VENTILATION UPS AIR TRANSMIT RISK

Researchers have found that the lack of adequate ventilation increases the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19.

In a study, published in the City and Environment Interaction journal, experts from the University of Surrey (UK) said that preventing airborne transmission should be the next front of the battle against the virus.

"These past months, living through the COVID-19 crisis, has been truly unprecedented. But we must turn this global tragedy into an opportunity to better prepare for similar threats," said study author Prashant Kumar, Professor at the University of Surrey.

The study highlights improving building ventilation as a possible route to tackling indoor transmission of COVID-19. "We discuss the need to acknowledge the airborne spread inside built spaces under eased movement restrictions and the potential steps to control it," the study authors wrote.



YOUNGSTERS MORE LIKELY TO BE LONELY

Loneliness may decrease as you age. The study carried out by Exeter, Manchester and Brunel universities, found that a young man living in an individualistic society — such as the UK or the US — is more likely to report feeling lonely than an older woman in a collectivist society — such as China or Brazil.

"Contrary to what people may expect, loneliness is not a predicament unique to older people. In fact, youngsters report greater feelings of loneliness," said study researcher Manuela Barreto from the University of Exeter in the UK.

Since loneliness stems from the sense that one's social connections are not as good as desired, this might be due to the different expectations younger and older people hold. "There is an awareness that admitting to feeling 'lonely' can be especially stigmatising for men," said study author Pamela Qualter from the University of Manchester.



10% DIABETIC-COVID CASES DIE WITHIN 7 DAYS

One in 10 COVID-19 patients with diabetes die within seven days of hospitalisation, a new study has claimed.

The findings, published in the journal 'Diabetologia', show that two-third (65 per cent) of COVID-19 patients with diabetes are men and the average age of the patient is 70 years.

According to the researchers from France, the presence of diabetic complications and increasing age raises the risk of death, while increased Body Mass Index (BMI) is associated with both heightened risk of needing mechanical ventilation and with higher risk of death. However, worse blood sugar control doesn't seem to impact a patient's outcome.

Across all the patients in this study, by Day 7 one in five (20.3 per cent) had been intubated and were placed on a ventilator in intensive care, and one in 10 (10.3 per cent) had died.



ANAESTHETIC TRIGGERS ALCOHOL USE DISORDER

Early exposure to anaesthetics in life may make adolescents more susceptible to developing alcohol use disorder (AUD), warn researchers.

Anaesthetics are commonly used drugs in the healthcare field and are often administered to children to induce unconsciousness and immobility during surgeries.

Researchers discovered that anaesthetic exposure during adolescence may be an environmental risk factor that leads to an increased susceptibility to developing AUD later in life.

Although not all adolescents who drink alcohol develop AUDs, the research team said it's important to identify risk factors that contribute to an increased susceptibility to alcohol abuse.



AFF ■ MOENCHENGLADBACH

NO FANS, NO PROBLEM

Thuram's brace helps M'gladbach spoil Union outing in front of cut-out supporters

Borussia Moenchengladbach routed Union Berlin 4-1 on Sunday to go third in the Bundesliga with French striker Marcus Thuram scoring twice and taking a knee in protest at the death of an unarmed black man in the United States.

"Marcus has made the point. He has set an example against racism that we all support," Gladbach coach Marco Rose said of Thuram's protest.

First-half goals by midfielder Florian Neuhaus, who bagged Gladbach's 3,000th goal in the Bundesliga, and Thuram put Gladbach 2-0 up at the break when he headed home unmarked at the far post.

The 22-year-old French striker then took a knee on the Borussia Park turf, imitating NFL star Colin Kaepernick.

"No explanation needed," wrote Borussia Moenchengladbach on the club's official Twitter account.

It was the latest show of Bundesliga solidarity with the current protests sweeping the United States.

Schalke's US midfielder Weston McKennie wore an armband in Saturday's defeat to Werder Bremen bearing the words "Justice for George".



Moenchengladbach players celebrate in front of the cardboard cutouts of Borussia Dortmund fans at the end of the Bundesliga match.



George Floyd, 46, died in Minneapolis during an arrest by a police officer who pinned him to the ground for several minutes by kneeling on his neck.

Just after the break in Gladbach, Union's Swedish striker Sebastian Andersson pulled one back after being left unmarked.

Gladbach pulled away when Thuram added his second after pressing the Union defence.

Alassane Plea then grabbed a goal of his own for Gladbach, having set up Thuram's first, when he fired home off his left foot to make

it 4-1 on 81 minutes when he beat Union goalkeeper Rafal Gikiewicz.

After the final whistle, the Gladbach squad celebrated in front of terraces filled with cardboard figures of fans.

There were 15,000 cut-outs on the terraces at Borussia Park with home supporters paying 19 euros (\$21) each to have their image at the game as fans remain shut out to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

After a 3-1 defeat to Leverkusen last weekend, and a goalless draw with relegation-threatened Werder Bremen on Tuesday, this was an important win for Gladbach.

It lifted them to third in the table, but RB Leipzig can take their place if they win at Cologne on Monday.

On Saturday, reigning champions Bayern Munich opened a 10-point lead with a 5-0 thrashing of Fortuna Dusseldorf with the league's top-scorer Robert Lewandowski netting twice.

Later Sunday, second-placed Borussia Dortmund can trim Bayern's lead if they win at bottom side Paderborn.

Five subs 'awful' idea: Gasperini

AFF ■ BERGAMO

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini on Sunday slammed as 'awful' the new rule which now allows teams to make five substitutions in a match instead of three.

"Five subs? Terrible. The game is distorted," Gasperini told *Gazzetta Dello Sport*.

"We become basketball. There may be ten new players on the pitch at the end."

FIFA has made the temporary change to ease the physical strain on players, who are returning to a congested period of games after a lengthy break due to the coronavirus pandemic. But it could favour the bigger clubs, such as Juventus, who have deeper squads and better players ready to come off the bench.

"Who's the genius who claims that injuries can be avoided?" continued the former Inter Milan coach.

"On that basis? Better to change your engine halfway through the Grand Prix. It takes away from the show."

How can you be allowed to change your engine halfway through the Grand Prix. It takes away from the show."

Serie A returns on June 20 with Gasperini's side in fourth, and battling for the final



Champions League berth in Italy. "I don't like football without fans either, but it's the only way to start again," he continued.

"During the first day of the Bundesliga I zapped, I could not follow, Borussia-Bayern, on the other hand, was a good game."

"I saw many technical errors even from important players — in an empty stadium it is more difficult to stay focused."

Sampdoria coach Claudio Ranieri, however, hailed five substitutions "a great thing" as his side battle relegation.

"The heat and matches close together carry a risk for players," said the former Leicester City manager.

"When there will be three games a week the stress will be considerable."

Mahi always emotional about cricket: Sakshi

IANS ■ CHENNAI

The common perception might be that Mahendra Singh Dhoni does not show a lot of emotion on the field and is *Captain Cool*. But on Sunday, the iconic former India captain's wife Sakshi said that Dhoni is always emotional about the game as it is his love.

While talking about Dhoni getting emotional after leading Chennai Super Kings to their third Indian Premier League title in 2018, Sakshi said during an *Instagram Live* chat on CSK's official handle: "Mahi (Dhoni's pet name) is always emotional about cricket. It's his love."

Rajasthan Royals (RR) along with CSK are making a comeback to the IPL after a two-year ban. Sakshi also revealed how the avid gamer in Dhoni helps the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman relax.

"Video games are a stress buster for him. He has a thinking brain which doesn't rest. So video games help him and he is



now too much into *Call Of Duty* and *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds* (PUBG)."

Sakshi also joked that only she can pick up a fight with ice-cool Dhoni who last turned out for India during their loss to New Zealand in the 2019 World Cup semi-final.

"Nobody picks up a fight with him. I am the only one," she smiled. Sakshi also revealed that Dhoni has always kept his door open during tours and players could walk in any time

Don't know where these come from: Sakshi on MS retirement rumours

CHENNAI: Mahendra Singh Dhoni's wife Sakshi on Sunday said the iconic former India captain has had virtually no presence on social media during the Covid-19 induced lockdown and therefore the sudden trends about him hanging up his boots baffles her.

A hashtag, namely #DhoniRetires, recently started trending on social media but soon, it became apparent that it was just another false rumour.

"He has had zero presence on social media during this

lockdown, I don't know where these things come from. I just don't know," Sakshi said.

Sakshi had previously rubbished rumours of the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman's retirement from international cricket following the *Twitter* trends. "It's only rumours! I understand Lockdown has made people mentally unstable! #DhoniRetires... Get a life!" (sic), Sakshi had written on *Twitter*.

However, just a few minutes after posting the tweet, she deleted it.

they wanted.

"Mahi has always kept his door open. It has been like that since 2010 (when we got married). People come... we chat sometimes till 3-4 in the morning. When they come to talk to

Mahi about cricket, I go away,"

Sakshi also said CSK has always been a family to them. "It is nice to be part of the family. They take the sport as sport and there are no hard feelings."

Marcelo can't wait to start playing matches

MADRID: Real Madrid left-back Marcelo said that the players 'can't wait' to get back to playing regular football.

"We had never gone so long without being able to train out on the pitch and our desire to play football has been growing ever since we stopped. Now we're close to getting going again and we can't wait," Marcelo told Real Madrid's official website.

"It's been different to what we're used to. We have to take the positives from it and now we're used to the routine; it's not like it used to be but everything's good. We're all healthy, the training sessions have been fantastic in recovering our rhythm. "Having not touched a ball for so long, when you go back out on the pitch you've lost your touch a bit, but now we just can't wait to start playing games," he added.

IANS

Icardi signs PSG deal



AFF ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain international Mauro Icardi from Inter Milan on a four-year deal after taking up the option to

buy the on-loan forward, the two clubs announced on Sunday.

Icardi joined PSG this season and impressed with 20 goals in 31 games, before the Ligue 1 campaign was stopped and his club crowned champions because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Paris Saint-Germain are delighted to announce the signing of Mauro Icardi on a permanent deal, following the striker's loan from Inter Milan during the 2019-2020 season," the French club said in a statement.

Icardi, who has eight caps for Argentina, but also holds an Italian passport, has signed a four-year deal until June 30, 2024.

Given the current economic situation the French champions succeeded in reducing the fee "to under" 60 million euros (\$66 million), as opposed to the 70 million euros initially requested, according to the French and Italian sports press.

Inter Milan thanked Icardi "for the six seasons he spent with us and wish him the best for his future professional career."

SL cricketers to resume training

COLOMBO: A group of 13 Sri Lankan cricketers, comprising mainly bowlers, will resume training on Monday following the coronavirus hiatus, the country's cricket board said on Sunday.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said in a statement that a "selected squad of 13 members will undergo a 12-day Residential Training Camp at the Colombo Cricket Club".

"The players taking part in the camp represents a general squad chosen from across all formats, and primarily consist of bowlers, as they need more time for 'conditioning' before going into active competition," the statement said.

The coaching and support staff overseeing the training of the players will consist of a four-member unit. All the players will strictly adhere to the health regulations imposed by the Government.

The SLC said it has "taken all required measures in consultation with the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Health to



ensure the safety of every individual involved in this exercise, and has formulated a set of procedures to adhere, during the camp period and before."

The governing body said "members taking part in the camp, will not be allowed to leave the hotel premises or the practice venue to attend personal matters during the training period".

The South African Government has also allowed non-contact sports, including cricket, to return to play, a decision hailed by Cricket South Africa (CSA) acting CEO Jacques Faul as a "big boost".

He said the Covid Steering Committee will meet on Monday to draw up a protocol covering the return to training and playing. "At this stage these regulations apply only to professional cricket and our next step will be to draw up a protocol covering the return to training and playing and submit it to SRSA for approval."

"Both our national teams and our franchises will in due time be given the green light to return to training."

Faul, however, said no one will be forced to resume training.

PTI

I am enjoying my cricket: Ishant



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

He has been phenomenal in the last few years and India pacer Ishant Sharma simply believes that it has to do with him "enjoying his cricket".

The 31-year-old, who is India's senior-most cricketer in the current set-up with 97 Tests, said that he wouldn't probably like to sledge Steve Smith during the next tour of Australia, unlike the 2017 home series game in Bengaluru where his facial expression became a meme.

"I am in that phase of my career where I am enjoying my cricket and more I enjoy, better it is. I will take more wick-

ets and win matches for the team unless you guys want to provoke me and get me banned," Ishant, known for his dry sense of humour, said. He was speaking to teammate Mayank Agarwal during a podcast, *Open Nets with Mayank*, and aired by *bcci.Tv*.

When Agarwal asked about his now-famous facial gesture to the former Australian captain, the senior speedster said that the sole aim was to upset Smith's rhythm.

"I was trying to upset Steve Smith's rhythm. We knew if we could get that wicket, we would have a better chance of winning. Virat doesn't mind aggression. He is an aggressive captain and only thing he will tell is 'just get me the wicket but make sure you don't get banned'."

Ishant, who was a part of the pace quartet during the 2018-19 historic series win in Australia, still cherishes the feat.

"I have been on for tours to Australia (since 2007-08) and I know how tough it is. Having heard all these years that we don't win in Australia, you have that eagerness and urge to win."



Misbah backs Babar to succeed as captain

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's head coach-cum-chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq has backed Babar Azam to succeed as the national team's ODI and T20 captain despite former batting coach Grant Flower expressing concerns over his ability to handle the pressure that comes with the job.

Misbah said the 25-year-old Azam has shown he is capable of dealing with the expectations.

"Making Babar captain of the T20 team last year was a tester really. We wanted to see how he will respond to the challenge and how it will affect his batting," Misbah said in an interview.

"But all of us agreed that he handled the pressure well and if anything the responsibility of being captain only made him show more responsibility as a batsman," he added.

Azam was given leadership of Pakistan's ODI team earlier this month.

Flower, who worked with the Pakistan team as batting coach from 2014 till after last year's World Cup, expressed concerns about Azam's capability to captain in two formats and be the team's best batsman as well.

"He's got a good cricketing brain but there's a lot of politics in Pakistan cricket and a lot of pressure from the public," Flower was quoted as saying by *Stats Perform News*.

"If you start losing, it's one thing being the best batsman but that will put pressure on your batting skills and it can all come tumbling down pretty quickly."

"We've seen with great players in the past the pressures that captaincy can bring, but some players get better and if he gets better than the world is his oyster. Time will tell," he added.

However, former Pakistan captain Misbah said Azam's batting has already scaled a different level during the tour of Australia last year.

"That is why we decided to also give him the responsibility of leading the ODI team. I think he is ready for the challenge and he should thrive as the team's top batsman as well."

Misbah didn't agree with Flower's assertion of politics in Pakistan cricket and pressure from the public. "The way I look at it, being a top batsman he is best suited to lead the team by example and this would make it easier for him to also take strong decisions and for the team to follow him," Misbah said.

US Open plan in work



AP ■ NEW YORK

Charter flights to ferry US Open tennis players and limited entourages from Europe, South America and the Middle East to New York.

Negative Covid-19 tests before travelling. Centralized housing. Daily temperature checks.

No spectators. Fewer on-court officials. No locker-room access on practice days.

All are among the scenarios being considered for the 2020 US Open —

if it is held at all amid the coronavirus pandemic — and described to *The Associated Press* by a high-ranking official at the Grand Slam tournament.

"All of this is still fluid," Stacey Allaster, the US Tennis Association's chief executive for professional tennis, said in a telephone interview on Saturday. "We have made no decisions at all."

With that caveat, Allaster added that if the USTA board does decide to go forward with the Open, she expects it to be held at its usual site and in its usual spot on the calendar. The main draw is scheduled to start August 31.

"We continue to be, I would say, 150% focused on staging a safe environment for conducting a US Open at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on our dates. It's all I wake up — our team wakes up — thinking about," Allaster said.

"The idea of an alternative venue, an alternative date ... We've got a responsibility to explore it, but it doesn't have a lot of momentum."

An announcement should come from "mid-June to end of June," Allaster said.

WFI to nominate Vinesh for Khel Ratna

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World Championship Bronze medallist Vinesh Phogat is set to be nominated for Khel Ratna for the second year in a row while Rio Olympic Bronze winner Sakshi Malik wants to be in contention for the Arjuna award, although she is already a recipient of country's highest sporting honour.

Vinesh, who is the lone woman wrestler to have qualified for the now-postponed Tokyo Olympics, had missed out on the honour last year with fellow grappler Bajrang Punia getting the prestigious award.

She has been consistent in the last three years, winning Asian Games Gold in Jakarta. She qualified for the Tokyo Games by winning a Bronze at the World Championship in Nur Sultan in 2019.

Early this year, she won a Bronze at the Asian Championship, held in New



Delhi.

"We will send Vinesh's application on Monday for Khel Ratna. She will be a strong contender. But we have not yet decided on Arjuna award application because we have received many applications. The WFI President will have a look and decide whose application is to be forwarded to the ministry,"

WFI Assistant Secretary Vinod Tomar said.

"We still have time till June 3. But most likely the names will be sent tomorrow (Monday)," he added.

A WFI source said Sakshi, who has been struggling badly of late, has sent her application for the Arjuna. She had got Khel Ratna in 2016 along with gymnast Dipa Karmakar and shooter Jitu Rai.

Recently she lost twice to young grappler Sonam Malik, who stopped the elite athlete from making the cut even for the Asian Olympic Qualifiers.

It will be interesting to see if WFI sends her name since 2019 World Championship Silver medallist Deepak Punia (86kg) and very-talented Rahul Aware (61kg, non-olympic category) have also sent their applications for the Arjuna.

"She had no achievement before the Rio Games, so her name was not sent for Arjuna. Since she won a Bronze in Rio,

she (directly) got the Khel Ratna that time. Now she wants the Arjuna award as well," the source said.

If WFI goes by performance, it will not send Sakshi's name because better performers like Deepak Punia and Rahul Aware stand a better chance to get the award as they will compete with brilliant athletes from other disciplines.

Also sending his application to WFI for the Arjuna is Sandeep Tomar, who was a strong candidate in the 57kg before the rise of Ravi Dahiya, the 2019 World Championship Bronze medallist.

While application have to be filled by the athletes, it is the national federation which has to recommend names for the sports awards to the ministry. The athletes can still send their applications if their form is endorsed by their state unit or a former national awardee — Arjuna, Khel Ratna, Dhyan Chand or or Dronacharya.