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LUCKNOW, TUESDAY JUNE 2, 2020; PAGES 14 ₹3



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VARUN IS MISSING HIS PEOPLE
12 VIVACITY

Booster dose for MSMEs, farmers

Cabinet OK's ₹20K cr for MSMEs, hikes MSP for kharif crops

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Wednesday announced a major scheme for the revival of micro, small & medium enterprise and enhanced the minimum support price for kharif crops to ease off the problems of farmers due to Covid-19 and protracted lockdown.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) announced ₹20,000 crore financial package for two lakh "stressed" MSMEs and ₹50,000 crore "Fund of Fund" equity infusion plan to the medium and small units to enable list in stock markets.

Later Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a dedicated one-stop portal "Champions" for the MSMEs to avail the benefits announced in the Atmanirbhar package.

Detailing the Cabinet announcements, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Prakash Javadekar said these two packages will help the millions of MSME units to tide over their bank NPA problems and get more loans as well as new fund infusion. "With today's approval, implementation modalities and road map



Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs a Cabinet meeting in New Delhi on Monday

for entire components of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package are in place. This will help in attracting investments and creating more jobs in the MSME sector," said Gadkari, adding that new single window portal 'Champions' will take care of the grievances of MSME units and also monitor their applications to banks under the

Atmanirbhar packages. Gadkari said the change in definition of MSME will help the small and medium enterprises to get more help from financial institutions. He said that the Government has also formed ₹4,000 crore distressed asset fund for the revival of small and medium units in the country. "The definition of

micro manufacturing and services unit was increased to ₹1 crore of investment and ₹5 crore of turnover. The limit of small unit was increased to ₹10 crore of investment and ₹50 crore of turnover. Similarly, the limit of a medium unit was increased to ₹20 crore of investment and ₹100 crore turnover. The revision was done after

14 years since the MSME Development Act came into being in 2006. After the package announcement on May 13, the Government received several representations that the announced revision was still not in tune with market and pricing conditions and it should be revised upwards. **Continued on Page 10**

Community transmission well established: Experts

They paint gloomy picture in report to PM, assert Covid can't be eliminated at present stage

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Contrary to the Government's stand, a group of health experts, including eminent doctors from the AIIMS and ICMR on Covid-19, has said that community transmission stage of the coronavirus infection has been well-established across large sections or sub-populations in the country.

"It is unrealistic to expect that Covid-19 pandemic can be eliminated at this stage given that community transmission is already well-established across large sections or sub-populations in the country," they said while painting a gloomy picture of the state of the deadly disease in a report which has now been submitted to the Prime Minister.

The report comes amidst spurt of cases in major States



Medics wearing protective kits work inside a mobile coronavirus testing facility bus in New Delhi on Monday

like Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Bihar.

The report compiled by experts from the Indian Public Health Association (IPHA), Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine (IAPSM), and Indian Association of Epidemiologists (IAE) is damning in nature and also slams the Government for failing to take timely adequate steps to contain the disease for which "India is paying a heavy price, both in terms of humanitarian crisis and disease spread."

"The expected benefit of this stringent nationwide lockdown was to spread out the disease over an extended period of time to flatten the curve and effectively plan and manage so that the healthcare delivery system is not overwhelmed. This seems to have been achieved albeit after lockdown 4.0 with extraordinary inconvenience and disruption of the economy and life of the general public," said the report. **Continued on Page 10**

Haryana, Odisha too join the race

Maharashtra, TN, Delhi, Gujarat, UP remain biggest contributors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Haryana and Odisha on Monday recorded biggest single day spike in the number of Covid-19 cases after Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh remained the major contributors in sustaining the high figure on a daily basis for weeks.

Haryana reported 265 new cases, which is its highest daily count, taking the total number of positive cases in the State to 2,356. Haryana has seen steady rise in the number of cases during the last one week. State's ruling politicians have blamed Delhi for the spike and sealed the State's border with the national Capital.

Odisha reported 156 new cases on Monday which took its overall tally of cases to 2,104. The State has seen a gradual increase in the number of cases since the migrants workers began to return in tens of thousands.

Jammu & Kashmir reported 155 new cases — 56 from Kashmir division and 99 from Jammu division. Total positive cases in the Union Territory

Covid-19 in India

TOTAL CASES: 1,98,317

DEATHS: 5,608

RECOVERED: 95,714

ACTIVE: 96,984

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	70,013	2,362	30,108
Tamil Nadu	23,495	187	13,170
Delhi	20,834	523	8,746
Gujarat	17,217	1,063	10,780
Rajasthan	9,100	199	6,213
Uttar Pradesh	8,361	222	5,030
Madhya Pradesh	8,283	358	5,003
West Bengal	5,772	325	2,306
Bihar	3,945	23	1,741
Andhra Pradesh	3,676	64	2,374
Karnataka	3,408	52	1,328
Telangana	2,792	88	1,491
Jammu & Kashmir	2,601	31	946
Haryana	2,356	21	1,055
Punjab	2,301	44	2,000

stand at 2,601 including 1,624 active cases. West Bengal added 271 new cases, which took its tally of positive cases to 5,772 while the death toll is at 253. Karnataka reported 2,187 cases which took its tally to 3,408.

Maharashtra's count rose to 70,013 cases with 2,362 deaths. The State reported 2,361 new cases on Monday. The recovery rate from the coronavirus pandemic in Maharashtra improved to 43.35 per cent in

the month of May. As many as 40 deaths and 1,413 new Covid-19 positive cases were reported in Mumbai on Monday, taking the total number of cases in the city to 40,877. Municipal Corporation Greater Mumbai said.

Meanwhile, the State's doubling rate has also improved. It is 17.5 days now, as compared to 11 days earlier.

After reporting 1,295 cases on Sunday, Delhi on Monday

added 990 new Covid-19 cases. Delhi's total case count has now risen to 20,834 with a total death toll of 523.

The day Tamil Nadu chose to relax the lockdown and allow factories, IT companies and business establishments to resume operations, it saw 1,162 persons testing positive for corona virus, the highest number of cases to be registered on a single day.

Continued on Page 10

14 more test +ve in City

Nine GRP personnel among those infected

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Fourteen more persons, including nine GRP personnel, tested positive for coronavirus infection in the state capital on Monday.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Narendra Agarwal said that besides the GRP personnel, three contacts of a health worker from Chinhat who had tested positive recently, the daughter of an RPF personnel and a man admitted to KGMU tested positive on Monday.

The CMO inspected the community health centre and the Covid care centre at Surya Institute of Engineering College in Mohanlanjan to check the facilities there. He also reviewed the work of ASHA workers

A total of 291 swab samples were taken under contact surveillance and sent to King

George's Medical University lab for testing.

Two COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals in the city after testing negative for the infection.

Across the state, five more persons lost their lives to coronavirus even as 296 more tested positive on Monday.

While two COVID-19 deaths were reported from Meerut, one patient each died in Lucknow, Kanpur and Aligarh, taking the toll to 222. Among the new cases reported on Monday, 27 were from NOIDA and 24 each from Gorakhpur and Sant Kabir Nagar, taking the statewide tally to 8,361.

As many as 187 COVID-19 patients were discharged from various hospitals on Monday. With his 5,030 infected persons have recovered in the state so far.

Airlines should keep middle seat vacant if feasible, says DGCA

Otherwise passenger on middle seat will be provided with PPE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday issued a circular instructing the airlines to keep the middle seat vacant if the passenger load and seat capacity permits. The order, which will be effective from June 3, however, States that members of the same family can be allowed to sit together.

If the middle seat, or the seat between two passengers, is occupied due to passenger load, then additional protective equipment like the Ministry of Textiles-approved wrap-around gown will be given to the individual occupying the intervening seat, in addition to three-layered face mask and face shield. The Government had earlier said it would not be viable to keep middle seats vacant as fares would shoot up.

From now on, no meals or



drinking water shall be provided on board except in extreme circumstance, the DGCA order read. The DGCA order said airlines must provide a safety kit to each passenger. It shall include a three-layered surgical mask, a face shield and adequate amount of sanitiser in either a sachet or a bottle.

The embarkation or disembarkation shall be sequential and passengers shall be advised by airlines to follow the instructions. The passenger should not rush towards the exit as soon as the flight lands. Airlines must ensure the orderly entry and exit of the travellers, it said.

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CAPSULE

NO BADGE NEEDED FOR DRIVING RENTED CAB
New Delhi: Tourists and others hiring cabs and motorcycles for self-driving will not be required to carry badges if they are holding a domestic driving licence or an international driving permit (IDP), the Government said on Monday.

DANIEL PEARL CASE: PAK'S SC BACKS ACQUITTALS
Islamabad: Pakistan's Supreme Court on Monday rejected a petition filed by the Sindh Government to suspend a High Court verdict that overturned convictions of al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and his three aides in the kidnapping and murder case of American journalist Daniel Pearl.

MUSIC DIRECTOR WAJID KHAN PASSES AWAY
Mumbai: Wajid Khan, Bollywood's one of the finest music directors, of the popular music composer duo Sajid-Wajid passed away in the early hours on Monday morning due to complications arising from a kidney infection, that included cardiac arrest and coronavirus infection. Close family and brother Sajid attended his last rites on late Monday afternoon. He was 42. He had a kidney transplant, and was on the ventilator for the last four days.

1,000 foreign goods delisting 'erroneous', CAPF to list afresh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the Central Police Canteens that cater to the Central paramilitary forces withdrew 1,000 foreign items from their stores, Welfare and Rehabilitation Board (WARB) Chairman and CRPF DG AP Maheshwari on Monday said the items were erroneously delisted and action is being taken against errant officials.

The move by the WARB follows instructions from the Home Ministry to rescind the order for removal of "imported" products sold at canteens. On May 29, an order delisting the "imported" products was issued. However, a number of products manufactured by Indian companies also figured on the list. Now a new reworked list will be brought out, officials said.

Maheshwari said, "This is clarified that the list issued by Kendriya Police Kalyan Bhandar (KPKB) on 29th May 2020 regarding delisting of



certain products has been erroneously issued at the level of CEO. The list has been withdrawn and action is being initiated for the lapse."

DIG-rank officer RM Meena is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) KPKB that runs paramilitary canteens across India.

The KPKB had formulated three categories of products to discriminate between locally manufactured and imported. In the first category, products made in India from scratch were included.

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Moody's demote India's sovereign rating 1st time in over 2 decades

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Monday downgraded India's sovereign credit rating for the first time in more than two decades, saying policymakers will be challenged to mitigate risks of low growth, deteriorating fiscal position and financial sector stress.

Downgrading India's rating by a notch to "Baa3" from "Baa2" assigned in November 2018, Moody's estimated India GDP shrinking by 4 per cent — first full fiscal contraction in more than four decades, as the country faces a prolonged period of slower growth.

Accordingly, India's foreign-currency and local-currency long-term issuer ratings have been downgraded to Baa3 from Baa2. India's local-currency senior unsecured rating too has been lowered to Baa3 from Baa2, and its short-term local currency rating to P-3 from P-2. The outlook remains negative. **Detailed report on P10**

Polls to 18 RS seats deferred due to corona now on June 19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The polls to 18 Rajya Sabha seats in seven States, deferred due to the coronavirus pandemic, will be held on June 19. The elections assume significance not just because it will be the first such electoral process ever since the outbreak of the Covid-19 contagion but also since it is politically crucial for the BJP and the Congress locked in a fierce contest in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan where the likes of Jyotiraditya Scindia, Digvijay Singh and KC Venugopal are in the fray.

Out of the 18 seats going to polls, four seats each are from Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, two from Jharkhand, three each from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and one each from Manipur and Meghalaya. Votes will be polled from 9 am to 4 pm on June 19 and counting will be done from 5 pm onwards on the same day. The results will be declared on June 22. **Continued on Page 10**

Monsoon keeps date with Kerala

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Southwest monsoon arrived in Kerala on Monday as predicted by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) bringing heavy rain to several parts in the State and marking the commencement of the four-month long rainfall season in the country. This year, monsoon rainfall would likely get 102 per cent more rain between June and September than what the IMD forecast in April.

Further away, from the west coast a cyclone Nisarga is brewing in the Arabian Sea and likely to hit north Maharashtra as well as the Gujarat coast by the June 3. The cyclone will bring heavy rainfall on coastal areas of Mumbai and Gujarat and may inundate low-lying areas.

Announcing the arrival of Southwest monsoon in Kerala, Madhavan Rajeevan, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, on Monday said India would get 102 per cent more than between June and September. "Most parts of India, except for the north-east are expected to get more rain than normal. North-west India is expected to get 107 per cent of



Fishermen row their traditional boats as they set out to fish in the morning in Kochi, Kerala on Monday

its normal, Central India-103 per cent and 102 per cent over south peninsula. North-eastern India, including Bihar, West Bengal, is expected to get only 96 per cent of its long term average. Rain in July were likely to be 3 per cent above what's usual for the month but August would see a 3 per cent decline," Rajeevan said while releasing second Long Range forecast for southwest monsoon 2020. In last 24 hours, most parts

of Kerala have reported heavy to very heavy rainfall.

"While unclear so far, the presence of the cyclone could delay the progress of the monsoon and put it into a 'hiatus', he said.

The IMD also stated that some possibility of development of weak La Niña conditions in the later part of the monsoon season that is good for the monsoon. **Continued on Page 10**

West UP corona spike worrying

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The spike in coronavirus positive cases has been oscillating between the vast swathes of the state, but in recent times, the western region, especially Noida, Ghaziabad and Meerut, has emerged as the ominous hotspot with 65 per cent of cases being reported from there. A senior official told *The Pioneer*, "We cannot say as to why cases are reported more from western parts now. One possibility could be its proximity to Delhi, which has been badly affected, or increase in testing."

It started with Agra reporting the first COVID-19 case and the infection slowly spread to Noida and adjoining areas, increasing the figures. The situation was so grim that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath camped in Noida and later sent senior IAS officers to seven districts of west UP to control the spread of the virus. But in the last few weeks, Purvanchal took the lead with migrant workers returning to their homes and triggering a spike.

On Sunday, the highest ever spike of 378 new cases was reported in UP, of which 248 were reported from west UP. Gautam Buddha Nagar (Noida) added 49 while neighbouring Ghaziabad accounted for 33 cases, Firozabad 19, Meerut and

DMs asked to regularly inspect quarantine centres, isolation wards

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh government has directed all district magistrates to make regular inspections of quarantine centres and isolation wards set up by the government.

Chief Secretary RK Tiwari, in a circular issued on Monday, directed the district officials to ensure availability of quality food and implementation of social distancing protocol.

The government directed doctors and paramedical staff of Covid hospitals to daily make rounds of the wards and ensure proper care of the patients. The government also directed hospital administrations to take special care in maintaining sanitation, providing quality food to the

patients and changing bed sheets daily.

The chief secretary also directed the district magistrates and chief medical officers to be in constant touch with the COVID-19 patients and obtain their feedback.

In the circular issued to all district magistrates, the chief secretary asked them to post a nodal officer at PDS shops for proper distribution of food grains to ration card holders. He said teachers of village primary schools, village panchayat secretary and staff from the block development office could also be posted as nodal officers.

The chief secretary also directed the officers to check short weighing at the PDS shops and ensure that all PDS

shop had POS (point of sale) machine. He also asked the district magistrates to motivate the state employees to download the Aarogya Setu App. Meanwhile, so far, the daily sample testing in UP stands at 10,000 and it is targeted to be ramped up to 15,000 by June 15 and to 20,000 by the month-end.

The state has also expanded the Covid beds count to 1,00,000 to deal with any eventuality. These beds have been arranged in Level-1, Level-2 and Level-3 Covid hospitals, although the government has estimated that going by the current rate of infection, UP will not need such large provisioning for COVID-19 patients and coronavirus suspects.

Sambhal 13 each being the most affected districts. On Saturday, Noida reported 23 cases, Ghaziabad 17, Moradabad 12, Kannauj 12, Baghpat 10. Eight districts reported cases in double digits and six were in west UP while two were in eastern part of the state. The biggest spike was however in Amethi with 42 cases as the state recorded 262 cases.

With 25 lakh migrants workers returning to UP during lockdown, the figures showed that they constituted nearly one-fourth of the total COVID-19 cases in UP. As per official figures, as of now, 2,165 migrants returning to the state tested positive for COVID-19. The official said that samples of 69,000 migrants were collected for testing, of which 2,165 tested positive.

"Eastern UP has started showing signs of recovery and 30 persons were discharged in Jaunpur, 11 in Barabanki and 24 in Ayodhya among 194 people discharged on Sunday," he said.

Principal Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said that the recovery percentage of coronavirus positive cases in Uttar Pradesh went up to 59.71 points.

Govt uses state plane to cart Covid-19 testing machines

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government engaged state aircraft to cart modern coronavirus testing machines to do away with delays and increase testing facilities across the state.

"State aircraft was used to bring 21 TrueNet machines from Mumbai. They will now be sent to districts for testing people with COVID-19 symptoms," said Principal Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad on Monday.

The principal secretary said the remaining 34 TrueNet machines would also be brought by state planes from Mumbai so that they could be set up in far flung districts to increase testing capacity.

"On the directive of the chief minister, the state aircraft is being used so that machines are set up without delay as transporting them by road from Mumbai could take at least a week," he said.

Earlier, 20 TrueNet machines were installed in districts last month due to which the testing capacity went up to 10,000 per day. The state government has set a target to double the testing to 20,000 tests per day by June-end.

The state labs tested 8,642 samples on Sunday, including 847 pool tests of five samples and 111 pool tests of 10 samples each. In five-sample pool tests, 100 people were found to be positive and in 10-sample pool tests, 20 were found positive for coronavirus infection.

Talking about the people admitted in Covid isolation wards, Prasad said that 3,141 people were being treated and of them 60 were on oxygen support and four had to be put on ventilator. He said 8,472 people were in quarantine and waiting for their report.

During tracking of home quarantined migrant workers, AASHA workers found 1,027 with coronavirus symptoms. More than 11.47 lakh migrant workers have been tracked so far.

Similarly, Aarogya Setu App alerted 59,823 people in the state out of which 127 were found positive and hospitalised. Of them, 55 have recovered, 1,479 are in quarantine centres and 46 are awaiting their test results.

Normalcy back as lockdown eases

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A semblance of normalcy was visible in the state capital and other parts of Uttar Pradesh barring Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar as the government offices and markets opened after the unprecedented lockdown of 68 days imposed on March 24 to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

The attendance in government offices was normal but there were no visitors in most of the offices and the state secretariat.

There was confusion over plying of public transport like auto and e-rickshaw. Due to lack of passengers, it is estimated that hardly 30 per cent of the public transport vehicles were on the road.

After a long gap, the power employees staged token demonstration at Shakti Bhawan after submitting a

memorandum to the UP Power Corporation Limited MD against the proposed amendment in Indian Electricity Act, 2003.

Though more than 60 per cent of the country's coronavirus fatalities have been reported from only two states, Maharashtra and Gujarat, the lockdown was strict in Uttar Pradesh.

Meanwhile the government on Monday extended the hours for opening of liquor shops till 9 pm.

After lockdown of 40 days, the liquor vends of India-Made Foreign Liquor and country liquor opened on May 5.

They were allowed to open from 12 noon to 7 pm. On Monday the time was extended to 9 pm.

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INDL. AREA PEERA GARHI CHOWK NEW DELHI-41

NTT NO-07/EE(NW)/1(2020-21)
PRESS NOTICE TENDER

S.No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to tender (Rs.)	E/M (Rs.) & processing Fee's	Dt. of release of tender procurement solution/I.D. No.	Last date/ time of receipt of tender through E-procurement solution
1.	Engagement of 20 No. Beldars on hire basis for day to day maintenance of water lines in Kirari (AC-09) under ZE-I/EE(NW).	Item Rate	70,000/- 500/-	28/05/2020/ 2020_DJB_191153_1	11-06-2020 at 3.00 P.M.

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

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Adv. No. J.S.V. 51(2020-21)

Sd/-
(Himanshu Agarwal)
EX. ENGINEER (NW/I)

CM stresses on reviving sick industrial units

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asked officials to chalk out an action plan to make sick industrial units functional to generate maximum employment and to implement unlock 1.0 effectively while following Centre's guidelines.

"Economic, commercial and industrial activities should be started with preventive measure while the police should effectively check gathering and security in markets," Yogi said while chairing a meeting to review unlock 1.0 at his official residence here on Monday.

The chief minister said that to create more jobs, an action plan should be prepared to revive industrial units for such units had to be mapped. He also asked officials to prepare an action plan for mango export from UP.

Yogi emphasised on revenue generation and said that serious efforts be made to reach the targets of June. He directed intensive patrolling on highways, markets and parks to ensure social distancing.

With commencement of daily trains,



the chief minister ordered that travellers be thoroughly checked at all stations and if anyone was found with symptoms, he/she be immediately shifted to the hospital. "Officers of administration, police and health department should be compulsorily deployed at railway stations to ensure scanning of every passenger. Hand bills on prevention from coronavirus should be given to each passenger," he said.

The chief minister asked officials to run quarantine centres and community

kitchens as effectively as was being done earlier. He said all migrant workers be taken to quarantine centres and medically screened.

The chief minister observed that effective surveillance system would help in commencing several activities, including intrastate bus services.

Meanwhile, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said that data of 24 lakh migrant workers had been collected and the number was likely to go up to 30 lakh by next week.

He said so far 1,587 Shramik Special trains had brought 21.50 lakh migrant workers and their families to UP and in the next two-three days, one lakh more migrants would be brought back from other states.

Most migrants came from Gujarat by 530 trains followed Maharashtra by 427 trains, from Punjab by 233 trains, from Karnataka by 53 trains, from Telangana by 23 trains, from Tamil Nadu by 37 trains, from Kerala by 13 trains, from J&K by two trains and from north eastern states by a couple of trains.

Priyanka Gandhi slams govt for poor health care

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After taking on the Yogi Adityanath government for poor testing of coronavirus suspects, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra slammed the regime over poor health care in government hospitals treating COVID-19 patients.

Uploading a video of community health centre in Kotwa (Bani) in Prayagraj, Priyanka tweeted "The patients were revealing the pathetic and poor condition of CHC and treatment given to them. It speaks the truth of prevailing health care services in government

hospitals treating Corona patients and is contrary to what was highlighted by the Yogi government."

The Congress leader advised the government to take corrective measures immediately as cases were still showing an upward trend.

"The number of patients are increasing in UP. So in the prevailing situation, present health care facilities in hospitals should be immediately upgraded and better conditions should be facilitated for quick recovery and control the spread of pandemic," she tweeted.

In the uploaded video, patients seem very annoyed

and are seen complaining of scarcity of drinking water, food and facilities. One of them is heard comparing himself to animal whom even water is not available.

Meanwhile, the twitter war between Congress leaders and Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Amethi, Smriti Irani, flared up after some Amethi locals put up posters claiming that Union Minister Irani was 'missing' from her constituency.

Put up on Monday morning, the posters accused Irani of playing antakshari instead of visiting Amethi during the medical emergency and went on to curse her for not visiting

the place once even as the situation worsened for the local inhabitants.

Uploading the posters on his twitter handle on Monday, Congress MLC Deepak Singh reminded Irani to visit her parliamentary constituency.

"Since winning the May 2019 poll, you (Irani) first visited Amethi on June 22, then for four hours on July 6, for two hours on August 28, and another time for four hours. It's a long time now, the people of Amethi and your party workers remember you. Spend time in Amethi, and not few hours," Singh tweeted, taking a jibe at the BJP leader.

Maya cautions govt over rising corona cases

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Asking the Central and the state governments to be more cautious on exiting the lockdown due to the rise in the number of coronavirus cases in the country, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Monday expressed concern over Nepal showing part of India in its territory and appealed to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government to immediately take up the issue.

She said the Centre and the state governments need to be "more serious" amid concerns over rising number of novel coronavirus cases.

"Amid rising cases of COVID-19 and increasing deaths, the government on 69th day of lockdown gave several relaxation which will continued till June 30," the former chief minister of UP pointed out in another tweet, adding that since the people now faced more threat of getting

infected, the responsibility of Central and state government had further increasing to check the virus from spreading.

She appealed to the government to take necessary steps in this regard.

Mayawati advised the Centre to seriously think about the "unexpected" step of neighbouring Nepal on the border issue.

"Nepal has prepared a new map in which it has shown Kalapani and 3790 kilometres of Indian territory as its area which has put India in trouble," Mayawati tweeted on Sunday, asking the Centre to immediately take up the issue with the neighbouring country so that map was rectified.

It may be mentioned that in a development which is likely to worsen the relations between India and Nepal over the disputed areas, the Himalayan country has officially issued a new map that shows Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura as its territory.

कार्यालय जिला बेसिक शिक्षा अधिकारी, सोनभद्र

पत्रांक :-एस०एस०ए०/एम०डी०एम०/९० / 2020-21 दिनांक-01-6-2020

निविदा शुद्धि-पत्र

जिला क्रय समिति के अनुमोदनोपरान्त जिला बेसिक शिक्षा अधिकारी सोनभद्र के कार्यालय पत्रांक - एस०एस०ए०/डी०ए०/273-77/20-21 दिनांक-21.05.2020 द्वारा परिषदीय विद्यालयों में फर्नीचर हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी थी। जिसे दिनांक 21-05-2020 को ई-टेंडर पोर्टल पर Tender ID 2020-UPEFA-473700-1 अपलोड किया गया था, जिसका Bid Submission End Date 05-Jun-2020 05.00 PM तक है। कुछ एक बिडर्स द्वारा दिनांक 31-05-2020 को अवगत कराया गया है कि ई-टेंडर पोर्टल पर BOQ अपलोड नहीं हो रहा है तथा Error message आ रहा है। तत्कम में ई-टेंडर पोर्टल पर अपलोड BOQ का परीक्षण किया गया, जिसमें Error "Please Enter the Basic Rate for S.No.1.04 In the Sheet BOQ I" प्रदर्शित हो रहा है। परिणाम स्वरूप दिनांक 01-06-2020 को समिति द्वारा सर्वसम्मति से लिये गये निर्णय के क्रम में BOQ की तकनीकी कमियों को दूर करने हेतु ई-टेंडर पोर्टल पर Create Corrigendum में Re-Tender विकल्प का प्रयोग करते हुये निविदा पुनः आमंत्रित की जाती है। उक्त निविदा में अब दिनांक-02-06-2020 से 09-06-2020 को सायं 05.00 बजे तक निविदा डाली जायेगी तथा दिनांक- 10-06-2020 को अपराह्न 02.00 बजे खोली जायेगी।

अतः पूर्व में निर्धारित नियम एवं शर्तों के अनुसार ई-टेंडर पोर्टल पर बिडर्स द्वारा बिड की कार्यवाही पूर्ण की जाय।

डॉ(रोखनाथ पटेल)
जिला बेसिक शिक्षा अधिकारी
सोनभद्र।

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सूचना

सर्वे साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरा पासपोर्ट में नाम त्रुटिवा शिवेन्द्र पाण्डेय हो गया है। जो कि असत्य है शिवेन्द्र पाण्डेय S/o कमल किशोर पाण्डेय है। पता-7/45, कुल्ला नगर कानपुर।

NOTICE

This is notified that my name is mentioned in service record as Smt. Rajrani but my complete name is Smt. Rajrani Rana. In future I shall be known both names for all purposes. Mrs. Rajrani Rana W/o Late Mr. Kartar Chand Rana, R/o Ibrahimpur, Nilmatha, Lucknow.

NOTICE

It is to be inform that I Gajendra Dhyani S/o Late Sri D.D. Dhyani R/o-547K/367 Nai Basti Rahim Nagar Mahanagar Lucknow has changed my daughter's name from Rudrashi Dhyani to Rudrakshi Dhyani. In future he will be known & called as Rudrakshi Dhyani.

NOTICE

I Army No. JC-698740-A Sub/Maj Kudache Chandrakant D. S/o Dattaraj Rayappa Kudache. unit AMC centre & college CHQ Lucknow Pin-226002. In my service record my wife name inadvertently mentioned as smt. Shital Chandrakant K. her correct name is smt Shital Chandrakant Kudache.

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New normal: Unlock 1.0 kicks off slow and steady

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The unlock 1.0 kicked off slow and steady in Lucknow on Monday. The increase in traffic volume was evident with people coming to terms with the new normal and beginning to realise the need to live with coronavirus. Routine activities started with some hiccups and extra load of sanitisation and some rules & regulations at offices.

Divisional Commissioner Mukesh Meshram said people have started stepping out and gradually their numbers will increase, which is important from the point of view of economy. Bus services started in the morning with Uttar Pradesh Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) beginning operations at 8 am. A senior UPSRTC official said there were around 200 passengers at Kaiserbagh and Alambagh bus stations in the early hours and most of those were stranded in the city. They left for destinations such as Moradabad, Bahraich, Lakhimpur Kheri and Bareilly. The official said there were not too many passengers because of the coronavirus scare.

UPSRTC managing director Raj Shekhar, who inspected Alambagh bus station, said June 1 was also the foundation day of the corporation which was dedicated to all the drivers and conductors who acted as corona



Huge rush of commuters at Hazratganj crossing; and (right) a woman at a shop in Aminabad on Monday



Pioneer

warriors. DCP, Traffic, Charu Nigam said it was 85 per cent of the regular traffic on Monday. "We had planned that on the first day itself, we would be reminding people of 'no parking' zones since most of them may have forgotten. Our parking cranes were functional on the first day. We had enforcement at 218 points across the city," she said. LMC officials said sanitisation was being carried out at all the parking lots under LMC on a regular basis. Nearly 2,000 autorickshaws hit the road on the first day.

Piyush Verma, who heads Lucknow Autorickshaw and Tempo Sangh, said although there were 4,343 driver registered in the city, only about half of them were working on the first day. "Some are still in their villages while others are trying to bring their vehicles back in shape. There are still others who are scared about contracting coronavirus and they are adopting a wait-and-watch policy," he said.

He said though the government had allowed plying of autorickshaws with three com-

muters, they would be taking only two passengers at a time. "The passengers have to wear masks and we will provide hand sanitisers to the drivers for commuters. We have also made arrangements for sanitisation of autorickshaws at Charbagh," he said. He added that they have approached the Divisional Commissioner requesting that fares should be increased and be paid according to meter readings as the number of passengers was less in the current scenario. The drivers have positioned the autos at Charbagh,

bus stations, airport, Engineering College crossing, Hazratganj, Narhi, Husadiya and Gomti Nagar. Verma pointed out that e-rickshaws were plying within the colonies and were few in number. For shopkeepers, the extended time till 9 pm spelled relief. President of Adarsh Vyapar Mandal Sanjay Gupta said the shopkeepers were of the view that it would mean more customers.

Salons which opened on Monday had visitors in an spaced-out arrangement. A salon owner said while the cus-

tomers were not restricted, they came with their own towels and combs.

Meanwhile, government offices witnessed proper attendance. Director of Indian Institute of Toxicological Research (IITR) Alok Dhawan said it was a 100 per cent attendance at the institute. "We have given instructions to the labs that scientists may decide on their part on shifts if there are too many students in one lab," he said. He added that there was a thermal scanner for anyone entering the institute and that

DM issues directions

Lucknow (PNS): District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash issued directions regarding lockdown 5.0 on Monday. He said in adherence of the state government's directives, there would be no activities in the containment zones. In buffer zones, only shops selling essential commodities will open, including those of medicines, milk, fruits, vegetables, bread and ration.

"Private vehicles with permits and city buses will pick and leave commuters at their marked points and will follow social distancing and sanitisation, as per the standards set by UPSRTC. These vehicles should have sufficient number of masks and face covers along with sanitisers. Regional transport official should also ensure that private operators follow the instructions of Covid-19 precautions," the DM said.

All autorickshaws, taxis and e-rickshaws will start plying from June 3 from 5 am to 9 pm. The number of com-

muters should be as per their capacity and they must keep sufficient number of masks, sanitisers and mention details of these items on their windscreen. This has to be enforced by the regional transport officer. The DM said all these vehicles would be sanitised on Tuesday and the Transport department officials should make sure that they were sanitised every morning.

He said all the shops would open from 9 am to 9 pm with pre-decided rules of alternate arrangements. The DM said that registered marriage houses would be allowed to open but the gathering should not have more than 30 persons while no one in marriage processions would be allowed to carry weapons. "Permission for marriages has to be taken from the ADM, Land Acquisition," he said. Besides, beauty parlours and salons are permitted to open but only for haircuts. He appealed to all the traders to download Aarogya Setu App.

they had also placed a wash-basin at the entrance.

However, sales remained dull at the vegetable mandis. Mandi secretary Sanjay Singh said the sales were the same as earlier with onions being the cheapest.

Interestingly, people also celebrated Ganga Dussehra on Monday. Ridhi Gaur from Shubh Sanskaar Samiti said they organised 'aarti' on the banks of Gomti river at Kudiaghata and there were only three persons..

PIONEERIMPACT

Railway Police HQ in Signature building sealed

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After *The Pioneer* published a report on four GRP personnel at DGP headquarters in Signature building being quarantined and the threat of coronavirus infection they posed to other officers and personnel, ADG (Railways) Sanjay Singhal ordered the sealing of Railway Police Headquarters situated on the third floor of the building on Monday afternoon.

The fourth tower of the third floor houses the offices of ADG, staff officer to ADG, IG, DIG of Railway Police and their staff besides two special prosecuting officers (SPOs). Only a few hours after the ADG sealed the office premises, four other Railway Police cops, who

were quarantined at GRP Lines in Charbagh, tested positive for coronavirus infection. One of the infected cop turned out to be ADG's staff officer Rafiq Ahmad's driver RA Verma. Verma had been coming to the Signature building regularly and hence the chances of the personnel and officers he came in contact with running the risk of contracting the infection is inadvertent.

On May 26, a Railway Police driver who used to ferry colleagues from Charbagh to Signature building had tested positive. Since the driver was in constant touch with his colleagues during the travel, four Railway Police cops, including a staff of IG (Railways), were quarantined on Saturday.

Meshram asks CDOs to provide jobs to migrant labourers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Divisional Commissioner Mukesh Meshram on Monday directed all the CDOs to make a proper work plan for providing employment under various MNRGA schemes to migrant labourers who have come from different states and districts.

In a meeting held on Monday, the Divisional Commissioner pointed out that these labourers can work under Aanganwadi & floods management schemes, irrigation, road contact programmes and water & environment conservation programmes.

He said that in 461 gram

panchayats in Lucknow district where these migrants have arrived, nearly 1,288 job cards have been made and in 420 gram panchayats, 1,526 migrants have already started working. Meshram said over 58,988 migrant labourers were working under 5,354 gram panchayats in the entire division. He pointed out that 12,696 migrant labourers were working under 420 gram panchayats in Unnao, 7,893 migrants working in 777 gram panchayats in Rae Bareilly, 18,562 migrants working in 1,062 gram panchayats in Hardoi and 9,416 migrants working in 1,054 gram panchayats in Lakhimpur Kheri.

3-yr-old killed in mishap

Lucknow (PNS): In a tragic incident, a 3-year-old boy died while her mother grievously injured in a road mishap in Madiyon on Saturday. Incharge of Bhitauli police outpost Akhilesh Singh said the woman, identified as Amna and her son Altamash (both of Naubasta) were going to see a doctor as the latter was sick. "When they were crossing the road, a speeding car hit both. They were rushed to hospital where Altamash was declared brought dead. The woman is under treatment," he said.

In Madiyon, unidentified miscreants duped a Bahujan Samaj Party leader of Rs 10,000 by sending him a fake

mail from his friend regarding the need of cash. The complainant, Sanjay Singh Rana of Khadri, had contested general elections in 2019 and UP Assembly elections from Lucknow in 2017.

Sanjay said his friend Dinesh is incharge of BSP in Mahsi Assembly in Bahraich. On May 29, Sanjay got a message by Dinesh who stated the need of Rs 10,000 and Sanjay transferred the money into his bank account. A little later, he got another message from Dinesh but he did not send the money and called Dinesh to know the problem. He was surprised when Dinesh said he did not send any mail to Sanjay.



The corona pandemic has brought many changes in the world. These tough times have made a massive impact on your livelihood. To help you recover, a package of **Rs. 1 lakh 1 thousand 5 hundred crore** has been allocated under MGNREGA.

- Daily wages under MGNREGA at national level has been **increased from Rs. 182 to Rs. 202.**
- Applicants can register on nrega.nic.in/netnrega/HomeGP.aspx or contact the local Gram Panchayat for employment opportunities.

Labourer brothers and sisters, do you know?

- Any needy person even without ration card has the right to avail food grains for two months. During each month, 5 kg wheat/rice per person and per family 1 kg chickpeas/pulses can be availed.
- Labourers get forced to move to their villages as they are unable to afford high rent in urban areas. Now, under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) a scheme for 'Affordable Rental Housing Complexes' has been announced.

Avail these benefits. During these difficult times, the entire nation stands with you.



“ The crisis, the world is facing today teaches us that the way forward is - **Aatmanirbhar Bharat (A self-reliant India)** ”

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



For more information, please visit – transformingindia.mygov.in/aatmanirbharbharatm

Bathing in holy river not allowed on Ganga Dussehra in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Amidst the continuous rising cases of coronavirus, the local markets were opened with new guidelines and activities in several government offices restarted on the first day of Unklock 1.0 here on Monday. Hundreds of devotees were disappointed when they were not allowed to go to the river Ganga for taking holy dip into the sacred water of river Ganga on the auspicious occasion of Ganga Dussehra. Elaborate security arrangements were made to stop the devotees and avoid rush of the devotees at the ghats. At some main ghats including Dashaswamedh, the personnel of Rapid Action Force (RAF) were also deployed. However, under the auspices of Ganga Sewa Nidhi, the formalities of Ganga Pujan were done as a single priest performed the aarti amidst tight security arrangements.

The running of some regular trains with special status has started as one of the most popular trains, Shiv Ganga Express (02559) left for New Delhi from Platform No. 8 of Manduadih railway station with full capacity as all the reserved tickets were sold much earlier. The Special Shiv Ganga (02560) which was departed from New Delhi will come



Ganga-aarti being performed in symbolic manner on the occasion of Ganga Dussehra in Varanasi on Monday Pioneer

here on Tuesday morning at the same platform. Similarly, four other important trains including Mahanagari, Kamayani (both Mumbai), Mahamana (New Delhi) and Sabarmati (Ahmedabad) will depart for their destinations from Varanasi Junction (Cantt. railway station) on Tuesday.

The train movement has started with guidelines of the Railway Ministry as all passengers were properly thermal scanned before boarding into the train. Similarly, long line of passengers was also seen at Cantt. bus depot of Roadways from where, maintaining social distancing, the bus services

have started for various destinations in the state. Apart from sanitising the buses, the passengers were also asked to sanitise them and wear masks in view to avoid spread of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the district administration has taken some decisions in view of new guidelines of the state government under which now the markets would remain closed on every Saturday instead of Sunday. Paan (betel) and sweets shops were opened but the customers were not allowed to consume the articles there. Milk and vegetable markets will remain open on all the days. Restrictions will continue in all

the containment zones and in the markets, odd and even system will continue.

As arrival of migrated workers continued, the rise in COVID-19 cases continued to see sharp hike in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) comprising 10 districts of three divisions as on Sunday, as many as 71 new cases were found and the total number of cases in the region has increased to 768 with 192 in Varanasi, 181 in Jaunpur, 122 in Ghazipur, 94 in Azamgarh, 50 in Ballia, 44 in Bhadohi, 34 in Mirzapur, 29 in Mau, 21 in Chandauli and nine in Sonbhadra.

DM's stress on counter-watch over vigilante bodies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur District Magistrate BR Tiwari while expressing concern over the working of vigilante bodies, said there was need to maintain counter-watch over them.

He said a special team would undergo training and monitor the arrival of migrant labourers.

The district magistrate said although the administration was keeping a tab on the migrant workers who returned to the district by conveyance arranged by the state government, it had come to light that a big number of migrants had sneaked in and were evading quarantine which was manda-

tor. He said there was need to track such migrants. He added that the special committees would maintain a strict vigil on the working of the monitoring committees.

Later, addressing a meeting at his camp office on Monday, Dr Tiwari said the lockdown in Kanpur would continue till June 30 and it would be strictly enforced with night curfew from 9:00 pm and 5:00 am.

The district magistrate cautioned the shopkeepers that they should reach their homes by 9:00 pm after which the police would have the authority to take legal action against those found on roads.

He said special monitoring committee was being formed to

ensure that norms were being followed in the right earnest factory workers.

He said medical stores, nursing homes and private hospitals had been given full operational freedom. He said for surgeries, private hospitals would have to seek prior permission while ensuring full security and safety measures.

3 MORE TEST +VE FOR CORONAVIRUS

Three more persons tested positive for coronavirus infection in the city on Monday.

Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Shukla said the three new cases were reported from Babupurwa and Deputy Ka Parao, taking the total number

of coronavirus infected persons detected in the city so far to 372. With one COVID-19 patient being discharged from hospital on Monday, 305 infected persons have been cured in the city, which has witnessed 31 COVID-19 deaths. There are 56 active cases as on date.

The CMO said health workers scanned areas like Golaghat, Makhania Bazaar, Dalelpurwa, Anwarganj, Kumharwali Gali, Gujaini K&L Block, Tikra Kalyanpur, Dufferin and Ursula hospital campuses. The teams visited 7,046 houses and collected 319 swab samples, — 99 of migratory labourers, ten from hotspot and random sampling and the rest from other places.

3 new COVID-19 cases found

VARANASI (PNS): The office of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) has been closed for 24 hours for thorough sanitisation after finding of a COVID-19 cop posted there. Meanwhile, three new corona patients have been found in the district. The cop working as runner was found infected as he came into the contact of police personnel found positive earlier. The infected policeman lives in barrack of the Police Lines. District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma said that the SSP office was just closed for 24 hours for sanitisation and it was not sealed. Since the information received that the runner came into contact of some positive cops, he was quarantined and now after confirmation of his report positive, he has been isolated.

According to DM, 42 reports have been received from Microbiology Lab of BHU and 39 of them are neg-

ative, while three are positive. It included follow-up reports of four patients including one being treated at Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital and three at ESIC Hospital. Later, all these patients have been discharged. They belong to Umrha Barai, Barni, Gadar and Gurudham Colony. With this, the total number of positive patients in the district has increased to 185 and out of them, 121 have been discharged and four have died. There are 60 active patients.

The three new patients included a 65 years old person hailing from hotspot Mohani (Jaitpura) who owns a water pump shop near his house. Due to some problems in throat he himself reached BHU to give his sample. The second patient is a teacher (40) who works in Ghaziabad and a resident of Ghazipur but since March 20, he was staying at his in-laws house at Awaleshpur near Akhari Bypass (Rohania). The

third patient is 65 years old resident of Gadwasi Tola (Chowk).

The number of hotspots has increased to 94 in the district with two new ones including Awaleshpur (Rohania) and Gadwasi Tola (Chowk). Out of which 28 have become green zones, while among the 66 active hotspots, 26 are in orange zones, while 40 are still in red zones. In the district, as many as new 157 samples were collected during the day. Out of total 5,892 samples, the reports of 5,409 have received, while of 483 are awaited. Out of received reports, 5,224 were negative and 185 positive.

Apart from Varanasi in this region, Azamgarh became the fourth district out of 10 of three divisions from this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) where the number of corona cases has crossed the three figure marks after Varanasi, Jaunpur and Ghazipur. As many as 15 new

corona patients including a two years old girl have been detected positive. With this, the number of cases has reached 109 in Azamgarh with 94 active. Three patients have died, while 12 recovered. In Mau, one more positive patient has been detected, increasing the number to 30. In Chandauli, three more patients have been discharged, leaving just seven active patients out of 22. One patient has died.

Meanwhile, BHU administration has informed that the university will remain closed till June 30 but all the officers will attend their offices while there would be only 50 per cent attendance of the employees. All the employees will follow the COVID-19 guidelines including wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing. All the essential services including emergency services at SSH Hospital and Trauma Centre will continue.

Operation of Roadways buses begins

VARANASI (PNS): The Roadways bus stand, near Cantt railway station, remained buzz with passengers on Monday when the operation of inter-district buses began on some selected routes on the very first day of unlock-1 after a gap of 68 days. And, the operation of buses gave more relief to people who wanted to go to adjoining districts of Varanasi. It may be noted here that the government has allowed the operation of inter-district buses with some restrictions in unlock-1 that began on Monday. The operation of buses was stopped since the lockdown came into effect on March 24 last.

To ensure the social distancing following the guideline issued by government in view of COVID-19, the barricading was made around Roadways premises barring entry and exit points. The barricading was made in such a way that only one bus could enter the

premises and also only one bus could exit at one time.

As per new system, the buses entered the Roadways premises from Northern (Andhrapul) gate and exit from the western (Cantt) gate of Roadways. The workshop side of Roadways was barricaded to stop entry and exit as well from here. Circles were made at inquiry counter and platforms in Roadways premises to maintain social distancing among passengers.

The plying of buses began at 7 am in the morning and it lasted till 7 pm. In the first phase of unlock-1, the operation of Roadways buses began on seven routes which include Varanasi-Jaunpur, Varanasi-Azamgarh, Varanasi-Mau-Gorakhpur, Varanasi-Shaktinagar, Varanasi-Prayagraj, Varanasi-Shahganj and Varanasi-Vindhyachal. According to Regional Manager of Roadways SK Rai, the operation of buses on

Varanasi-Lucknow and Varanasi-Kanpur routes could also be started if the passengers are available as per sitting capacity of bus.

The new system will remain for four days i.e. till June 4, informed Rai and the fresh decision about extending the timing, etc would be taken thereafter in view of increase in the passengers. As per new system, the buses were allowed to go to their destination in the gap of 45 minutes.

As per new system, to put mask is compulsory for each and every one in buses including conductor, driver and passengers. The passengers were allowed as per the availability of seat in buses. The thermal screening was made of each and every passenger by Roadways employees at entrance gate. A female passenger was stopped from entering the premises after thermal scanner measured her temperature more than standard

for the COVID-19.

The Roadways employees sanitised the passengers before they boarded and the passengers without mask or cotton towel were not allowed to board in view of COVID-19. The COVID-19 help Desk was made in the premises to make passengers aware about the guideline of unlock-1. Sanitiser are available at the help desk.

As per new system, the buses are to be sanitised on each six hours and the buses would come out from workshop only after being sanitised. The passengers were also sanitised by conductors before they boarded on buses. To download Arogya Setu App is also compulsory for the passengers. The Regional Manager of Roadways Rai has shot off letter to Health department to make available ambulance at Roadways to take the passenger to hospital if symptoms of COVID-19 are found.

AU, IVRI may soon launch coronavirus rapid test kits

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Allahabad University (AU) in collaboration with the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) located at Bareilly may soon launch affordable rapid test kits in the market to test the deadly coronavirus. COVID-19 test will be done in just three to five minutes by this kit. Both the institutes have demanded Rs 25 lakh from the Department of Science and Technology after making its budget.

Coronavirus test is the biggest challenge right now. At this juncture, the Department of Physics of AU and the Indian Veterinary Research Institute at Bareilly sent a project for the manufacture of rapid test kits to the Department of Science and Technology under the Swachh Bharat and Swasth Bharat Scheme. The brainchild investigators of this project are Dr Praveen Kumar Singh, Professor in the Department of Biophysics, Bareilly, and Co-

Investigator Professor KN Uttam, Department of Physics, AU.

Professor KN Uttam of the Department of Physics of AU, said that the kit is being manufactured at trial level. So far, its results are being received as expected. He said that this testing kit will be very simple, inexpensive and portable. It will be like a test pregnancy kit. Its testing time will be only between three and five minutes. Its price will be ranged between Rs 200 to 300. Now we are waiting for the green signal from the Department of Science and Technology, he pointed out.

HEARING IN PIL ADJOURNED: The Allahabad High Court adjourned till June 9, hearing in a PIL raising issue of steps taken by state government to check spread of COVID-19 in rural areas of state and medical facilities provided to migrant labourers.

Chief Standing Counsel representing the state govern-

ment filed certain documents regarding policy of state government in this matter after availing necessary instructions from the Department of Labour as well as Department of Medical and Health Services.

Hearing a PIL filed by Ritesh Srivastava and Gaurav Tripathi, both High Court lawyers, a division bench comprising Chief Justice Govind Mathur and Justice Ramesh Sinha directed CSC (Chief Standing Counsel) to provide a copy of all the documents filed to the petitioners and adjourned the hearing in the case. On May 26, the Allahabad High Court had directed the state government to explain about the policy and norms for providing medical facilities and treatment to the migrant workmen and their families and further to stop spreading of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in rural parts of the state.

The court had also directed the state government to

explain about its scheme for the rehabilitation of migrant workmen and their families in the state.

"The state is also required to give a complete layout to reduce migration of the natives of Uttar Pradesh to other parts of the country to earn minimum livelihood; the court had directed.

The petitioners by the instant petition had agitated the cause of migrant labourers, who according to them, are travelling on foot from hundreds of kilometres from their working place to their hometown/village. According to the petitioners, since March 25, 2020, the entire nation is facing lockdown and that compelled the labourers working in different states to move to their native place. Neither the Central Government nor the state governments where the labourers were working made adequate arrangements for their movement and their families.

Utkarsh Bank records NII of ₹728.2 cr

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Ltd recorded a Net Interest Income (NII) of ₹ 728.2 crore and an opening profit of ₹ 350 crore during the financial year of 2019-20 which are an increase of 49 per cent and 52 per cent respectively than that of previous financial year of 2018-19.

Finance Head of Bank Suman Saurabh informed that, the Bank has achieved ₹ 250 crore as Profit Before Tax (PBT) against ₹ 148.8 crore for the financial year of 2018-19, a growth of 60 per cent. The

Profit After Tax (PAT) almost doubled to ₹ 186.74 crore from ₹ 93.9 crore achieved on 2018-19. The bank has generated return on average assets of 2.47 per cent and return on average net worth of 21.18 per cent during this period.

The gross NPA ratio 0.71 per cent and Net NPA ratio of 0.18 per cent is reflection of robust portfolio that the bank possesses. The bank created a specific ₹ 49.9 crore Covid-19 standard assets provision on prudential basis in excess of RBI prescribed norms. The bank's Capital to Risk Assets Ratio (CRAR) is 22.19 per

cent as against the stipulated 15 per cent by RBI. The deposits book stood at ₹ 5,235 crore (March 2020) which grew by 38 per cent from ₹ 3791 crore (March 2019). The Current Account- Saving Account (CASA) Deposits and the retail deposit grew by 86 per cent and 110 per cent respectively on year on year basis. The bank has more than 2,54,000 Active Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts as on March 31 last.

The gross advance grew by 40 per cent to ₹ 6660 crore by this March-end from ₹ 4740 crore (March 2019). The microfinance loans to women

clients constitute 90 per cent of overall advances accounting to ₹ 5980 crore served by 404 micro banking outlets and business correspondents outlets.

The bank has outreach of over 27 lakh active clients at the close of 2019-20 financial year and it has currently presence in 173 districts of 15 states and 2 union territories with banking outlets served by over 8800 employees. The bank focused on geographical expansion in new states of Telangana, Assam and Odisha and existing states for providing all banking services to customers.

Devotees take holy dip in Ganga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The ghats along Sangam bustled with devotees from Allahabad and several neighbouring tehsils who took a dip in the confluence river of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati on the occasion of Ganga Dussehra here on Monday. However, devotees forgot to follow the norms of lockdown including social distancing.

After bathing and worshipping, charity was also performed at the ghats. A large number of people especially locals congregated at Sangam to take holy dip in Ganga. The devotees turned up from different tehsils. People from neighbouring districts could not reach here. People celebrated the incarnation day of Ganga by worshipping. A huge crowd also gathered at Naini's Mahakal Ghat. Deepdan programme was also performed in the Ganga.

On Ganga Dussehra, people gathered on the ghats for Ganga Pujan and Deepdan



programme. However, due to coronavirus infection large and mass events could not be organised here. At the same time, with providing some exception in the lockdown, people in large number reached the Sangam and other ghats for bathing. Some committees also organised puja performance there.

Ganga Dussehra is celebrated every year to commem-

orate the descent of the Devanadi Ganga on Earth. Every year on Ganga Dussehra, devotees from nearby used to come to bathe in the Sangam by tractors and their personal means.

Allahabad based religious scholar KP Shukla said that Ganga Dussehra also known as 'Gangavataran' was observed to celebrate goddess Ganga's descent on earth. It was celebrat-

ed every year on the Dashami 10th day of the Shukla paksha during the Hindu month of Jaita, he added.

In the online meeting of the Yag Sangam Aarti Committee, a discussion was made related to Ganga Aarti and Ganga puja. In view of the COVID-19 disaster, it was decided to perform Ganga Aarti, Ganga Pujan, Deepdan at Arail Ghat due to the ban on mass events here. Saint Swami Ramratan Das ji of Falahri Ashram carried out programme by following the physical distance standard with five batuks only, president Ravikant, secretary Arun Kishore Khanna, Pramod Bansal, Shanti Chaudhary etc. attended the programme.

Meanwhile, the rush of devotees clogged most streets leading to Sangam, leading to jams at frequent intervals. The routes cleared as the traffic police deployed more personnel at location like Bairahna and Harshvardhan Crossing to regulate vehicle movement.

Nine held in double murder case

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The police arrested six miscreants involved in the murder of two cousins, Diwakar and Krishna, on the banks of Gorra river under the Jhangha police station from Jungle Ramlakhana under the Khorabar police station on Sunday. Besides three people who had provided shelter to the miscreants along with weapons and vehicle too had been nabbed. During interrogation it was found that the cousins were killed following a dispute over supremacy going on between two groups for the past two years. Three pistols, a revolver and cartridges were recovered from the possession of the accused. Police was searching for three other accused. Superintendent of Police (SP) North Arvind Pandey and Circle Officer (CO) Crime Praveen Singh told reporters at the Police Lines on Sunday that the cousins were killed during a feast on May 24 afternoon. During investigation it came to light that the cousins,

Aman Patel and Amish, residents of Ramlakhana village, had hatched the conspiracy for committing the crime.



Diwakar and Krishna ran a group and the accused also had their own group. There was a dispute over supremacy between them. In the Aman and Satyam had also joined the feast. Both of them were also associated with the group of accused. The cousins were

killed by the miscreants who came on information provided by them. During the investigation, Mukesh was found to

Gahira Chaubey Tola under the Jhangha police station, Satyam Yadav, a resident of Koiran Tola, Motiram Adda, Aniket Yadav alias Vishal, a resident of Burgadwan, Jhangha and Abhijeet Yadav, a resident of Nauva Avval under the Khorabar police station. Apart from them, Shashi Kumar, a resident of Pochhiya Brahmadhan in Khorabar, Rana Pratap Singh, a resident of Ramalkhana Jungle and Sonu alias Shivaji, a resident of Gajpur, who had provided shelter to the miscreants had also been arrested.

Meanwhile in another case, a youth, Rajendra and woman, Priynaka, were arrested by the police on being tipped off by an informer along with over 10 kg ganja from an area under the Nausad police post under the Gida police station while they were coming on a motorcycle on Sunday. A case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was registered against both the accused and they were sent to jail.

be innocent after which he was released by the police. The murder accused who had been arrested were later identified as Aman Patel alias Golu and Amish Singh alias Vivek, residents of Ramalkhana forest, Khorabar, Abhishek alias Neeshu Chaubey, a resident of

Thieves target two houses, flee with valuables

CORRESPONDENT ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI

Some unidentified thieves sneaked into two houses by breaking open the latch of the doors and took away valuables worth around ₹50,000 from there. The victims had lodged a complaint with the police in this connection. According to a report received here, Ashok, a resident of Purushottampurwa hamlet in Mukhlispur said that he was sleeping on the roof along with family. On finding the moment opportune some thieves sneaked into the house and escaped with a bicycle parked in the house, mobile phone, clothes, utensils, ration etc. Besides they took away ration, clothes, mobile phone etc from the house of Umesh Kumar, a resident of the village. Inspector incharge Sunil Singh said that a case would be registered after conducting an investigation in the matter.

WOMAN KILLED IN LIGHTNING STRIKE

A woman died in a lightning strike in Lakshman Nagar under the Mitauli police station here. Her husband became

unconscious. According to a report received here, Bhola Singh, a resident of Lakshman Nagar village, had gone to the field along with his wife, Chandmati (50). In the meantime it suddenly started raining. They took refuge under a mango tree in the field. The couple was hit by the lightning and both of them became unconscious. When Bhola Singh regained consciousness he returned home and informed his family members about it. By the time they reached the place it was too late. They took Chandmati to the community health centre where the doctors on duty declared her dead. On getting information the Revenue department team rushed to the spot and sought necessary information. Police took the body of the victim into custody and sent it for the post-mortem examination.

In another incident one person was killed when he fell down on the overbridge here recently. The victim was identified as Ramjeevan (45), a resident of Lonpurwa under the Kheri police station here. On getting information the police rushed to the spot, took the body of the victim into custody

and sent it for the post-mortem examination. According to information one person was going on a bicycle towards the city. Suddenly he fell down on the bridge along with the bicycle. On seeing the spectacle a large number of people gathered on the spot. On getting information the police outpost incharge, Roadways, Deepak Rai, rushed to the spot. The police rushed him to the district hospital where the doctors on duty declared him dead. The police outpost incharge said that the deceased was identified as Ramjeevan, a resident of Lonpurwa under the Kheri police station. His family members had identified him.

Meanwhile in yet another incident, Kalika Prasad (50), a resident of Hazratpur village under the Mailani police station, had died when he was knocked down by a motorcycle near Jatpura recently. In a complaint lodged at the Mailani police station in this connection, his son, Shivprasad, a resident of Hajratpur, stated that his father, Kalika Prasad, was going on a bicycle on the said day when he was hit by the motorcycle near Jatpura sugarcane centre and he had died during treatment.

The police was investigating the matter but had not registered a case in this connection yet.

CAR LOOTED

A man was deprived of his car by some motorcycle-borne miscreants on the Lakhimpur-Gola Road here recently. After committing the crime the miscreants fled towards Lakhimpur. According to a report, Sandeep Kumar, a resident of Bhawanipur village under the Bhira police station, was going to Gola in connection with his private work. When he reached Rookandpur village in the Phardhan area on his Alto car two motorcycle-borne miscreants overtook him and stopped him. Sandeep had kept ₹1,500 in cash and his cell phone in his car. On being informed by the victim the police became alert. Superintendent of Police Poonam reached the spot and got a checking drive launched by cordoning off the area. Besides the Phardhan police the crime branch personnel too had been engaged. Police had registered a loot case in this connection. SP said that the case would be worked out soon.

Protest against Electricity Amendment Bill

CORRESPONDENT ■ BANDA

Vice-president Hydro Electric Employees Union, UP, Ram Charan Singh said that they had started protesting against the proposed Electricity Amendment Bill, 2020.

Singh along with office-bearers, Ajay Kumar Dhuria and Vijay Chaurasia, said that all employees of electricity nigram/officers had started tying black bands on their arms in order to protest against the proposed Electricity Bill, 2020. Singh said that their protest had started from Monday. He added that all employees would continue their routine work in the offices while maintaining social distancing and would not create

any problems for the government and public. They would follow the guidelines of the government. They would put black bands on their arms to protest against it.

WOMAN ENDS LIFE

A 42-year-old woman Geeta, wife of Mohan Yadav, committed suicide with the help of a rope from the ceiling of her room in Syodha village under the Girwan police station on Sunday. Station House Officer (SHO) Girwan Shashi Kumar Pandey had inspected the spot where the incident took place and sent the body for the post-mortem examination. Pandey said that it was a case of suicide due to depression. Pandey said

that the husband of the deceased was working in Ghaziabad.

The family members said that the deceased Geeta was not feeling well as she was mentally disturbed which forced her to commit suicide. In yet another incident Preeti (20), wife of Mahesh Verma, committed suicide with the help of a rope from the ceiling in her house in Majhgawan village under the Girwan police station on Sunday. Officer incharge Akbarpur police outpost Naresh Chandra Nigam visited the spot and sent the body of the deceased for the post-mortem examination. Officer incharge Nigam said that the deceased was scolded by her husband over some petty mat-

ter and she felt bad and committed suicide.

Meanwhile a youth committed suicide by gulping some poisonous substance in a village under the Girwan police station here. According to a report, Raj Bahadur (27), son of Ram Manohar, committed suicide by consuming a poisonous substance in Khanpur village under the Girwan police station. The family members took him to the district hospital Banda where he died during treatment. The police said that the youth committed suicide as he was scolded by his father over some petty family matter. SHO Girwan Shashi Kumar Pandey said that the body of the deceased had been sent for the post-mortem examination.

Commendable work by corona warriors

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 whole-heartedly. Face masks and relief materials are being distributed among the needy people by the railwaymen. Besides freight and parcel trains Shramik special trains were being run for the past few days so that the migrant workers reached their native places. Railway workers doing commendable work in such a situation are being declared 'Corona Warriors of the Day' daily by the NER administration in order to boost their

morale. In this series two railwaymen on North Eastern Railway were honoured on

Manoj Kumar, working as senior section engineer/carriage and wagon, did better



Manoj Kumar, senior section engineer/carriage and wagon, Siwan, Varanasi division



Ashish, track maintainer, Lal Kuan, Izzatnagar division

commendable works of Manoj Kumar he was honoured as the 'Corona Warrior of the Day' of Varanasi division.

Ashish working as a track maintainer under senior section engineer/permanent way, Lalkuan, did the maintenance and patrolling work of the railway track in his gang beat with complete vigilance and alertness due to which the protected movement of trains in this section was being ensured. In addition Ashish made his colleagues and gatemen aware about Covid-19 pandemic. For these commendable works of Ashish he was honoured by being declared as 'Corona warrior of the day' of Izzatnagar division. The railway administration was indeed proud of its such railway personnel.

Food items, masks given to labourers

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Sushil Kumar Patel has asked the officials concerned to involve

120 and 130 labourers respectively were found working.

As per the press release of the District Magistrate, since April 20 this year, 11 lakh



District Magistrate Sushil Kumar Patel distributing food items in Mirzapur

the interested migrant labourers in the projects of MGN-REGA. These directives were given by him during his visit to the sites where works were going on under the scheme.

During his tour he visited Madihan and Chhanbey blocks and distributed some food items and masks among the labourers. He visited Gularahia pond in Kanhayipur village in Madihan block which was being constructed at a cost of ₹23.76 lakh. He also visited the ongoing works of pond, small dam etc in Gopalpur, Vijaypur and Kamapur villages in Chhanbey block in which 111,

mandays had been created in the district and on an average 126 labourers in each gram sabha were on job per day.

On the labour component ₹17.56 crore had been spent, the communicative added. During the tour the DM was accompanied by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Avinash Singh and other officials related to MGNREGA scheme.

FORMER MLA PASSES AWAY

Former MLA Yadunath Singh passed away on Sunday

evening. He breathed his last at his native place, Niyamatpur village under the Chunar police station. Yadunath Singh had represented Chunar constituency consecutively from 1980 to 1991. Veteran Lok Dal leader, Ravindra Patel and former minister Dr SS Dang expressed their grief over his demise.

DISTRIBUTED

Superintendent of Police (SP) Dr Dharmveer Singh distributed sanitisers among the staff in his office on Monday. Praising the work of his colleagues during the lockdown he



SP Dr Dharmveer Singh distributing sanitisers among his office staff on Monday

said that the entire task required team spirit and his staff did it appreciably. He told the staff that in order to perform the work properly one has

to be fit first not only physically but mentally too. During the distribution the SP was accompanied by ASP (Operation), reader and PRO.

WOMAN BURNT ALIVE

An aged woman was burnt alive when a house caught fire in Narainpur trifurcation under the Adalat police station.

As per the reports received here smoke seemed in the house of Shiv Narain located at Narainpur trifurcation. The fire could be controlled with the help of the locals but Laxmi Devi (80), mother of the land lord who was sleeping in a

Theft case

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

A gang of unidentified thieves stole valuables worth about ₹2 lakh in Tedha village under the Padari police station. Reports said Ramesh Singh, a resident of the village, had constructed his house a few metres away from the locality. He was in Haryana along with his family at present. On Sunday his brother-in-law, Vanshi Dhar Singh, found the power connection disconnected there. He went inside the house and found that the thieves had taken away valuables worth around ₹2 lakh along with a motorcycle.

On Vanshi Dhar Singh's application a report was lodged at the Padari police station and the matter was being investigated.



Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Nagar Palika Chairman Santosh Kharwar distributing thermal screening machines among ward members at camp office in Mughalsara, Chandauli, on Monday. Ward members, Rajesh Jaiswal, Brijesh Gupta, Nayab Ahmed Rinku and Ravi Sonkar were present on the occasion.

11 houses reduced to ashes

CORRESPONDENT ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI

As many as 11 houses were reduced to ashes in separate fire incidents in three villages recently. Two girls sustained burns while trying to douse the flames. According to a report received here, fire broke out in the shed for animals in Ambara village in Gola tehsil. By the time people came to know about it the flames spread to the nine houses, including those of Puttullal, Komal, Ram Swaroop, Dunna, Shripal, Pankaj, Ankaj and Ashwani Kumar. As a result the houses were reduced to ashes. Reports said that the marriage of daughter of Puttullal was scheduled to be held after two

weeks and he had withdrawn ₹95,000 from the bank only two days ago. On the other hand, Shripal had mortgaged his land for ₹1 lakh and the money was kept there. Everything was reduced to ashes. On getting information the police rushed to the spot and the fire brigade personnel doused the flames with a lot of effort. In this fire wheat and paddy crop, bed and entire household articles were reduced to ashes. While dousing the flames the hand of Poonam, daughter of Puttu, got scorched. On the other hand, the house of Ved Pal caught fire which spread to the house of his neighbour in Sujan Tanda village under the Bhira

police station. As a result the clothes, foodgrains, utensils, cot etc were burnt. On getting information Bhira Station Officer Pradeep Kumar Singh called the fire brigade and brought the flames under control with the help of villagers. How the fire broke out could not be ascertained yet. The 28-year-old wife of Vedpal was scorched while trying to extinguish the blaze and was admitted to the Bijua hospital for treatment. Besides a calf who was tied there too was singed. The gram pradhan informed the tehsil administration about the matter. On the other hand, fire broke out from a cylinder while food was being cooked in

the house of Karamat Ali in Mooda gram panchayat in Kukra police outpost under the Mailani police station. On seeing the flames women raised an alarm and rushed out. As a result the entire house was burnt. On being informed by Panchayat mitra Ajay Kumar Yadav police outpost incharge Pramod Tyagi and lekhpal Lalchand visited the spot. Gram pradhan Kamruddin demanded government aid. Naib tehsilar Prayga Agnihotri met the fire victims in Sujan Tanda village under the Bhira police station. Along with getting the medical examination done lekhpal Jagannath Rana was told prepare a report and extend help to the victims.

Teenager dies as tractor overturns

CORRESPONDENT ■ BANDA

A 16-year-old teenager died when a tractor overturned in a village under the Girwan police station here recently.

According to a report received here, Ashish, son of Ramdev, died when the tractor overturned in Khurahand village under the Girwan police station. SHO Girwan Shashi Kumar Pandey said that the victim, Ashish, was going to give food to his father on tractor in the field when the tractor suddenly got disbalanced and overturned as a result of which he sustained serious injuries. He was taken to district hospital Banda from where the doctors on duty referred him to Kanpur but he died on the way there. SHO Pandey said that the body was sent for the post-mortem

examination. In another incident a cleaner was killed when two trucks collided with one another in Khair village under the Mataundh police station here. On getting information the police reached the spot, impounded both the trucks and sent the body for the post-mortem examination. Circle Officer (CO) City Alok Mishra said that two trucks were going to Rae Bareilly district after loading macadam from Kabrai town of Mahoba.

One truck coming behind collided with while overtaking it. CO City Alok Mishra said that the drivers of both trucks had absconded from the spot.

WOMAN KILLED IN WALL COLLAPSE

An aged woman was killed and her sister-in-law was

injured when a mud wall collapsed on them while they were sleeping at night recently. According to a report received here, Tuliya (70), wife of Bisheshwar and her sister-in-law, Phulmatiya (65) wife of Busia, a resident of Kurra village under the Kamasin police station, were sleeping on a bed suddenly the mud wall fell on them at night. While Tuliya was admitted to District Hospital Banda where she her condition was reported to be out of danger. Circle Officer Baberu Rajeev Prateep Singh said that the Tuliya's body had been sent for the post-mortem examination.

FIR LODGED

An FIR was lodged under Section 376 of the Indian Penal

Code (IPC) against one persons at the Atarra police station on Sunday. SHO of Atarra police station Ravindra Tiwari said that the father of the 18-year-old girl had given an application to him in which he alleged that an influential person had raped her several times, blackmailed her and threatened her with dire consequences if she disclosed the matter to the police. The father of the girl said that he had decided to register a case against him for outraging the modesty of his daughter. SHO Atarra Ravindra Tiwari said that he had deputed a team of policemen to conduct the raids on the hideouts of the absconding culprit in the town.

SHO Tiwari said that the girl had been sent to the district women's hospital for a medical examination.

5,000 ration kits handed over to admn

CORRESPONDENT ■ SINGRAULI

The Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) is extending all possible support to the district and local administration in this difficult time keeping the pandemic in mind. Reports said on behalf of Northern Coalfields Limited under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) the Sonbhadra administration was handed over 5,000 kits of ration comprising five kg of rice flour each, salt, onion, mustard oil and spices etc on Sunday. With the help of the district administration this ration will be distributed among the needy families

residing in Chopan, Myorpur and Babni blocks. The NCL had earlier too handed over

ration to help the needy families affected by the Covid-19 related problems. NCL had



2,500 kits of ration to the Sonbhadra district adminis-

handed over 10 infrared thermometers, 1,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, 5,000 masks, 2,500 alcohol-based sanitisers of 100 ml, 1,000 alcohol-based sanitisers of 500 ml, 40 jars of hypochlorite of five litres for prevention of coronavirus pandemic and 20 bags of 25 kg of bleaching powder were handed over to the Chief Medical Officer of Sonbhadra earlier.

Along with it all the projects of NCL are going ahead to help the needy families around them, distributing ration materials, masks, sanitisers and soaps etc besides also providing relief materials to the district and local administration from time to time.

U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED TENDER NOTICE
Tenders for executing the following works in two parts (as detailed in tender specifications) are hereby invited from experienced contractors and will be opened on the same dates mentioned below at 15.30 hrs. publicly in the office of the undersigned. The tender documents can be had up to previous working day of the opening day on payment of Rs. 236.00 including GST (NON REFUNDABLE) in cash or demand draft. If e-tender document is required by post, Rs. 30.00 will be charged extra. Part-I of the tender will contain an earnest money in shape of CDR/FDR/BD/RTGS duly pledged in favour of the undersigned in official capacity and part-II will contain rates, terms and conditions and other relevant details. Without earnest money e-tender will not be accepted. E-tender No. 04/ESD/2020-21 to be opened on 02.07.2020. Tender cost Rs. 236.00. Earnest Money Rs. 2000.00

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION OBRA-SONBHADRA-231219 EXTENSION TENDER
NO : T-01/SE-HQ/OTPS/FF&SD/2020-21 TENDER ID : 2020 RVUNL 460116_1
The opening date of Part-I (Technical Bid) of Online e-bid Tender No. T-01/SE-HQ/OTPS/FF&SD/2020-21 for the Work for repairing/Overhauling of CCTV cameras along with its network system installed at various location of TPS, obra is hereby extended due to unavailability of sufficient no. of bidders on due date. Now the new dates regarding the above e tender is stated below :
1. Online Submission End date & time of e-Bids : 11/06/2020 at 18:00 Hrs. 2. Last Submission Date of Hardcopy, EMD, Tender Cost & Annex : 13/06/2020 at 17:00 Hrs. 3. Online opening date & time of Part-I (Technical Bid) : 15/06/2020 at 18:00 Hrs. All the other terms & conditions will remain same. Information or corrigendum if any, shall be uploaded only on the nigram's website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves update. Superintending Engineer-HQ No. 131 Date 1.6.2020 SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION

उत्तर प्रदेश विद्युत निगम लिमिटेड
अनुप्राणी फर्मा/देकंदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु सीलबन्ध निविदाओं को मांगी में दिनांक 29.06.2020 को 17:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की जाती है। (1) ई-निविदा संख्या : 01/विभागा/गो/2020-21 : विद्युत पारेण खण्ड गोष्ठा के अधीन 220 कोणीय उपकेंद्र गोष्ठा पर विभिन्न प्रकार की अग्रयोज्य/संकीर्ण सामग्री की 220 कोणीय स्थानगर्ह से अन्वय सुरक्षित स्थान पर रखने सम्बन्धी कार्य। घरोहर राशि रु 2000.00 निविदा माग-1 खुलने की तिथि 30.06.2020 को 14:00 बजे, निविदा माग-2 (प्राइज पार्ट) खुलने की तिथि हेतु तदनुसार वेबसाइट पर सूचित किया जायेगा, निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य रु 236.00 (जीएसटीडी सहित)। (2) ई-निविदा संख्या : 02/विभागा/गो/2020-21 : विद्युत पारेण खण्ड गोष्ठा के अधीन 220 कोणीय उपकेंद्र गोष्ठा पर विभिन्न प्रकार की अग्रयोज्य/संकीर्ण सामग्री की 132/33 कोणीय स्थानगर्ह से अन्वय सुरक्षित स्थान पर रखने सम्बन्धी कार्य। घरोहर राशि रु 2000.00 निविदा माग-1 खुलने की तिथि 30.06.2020 को 14:00 बजे, निविदा माग-2 (प्राइज पार्ट) खुलने की तिथि हेतु तदनुसार वेबसाइट पर सूचित किया जायेगा, निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य रु 236.00 (जीएसटीडी सहित)। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क एवं जीएसटीडी अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेण खण्ड, गोष्ठा के बैंक खाते में (बैंक का नाम- पंजाब नेशनल बैंक, खाता सं-0181002100120697, IFSC Code- PANB0018100) R.T.G.S./N.E.F.T. के माध्यम से जमा कराई जानी है तथा बैंक में जमा किये जाने का साक्ष्य यथा योज्य युटीआर संख्या, खाते का नाम, निर्गतकर्ता बैंक अधिकारी द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित एवं निविदादाता द्वारा प्रतिहस्ताक्षरित पे-इन स्लैप का प्रमाणित प्रपत्र, जीएसटीडी पंजीकरण की स्या-प्रमाणित प्रपत्र एवं तकनीकी अनुभव इत्यादि, संलग्न करना अनिवार्य है। घरोहर राशि/निविदा शुल्क न होने अथवा किसी प्रकार की त्रुटि होने पर निविदा का माग-2 जिसमें दर्दे दी जानी है, नहीं खोली जायेगी। माग-2 में दर्दे एवं वाणिज्यिक निवाम व राशि होने काहिये। शर्ह कभी कार्यालय में जमा करने की आवश्यकता नहीं होगी। निविदा का माग प्रपत्र एवं द्वितीय माग (प्राइज बिड दर्दे एवं राशि) दिनांक 29.06.2020 को 17:00 बजे तक www.etender.up.nic.in पर डाउनलोड/अपलोड की जा सकती है। निविदा का प्रपत्र माग दिनांक 30.06.2020 को 14:00 बजे एवं माग-2 (प्राइज पार्ट) निविदा शुल्क एवं घरोहर वनराशि प्राप्ति की पुष्टि होने के पश्चात सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। निविदा खुलने की तिथि पर अवकाश होने की स्थिति में निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस पर निर्धारित समय पर खोली जायेगी। निविदाओं को बिना कोई कारण बताये निविदा/निविदाओं को अस्वीकार/विनाजित करने का अधिकार अधीनस्थ अधिकारियों के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा। घरोहर/निविदा राशि सहित व सशर्त निविदायें स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी। कृपया विद्युत जांचकारी, डाउन लोड, अन्य संशोधनों एवं निविदा प्रस्तुत करने के दिनांक तक विस्तार आदि के सम्बन्ध में कृपया www.etender.up.nic.in पर लॉग आन करें।
अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेण खण्ड, गोष्ठा संख्या-2891/विभागा/गो/ई-टेंडर/2020-21 संख्या : 01 एवं 02/दिनांक-01.06.2020 "सुरक्षित में बिजली बचाये"

Gomti Exp departs with 583 on board

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Gomti Express departed from Charbagh railway station with 583 passengers on board on Monday after a gap of over two months. Train operations were stopped across the country in view of the coronavirus pandemic. Last month, the railways pressed into service Shramik Special trains to ferry migrant workers. Besides, the Lucknow Mail and Pushpak Express also departed with full capacity. Senior divisional commercial manager (NR, Lucknow division) Jagtosh Shukla said special trains were being run to ferry passengers and there were no general coaches. He said that 583 passengers had booked tickets to Gomti Express. About the arrangements, he said the Central government's guidelines were



adhered to and passengers were asked to follow social distancing and wear masks. "All the passengers were screened at the entrance of railway station before being allowed to get into trains. The staff also held checking drives to see the passengers were wearing masks," he said. He added that 53 passengers boarded at Unnao railway station when the train reached there. The train will pass via Kanpur Central, Rura, Jhijhka, Shikohabad, Etawah Firozabad, Tundla, Hathras Aligarh, Khurja and Ghaziabad

to reach new Delhi. Meanwhile, the Lucknow division of NER also made ample arrangements for running Lucknow Mail and Pushpak Express. The entire railway station premises and platforms were sanitised and passengers screened. However, sources said the passenger strength in Gomti Express was not as much it used to be before the outbreak of Covid-19. Meanwhile, DRM, NER (Lucknow division), Monica Agnihotri carried out an inspection at the Lucknow junction prior to the train run which started on Monday. The DRM inspected the barricading and arrangements at the entrance, portico, concourse and station area. She asked the officials to screen the passengers and ensure they were wearing masks.



MLA Dinesh Choudhary handing a Rs 5-lakh cheque for Covid Care Relief Fund to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at latter's official residence on Monday

Back from Mumbai, man flings 3 kids into river

Lucknow (PNS): A man threw his three infant daughters into Ghaghra river in Sant Kabir Nagar late Sunday night even as six persons, including a kid, drowned while taking a dip in river Ghazipur and Ballia on Monday. In two separate incidents, four kids drowned while bathing in Mainpuri on the occasion of Ganga Dussehra. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath consoled the deaths. In Sant Kabir Nagar, Sarfaraz threw his infant daughters Sana (7), Saba (4) and Sama (2), into Ghaghra river from Birhar bridge. Later, the police rushed there and

deployed SDRF and local divers to trace the bodies. Sarfaraz and his friend Neeraj, who helped him in the act, were later arrested. Sarfaraz (32) of Dihwa village of Dhaghata police station area along with his wife and four daughters returned from Mumbai 20 days back due to lockdown. He used to work as a truck driver there and is reported to be a drunkard. He had regular fights with his wife in recent days which is said to be the reason behind the extreme step. Elsewhere in Ghazipur, three teenaged youths, including two brothers, drowned

while bathing in Ganga river at Chhota Mahadeva ghat of Kotwali police station area on Monday morning. The police later recovered the bodies of Shivam (17) and his younger brother Saurabh (16) and their friend Chunna (17). The police had earlier asked people not to bathe in ghats like Chhota Mahadeva but their appeal failed on deaf ears. Meanwhile in Ballia, two youths and a child drowned while taking bath on Ganga Dussehra. As per reports, Prince Patel (7) of Haldi hamlet of Ballia went along with his grandmother to take a dip in Ganga river at the Pachrukhiya

Shekhawat promises tap water to every UP household by '22

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat expressed happiness over Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's resolve to provide water to every household in Uttar Pradesh. In a letter to the chief minister, the Union minister wrote: "I am happy that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath pledged to supply water to every house in Uttar Pradesh in 2022 itself and realise the dream of Prime Minister Narendra Modi." Shekhawat assured the chief minister that UP would be given unconditional support to provide 100 per cent functional household tap connection (FHTC) in the state. The Union minister said

that when India would celebrate 75 years of its Independence, every villager of UP would have access to clean water from taps installed in homes. "It is a matter of pride for all of us that the most populous state in the country will provide tap water to every household," he wrote. "Our mothers, sisters and daughters will be freed from facing troubles to fetch water. In the true sense, this is Antyodaya. Funds are being provided by both the Centre and UP for this. Provision has also been made for availability of safe water in areas affected by arsenic and fluoride contamination," Shekhawat said. The minister further wrote, "Local communities will be involved in planning, imple-

mentation, management, operation and maintenance of water supply systems in villages to achieve water security and ensure long term sustainability. And by organising IEC campaign with community solidarity, Jal Jeevan Mission is truly being made a mass movement." In view of COVID-19 epidemic, it is important that people do not crowd around public posts/public water sources to fetch water. Therefore, the work of water supply in all households will be done to provide tap connection to every house on the basis of preference. It will not only help in following social distancing, but will also help locals in getting employment as well as promoting rural economy," the minister said in his letter.

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LIMITED OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION OBRA-SONBHADRA "TIME EXTENSION TENDER"
ID : 2019 RVUNL 403578_1
This office tender no. T-28/0MMCV-B/MD/BTPS/2019-20 for the work of "Work of Boiler Pressure part during boiler breakdown maintenance of unit no. 12 & 13, 2x200MW, BTPS Obra", is hereby extended as below:- Last Date and Time For Submission Of E-Bids (Technical and Financial) at E-procurement website: <http://etender.up.nic.in> : 10/06/2020 up to 17:00 hrs. Last Date and Time For Submission of Hardcopy of: Requisite Documents in the Office of Undersigned : 11/06/2020 up to 17:00 hrs. Date and Time of Opening of E-Bids (Part-I) : 15/06/2020 At 16:00 hrs.) All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. Superintending Engineer O&MMC-V, BTPS, OBRA No. 132 Date 1.6.2020 SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION

Robbers make off with ₹22.7L, shoot four

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the first day of Unlock 1.0, unidentified miscreants opened fire and snatched Rs 22.70 lakh from a cashier of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) who was heading to a bank to deposit the money in Aligarh on Monday. In the process, four persons suffered gunshot wounds and a woman was also deprived of her valuables by the brigands. On their part, senior officers rushed to the scene, sealed major intersections and launched a hunt for the

robbers. However, two hours of combing failed to yield any results. A case was registered and CCTV footages were being scanned by the police to identify the culprits. As per reports, the staff of Cash Management Service Company went to LIC office at Samad Road in Civil Lines police station area of Aligarh to transfer cash on Monday morning. As the cashier came out with the money, three motorcycle-borne youths approached him and butted his head with a revolver while his two aides warned the security guard

Couple held for child-lifting, baby recovered after 12 days

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): Police on Monday recovered a child who was lifted 12 days back, soon after his birth at a hospital in Chowk. A woman, identified as Seema Shukla and her husband Sanjay Shukla were arrested on the charges of child-lifting. Seema Shukla of River Bank Colony in Wazirganj police area confessed to her crime and said she was driven by the desire to have a baby. She said they had no child from wedlock and she was mocked at in the society. She further said she used to loiter around the hospital to see women carrying their babies and had made several unsuccessful child-lifting attempts in the past. On the fateful day, she found the mother of the child alone and befriended her. She then made off with the baby taking advantage of the mother's unmindful-

ness. ADCP Vikas Tripathi said Jagdish of Pihani (Hardoi) had lodged a case at Chowk police station. He said a team worked on the case and scanned CCTV footages in which a suspect was seen taking away a baby. The police worked further and succeeded in finding the woman," he said. However, the ADCP said tracing the child was not an easy task. "In a CCTV footage installed at KK Hospital, the woman was seen purchasing milk from a shop. It was enough of a hint. We thought the woman would be living in a surrounding area, and we contacted some shopowners to get a lead about the accused. Later, the woman was rounded up and the child was recovered," he said. The parents were elated at their reunion with the child after 12 days.

Health expert Dr Ishwar Gilada also echoed the same views. "It may, in fact, lead to diagnostic confusion because there will be a large number of cases of cold and cough in monsoon, and doctors may have to ask for Covid-19 testing in that case," he said. "High temperatures usually weaken viruses but it was evident that heat has made no difference to coronavirus because the cases have only increased," he pointed out. He said it was a complex scene where it was also difficult to make any interpretation because if the number of testing is increased, so will the number of the cases, and it would be difficult to say anything about the impact of weather on coronavirus.

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD. OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION OBRA-SONBHADRA-231219 TENDER ID :
2019 RVUNL 403974_1
This office Tender No. T-29/0MMCV-B/MD/BTPS /2019-20 for the work of "Annual running maintenance of Main Boiler for unit no. 12 & 13, (2x200MW) BTPS Obra", is hereby extended as below:- Last Date and Time For Submission Of E-Bids (Technical and Financial) at E-procurement website: <http://etender.up.nic.in> : 10/06/2020 up to 17:00 hrs. Last Date and Time For Submission of Hardcopy of: Requisite Documents in the Office of Undersigned : 11/06/2020 up to 17:00 hrs. Date and Time of Opening of E-Bids (Part-I) : 15/06/2020 At 16:00 hrs.) All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. TENDER ID : 2019 RVUNL 404135_1 This office Tender No. T-30/0MMCV-B/MD/BTPS /2019-20 for the work of "Cleaning of Oil Gun and Routine checking of Boilers of 2x200MW, BTPS Obra", is hereby extended as below:- Last Date and Time For Submission Of E-Bids (Technical and Financial) at E-procurement website: <http://etender.up.nic.in> : 10/06/2020 up to 17:00 hrs. Last Date and Time For Submission of Hardcopy of: Requisite Documents in the Office of Undersigned : 11/06/2020 up to 17:00 hrs. Date and Time of Opening of E-Bids (Part-I) : 15/06/2020 At 16:00 hrs.) All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. Superintending Engineer O&MMC-V, BTPS, OBRA No. 133 Date 1.6.2020 SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION

AKY: Interests of farmers, labourers ignored by Centre

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of attempting to draw political mileage from the coronavirus pandemic. He alleged that the Rs 20 lakh crore economic package announced by the Narendra Modi government would only benefit the corporate houses that had caused maximum damage to the economy. "The interests of labourers and farmers had been ignored in the package," he said, adding that the government had failed to take the measures required for tackling the crisis caused by the pandemic. "The BJP has drawn grand plans for taking political mileage out of the pandemic and with this aim the government gave a call for banging thali and clapping. When the strategy failed to deliver the desired results, the government extended lockdown without consulting anyone and giving time to the migrant labourers to return to their native places," Akhilesh Yadav said here on Monday. "The migrant labourers are nowhere in the agenda of the government and it kept extending the lockdown. The migrant labourers ultimately ran out of patience and they were forced to move out of big cities of Maharashtra and Gujarat and move out with whatever means available to them," Yadav said, adding that many migrants died midway and the BJP government-UP was responsible for these deaths. He said the government should have given at least a week's time to the migrant labourers to move out of big cities. Referring to the announcement for constitution of migrant labour commission, the SP chief said the government was misleading people as there was nothing new in the idea, skill development being an old scheme of the government.

Health experts clueless about impact of weather on virus

Lucknow (PNS): With the south-west monsoon slated to arrive in the state capital in the third week of June, health experts remain clueless on the impact of rains on coronavirus. On the contrary, doctors said rains might lead to diagnostic confusion as many people would be suffering from cough and common cold. Incharge of Infectious Diseases Centre (KGMU) Dr D Himanshu said it was difficult to say what the impact of rains would be on coronavirus because not much was known about it. "While the impact of humidity is known on other viruses, nothing can be said of coronavirus," he said. He pointed out that one could not comment on what has been the impact of rising temperature on coronavirus as it was too

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेण खण्ड, लो.नि.वि. - 2020/2020									
पत्रांक : 600/ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट नोटिस /20-21 ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट नोटिस दिनांक : 26.05.2020									
क्र. सं.	अन्यत्र	कार्य का नाम	अंशित प्रपत्र (रु. लाख)	वोल्यूम (रु. लाख)	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (रु. सहित)	कार्य पूर्ण करने में अवधि (सप्ताह)	कार्य समायोजित अवधि (सप्ताह)	अधीनस्थ अभियन्ता का पता	मूला अधिशासी का पता
1	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में स्टाटर गार्ड की उप पर बिक कोबा प्लास्टर का कार्य।	4.02	0.41	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
2	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में स्टाटर गार्ड के प्लास्टर विद्युतीकरण, पेंटिंग आदि का कार्य।	4.23	0.43	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
3	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में मोनोरॉन गृह के फर्श पर टाइल्स लगाने का कार्य।	3.67	0.37	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
4	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में स्टाफ मेस के टीन रॉड, फर्श आदि का निर्माण कार्य।	4.11	0.42	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
5	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में मेस नं-1 की किचन में फर्श में कोटा स्टोन लगाने व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	1.78	0.18	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
6	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में मेस नं-2 की किचन में फर्श में कोटा स्टोन लगाने व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	1.78	0.18	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
7	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में मेस नं-3 की किचन में फर्श में कोटा स्टोन लगाने व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	1.78	0.18	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
8	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में मेस नं-4 की किचन में फर्श में कोटा स्टोन लगाने व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	1.78	0.18	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
9	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में मेस नं-5 की किचन में फर्श में कोटा स्टोन लगाने व नाली का निर्माण कार्य।	1.78	0.18	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
10	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में आटा बक्की की उप पर बिक कोबा, प्लास्टर, पेंटिंग आदि का कार्य।	2.96	0.30	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
11	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में परेड ग्राउण्ड का एलायमेंट का कार्य।	1.49	0.15	661.00	3 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
12	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में एक कमरा व शौचालय का नव-निर्माण कार्य।	5.88	0.59	661.00	6 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ
13	सीतापुर	पी.टी.सी. सीतापुर में मेनोरॉन गृह के प्लास्टर, पेंटिंग आदि का कार्य।	2.76	0.27	661.00	3 माह (सर्वां अत्रु सहित)	निर्माण खण्ड लो.नि.वि. सीतापुर	सीतापुर/चीरी वृत्त सीतापुर	मध्य से. लो.नि.वि. लखनऊ

CITYBRIEFS

FORMER PRO-VC OF AMITY UNIVERSITY PASSES AWAY
Former Pro Vice-Chancellor of Amity University Maj Gen (ret'd) KK Ohari passed away on Monday morning. He breathed his last at Command Hospital at 11:35 am. He was 77. His last rites will be performed on Tuesday. He had joined Amity University as director-general in the year 2004 and retired as Pro-VC last year. Current Pro-VC Sunil Dhaneshwar and all Amities extended their condolences on the demise of Maj Gen Ohari.

LSWA WELCOMES DECISION
Liquor Sellers Welfare Association (LSWA) welcomed the state government's decision to allow opening of shops from 10 am to 8:30 pm. General secretary KL Maurya said there was brisk business only after 7 pm everyday. "Earlier, the shops were closed by 7 pm and it was affecting the business. Now, we will get enough time," he said. He added that the shortage of different brands of liquor and beer has almost ended.

WEBINAR DISCUSSES AGRICULTURAL REFORMS
The department of Commerce, Lucknow University, on Monday organised a webinar on agricultural reforms in India amid coronavirus pandemic. Assistant Prof Geetika Kapoor from the department was the co-convenor of the webinar and she delivered the opening note. Chief speaker TS Raji Gain, who is

currently the director of Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD), first outlined the main issues faced by the agriculture sector — mainly of production, marketing and liquidity. She then spoke of possible solutions and what the government is doing should do under the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' initiative, new mandis under-NAM and ordinance on APMC Act as well as direct procurement of oil seeds and pulses. She also talked about farmers-producers organisations, agri-infra fund and support from the government, including Jan Dhan accounts PM Kisan transfers, extension of Bhavantar Yojana as well as support from NABARD.

SCHOLARSHIP
Saurabh Singhal, a student of City Montessori School, Mahanagar campus, has been offered admission with a scholarship of US\$ 68,000 by Polytechnic Institute, USA, for pursuing higher studies. He has been awarded the scholarship for the entire study period of four years. Apart from this, Arizona State University of USA has also offered him a scholarship of US\$ 60,000 while three more universities — Purdue University (USA), Worcester University (UK) and Aberystwyth University (UK) — have also invited him to take admission there.



3. बिल ऑफ सॉल्टिटी में लगाई गयी दर्दे समी करो को जोड़ने हुए तथा जीएसटीडी करो को छोड़ने हुये लगाई गयी है। निविदा आमंत्रण दिनांक-05.06.2020 से अज्ञानलॉड की जा सकती है एवं दिनांक-04.07.2020 की अग्ररत 12:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। उक्त निविदा की तकनीकी बिड दिनांक-04.07.2020 को अग्ररत 02:00 बजे खोली जायेगी। शासनादेश संख्या-1/2018/3070/78-2-2018/42 आरडीटी/2017(22) दिनांक-03.01.2018 में निहित व्यवस्थानुसार निविदा की तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय बिड खोले जाने के उपरान्त निविदादाता द्वारा मूल अभिलेख व्यक्तित्व का से विमाम/कार्यालय में प्रस्तुत किये जाने है। निविदादाता द्वारा मूल अभिलेख प्रस्तुत न किये जाने की दशा में शासनादेश में निहित प्रावधानों के अनुसार कार्यावाही की जायेगी।
(संघटनका प्रया) अधिशासी अभियन्ता निर्माण खण्ड, लो.नि.वि., सीतापुर।
दूरभाष सं. 05862-270152
उपरो 151933, दिनांक-30.05.2020
विज्ञान वेबसाइट www.up.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।
ई-मेल : exengcdpww@gmail.com

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

BJP Bihar campaign to start with 'virtual rally'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the BJP is set to unlock its poll campaign in Bihar next week with a "virtual rally" by Union Home Minister and former BJP president Amit Shah who will address the people of the State through video conference and Facebook Live.

Shah's virtual rally will be followed up by BJP President J P Nadda's "digital rally" in the State that is slated to go to polls in October-November this year to elect 243 members of the Bihar Legislative Assembly. The term of the current Assembly, elected in 2015, will expire on November 29, 2020.

The BJP has been sharing power with the JD(U), headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar since 2005, barring a four-year gap from 2013-17. Bihar would be the focus of most of the 2,000 virtual video conferences, rallies or meetings announced across the States by the BJP in the next one month. The Central and State leaders, to begin with, will address and mobilise booth-level workers in the State through video-conferencing.

According to Bihar BJP President Sanjay Jaiswal, the

party has set a target of roping in "at least one lakh people across the 243 Assembly segments in Bihar" for the video conference, besides those who may prefer to listen to the speech on the social networking site.

"The virtual rally can be verily called the commencement of our digital campaign for Assembly elections in Bihar. The June 9 rally by the Home Minister will be followed by similar public addresses from party president J P Nadda on a later date. Itinerary for the same will be made known in due course. Nadda is expected to address the people in two phases covering north and south Bihar," he said at Patna.

The Rashtriya Janata Dal is also planning to counter Shah's "virtual rally" by its own "Garib Adhikar Divas" rally on June 9.

BJP's national president this week said that Coronavirus has restricted the scope of real poll campaigning but the party would launch electioneering sticking to new norms of 'social distancing' and taking to face masks.

Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, had, interestingly, spoken of the possibility of 'virtual cam-

paign' and even 'online voting' replacing old-style rallies and the long queues outside polling booths in the times of pandemic.

The election commission will have the last say on the date of polling and the mode of campaign if the pandemic curve is not beaten effectively before the year-end, sources said.

While large gatherings are prohibited under what is being termed as "Unlock 1.0", it remains to be seen whether conventional poll campaign involving rallies and roadshows will be allowed by the time the election schedule is announced.

Rival parties in Bihar apprehend that a campaign restricted to the "digital" mode would be of disproportionate advantage to the BJP, which has a well-oiled IT cell, and by virtue of being in power at the Centre for more than six years, can marshal resources with far greater ease than its rivals.

Last month, Nadda had addressed a meeting of Bihar core committee leaders through video-conferencing and exchanged views relating to electioneering, including the subject of stranded migrants from the State.

India's corona fatality rate still lower at 2.83%

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

COVID-19 case-wise, India may have moved up viciously from the 10th position to 7th position within a week since May 25 but the fatality rate at 2.83 per cent of the total death of nearly 5,400 is much lower than the global 6 per cent.

The recovery rate in India also improved to 48.13 per cent on Monday. On May 25, India with 1,38,645 infected cases was at tenth position piping Iran which currently has 1,54,445 cases. On May 31, India with 1,90,535 cases replaced France to move to 7th position.

A senior official from the Union Health Ministry said that infection and fatality might seemingly be moving at the faster pace in India, but when compared to the other worst-hit countries, it is comparatively low (See Box).

The case fatality rate is 2.83 per cent. On May 18, it was 3.15 per cent while on May 3, it was 3.25 per cent and on April 15 it was 3.30 per cent.

"A steady decline can be seen in the case fatality rate in the country. The relatively low death rate is attributed to the continued focus on surveillance, timely case identification and clinical management of the cases," he said.

In comparison, said the official, the USA has 5.92 per cent, UK (14.07 per cent), Italy

THE CASE FATALITY RATE FOR COUNTRIES HAVING THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF DEATHS

COUNTRIES	TOTAL DEATHS	CASE FATALITY RATE
World	367,166	6.19%
USA	1,01,567	5.92%
UK	38,376	14.07%
Italy	33,340	14.33%
Spain	29,043	12.12%
France	28,717	19.35%
Brazil	27,878	5.99%
Belgium	9,453	16.25%
Mexico	9,415	11.13%
Germany	8,500	4.68%
Iran	7,734	5.19%
Canada	6,996	7.80%
Netherlands	5,951	12.87%

(14.33 per cent), Spain (12.12 per cent) and other around eight other developed nations where case fatality is comparatively higher than India.

"Through a graded, pre-emptive and pro-active approach, we are taking several steps along with the States/UTs for prevention, containment and management of Covid-19.

These are being regularly reviewed and monitored at the highest level," he added. The official also said that two specific

trends are being noticed: while the recovery rate is increasing on one hand, case fatality is going down on the other.

A total of 91,818 patients have been cured of the disease, with recovery rate at 48.19 per cent amongst Covid-19 patients.

The testing capacity has increased in the country through 472 Government and 204 private laboratories (total 676 laboratories). Cumulatively, 38,37,207 samples have been tested so far for the infection.

IMA urges Govt to extend MSME benefits to clinics, nursing homes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has urged the Government to extend the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) benefits, recently announced by the Finance Ministry, to clinics, nursing homes and small hospitals run by single doctors, couple doctors and group of doctors who are grappling with financial crisis owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"There are thousands of single doctors, couple doctors and group of doctors who have established clinics, nursing homes and small hospitals providing healthcare in almost all the districts and towns of the country. They provide affordable healthcare and are accessible 24x7.

"Most of them fail to come under the definition of MSME. It is also true they have been badly affected in the current lockdown situation. Many of them have been closed. Some of them may not revive at all.

All of them are important in the current stage of exit to provide non-Covid services and perhaps even Covid-19 related services," IMA national president Dr Rajan Sharma said.

This stimulus package, which requires clarity will allow these institutions to survive and continue serving the people, Dr Sharma added. The IMA represents private medical professionals in the country.

The Government has announced a major economic package for the MSMEs which have been given a special consideration to help them bail out from financial crisis in the wake of Coronavirus pandemic.

Naidu, Birla mull virtual Parliament in long run

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday discussed about the conduct of Monsoon Session of Parliament under social distancing norms in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Naidu and Birla also explored "virtual Parliament" as an option in the long run and to adopt technology to enable Parliament Sessions to tide over situations when regular meetings are not possible.

Both the Presiding officers also referred the issue of virtual meetings of parliamentary committees to the Rules Committees of both the Houses in view of the confidentiality aspect of the deliberations.

Parliament officials said several options are being considered including holding the meeting of Lok Sabha in the

Central Hall, with the Rajya Sabha, which has less members than the lower house, shifting to the chamber of Lok Sabha. Also the sittings of both the Houses can be held on alternate days.

Taking note of reports suggesting that the fight against the coronavirus is likely to be a long haul, Naidu convened the meeting at his official residence which was also attended by the Secretary Generals of both the houses.

The presiding officers directed the Secretary Generals to examine the feasibility of using the central hall of Parliament appropriately to ensure social distancing norms during the upcoming monsoon session.

They noted that since there is no requirement of maintaining confidentiality of the proceedings of both the Houses, which are open to general public besides being

telecast live, virtual Parliament is an option to be explored in the long run.

The two officials were also directed to examine in detail various technical and other arrangements to be ensured to enable smooth functioning of both the Houses.

Parliament usually meets in July-August for the monsoon session. It was adjourned sine die on March 24, ahead of schedule, amid growing concerns over the Covid-19 outbreak.

"Both the Secretary Generals briefed the Chairman and Speaker on issues connected with the proposed virtual meetings of various committees of Parliament," said the official.

Measures include providing a safe technological platform, complying with the rules of confidentiality of deliberations in such meetings and the difficulties in ensuring the

same in case of virtual meeting, they said.

Infrastructure upgrade to be undertaken to enable virtual meetings and the time likely to be taken in this regard were also discussed.

Taking cognisance of the long existing rules regarding confidentiality in respect of meetings of the committees and the implications of holding virtual meetings, Naidu and Birla opined that it would be necessary to refer the issue of virtual meetings to the Rules Committees of both the Houses, the sources said.

Regarding the view expressed in some quarters that presiding officers can suspend the Rules, officials have pointed out that such suspension requires a motion to be carried in the House and presiding officers cannot supercede rules by issuing directions.

Both Naidu and Birla noted that the chairmen of various

committees of Parliament including the department-related Standing Committees are empowered to convene regular meetings of respective committees on their own.

However, in view of the feedback being received from some members of Parliament about their inability to travel on account of quarantine norms in various states, they felt that it may be better for the chairmen of various committees to convene meetings after ascertaining the likely attendance of Members.

Officials informed that the average attendance in the meetings of the eight department-related Standing Committees of Rajya Sabha over the last three years has been about 45 per cent.

This in effect means that on an average, 14 of the 31 members of each committee attended the meetings, they said.

Take political parties, country into confidence over China border issue, Cong tells Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday asked the Government to take all political parties and the country into confidence over restoration of the status quo ante on the border with China.

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said there can be no compromise on India's security and territorial integrity and posed a set of questions to the Government on the situation at the border in Ladakh.

He questioned the "silence" of the Government on the "brazen Chinese transgression" into Indian territory.

The Congress leader also expressed concern over issues raised by Nepal and hoped the Government would find a lasting solution to it.

"Why has the Modi Government not taken the nation into confidence vis-a-vis

the actual position on the ground?", the Congress asked.

"While the Government has briefly commented upon resolving the crisis diplomatically, the Modi Government must take all political parties and the country into confidence on restoring the status quo and protecting India's territorial integrity," Surjewala demanded at AICC Press conference.

The Congress said that umpteen news reports reflect that Chinese forces have made serious transgressions into Indian Territory at three points in Ladakh and Sikkim.

"Reports of Chinese Army moving thousands of troops in Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso Lake Area (Ladakh) are shocking and audacious attempt on our "territorial integrity," said the party leader.

The grand old party said if these reports are true, the

Modi Government must answer -Have the Chinese troops occupied Indian Territory in the Galwan River Valley and Pangong Tso Lake in Ladakh?

It asked from the government to clarify that the Chinese transgressions into Galwan River Valley threaten the operation of "Darbuk-Shyok-DBO Road" vital to servicing Indian troops in Sub-Sector North and Karakoram pass.

Have they even beyond China's own "Claim Line", pitched hundreds of tents, constructed concrete structures and built a few kilometres of road along the LAC in Galwan River Valley as also on the north bank of Pangong Tso Lake? And is it correct that Chinese troops have occupied the "Finger Heights near Pangong Tso Lake?" asked the Congress.

Reshuffle in Bengal BJP ahead of 2021 polls

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Ahead of the June 8 video conference with Home Minister Amit Shah, the Bengal BJP has effected massive organizational reshuffling that saw shunting of a known "plain-speaker" senior leader Chandra Bose a scion of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

The name of Bose who was a vice president of the Bengal party unit would not appear in the new list of office bearers even as State BJP president announced the new list of functionaries even as critics said the new list makes it apparent that the party is looking for street fighters rather than ideologues to counter the Trinamool Congress in the next year's Assembly elections.

According to the new list Barrackpore MP and a former strongman of the TMC Arjun Singh has been promoted to the

post of vice president. Along with him Bankura MP Dr Subhas Sarkar, Hooghly leader Rajkamal Pathak, Ritesh Tewari, Pratap Banerjee, Raju Banerjee, and Mehfuza Khatoun too have been made the party's State vice presidents.

Former women's wing leader Locket Chatterjee, the current Hooghly MP has been made the General Secretary of the party along with JP Singh Mahato and others. Locket Chatterjee is replaced by fashion designer Agnimitra Paul as the State party Mahila Morcha president. Sabyasachi Dutta another TMC turncoat and close associate of senior leader Mukul Roy has been made the party's state secretary. Vocal leader Sayantan Banerjee too have made a general secretary while party MP Soumitra Khan has been made the Yuva Morcha president.

The reshuffling takes place

at a crucial time ahead of the next year's Assembly elections which the BJP is seeing as a chance to bring about a second change in Bengal.

The reshuffling --- which further tightens the stranglehold of Ghosh in the State party --- also takes place ahead of the five-day video conference with Shah who would speak to all the party workers and office bearers from June 8 onward, sources said.

Meanwhile Ghosh on Monday made it clear that his party was switching on to the agitation mode keeping the next year's elections in mind even as he brought new allegations against the TMC Government accusing it of large-scale housing corruption. Crores have been siphoned off in housing scam which is a big scam and the party will take up this cause soon along with other issues," he said.

Odisha, Sikkim, Mizoram join 'One Nation-One Ration Card'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Three more States — Odisha, Sikkim and Mizoram — have joined the 'One Nation-One Ration Card' scheme, taking the number of states and union territories (UTs) which have joined the scheme to 20. Uttarakhanda, Nagaland and Manipur will also be added to the national cluster by August.

Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Monday said necessary infrastructure work — upgradation of electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) software, integration with central Integrated Management of PDS (IM-PDS) and Annavitran portals, availability of ration cards/beneficiaries data in cen-

tral repository and requisite testing of national portability transactions — required for ration card portability has been completed in these three states—Odisha, Sikkim and Mizoram. So far, ration card portability has been enabled in 17 states and UTs—Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

Under the 'One Nation-One Ration Card' initiative, eligible beneficiaries would be able to avail their entitled foodgrains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) from any Fair Price Shop in the country

using the same ration card.

"Further, constant efforts are being made by this Department to expand the reach of national portability to the beneficiaries of other states/UTs also in association with respective state/UT governments," Paswan said.

The Food Ministry is doing all necessary arrangements to include remaining 13 states and UTs to the national cluster.

A central technical team has imparted the requisite orientation training to the technical teams and concerned officers of these states through video conferencing and necessary guidelines/instructions for the implementation of national/inter-state portability were also provided to them, Paswan said.

PM Svanidhi for street vendors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) on Monday launched PM Svanidhi, or Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi scheme, which is a special micro-credit facility plan to provide affordable loan of up to ₹10,000 to more than 50 lakh street vendors, who had their businesses operational on or before 24 March. The scheme is valid until March 2022.

Under the scheme, vendors can avail working capital loan of up to ₹10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments within one year. On timely/early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy of 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) on six-

months basis. There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan.

The scheme is applicable to vendors, hawkers, thelewalas, rehriwalas, thelphadwalas in different areas/context where supply goods and services. Street vendors belonging to the surrounding peri-urban/rural areas are also included.

The scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors, who had been vending on or before 24 March, 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/ rural areas.

The duration of the scheme is till March 2022. The street vendors belonging to the surrounding peri-urban/ rural areas are being included as beneficiaries under the urban livelihoods programme for the first time.

1,162 test positive in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The day Tamil Nadu chose to relax the lockdown and allow factories, IT companies and business establishments to resume operations saw 1,162 persons testing positive for coronavirus, the highest number of cases to be registered on a single day. On Sunday 1,149 persons had tested positive for the pandemic.

According to the release issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu on Monday, 23,495 persons have been tested positive till date in the State. Taking into account the number of persons cured and discharged from hospitals, there were 10,138 active cases in the State as on Monday. The day also saw 11 persons succumbing to the pandemic taking the

tally to 184.

Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram and Thiruvallur districts topped the table with the highest number of covid patients. Dr Ram Subramanian, member of the medical team advising the Tamil Nadu Government said the increase in the number of patients need not cause any kind of apprehension in the minds of the people. "The responsibility of the citizens is to make sure that they wear masks and observe social distancing. Also, see to it that children below the age of 10 and senior citizens (those above the age of 60) remain at home because they are the most vulnerable group," said Dr Ram Subramanian, a specialist in infectious diseases.

Chief Minister Edappadi

Palaniswamy on Monday laid the foundation for a ₹235 crore Software Park to be built by Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation at Pattabiram, a Chennai suburb. The park named as Tidel Park would offer 25,000 direct employment in the field of futuristic technology, said a release by the Tamil Nadu Government.

Despite the ever increasing number of patients, the State is limping back to normalcy as the lockdown which was in force for the last 65 days has entered its last phase. Barring the four districts of Chennai, Thiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu, lockdown is being relaxed all over the remaining 33 districts, though remnants of the restrictions are still visible.

OZ PM to hand over stolen artefacts to Modi during virtual meet

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A virtual meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison scheduled on June 4 is also likely to witness the latter handing over online the exquisitely carved stolen artefacts, including two Nayak period dwarapalas or temple gate guardians and a 6th or 7th Century serpent king (Nagaraja) of Rajasthan/Madhya Pradesh, stolen from India.

The Australian Government had earlier planned to return the three antiquities of cultural significance during the official visit of Morrison to India in January early this year. But the plan went for a toss, first owing to forest fires in Australia followed

by the Covid-19 pandemic which has brought the world on its knees.

Sources in the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) said that the three culturally significant artefacts, a pair of 'Dwarapala' (door guardians), dating back to 15th century, are from Tamil Nadu. The 'Nagaraja' (serpent king), belonging to 6th or 8th century from either Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, was at display at National Gallery of Australia. It had reportedly purchased them from idol smuggler Subhash Kapoor.

However, extensive research undertaken by the Gallery prompted it to voluntarily return these artefacts to India. "We are expecting the Australian leader to virtually handover the idols to our Prime Minister Modi when



they have a virtual meeting on June 4. After that, we will send the two Dwarapalas to Idol wing of Tamil Nadu which has registered a theft case in the matter while the Serpent King will be handed over to a museum in Red Fort," the sources

said. In September last year, a 600-year-old Nataraja idol worth Rs 30 crore which was stolen 37 years ago from a temple at Kallidaikurichi in Tirunelveli district, Chennai, Tamil Nadu was returned to

India by Australia. The two and a half feet 16th-century idol which was kept in the gallery in Adelaide, Australia for 17 years was traced a year ago.

Three years ago, Australia had returned three artefacts, including an idol of goddess Pratyangira, stolen from a Shiva temple in Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu. In 2014, then Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott had returned two statues of Nataraja and Ardhanariswarar stolen from temples in the state.

Both India and Australia are a party to the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transport of Ownership of Cultural Property.

Another push

Cabinet decisions on MSMEs and the agricultural economy are well-intended but depend a lot on implementation and sub-text



The Coronavirus and its shape-shifting effect on the economy have been debilitating but the Government has been reacting to it in fits and starts. And while the stimulus packages announced in a series so far haven't been as stimulating, the Cabinet decisions with regard to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the agricultural economy are well-intended but depend a lot on implementation and details. The definition of MSMEs has been changed, their turnover limit revised upward to ₹250 crore from ₹100 crore. The Government has infused ₹20,000 crore into

the sector as subordinate debt for stressed units. And although the Finance Minister in her first tranche of the stimulus had included ₹3 lakh crore collateral-free automatic loans for them, many MSME owners claimed that about 97 per cent were not in the corporate sector and were either partnerships or proprietorships. So only a minuscule number of firms, that were either private limited or LLP, were benefitted. Besides, this badly-hit sector, which contributes up to 30 per cent of the GDP, has not quite recovered from demonetisation and many units are almost on the verge of closure. And for all the detailing, the fact of the matter is that credit channels like banks and NBFCs will have to ease loans to this sector no matter what the Government says. Even now, MSME credit is a very small percentage of total outstanding bank credit and that pie was declining even before the pandemic, decelerating industrial growth. The proposed fund of funds would help list MSMEs on stock exchange, hoping it will encourage private sector investments in them. But without good ratings and financials, that would not deliver immediately. Farmers, too, got some incentive in the form of a hike in Minimum Support Price (MSP) for 14 crops, which will be 50-83 per cent more than the cost of production. But the Government's loan facility to farmers (₹3 lakh with a two per cent interest subvention) and the credit scheme for street vendors still do not address the dire need for fund infusion. Of course, more decisions guaranteeing farmers' incomes, encouraging crop rationalisation and making agri-business investment worthy are expected like getting rid of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act and facilitating easy inter-state trade for farmers. Farmers currently are bound to sell agriculture produce only through APMC mandis, which restrict the free flow of farm products and lead to cartelisation. Though APMCs were meant to protect farmers from commission agents and middlemen, over time they embodied the very ills that they were meant to cure. But to their credit, they did ensure a steady procurement of foodgrains to avoid our food crises. So though farmers may have free market benefits, dismantling a regimented procurement structure would have to be followed up by creating an efficient marketing and distribution system that does not compromise our food security. Free market policies may not look at such altruistic priorities as creating a buffer. Yet we must remember that at least our surplus food reserves helped us somewhat during an emergency brought about by the pandemic. The dairy industry would be a good comparison. With private dairies refusing to buy extra milk produced, only cooperative dairies picked it up and converted it into other milk products, thereby easing the pressure on dairy owners. The Kerala Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation is even providing free milk to migrants to take care of the glut in supplies. Also, over 90 per cent of our farmers do not have access to regulated markets, so dismantling them wouldn't really have a cascading impact. A better bet would be to widen a network of well-distributed mandis and invest in longer shelf life of produce by way of attendant infrastructure like cold chains, storage, grading, transportation and so on.

Also, many of these measures were intended and discussed before to revive a slowing economy and are not particularly a palliative to the pandemic. We still have a slowing GDP to take care of and that will need big bang reforms and a fund infusion in the short run. Second, this year's GDP projection has fallen to 4.2 per cent and a consistent downward revision of growth means that figures aren't sacred. And for all the push to the agricultural sector, nothing is being done to generate demand in urban hubs or joblessness without which no reform would make sense. Our manufacturing and construction growth is almost flatlining and certain sectors are just not being considered for incentivisation. Till this piecemeal approach continues, no matter how reinvigorating each is, there is no rescuing the economy.

Back to space

The privately-funded SpaceX mission not only marks America's return to manned space flight but is much more



A comment on Twitter read, "2020 in the US resembled 1968." A statement by aviation journalist Jon Ostrower has a historical context to it. For those of us in India, it is worth recalling that in the late 1960s, as the US reached for the moon, race riots and civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King reached a crescendo. Similarly, protests following the "effective" murder of an unarmed Black man George Floyd, just as America launched its first manned mission to space after almost a decade, is a telling commentary on the US: The world's only superpower can

climb the greatest heights and plumb the lowest lows all at once. However, one must not lose sight of the tremendous achievement of the SpaceX Crew Dragon mission to the International Space Station (ISS) undertaken by astronauts Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley. For one, while funded in part by the US' space agency, NASA, the rocket that carried the astronauts to space, the Falcon 9, the Dragon capsule and even the spacesuits the astronauts wore, were all developed by the Elon Musk-promoted SpaceX. Musk, who also founded electric carmaker Tesla, is a divisive figure for many but only the most petulant will deny that he is a technology visionary. Developing a commercially-viable space launch system from scratch and now using it to launch astronauts from American soil, he has done something that was previously unthinkable. A private, commercial organisation without Government support, funded by Musk's billions among other investors in a sector previously dominated by Government money across the world, he has proven, like he himself with electric cars, that change is possible.

This acquires even more significance as India, too, is opening up its space sector for commercial opportunities. Of course, we might not be able to find a man like Musk but even small private sector development, starting with a satellite that can use existing technology from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), can drive India's space industry. Musk's development with SpaceX alongside the work by fellow American billionaire Jeff Bezos with his "Blue Origin" has created large volumes of research as well as high-tech jobs across the US. India can emulate this and create jobs for legions of its best and brightest engineers, many of who emigrated to the US to work with the likes of Musk and Bezos as well as the larger aerospace and space industries. Arguing that opportunities exist and allowing industry access is not, however, the be-all and end-all of policy. The Indian Government, ISRO and private Indian industry will have to walk the talk if we want to emulate Musk.

Age of reason

Amid border tensions, India must beat China at its own game by playing to its strengths, lowering rhetoric, strengthening its military-economic muscle and posturing peace



BHOPINDER SINGH

The crest and trough of the Sino-Indian relationship has been witnessing its lowest ebb ever since the Doklam standoff of 2017. Now, an expected reportage of counter-narratives is ensuing on both sides. Hard facts have become a casualty. The primary driver for the present jingoistic fervour is the cold reality of extreme "political vulnerability" following mismanagement of the COVID pandemic and its accompanying impact both in Beijing and New Delhi. Thus, the common urge for some societal distraction. The ability to spin the situation (however severe) towards their own advantage has been the hallmark of both regimes.

While this is certainly not the sort of distraction that would appeal to New Delhi's sensibilities, it is clearly up the Chinese path of circumstantial preference. The Xi regime is legitimised and galvanised by the hegemonic "Chinese Dream" and the sudden undoing of the same due to the socio-economic cost of COVID-19. Alongside came the trade war with the US, impulsive tendencies flaring up in Hong Kong, Tibet and with the Uighurs. The re-election of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen, who has brazenly slammed the door on the Chinese offer of "one country, two systems", dealt a further blow. Chinese President Xi Jinping is desperately looking for distraction and is showcasing some "wins." He is punting on the tried and tested formula of patriotism to "manufacture" distraction.

In such times, the media becomes the foremost weapon for subterfuge and inflaming passions that tend to divert passions from real issues. It is in this backdrop that a rather bizarre, loaded and factually questionable goad was made by Xi when he said, "It is necessary to explore ways of training and preparing for war because epidemic control efforts have been normalised." The supposed "enemy" was not named. It could be anyone — Taiwan, the US or India — given the prevailing dissonance. The Indian media does no service in biting the bait with its own proclivity for war-mongering and provoking the citizenry to adopt their own diversionary views. Uber-nationalism is also fodder for TRPs. Besides, it also ostensibly projects a "positive" outlook of Indian capabilities.

Amid the media din, the official dispensation has maintained an unusual silence, unlike the fuming free-for-all against Pakistan. Somewhere, the chinks in our foreign policy (especially with our neighbours) are getting embarrassingly exposed with traditional allies like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, too, rolling their eyes gently at China. Indian diplomacy seems to have got carried away with its own supposed stridency and circumstantial "pivot" with an ultimately fickle



US ignoring the virtues of quiet diplomacy and humility.

The fact is that China has an expansionist agenda while India does not. This is reflected in Chinese realpolitik and its chessboard moves. Denial and deception are a standard feature of Chinese diplomacy and no amount of serving tea on a swing can undo that basic instinct. When Xi was being personally charmed in Ahmedabad, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was engaged in a border fracas at that very moment. The same China, which selectively posits a "Dragon-Elephant tango", will have no qualms to veto India in favour of an international terrorist like Masood Azhar.

To get carried away by "hometown diplomacy" is reminiscent of *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai* (India and China are brothers) naivety. Border issues between India and China date back to decades but a consensus on delinking the same was established by way of improving bilateral relations. Today, a breakdown of that diplomatic understanding is apparent. Rhetoric on both sides needs to be lowered and not escalated. Beyond a point, the Chinese themselves cannot afford to open yet another "front" in these trying times.

So when the dust settles, both sides will claim to have "bloodied each other's nose", their cadres will be electrified and then, the leadership on both

sides will move on to the next set of distraction after having "won" this round. But the essential point of "tripping diplomacy" is well-nigh forgotten.

Reality is that 2020 is not 1962 even though the Indian armed forces are numerically and materially lesser than the PLA. However, the Chinese would know better than most that numeric superiority is not enough. Limited combat operations against India in 1967 at Nathu La and Cho La or the more expansive war against the Vietnamese forces in 1979 would validate this but the Chinese did get a bloody nose, both times.

Worse for the Chinese, today's PLA is also the largest military to have never partaken in any tangible combat experience whereas Indian soldiers are combat-experienced and tested. The Chinese are masters of knowing when to bargain as also just how much. They will limit their activism to the levels already established and keep the kettle boiling with existing and new-found proxies in the sub-continent. They just found a convenient opening for limited distraction as the Indian diplomacy and the Government inadvertently afforded the chance.

The foremost lesson for India is to not be taken in by its own charm offensives and instead strengthen its "core" in defence and economy. As it is, the diplomatic dice is loaded and

we make it worse with thundering blusters that unsettle smaller neighbours and send them scurrying into the willing arms of China. Uber-nationalism that is seen and heard in political rallies need to be inked where it matters, that is in defence budgets. All talk of mass exodus of US firms from China to India is more social media fantasy, like the cadre call for boycotting Chinese products. A bulk of this lopsided trade with China is done by the Indian Government itself.

Instead, the citizenry has to put pressure on the Government to revert to old-fashioned and professional diplomacy that is not necessarily conducted under the glare of the media lens or with one eye permanently fixated on electoral prospects. China fears India as a "moral idea" which intrinsically resonates across global capitals. We cannot look and sound like China. Xi's "thought on diplomacy" is unapologetic about its hegemonic intent. India needs to "manage" the same by lowering rhetoric, strengthening military-economic muscle and yet posturing peace and reason. Basically, beat China at its own game by playing to its strengths. The elephant needs to remain calm, wise and powerful. It must never forget the ignoble fire-spewing instincts of the dragon.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands)

“ THE CITIZENRY HAS TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO REVERT TO OLD-FASHIONED AND PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMACY THAT IS NOT NECESSARILY CONDUCTED UNDER THE GLARE OF THE MEDIA LENS OR WITH ONE EYE PERMANENTLY FIXATED ON ELECTORAL PROSPECTS ”

SOUNDBITE

If you take the modern-day game, India has two best players in Virat and Rohit, who play orthodox cricket but they are absolutely destructive in any format of the game.



Former Sri Lanka captain —Kumar Sangakkara

I've never been hell-bent on having a birthday celebration. I find great joy in the simplicity and modesty of things. I like and find comfort in a lack of pomp and flair.



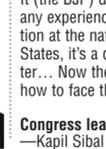
Actor —Shobhita Dhulipala

The WHO needs to reform. What the President said, if it reforms, ends corruption and reliance on China, the US will very seriously consider coming back.



US NSA —Robert O'Brien

It (the BJP) does not have any experience of administration at the national level... in States, it's a different matter... Now they don't know how to face this pandemic.



Congress leader —Kapil Sibal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Condemnable act

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Racist attack" (June 1). George Floyd's death is a dastardly and brutal act. The image of him begging for air to breathe is tragic. The circumstances around his death are a shame not only for the US, which still follows racism in this computer age, but also for the rest of humanity. It is nothing but a vulgar display of authority and arrogance by the police and is a case that must be condemned in harsh terms. It is a sheer violation of human rights. The hope is that the law and judiciary will do justice to Floyd.

NR Ramachandran
Chennai

Ill-effects of e-learning

Sir — Though just some time ago, youngsters, especially school-going kids, were prohibited from using mobile phones and computers for a longer period of time, nowadays, they are the ones who use digital devices for long hours as online classes have become a norm, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Things Government must set right

On March 24, when a three-week nation-wide lockdown was announced, the Government's concern was to save human lives. Prime Minister Narendra Modi borrowed an idiom from Urdu poet Meer Taqi Meer, "Jan hai toh jahaan hai" (If you have life, you have the world) to drive home his point. The Corona pandemic had just begun spreading its tentacles then. On the day when lockdown 4 ended to be replaced by unlock 1, India reported 8,380 cases and 193 deaths, taking the total tally to 1,82,143 cases and 5,164 deaths — a big leap from just 10 earlier. The idiom, too, was tweaked to, "Jaan bhi and jahaan bhi" (Life also, the world also). All of this seemed to echo the insensitivity shown by US President Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, though to a lesser extent. There has been a marked attitudinal change by the Government towards the virus and life. However, the notion of the two Western nations is too obsessive to be emulated in India, which has to take care of millions of people on the roads, under tin roofs and in thatched huts across the country; in short those who have been facing myriad existential issues for ages. The Central Government is insistent on adopting a uniform strategy. There is perceptible reluctance on its



part to let State Governments rule and regulate without Central interventions. Further, it is either ignorant about the diverse environment in States or is ignoring the pattern deliberately. It remains a fact that COVID cases and deaths in many saffron-ruled States show exponential rise every passing day. Possibly, it is this political expediency that is forcing the Government to drag its feet from devising State-specific strategies to unlock the Corona-driven crisis. Yet, let us not underestimate the enemy. There is an urgent need for a new template now.

Haridasan Rajan
Kozhikode

Be a responsible citizen

Sir — The Corona pandemic has affected almost every sphere of our lives. All sectors of the economy remain paralysed, thus affecting their financial position. It's only now that the economy is resuming activities. But with life slowing down, this is the time for us to inculcate positive changes.

The vacuum created due to COVID-19 also reminded us of an old saying, "Necessity is the mother of invention." Even as life remained stagnant, we learnt to remain "self-dependent" and practise "self-reliance." Barring a few cases, in general people were cooperative, confining themselves to their homes and maintaining minimum interaction. Now that our fight against the COVID pandemic will continue until a vaccine/cure is found, it is for the people to stay safe. The lifting of curbs will see a spontaneous rise in cases. But people must voluntarily observe safety protocols while going about their lives.

Gobardhan Singh
Ranchi

been raised by experts. They fear that overuse of digital devices and too much exposure to the internet can harm young minds in a hazardous way and that is unpredictable.

M Pradyu
Kannur

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Beware the dragon's moves

China's recent actions at the LAC have only gone to prove the long-term and diverse strategies that the nation follows



AMRIT PAL SINGH

China is doing what it does best — confuse and confound. Its recent actions have only gone to prove the long-term and diverse strategies that the nation follows. It began with the sequential escalation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at Naku La in Sikkim and then at Pangong Tso in Ladakh. This has been followed by a face-off at the Galwan Valley in the Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) sector of the LAC in Ladakh. The activities, with soldiers engaged on three border points, have the potential to escalate due to the intrinsic linkages between and the changed circumstances of the present clashes from the earlier incidents. There were also some indirect actions on both sides that have been in focus like the objection by Nepal to the development and inauguration of the road from Dharchula to Lipulekh pass in Uttarakhand. This is despite an agreement between India and China to have trade across the pass in the tri-junction of Nepal-India-China. Beijing accepted the pass as one of the commercial and cultural transit points with India under its 1954 Peace and Tranquillity Agreement. This was reiterated when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China in 2015. The route has deep-rooted spiritual and civilisational significance for India. In contrast, the recent broadcasting of weather reports of Gilgit-Baltistan on Indian news channels and the pre-conditions set for Foreign Direct Investment in segments of the Indian economy have definitely upped the ante for the Chinese.

The three sectors where India and China have recurrence of disputes are in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Ladakh. The Arunachal sector is largely dormant despite China's claim to the entire State. The Sikkim sector is strategic as any Chinese road and infrastructure development in its proximity can threaten the narrow Siliguri Corridor which is the gateway from India to the seven States of North-East India. The Doklam stand-off for 73 days from June to August 2017 amply demonstrated the strategic relevance of this sector.

It is in the Ladakh sector that the geo-strategic implications of the face-off and incursions assume significance. The Chinese have made an immense investment of \$62 billion in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Recent assertions by India on its right to Gilgit-Baltistan through which the CPEC passes on its way to the Karakoram Pass in the Shaksgam valley (illegally conceded by Pakistan to China) have obviously rocked the boat. China does not make short-term tactical moves without a long-term plan which may unfold in the winter when terrain and weather put India at a disadvantage. Unlike Doklam, where the Chinese movement was restricted to the single track which they were trying to develop along a narrow valley, in Ladakh the LAC is open and rugged. There are various "disputed areas" and "areas of differing perceptions" from the DBO in the north to Fokche in the south (the point of entry of the Indus river from Tibet to India). The scene of the recent scuffle has been on the banks of the Pangong Tso Lake. Its centrality to the entire LAC in Ladakh and proximity to the Spangur Gap and Chushul make the south bank of the lake a secure flank for large-scale moves by the Chinese. Hence, it holds operational importance to both armies.

The western Ladakh region of DBO provides a buffer against Chinese direct access to Shaksgam valley and the Siachen heights. India therefore, strongly holds on to DBO. Here the Galwan valley has witnessed similar stand-offs in the past with Chinese encampments detected far inside the alignment of the LAC into the valley. Strong deployments along the Line of Control (LoC) at Kargil and Drass opposite Pakistan have also to be maintained by India at all times. Reinforcements and additional forces will perforce have to be moved into Ladakh mostly from the plains and will require acclimatisation to operate in high-altitude areas of 11,000 to 16,000 feet. Logistics and sustenance of forces are a key factor, especially in Ladakh.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces involved in the skirmishes are not their regular army but the Border Defence Regiments (BDR) backed by PLA garrisons and camps with acclimatised troops along the Chinese East-West Highway. In contrast, Indian regular troops get sucked in as reinforcements and readjustments of command and control are necessitated as the Indo-Tibetan Border Police force (ITBP) readjusts from its border posts held in peacetime.

Hence, two imperatives for the Department of Military Affairs and Ministry of Defence to resolve in the present will be in the fields of command and control of border management forces and logistic preparedness. The office of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is best suited to resolve intra-service coordination of both areas as also inter-ministerial resolution of the command and control lacunae of forces on the LAC. India's approach must include a myriad of disabilities and all elements of national power. The annual defence allocations have been shrinking regularly (experts say the percentage available for modernisation has shrunk from 40 per cent to almost 32 per cent) and cannot sustain the human and equipment inventory needed to effectively deter China. In such a situation and in the post-Corona reduced resource basket, the prioritisation of requirements rather than a dilution of weapon qualitative requirements, is recommended. There must be a push towards operationalising the Rohtang tunnel to full capacity especially in view of logistic sustenance and troop reinforcements for the road closed period starting in November.

(The writer is a veteran and co-author of 'Maotist Insurgency and India's Internal Security Architecture'.)

THESE THUGS ARE DISHONORING THE MEMORY OF GEORGE FLOYD, AND I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN. WHEN THE LOOTING STARTS, THE SHOOTING STARTS.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



AFTER STOKING FIRES OF WHITE SUPREMACY YOUR ENTIRE PRESIDENCY, YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO FEIGN MORAL SUPERIORITY BEFORE THREATENING VIOLENCE?

—SINGER TAYLOR SWIFT

Hope sprouts in the farm

The Government deserves some credit for at least putting on the table long-pending reforms in agri-marketing, which if carried through, will be truly revolutionary



UTTAM GUPTA

Heralding a new chapter in agricultural market reforms in India, on May 15 Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made three major announcements under the "Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan." The first announcement was about the Centre's decision to enact a legislation to enable direct purchase of specified commodities — under entry 42 of the Union List and entry 33 of the Concurrent List — from farmers outside the designated Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs). Next was the move to enact a Central law on contract farming to provide a legal framework for farmers to engage with processors, aggregators, large retailers and exporters in a fair and transparent manner. Third was the decision to amend the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1954 and take off pulses, cereals, edible oil, oil seeds, onions and potatoes from the purview of this archaic law.

To understand the full ramifications of the proposed enactments, at the outset, let us take a look at the existing regulations. At present, trade in agri-commodities is governed by a highly-restrictive legislation viz. the APMC Act. This empowers State Governments to specify market areas — where farmers bring their produce for sale. These are operated and regulated by market committees. There are a total of about 5,000 such markets or *mandis* across the country.

The stated objective of the APMC Acts is to promote organised marketing of farm commodities to ensure fair play, achieve an efficient system of buying and selling of commodities, protect farmers from intermediaries and traders and to ensure better prices and timely payment for the produce. Far from achieving these objectives, farmers are being exploited by a network of licensed traders and middlemen, who have a complete stranglehold over these platforms.

While on one hand, farmers don't get to sell their entire produce at the Minimum Support Price (MSP), on the other, no alternative platforms are available where they could sell. Even Government agencies don't come forward to buy when the market price dips below the MSP. Actually, the problem is much deeper.

This has to do with a cozy nexus between politicians and grain traders that has existed and flourished for decades. A grain trader has a fundamental interest in ensuring that he minimises his payout to the farmer for the grains he buys. He can succeed in this gameplan if the farmer is left high and dry by State agencies. So, he collaborates with the politicians in the ruling establishment to ensure that State agencies remain weak and de-motivated.

This nexus has also come in the way of amending the APMC Act to make way for alternative channels of selling, such as direct purchase by bulk buyers, processors, exporters and so on (the revenue State Governments get from levy of market fee on transactions at the *mandis* has proved to be another major deterrent. In 2017, the Modi Government had passed a Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing [Promotion and Facilitation] Law containing provisions to give more options to farmers for selling their crop and greater flexibility to traders such as 'single pan-State licence' for buying from anywhere in the State).

True to its nomenclature, the model law is a mere showpiece as until hitherto (prior to the COVID-19 crisis, to be specific), a majority of the States showed no interest in amending their

“ THESE FARM REFORMS ARE INTENDED TO CREATE A PARALLEL ARRANGEMENT FOR SELLING FARM PRODUCE AND CAN CO-EXIST WITH THE APMCS. THESE AIM AT BREAKING THE MONOPOLY OF A FEW LICENCED TRADERS AT MANDIS, CREATE COMPETITION AND THUS HELP BOTH FARMERS AND CONSUMERS. WHETHER OR NOT THESE ACTUALLY SEE THE LIGHT OF THE DAY REMAINS TO BE SEEN ”



laws. In a daring move, the then BJP Government, led by Devendra Fadnavis, had approved in August 2018, an amendment to the Maharashtra Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act, 1963, in sync with the Centre's model law. That was done through the ordinance route. But Fadnavis was forced to withdraw the Bill on November 28, 2018 from the legislative council, a day after it was passed.

The continued writ of the APMC Acts has meant that there is no free movement of farm products even within the State, forget free inter-State trade. With several pieces of State legislation creating impregnable zones, even the much-trumpeted electronic national agriculture market (e-NAM) has failed to take off. The processors, exporters and other large buyers have no incentive to invest in agri-infrastructure. The archaic ECA (1954) with its draconian provisions, especially with regard to stock limits, acts as a further disincentive.

All this boils down to farmers not getting a remunerative price for their produce on the one hand and consumers having to pay a high price on the other — even as a number of intermediaries in the supply chain appropriate a major slice of what the latter pays. Needless to say, that the resulting low income not only keeps farmers poor but also boomerangs on overall economic growth through reduction in rural purchasing power. The extant state of affairs is not good for boosting exports on a sustainable basis either.

The COVID-19 crisis may have come as a blessing in disguise. It gripped India at a time when the Rabi crop, mostly the winter staple wheat, was ready for harvest. April-May is the period when farmers congregate at the *mandis*. Being the only platform where farmers could sell their produce, this would have led to overcrowding at the markets

which comes in conflict with "social distancing" — a pre-requisite for preventing the spread of the deadly virus.

Due to the dire need for adhering to "social distancing", Modi asked the States to suspend certain provisions of their respective APMC laws for three months to make way for purchase of farmers' produce directly from their doorsteps by large farmers' producers organisations (FPOs), large buyers such as processors, millers, exporters, cooperatives, individual traders and so on.

Some States like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka responded by making amendments in their APMC laws (using the ordinance route as none of the State Assemblies are in session, courtesy the prevailing emergency). As per the amendment, the entire State is declared as a "single market" wherein a trader can get a single licence for purchase of agricultural produce from any *mandi* within it. Further, it allows trade in all farm commodities, including livestock, outside the regulated APMC markets.

This has not only kept COVID-19 at bay (as the traders went to the farmers' doorstep instead of the latter having to go all the way to the *mandi*) but also fetched a remunerative price for their produce by offering more choice, resulting in higher income. No wonder, amid the gloom and doom in most other sectors of the economy, agriculture is expected to show a positive growth rate of over three per cent during the current year (of course, this will be helped by normal monsoon predicted by the meteorological department).

In retrospect, there is some reason to rejoice over the changes in APMC laws by the aforementioned States, which has enabled private trade to complement efforts of State agencies in ensuring record procurement from the farmers. While Modi had asked for suspension of the relevant provisions for

three months, these States have gone a step further by bringing an element of permanence. That serves as the icing on the cake. But some doubts remain.

For one, most States continue to turn a deaf ear to the Centre's wish. Even in the four States, where the changes have been brought about, these will have to be passed by the State Assemblies in the end. Given the deep-rooted vested interest, a Maharashtra-type fiasco can't be ruled out. In this backdrop, the Centre's decision to enact a Central law, wielding the rarely-used power under the Constitution to regulate inter-State trade and intra-State trade, makes major sense. The law will enable an entity to buy farm produce from farmers directly anywhere in the country, even outside the regulated market yards.

At the same time, the amendment in the ECA to remove fetters such as stock limits (these limits will be imposed only in exceptional circumstances) will enable large buyers viz. processors, millers, exporters and so on, to scale up purchases, thus providing sustained support to farmers. The proposed Contract Law — enforceable in all States — will clearly lay down rules of the game for a processor/large retailer that it must follow to ensure that farmers are not taken for a ride.

These farm reforms are intended to create a parallel arrangement for selling farm produce and can co-exist with the APMCs. These aim at breaking the monopoly of a few licensed traders at *mandis*, create competition and thus help both farmers and consumers. Whether or not these actually see the light of the day remains to be seen. For now, the Government deserves some accolades for at least putting on the table long-pending reforms in agri-marketing, which if carried through, will be truly revolutionary.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

Don't take their right to life away

Having given legal protection to intersex kids against unnecessary surgeries, India must proactively put an end to intersex and female infanticide



PRASHANT SINGH GOPI MADURAI

The recent killing of a one-day-old girl child in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvannamalai district has brought to the fore the unending practice of female infanticide. The murder was discovered on the complaint of an alert medical officer who suspected foul play.

Being the second reported instance of female infanticide from the region, this case has demonstrated that this evil practice is alive even during the current pandemic. Nearly 30

years ago, economist Amartya Sen argued that 100 million women were "missing." However, much before this usage was coined, the phenomenon behind the phrase was a reality in India, reflected in the practice of sex determination, selective abortions and female infanticide. There were no official numbers on female foeticide until the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) started collecting data on this crime in 2014. However, the consequences of killing the girl child before or after birth are clearly reflected in the skewed sex-ratios in the country.

In 2016, the Government released data based on the civil registration system. It showed that the sex ratio at birth (SRB) had fallen from 946 girls for every 1,000 boys in 1949 to 877 in 2014. A deeper crisis is revealed when the data on girls in the age group of zero-six years is examined. In 2011, the number of girls below six per

1,000 boys stood at 914 — which is the lowest since Independence. Now that the registration of births is compulsory, the SRB data is considered to be quite accurate. The problem is graver in five States (Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttarakhand, and Tamil Nadu) which have an SRB equal to or below 840.

Prevention of female foeticide and infanticide has been the focus of a wide range of the Government's efforts since the 1990s, with some successes and many challenges. The child sex ratio has continued to be on the decline even after the enactment of a Central law in 1994 banning the use of prenatal diagnostic tests for sex determination. Aside from this legal measure, the Union and State Governments have undertaken several policy initiatives such as the National Action Plan of 1991 to Balika Samridhhi Yojana in 1997 to the latest Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

campaign of 2015, to incentivise retention of the girl child. Several State Governments have also implemented innovative initiatives like the "Cradle Baby" scheme of the Tamil Nadu Government. Launched in 1992, the aim of the scheme was to encourage parents to give female children up for adoption by providing for cradles at Government hospitals and Primary Health Centres (PHCs). The two-fold objective was to prevent female infanticide and also stop illegal sale of babies.

This measure of the Tamil Nadu Government also encouraged reporting of this crime unlike other States where the cases are massively under-reported. In addition to improving law enforcement and preventing access to ultrasonography, measures like "Cradle Baby" scheme are critical.

The preference for the male child leading to a skewed sex ratio has been well-documented. However, another

major consequence of such preference poses a serious risk to bodily integrity of intersex infants and children. Intersex children in India are at constant risk of forced surgical and medical intervention in the form of sex normalising surgeries to align their body as per the normative definition of traditional gender identity i.e. male and female. In most cases, intersex children are assigned as male at birth.

This heinous practice is widespread in several Indian States, including Kerala, which claims to be a model State in terms of human development indicators. Even worse, the medical community also justifies such procedures, displaying a shocking ignorance of intersex human rights. For instance, doctors working in a hospital in Kerala have admitted performing such surgeries on intersex children and have also highlighted the preference of parents for the male child. In 2019, the Madras High Court outlawed this

practice and directed the Tamil Nadu Government to pass an order implementing the ban. However, infanticide of intersex babies and children continues to be an ignored issue in India. It is estimated that every year, more than 10,000 intersex children are born in India.

Still, our official statistics, including the census, do not provide any authentic population data of intersex children in the country.

Over the years, various United Nations (UN) committees have highlighted this issue. In 2019, expressing concern over the "mercy killing" of intersex children with disabilities, the UN Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended the Government to "protect intersex children from attacks against their lives and any related harmful practices."

The "missing intersex children" phenomenon is not limited to India. There is an urgent need for more

research and documentation on this subject globally. Further, it is also critically important to initiate a dialogue on the need for an international instrument to prevent intersex infanticide and a complete ban on sex normalising surgeries.

Having already established a legal protection regime for intersex children against unnecessary surgeries, India has a unique opportunity to lead the intersex human rights movement if it can proactively put an end to intersex infanticide. To achieve these goals, the Centre and States must undertake urgent steps to ensure prevention and prosecution in cases of female and intersex infanticide.

(Singh is Executive Director, Sri Shri Madurai-LGBTQIA+ student volunteer movement and Madurai is the elected Intersex Representative and Executive Board Member of International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, Geneva)

Moody's downgrades India's rating to 'Baa3'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Monday downgraded India's sovereign credit rating for the first time in more than two decades, saying policy-makers will be challenged to mitigate risks of low growth, deteriorating fiscal position and financial sector stress.

Downgrading India's rating by a notch to 'Baa3' from 'Baa2' assigned in November 2018, Moody's estimated India GDP shrinking by 4 per cent — first full fiscal contraction in more than four decades, as the country faces a prolonged period of slower growth.

Accordingly, India's foreign-currency and local-currency long-term issuer ratings have been downgraded to Baa3

from Baa2. India's local-currency senior unsecured rating too has been lowered to Baa3 from Baa2, and its short-term local currency rating to P-3 from P-2. The outlook remains negative.

"The decision to downgrade India's ratings reflects Moody's view that the country's policymaking institutions will be challenged in enacting and implementing policies, which effectively mitigate the risks of a sustained period of relatively low growth, significant further deterioration in the general Government fiscal position and stress in the financial sector," Moody's said.

'Baa3' rating is the lowest investment grade -- just a notch above 'junk' status.

Moody's had last downgraded India's rating in 1998.

The negative outlook reflects dominant, mutually-reinforcing, downside risks from deeper stresses in the economy and financial system that could lead to a more severe and prolonged erosion in fiscal strength than Moody's currently projects, it added.

Moody's said slow reform momentum and constrained policy effectiveness have contributed to a prolonged period of slow growth, compared to India's potential, that started before the Covid-19, and it expects this to continue well beyond the pandemic.

Moody's said India faces a prolonged period of slower growth relative to the country's potential, rising debt, further

Says GDP to shrink by 4% in FY21

weakening of debt affordability and persistent stress in parts of the financial system, all of which policymaking institutions will be challenged to mitigate and contain.

The agency said its upgrade of India's ratings to Baa2 in November 2017 was based on the expectation that effective implementation of key reforms would strengthen sovereign's credit profile through a gradual but persistent improvement in economic, institutional and fiscal strength.

"Since then, implementation of these reforms has been relatively weak and has not resulted in material credit improvements, indicating limited policy effectiveness," Moody's said.

Sensex, Nifty spurt over 2 pc as India begins to unlock economy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmark index Sensex on Monday rallied 879 points on heavy buying in financial, FMCG and energy stocks as the Government starting the process to unlock the economy boosted investor sentiment. Positive cues from the global markets also helped the key equity indices extend gains for the fourth session in a row. After skyrocketing 1,250 points during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 879.42 points or 2.57 per cent higher at 33,303.52.

The NSE Nifty surged 245.85 points or 2.57 per cent to finish at 9,826.15. Bajaj Finance was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 11 per cent, followed by Titan, Tata Steel, SBI, M&M, HDFC, IndusInd Bank and Reliance Industries. On the other hand, Sun Pharma, Nestle India and UltraTech Cement were among the laggards.

All sectoral indices ended on a positive note with BSE consumer durables rallying 6.56 per cent, followed by metal, finance, bankex, energy, auto and realty indices. Domestic shares zoomed at opening and stayed strong

throughout the day as investors ignored fourth-quarter GDP data and reacted positively to the government's decision to come up with a phased re-opening of all activities outside containment zones beginning June 1," Paras Bothra, President of Equity Research, Ashika Stock Broking, said. Positive sentiments also supported after US President Donald Trump stopped short of specifying tough sanctions over China's new national security law for Hong Kong and Chinese PMI data showed fresh signs of economic recovery, he added.

"The market further rallied in the afternoon session with much broad-based buying seen in both large and mid cap stocks tracked by respective indices," Narendra Solanki, Head - Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand Rathi, said. Broader midcap and smallcap indices surged up to 3.03 per cent.

The Home Ministry on Saturday said 'Unlock-1' will be initiated in India 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 reli-

gious places. "Buoyant Asian and European markets helped sentiments. Volumes were also healthy suggesting high delivery activity. Financials, Materials and Auto stocks did well while Pharma stocks came under selling pressure," Deepak Jasani, Head Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

Asian shares advanced to three-month highs on Mon as progress on re-opening economies helped offset jitters over riots in the US cities and unease over Washington's power struggle with Beijing. Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul settled up to 3 per cent higher, and those in Europe opened with significant gains. International oil benchmark Brent crude futures were trading 0.21 per cent higher at \$37.91 per barrel.

On the currency front, the rupee appreciated 8 paise to provisionally close at 75.54 against the US dollar. India is likely to receive 102% rainfall of a long-term average this year, the IMD said on Monday in its 2nd long range forecast, raising expectations for higher farm output in India, which is reeling from the new coronavirus pandemic.

Non-subsidised LPG rate hiked, aviation fuel ups by ₹11,000/kl

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies have hiked the prices of non-subsidised cooking gas and aviation turbine fuel with effect from Monday.

The price of the 14.2 kilogram cylinder of non-subsidised LPG gas in Delhi has been raised by ₹11.50 from May to ₹593 per cylinder.

In Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, the price of LPG has been raised at ₹616, ₹590.50 and ₹606.50, against ₹584.50, ₹579 and ₹569.50 per cylinder respectively. The highest increase was witnessed in Chennai with a hike of ₹37 from the price in May.

The Government currently subsidises 12 cylinders of 14.2 kilograms each per household in a year. Additional purchases have to be made at the market price.

In a statement on Sunday, Indian Oil Corp said that the retail selling price of LPG in Delhi market for the month of May 2020 was reduced from ₹744 to ₹581.50 per cylinder for all consumers in line with drop in International prices.

7.26 mn records of BHIM user data leaked: Report

New Delhi: Security researchers have discovered that about 7.26 million records linked to users of mobile payments app BHIM were left exposed to the public by a website.

The exposed data included sensitive information such as names, dates of birth, age, gender, home address, caste status and Aadhaar card details, among others, said the report from VPN review website vpnMentor.

"The scale of the exposed data is extraordinary, affecting millions of people all over India and exposing them to potentially devastating fraud, theft, and attack from hackers and cybercriminals," the security researchers from vpnMentor wrote in a blog post on Sunday.

Offered by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the app BHIM, or

Bharat Interface for Money, was launched in 2016.

In a statement on Monday, the NPCI said that "there has been no data compromise at BHIM App."

"We have come across some news reports which suggest data breach at BHIM App. We would like to clarify that there has been no data compromise at BHIM App and request everyone to not fall prey to such speculations. NPCI follows high level of security and an integrated approach to protect its infrastructure and continue to provide a robust payments ecosystem," said the NPCI.

In its report, vpnMentor also said that the website that leaked the data was developed by a company called CSC e-Governance Services LTD, in partnership with the Indian government.

The issue was resolved late

last month after the researchers contacted India's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) twice in a month's time.

"In this case, the data was stored on an unsecured Amazon Web Services (AWS) S3 bucket," the researchers said, adding that S3 buckets are a popular form of Cloud storage across the world but require developers to set up the security protocols on their accounts.

"We reached out to the website's developers to notify them of the misconfiguration in their S3 bucket and to offer our assistance. After not receiving a reply, we contacted India's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), which deals with cybersecurity in the country," they added.

It appears CSC established the website connected to the misconfigured S3 bucket to

promote BHIM usage across India and sign up new merchant businesses, such as mechanics, farmers, service providers, and store owners onto the app, according to the research led by vpnMentor's Noam Rotem and Ran Locar.

The volume of exposed data which was first discovered by the security researchers on April 23 amounted to 409GB.

"It's difficult to say precisely, but the S3 bucket seemed to contain records from a short period: February 2019. However, even within such a short timeframe, over 7 million records had been uploaded and exposed," said the report.

"The exposure of BHIM user data is akin to a hacker gaining access to the entire data infrastructure of a bank, along with millions of its users' account information," it added.

Pak HC officials wanted to extract details of Army movements via trains: Police

New Delhi: The motive of the two officials of Pakistan High Commission, who were declared 'persona non grata' by India on charges of espionage, was to extract details of movement of Army units through trains by befriending railway staffers, police said on Monday.

The two officials, Abid Hussain and Muhammad

Tahir, were caught by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police from central Delhi's Karol Bagh while they were obtaining sensitive documents relating to India's security installations from an Indian national in exchange of money, official sources had said on Sunday.

According to the police, during investigation, it has

emerged that Hussain operated under several fake identities to lure people working in organisations and departments of his interest. He posed as Gautam, brother of a media person, to establish contact with an individual working in the Indian Railways.

He tried to gain his confidence by pretending that he needed information about rail

movements for his brother who was supposedly doing a story on the Indian Railways and for which he was willing to pay, said Anil Mittal, Additional PRO (Delhi Police). However, police said the real motive was to lure and trap the railway staff and then acquire information about movement of Army units and hardware via trains. PTI

Booster dose...

From Page 1

Keeping in mind these representations, the Government decided to further increase the limit for medium manufacturing and service units. Now, it will be ₹50 crore of investment and ₹250 crore of turnover. It has also been decided that the turnover with respect to exports will not be counted in the limits of turnover for any category of MSME units whether micro, small or medium. This is yet another step towards ease of doing business. This will help in attracting investments and creating more jobs in the MSME sector," said the Government in a statement detailing the financial packages.

Gadkari said that ₹50,000 crore equity infusion for MSMEs will strengthen their growth potential and will enable them to get listed on stock exchanges. "This is for the first time MSMEs are getting such

support. We are changing the definition of MSMEs after 14 years," he said. Meanwhile, to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce and encourage farmers amid coronavirus pandemic, the CCEA chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday approved increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for all mandated kharif crops by 50-83 per cent for marketing season 2020-21. This will help farmers take a call on which kharif (summer) crop to grow as sowing picks up with the arrival of southwest monsoon.

Accordingly, the MSP for paddy has been fixed at ₹1,868 from ₹1,815. The price of the better variety of rice (Grade A) has been proposed at ₹1,888, up from last year's price of ₹1,835. Rice is a major kharif crop, accounting for 40 per cent of the planting in the season. Among cereals, the highest increase is proposed in Bajra where price is likely to be ₹2,150 per quin-

tal from ₹2,000, ₹150 more than last year. Among pulses, highest increment has been recommended for urad, with a proposed rate of ₹6,000 from last year's ₹5,700 a quintal.

The Cabinet has given its approval to extend repayment date up to August 31, for Standard Short-Term loans up to ₹3 lakh advanced for agriculture and allied activities by banks, which have become due or shall become due between 1st March, 2020 and August 31, 2020 with continued benefit of two per cent Interest Subvention (IS) to Banks and three per cent Prompt Repayment Incentive (PRI) to farmers.

The Government's decision of providing such loans to farmers through banks @ 7 per cent per annum, with 2 per cent per annum interest subvention to banks and 3 per cent additional benefit on timely repayment by farmers thus provides loans up to ₹3 lakh at 4 per cent per annum interest.

People crowd streets on Day 1 of unlock 1.0 in W Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The City of Joy tended to miss a heart beat on Monday the first day of 'unlock 1.0' even as things degenerated into a mega mix-up when citizens threw all cautions to the wind thronging public places and boarding packed up public buses—that ran far and few between—in mad desperation to reach their work places.

While people spilled over to the streets thronging market places in thousands at the end of 67 days confinement, the enforcers of law were hardly to be seen around, sources complained. "We have been forced to come out of our houses taking great risk on our lives as we have been asked by our respected offices to join work. But here we have no adequate public transport because the large majority of public buses are not running because they have an issue with the Government with increased fare," said Nalini Goswami and IT professional.

As the people tried to avail of the skeletal public transport whatever government buses were running got jam-packed with passengers, the more conscious people complained adding the policemen were nowhere to be seen to enforce the social distancing norms.

Monday saw a number of religious places opening up in Bengal with the exception of Kalighat, Dakshineswar temples and Belur Math. While busy religious places like the three 'Shakti Peeths' of Birbhum district, Thanthania Kali Temple and Lake Kali Temple in Kolkata opened up with limited visitors.

Community transmission...

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The experts noted that India's nationwide lockdown from March 25 till May 31 has been one of the most "stringent" and yet Covid cases have increased exponentially through this phase, from 606 cases on March 25 to 1,38,845 on May 24.

"This draconian lockdown is presumably in response to a modelling 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," said the 16-member joint Covid Task Force that included Dr Shashi Kant, former president IAPSM and Head of the Centre for Community Medicine at AIIMS, New Delhi and others.

Also, on the Task Force are Dr Sanjay K Rai, national president, IPHA and Professor, CCM, AIIMS, Dr D C S Reddy, former Professor and Head, Community Medicine, IMS, BHU, Varanasi and Dr Rajesh Kumar, former Professor & Head, DCM&SPH, PGIMER, Chandigarh Dr Reddy and Dr Kant are also members of an ICMR research group on epi-

demiology and surveillance for Covid-19. The experts also took exception that the Government did not consult the epidemiologists while making decisions on tackling the pandemic and rather relied overwhelmingly on general administrative bureaucrats.

"Had the Government consulted epidemiologists who had better grasp of disease transmission dynamics compared to modellers, it would have perhaps been better served," the report said.

From the limited information available in the public domain, the experts said, it seems that the government

was primarily advised by clinicians and academic epidemiologists with "limited field training and skills".

"The engagement with expert technocrats in the areas of epidemiology, public health, preventive medicine and social scientists was limited," they said.

"The incoherent and often rapidly shifting strategies and policies, especially at the national level, are more a reflection of "afterthought" and catching up phenomenon on part of the policy makers rather than a well thought cogent strategy with an epidemiological basis," they said.

Haryana...

From Page 1

On Sunday 1,149 persons had tested positive for the pandemic. According to the release issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu on Monday, 23,495 persons have been tested positive till date in the State. Taking into account the number of persons cured and discharged from hospitals, there were 10,138 active cases in the State as on Monday. The day also saw 11 persons succumbing to the pandemic taking the tally to 184.

In the last 24 hours, 25 deaths and 423 new Covid-19 positive cases have been reported in Gujarat. The total number of positive cases rises to 17,217 including 10,780 cured/discharged and 1,063 deaths.

Uttar Pradesh reported 296 new cases and five deaths in the State in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 8,361. Kerala reports 57 new Covid-19 cases and one death on Monday, which took its tally of cases to 1,237 and 11 deaths.

Telangana reported 94 new cases on Monday. The total number of Covid-19 positive cases in the State stands at 2,792. Five new positive cases of Covid reported in Manipur today, taking the total number of positive cases in the State to 83 including 72 active cases.

1,000 foreign goods delisting 'erroneous'...

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The second category included products manufactured or assembled in India but the raw material was imported. Likewise, the third category referred to 'Purely Imported Products', officials said.

Each and every product sold by the paramilitary canteens was put under one of these three categories.

In the category 3, the KPKB listed 1,026 products that included an Italian chocolate brand and a South Korean manufacturer of air conditioners and televisions.

Seven companies engaged in importing finished products and selling them here included brands like

American shoemaker Skechers, Italian proprietary food products manufacturer Ferraro India and energy drink maker Redbull India.

The delisted products list also included brands like Dabur fruit juice and VIP suitcases among others.

The KPKB order had anticipated the possibility of disputes over the move and underscored that it had categorised the products "on the sole information provided by the firms only".

"In case of any litigation, the information provided by the firm will be used as evidence and the onus to prove the information is correct will be on the respective firm," according to the order.

Airlines should...

From Page 1

As per the order, Airlines shall set the air-conditioning system in such a way that the air gets replaced at the shortest possible intervals. The aircraft will have to be sanitised after the end of each travel when there is no passenger on board. However, on transit flights, when passengers are on board, the vacated seats (including its contacts), will be sanitised. At the end of the day, each aircraft will be deep cleaned as per procedure. Special attention has to be given to seat belts and all other contact points.

The airplane lavatories will be cleaned or sanitised frequently during the flight. The airlines will also carry out health check-up of all the crew regularly. All the flying/cabin crew will be given full protective suits. At the end of the day, each aircraft must be deep cleaned, DGCA advised.

The DGCA circular noted that the recommendations were submitted to the Ministry of Civil Aviation by the expert committee, constituted by the Ministry in pursuance of the observation of the Supreme Court and in interest of the safety of passengers. The domestic commercial flights started after two months on May 25. International flights will not resume till end of June.

Polls to 18 RS seats deferred due to corona now on June...

From Page 1

While 55 seats fell vacant in April due to the end of the term of the Rajya Sabha members, 37 seats from 10 States were filled in uncontested by the NCP and RPI chiefs Sharad Pawar and Ramdas Athawale respectively, TMC's Dinesh Trivedi, Congress' KTS Tulsi, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha Harivansh among others.

But the BJP has made the contest for the 18 seats fierce by putting up additional candidates on the seats.

In Madhya Pradesh, the three seats up for grabs will see a keen contest between the BJP and the Congress. While the Congress was initially poised to win two of the three seats, the switching over of the Jyotiraditya along with 22 of

his loyalist Congress MLAs tilted the scale in favour of the BJP. The Congress has fielded its old guard Digvijay Singh and both sides have fielded additional candidates.

In Gujarat, five Congress MLAs have resigned to make the contest a close one. Gujarat has four Rajya Sabha seats going to polls. While two each for the BJP and the Congress were expected, the resignations have put the Congress in a fix. Here too, the BJP put up an additional candidate to queer the pitch for Congress.

In Rajasthan, the Congress seems more comfortable to win two Rajya Sabha seats and has Congress general secretary and Rahul Gandhi confidant KC Venugopal in the fray from one the seats. The BJP is poised to win one but

then it put up an additional player to send confusing signals to the opposite camp.

The EC said the Chief Secretaries of the States have been asked to depute a senior officer to ensure that the extant instructions regarding coronavirus containment measures are complied with while making arrangements for conducting the elections.

The Election Commission said it has reviewed the ongoing situation due to the coronavirus pandemic and the guidelines issued by the Union Home Minister and has decided to conduct the polls that were earlier scheduled to be held on March 26.

The EC has appointed Chief Electoral Officer concerned as Observer for the election in the respective state.

Monsoon keeps date...

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According to IMD, as of June 1, the cyclone is located about 360 km southwest of Panjim (Goa), 670 km south-southwest of Mumbai (Maharashtra) and 900 km south-southwest of Surat (Gujarat). It will cross north Maharashtra and south Gujarat coasts between Harihareshwar (Raigad, Maharashtra) and Daman during the evening of June 3.

Unlike cyclone Amphan which was categorised as an extremely severe cyclonic storm that devastated parts of West Bengal the cyclone Nisarga is expected to be less intense when it hits the coast. Konkan and Goa are likely to receive extremely heavy rainfall in isolated places from June 3.

Parts of Maharashtra will also experience heavy rainfall on June 3-4. High waves in the range of 2.3 - 6.5 meters are forecast till 11:30 pm of June 2 along the coast of Maharashtra-- from Malvan to Vasai. Madhavan said the IMD latest cyclone update expects it to balloon into a "severe cyclone" by the middle of the week.

FLOYD ANGER PERVADES US

Thousands arrested, nearly 40 cities under curfew

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US remained a tinderbox of anger and emotion as violent protests erupted for a sixth day across the country over the custodial killing of African-American George Floyd, resulting in the death of at least five people, the arrest of thousands and placing of curfew in nearly 40 cities, while forcing President Donald Trump to take shelter in a White House bunker.

Considered to be the most ever civil unrest in the US in decades, the violent protests have engulfed at least 140 cities across America in the days following the death of Floyd, a 46-year-old man who was pinned to the ground in Minneapolis on Monday by a white police officer who knelt on his neck as he gasped for breath.

Some of the protests have turned violent, prompting the activation of the National Guard in at least 20 states.

"At least five people were killed in violence that flared as demonstrations in parts of the country devolved into mayhem," The Washington Post reported. Police have arrested at least 2,564 people in two dozen US cities over the weekend. Nearly a fifth of those arrests were in Los Angeles, it said.

The unrest initially began in Minneapolis in Minnesota but has now spread across the country, with reports of violence coming in from across major cities including Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Houston, Philadelphia and Washington DC.

"The United States remained a tinderbox of emotion, anger and continued violence on Sunday, the sixth day of nationwide unrest since the death of yet another black man at the hands of the police," *The New York Times* reported.

Birmingham, protesters started to tear down a Confederate monument that the city had previously covered with a tarp amid a lawsuit between the state attorney general and the city.

In Boston, a police SUV was set ablaze near the State House,



sending up a column of black smoke after a large group of protesters had mostly dispersed.

In Philadelphia, police officers in riot gear and an armoured vehicle used pepper spray to try to repel rioters and looters.

In New York, demonstrators marched across the Brooklyn and Williamsburg Bridges, snarling traffic. The Manhattan Bridge was briefly shut down to car traffic. Chaos erupted in Union Square, with flames leaping up two stories from trash cans and piles of street debris, the *Times* said.

"It is the first time so many local leaders have simultaneously issued such orders in the face of civic unrest since 1968, after the assassination of the Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr," the report said.

Police fired tear gas near the White House on Sunday night to dissuade protesters who had smashed the windows of prominent buildings, overturned cars and set fires, with smoke seen rising from near the Washington Monument, it said.

For the past few days, thousands of protesters have gathered outside the White House raising slogans against President Trump. According to *CNN*, President Trump was briefly taken to the underground bunker for some time during the protest outside the White House, while First Lady Melania Trump and their son Barron were also taken to the bunker.

President Trump made no

public appearances on Sunday, but in a series of tweets he blamed the media for fomenting hatred and anarchy in the country.

"The Lamestream Media is doing everything within their power to foment hatred and anarchy. As long as everybody understands what they are doing, that they are FAKE NEWS and truly bad people with a sick agenda, we can easily work through them to GREATNESS!" he said.

Earlier in the day, he announced that his administration will be designating ANTIFA as a Terrorist Organization. ANTIFA is regarded as a militant, left-wing, anti-fascist political activist movement in the US. It comprises autonomous activist groups that aim to achieve their political objectives through the use of direct action rather than through policy reform.

US Attorney General William Barr said that the violence instigated and carried out by the organisation and other similar groups in connection with the rioting is domestic terrorism and will be treated accordingly. The Trump administration alleges that it appears the violence is planned, organised, and driven by anarchistic and far left extremists, using ANTIFA-like tactics, many of whom travel from out of state to promote the violence.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, who is the presumptive

presidential nominee of the Democratic party, visited a protest site in Delaware on Sunday. "We are a nation in pain, but we must not allow this pain to destroy us. We are a nation enraged, but we cannot allow our rage to consume us. We are a nation exhausted, but we will not allow our exhaustion to defeat us," Biden wrote on social media posts on Sunday.

"The only way to bear this pain is to turn all that anguish to purpose. And as President, I will help lead this conversation — and more importantly, I will listen, just as I did today visiting the site of last night's protests in Wilmington," he said.

The Committee to Protect Journalists, in a late night statement said several dozen covering the protests have been harassed, as well as arrested by law enforcement agencies.

TRUMP SLAMS GUYS AS 'WEAK,' URGES CRACKDOWN ON PROTESTS

President Donald Trump derided the nation's governors as "weak" and demanded tougher crackdowns on protesters in the aftermath of another night of violent protests in dozens of American cities.

Trump spoke to governors on a video teleconference with law enforcement and national security officials, telling the local leaders they "have to get much tougher" amid nationwide protests and criticising their responses.

SIDELIGHTS

BIDEN MEETS WITH BLACK LEADERS AT LOCAL CHURCH AMID UNREST
Joe Biden vowed to address "institutional racism" in his first 100 days in office as he met with community leaders at a predominantly African American church in Delaware on Monday morning, leaving home for a second consecutive day to address exploding racial tensions that have begun to reshape the upcoming presidential election.

GEORGE FLOYD'S FUNERAL TO BE HELD IN HOUSTON
George Floyd, the 46-year-old black man whose cold-blooded murder at the hands of a white police officer has sparked protests across the US, will be laid to rest in his hometown of Houston, following a public visitation in Minneapolis. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner announced the funeral plans on Saturday, though there are currently no public details about when it will take place. The mayor broke the news as part of a larger plea for peace amid a weekend where Houston police arrested hundreds of protesters.

JOURNALISTS COVERING US PROTESTS FACE ASSAULT, ARREST
From the East Coast to the West, journalists covering the widespread protests in the US after the killing of African-American George Floyd are facing assaults, being shot at, tear-gassed and arrested, as a leading media rights group urged authorities to ensure that reporters do their job safely without fear of injury or retaliation. From Minneapolis to Washington DC, from Louisville to Las Vegas, reporters are facing assault and arrest while reporting on widespread protests and unrest, the *CNN* reported.

WORLD'S REACTION TO US WEAVES SOLIDARITY, CALLS TO CHANGE

Several thousand people marched in New Zealand's largest city on Monday to protest the killing of George Floyd in the US as well as to stand up against police violence and racism in their own country. Many people around the world have watched with growing unease at the civil unrest in the US after the latest in a series of police killings of black men and women. Floyd died on May 25 in Minneapolis after a white police officer pressed his knee on Floyd's neck until he stopped breathing. The officer was fired and charged with murder.

In Iran, which has in the recent past violently put down nationwide demonstrations by killing hundreds, arresting thousands and disrupting internet access to the outside world, state television has repeatedly aired images of the US's unrest.

In Brazil, hundreds of people protested crimes committed by the police against black people in Rio de Janeiro's working-class neighborhoods, known as favelas. Police used tear gas to disperse them, with some demonstrators saying "I can't breathe," repeating Floyd's own words.

In Canada, an anti-racism protest degenerated into clashes between Montreal police and some demonstrators. Police declared the gathering illegal after they say projectiles were thrown at officers who responded with pepper spray and tear gas. Some windows were smashed and some fires were set.

In authoritarian nations, the unrest became a chance to undermine US criticism of their own situations. Iranian state television repeatedly aired images of the US's unrest. Russia said the United States had systemic human rights problems.

North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper on Monday reported about the demonstrations, saying that protesters "harshly condemned" a white policeman's "lawless and brutal murder" of a black citizen. It printed three large photos of protest scenes from recent days in the city where Floyd was killed.

China threatens to 'counter-attack' US over HK curbs

AP ■ BEIJING

Beijing warned Washington of retaliation after President Donald Trump announced restrictions on Chinese students in the US in protest over a new national security law in Hong Kong.

Trump said Friday that the United States would ban some Chinese graduate students and start reversing Hong Kong's special status in customs and other areas, as Beijing moves ahead with a plan to impose a controversial security law.

The US President said the Chinese Government had been "diminishing the city's long-standing and very proud status." But China reacted angrily to the moves on Monday, saying it was "detrimental to both sides".

GLOBE TROTTER

SCALE DOWN DRILLS: RUSSIA TO NATO

Moscow: The Russian military on Monday accused the US and its NATO allies of conducting "provocative" military drills near the nation's borders, a statement that reflected simmering Russia-NATO tensions. Col-Gen Sergei Rudskoi of the Russian General Staff said Russia has sent a formal letter to NATO proposing to scale down each other's military activities for the period of the coronavirus outbreak, but the alliance has stonewalled the offer.

PUTIN SETS JULY 1 FOR VOTE TO EXTEND HIS RULE

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin says a nationwide vote on constitutional amendments that could allow him to further extend his rule will be held on July 1. Putin said the pace of Russia's coronavirus outbreak has slowed down, allowing election officials to safely hold the vote.

DANIEL PEARL CASE — Pak's SC rejects Sindh Govt's plea to suspend HC verdict

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Supreme Court on Monday rejected a petition filed by the Sindh government to suspend a high court verdict that overturned the conviction of al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh in the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl in 2002, in a setback to the US efforts to get justice for the American journalist.

Pearl, the 38-year-old South Asia bureau chief for *The Wall Street Journal*, was abducted and beheaded while he was in Pakistan investigating a story in 2002 on the alleged links between the country's powerful spy agency ISI and al-Qaeda.

On April 2, a two-judge Sindh High Court bench overturned the death sentence of British-born 46-year-old al-Qaeda leader, who was convicted in the abduction and murder of Pearl in 2002.

He has been in jail for the past 18 years.

The court also acquitted his three aides — Fahad Naseem, Salman Saqib and Sheikh Adil — serving life sentences in the case.

The Bench announced the verdict on the appeals filed by

the four convicts 18 years ago.

The Sindh Government challenged the High Court judgment and on May 2 the slain journalist's parents also approached the Supreme Court against the acquittal of the convicts.

On Monday, a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed heard the appeals in Islamabad.

The apex court after initial hearing refused to suspend the Sindh High Court judgment and asked the provincial government to provide complete record of the case. It also said the petition contained irrelevant sections.

"We should be provided a complete record of the case," said bench member Justice Manzoor Malik.

"I want to look at all the records so that I can understand all the points."

The court adjourned the hearing for an indefinite period, after the Sindh government sought time to submit the record of the trial court.

The apex court ordered the counsel representing the Sindh government, Farooq H Naek, to submit the detailed record before the court.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Around the Globe

● **Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan** said it was a "mistake" to enforce a strict coronavirus lockdown as it aggravated the economic situation, even as the number of Covid-19 infections crossed the 72,000-mark in the country on Monday. According to the Ministry of National Health Services, 2,964 new infections surfaced over the last 24 hours, taking the nationwide tally of coronavirus to 72,460. "Lockdown is not a solution as it can only slow down. So it was a mistake to shut down business in the country," Khan said.

● The Singapore Government said it will build new accommodations to improve the living condition of foreign workers and reduce the population density in their quarters, which have seen a very high transmission rate of the novel coronavirus. There will be additional space to house about 60,000 workers by the end of the year, the Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Manpower said.

● The US has delivered two million doses of the antimalarial medicine hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) to Brazil to fight Covid-19, the White House said, though drug has not been proven effective against the coronavirus. "HCQ will be used as a prophylactic to help defend Brazil's nurses, doctors, and healthcare professionals against the virus. It will also be used as a therapeutic to treat Brazilians who become infected," a statement said.

● Britain's Queen Elizabeth was photographed riding a 14-year-old Fell pony in Windsor Home Park on Sunday as the country eases stringent measures to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus. The Queen has been living at Windsor Castle, west of London, during the lockdown with her 98-year-old husband Prince Philip.

GLOBAL CASES CROSS 6.3 MN

Covid-19 TRACKER

TOTAL CASES: 6,319,550
DEATHS: 3,75,593
RECOVERED: 2,876,722

COUNTRY	TOTAL CASES	TOTAL DEATHS
USA	1,843,920	1,06,379
Brazil	5,14,992	29,341
Russia	4,14,878	4,855
Spain	2,86,509	27,127
UK	2,76,332	39,045
Italy	2,33,197	33,475
France	1,88,882	28,802
Germany	1,83,627	8,610



Report: Russia to start using 1st approved drug from next week

Moscow: Russia will start giving its first drug approved to treat Covid-19 to patients next week, its state financial backer told Reuters, a move it hopes will ease strains on the health system and speed a return to normal economic life.

Russian hospitals can begin giving the antiviral drug, which is registered under the name Avifavir, to patients from June 11, the head of Russia's RDIF sovereign wealth fund told Reuters in an interview.

He said the company behind the drug would manufacture enough to treat around 60,000 people a month.

There is currently no vaccine for Covid-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, and human trials of several existing antiviral drugs have yet to show efficacy.

A new antiviral drug from Gilead called remdesivir has shown some promise in small efficacy trials against Covid-19 and is being given to patients by some countries under compassionate or emergency use rules. Avifavir, known generically as favipiravir, was first developed in the late 1990s by a Japanese company later bought by Fujifilm as it moved into healthcare.

Report: People living on higher altitudes less vulnerable

Washington: Researchers have found that populations living in higher altitudes, especially 3,000 metres above the sea level, significantly report lower levels of coronavirus infections than their lowland counterparts.

The *Washington Post* cited one peer-reviewed study, published in the journal *Respiratory Physiology & Neurobiology*, in which researchers from Australia, Bolivia, Canada and Switzerland looking at epidemiological data from Bolivia, Ecuador and Tibet found that Tibet's infection rate was "drastically" lower than that of low-

land China, three times lower in the Bolivian Andes than in the rest of the country and four times lower in the Ecuadorian Andes.

Cusco in Peru, a picturesque Andean valley, the high-altitude city of 420,000 residents, had only recorded the death of three tourists from Mexico, China and Britain, between March 23 and April 3, at the start of Peru's strict national lockdown. Since then, there has not been another covid-19 fatality in the entire Cusco region, even as the disease has claimed more than 4,000 lives nationally.

SA eases; liquor is sold, school openings delayed

AP ■ CAPE TOWN

Many South Africans spent their Monday morning lining up outside liquor stores, as alcohol sales were allowed again after a two-month ban because of the coronavirus outbreak.

But while South Africa — with the continent's most developed economy and the highest number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 — relaxed its strict lockdown, the reopening of most school classes was delayed and there was debate about how churches could safely resume services.

The Government postponed the planned opening of two grades for another week so that some under-prepared schools could get ready to resume classes for grades 7 and 12, the final years of elementary school and high school.

Places of worship were allowed to open from Monday with limits on the number of people in congregations, yet many religious groups said they would refuse the opportunity. They said they were concerned about the danger of allowing people to gather in an enclosed building — something health experts warn against — and

some also said that limiting the number of people who could come into their church is against their values.

South Africa has reported over 32,000 Covid-19 cases and more than 600 people have died. The government warns that the number of infections will continue to increase and the peak is not expected until August or September.

Still, the relaxation of the alcohol ban came as a relief to many, who chose restocking their liquor cabinets instead of going straight to work on the day much of the country's economy also reopened.

UN forced to cut aid to Yemen, even as virus increases need

Cairo: Aid organisations are making an urgent plea for funding to shore up their operations in war-torn Yemen, saying they have already been forced to stop some of their work even as the coronavirus rips through the country. Some 75% of UN programs in Yemen have had to shut their doors or reduce operations. The global body's World Food Program had to cut rations in half and U.N.-funded health services were reduced in 189 out of 369 hospitals nationwide.

Lockdowns ease across Europe, Asia with new tourism rules

AP ■ ROME

The first day of June saw coronavirus restrictions ease from Asia to Europe on Monday, even as US protests against police brutality sparked fears of new outbreaks. The Colosseum opened its ancient doors in Rome, ferries restarted in Bangladesh, golfers played in Greece, students returned in Britain and Dutch bars and restaurants were free to welcome hungry, thirsty patrons.

Countries around the Mediterranean Sea tentatively kicked off a summer season where tourists could bask in their famously sunny beaches while still being protected by social distancing measures from a virus that is marching relentlessly around the world.

"We are reopening a symbol. A symbol of Rome, a symbol for Italy," said Alfonsina Russo, director of the Colosseum's archaeological park. "(We are) restarting in a positive way, with a different pace, with a more sustainable tourism."

Greece lifted lockdown measures Monday for hotels, campsites, open-air cinemas, golf courses and public swimming pools, while beaches and museums reopened in Turkey and bars, restaurants, cinemas and museums came back to life in the Netherlands.

"Today, we opened two rooms and tomorrow three. It's like building an antihill," Athens hotel owner Panos Betsis said as employees wearing face masks tidied a rooftop restaurant and cleaned a window facing the ancient Acropolis. "We can't compare the season to last year. We were at 95% capacity. Our aim now is to hang in there till 2021."

A long line of masked visitors snaked outside the Vatican Museums, which include the Sistine Chapel, as they reopened for the first time in



three months. Italy is eager to reboot its tourism industry, which accounts for 13% of its economy.

The Vatican Museums' famous keyholder — the "clavigero" who holds the keys to all the galleries on a big ring on his wrist — opened the gate in a sign both symbolic and literal that the Museums were back in business.

Still, strict crowd control measures were in place at both landmarks: visitors needed reservations to visit, their temperatures were taken before entering and masks were mandatory.

"Having the opportunity to see the museums by making a booking and not having to wait in line for three hours is an opportunity," said visitor Stefano Dicozzi.

The Dutch relaxation of coronavirus rules took place on a major holiday with the sun blazing, raising immediate fears of overcrowding in popular beach resorts. The new rules let bars and restaurants serve up to 30 people inside if they keep social distancing, but there's no standing at bars and reservations are necessary.

Britain, which with over 38,500 dead has the world's sec-

ond-worst death toll behind the United States, eased restrictions despite warnings from health officials that the risk of spreading Covid-19 was still too great. Some elementary classes reopened in England and people could now have limited contact with family and friends, but only outdoors and with social distancing.

In Asia, Bangladesh restarted bus, train, ferry and flight services Monday, hoping that a gradual reopening revives an economy in which millions have become jobless. Traffic jams and crowds of commuters clogged Manila as the Philippines tried to kickstart its economy.

Around 6.19 million infections have been reported worldwide, with over 372,000 people dying, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The true death toll is believed to be significantly higher, since many died without ever being tested.

The US has seen nearly 1.8 million infections and over 1,06,000 deaths in the pandemic, which has disproportionately affected racial minorities in a nation that does not have universal health care.

Trend Slazer

Varun is missing his people

Amid lockdown, actor VARUN DHAWAN says he is missing his people.

In an Instagram picture, the actor can be seen holding a teacup and his garden can be seen in the backdrop.

In the image, he put a sticker, which read: "Missing my people."

Varun had earlier expressed that he misses being on set.

He will soon be seen sharing screen space with Sara Ali Khan in the remake of 1995 hit film *Coolie No.1*.



A STREETSIDE NAMED DESIRE

With lockdown restrictions being lifted in some parts of the country, people have flocked the streets irresponsibly during a time which demands social distancing. How can local market vendors and shops ensure safety and hygiene, asks TEAM VIVA

With a few lockdown restrictions having been lifted, a large majority is seen frolicking in the streets in a manner that makes it seem that it is back to what life was prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. While advisories such as the practice of disinfecting hands regularly and covering face with masks are possible but maintaining social distancing with customers crowding around a *rehri* or screening them with an infrared thermometer might seem easy for shopping malls or other corporate offices, but are somewhat exclusionary towards street vendors and hawkers due to the nature of their livelihood and their socio-economic standing.

Markets are an important part of any local landscape and ensuring their safety is a must. So how are local vendors being prepared to keep hygiene in place? Experts tell us that the fear is here to stay and the precautions are important to follow now more than ever.

Sangeeta Singh, head of street food programme, National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), said, "Everyone, including the street food vendors, will have to get used to the new normal to start earning their livelihood. There are approximately more than three lakh vendors in Delhi alone, according to NASVI, which is a large number that has been unemployed due to everything being shut down. While the government is preparing these vendors for the new normal, most of them are quite unsure if they can immediately go back to selling food items, and are also worried about not earning enough because a lot of their food stands were next to public places like the metro station, bus stand, etc."

HK Sharma, owner of Babu Ram Paranthé Wala, a shop in Chandni Chowk, agrees that finding the first customer is quite difficult because of the non-operation of metro lines. He shares that they will ensure compliance with measures to protect themselves and the workers of the shop. Talking about the procedure being followed, he adds, "We are taking the basic safety measures such as wearing protective gears, using disinfectants to keep everything clean, opting for online payment and of course maintaining social distance. People are themselves so aware that it's unlikely they'll break the rules. Even if somebody does, we are ready with our strict protocols."

Ask him how important it is to follow them, he says, "This is something very serious. Everybody has to stick to the guidelines otherwise they will be risking their own lives as well as of others. Remember what Modiji said? *Jaan hai toh jahan hai*. So it's only if you have a life, you can have the world."



In order to have a proper protocol which was specially designed for street vendors, NASVI decided to coach them in various measures that they must take. The training focusses on three major aspects — maintaining high levels of personal hygiene, practicing social distancing at all times and frequent cleaning and sanitisation — among other things.

The NASVI also announced that it will train 500 street food vendors in collaboration with FSSAI to assist them in earning their livelihood by strictly following certain safety measures. As a part of the first phase, vendors were given training recently. They were informed and educated about the different kinds of precautionary measures which include food, safety, health and hygiene. They were also taught about the use of disposal plates, glasses and the safe use of alcohol-based hand sanitisers. Apart from this, the importance of social distancing and hand-washing was also taught to them.

The training is based on guidelines for food businesses during the pandemic. There are other examples too through which more such guidelines could be applied.



Maybe the solution would also come from market associations. Screening people at the same place where door-frame metal detectors are installed, restricting the entry to ensure that there are not more than a certain

number of people and keeping sanitisers at the entrance of a market are some ways that the associations can take up the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the vendors and the customers.

An example the Indian markets could learn from is that of the Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets, which, as soon as the US state discovered its first cases of the virus, issued guidelines in public welfare. It wants market customers and the public to know they are taking immediate and proactive steps to ensure markets are safe places to shop during the pandemic. The organisers were encouraged to streamline their markets to discourage the public from gathering in large numbers or lingering onsite. Inside the markets, the information booth will be well-stocked with hand sanitisers and there will be hand-washing stations available throughout the venue. All food sold at the market will be pre-packaged and sold by the vendors to reduce human contact with the items as much as possible. The federation also ensured that the food purchased at local farmers' market is safer than that sold in supermarkets.

Well, now the public is shattering the fear surrounding COVID-19 and stepping out onto the streets to do away with the monotony of sitting at home, we need fewer hands touching the products and ensuring these measures are observed.

Today the world is battling its greatest battle against Coronavirus. In these difficult times, the

people who are battling this crisis head on, are frontline workers, the medical personnel, brave soldiers, police force, who are risking their lives to keep us safe. As a Mumbaikar, I say a big Thank You to the Mumbai Police Foundation.

—Rani Mukherjee

Actress GENELIA D'SOUZA's younger son Rahyl turned a year older on Monday, and she took to social media to pen a wish for the boy.

"Rahyl....Just when I thought I know what love is, someone so little and so precious came along to remind me how big love is. I want you to always know, you were wished for, longed for, prayed for and will...always always be loved because you are my most favourite thing of everyday," Genelia wrote.

Along with it, she posted a couple of pictures capturing moments from Rahyl's life.



Tenet extremely complicated: Robert

Actor ROBERT PATTINSON struggled hard to understand the plot of Christopher Nolan's *Tenet*, and says he wasn't aware of what was happening for most months of the filming.

In an interview, the actor opened up about the complicated film.

"There were months where I was like, 'Am I....' Honestly, I had no idea if I'm even vaguely understanding what's happening," he said.

Pattinson continued: "On the last day, I asked (co-actor John David Washington) about what was happening in a scene, and it was just so profoundly the wrong take on the character..."



Last sonata

Condolences pour in from the Hindi music industry after the demise of singer WAJID ALI due to Coronavirus. By TEAM VIVA

"Meri toh duniya bilkul alag thi Andaz woh kho gaya Dekhna doobna ho gaya Doobna tairna ho gaya Kya asar mere saath hai Mukhtasar mulaakat hai..."

It was singer Wajid Ali's voice which made this song from *Teri Meri Kahaani* (2012) quite a favourite among youngsters. The singer later revealed that he had initially composed the song for his own album but then decided to use it for the film because it matched the situation. Alas, the song's meaning now matches Wajid's current situation. His demise at 42 due to Coronavirus has come as a shock to many connoisseurs of Bollywood music as well as the Indian music fraternity.

He had tested positive for Coronavirus a few days ago and was also suffering from a kidney ailment, had undergone a kidney transplant recently. He had been admitted to Surana Hospital at Chembur where his condition had deteriorated and was on a ventilator for the last few days. He breathed his last in the early hours of the day.

Priyanka Chopra, who starred in the song, tweeted, "Terrible news. The one thing I will always remember is Wajid bhai's laugh. Always smiling. Gone too soon. My condolences to his family and everyone grieving. Rest in peace, my friend. You are in my thoughts and prayers."



Wajid has judged various reality shows like *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*, alongside other prominent names from the industry. Shekhar Ravjiani, who judged the 2018 show alongside Wajid and Richa Sharma, expressed his grief by mailing us some of their photographs from the show sets and said, "I'll miss my friend."

It was Salman Khan's *Pyaar Kiya Toh Darna Kya* (1998), for which the Sajid-Wajid composer duo first scored music for with *Teri Jawaani*. The actor tweeted, "Wajid will always respect and remember you as a person. Love you and may your beautiful soul rest in peace." The duo went on to compose

several hit numbers for Salman starrers including *Laal Dupatta* and title track of *Mujhse Shaadi Karogi* (2004), *Tere Mast Mast Do Nain* and *Hud Hud Dabangg* in *Dabangg* (2010), *Mashallah* in *Ek Tha Tiger* (2012) and more.

Music composer and singer Shankar Mahadevan wrote, "I am just not able to come to terms with this. It's shocking! Good bye dear brother. Love you! Till we meet on the other side. Prayers for your peaceful journey Wajid bhai."

Singer Sonu Mohapatra, who has also judged alongside Wajid in a reality singing show, recalled her experience during the time. She told us,

"I know that Wajid was going through kidney ailments for a long time now. Even two years ago, on the sets of *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*, he had a small accident, where he had hurt himself but things became complicated because of his other medications and low immunity."

She added, "He was a generous, affectionate and lovely person who had come up the tough way. A tabla player, a composer, who had the intention to do good always. He would bring home-cooked food for all of us on the sets and used to be full of enthusiasm. I really got along with him very well and deeply regret losing touch during the lockdown."

Sona had also tweeted, "Heartbreaking news. Wajid is no more. Spent time on the *SRGMP* show with him as a co-judge and he was so kind and generous. I know he was ailing for a while, regret not picking up the phone on him in this lockdown. Stunned and sad."

Singer Mamta Sharma, who lent her voice to *Anarkali Disco Chali*, *Fevicol Se*, among other popular Sajid-Wajid numbers, expressed her grief by recalling her work with him as she considered him to be her "guru" and "mentor." She earlier said, "I am not in a clear state of mind right now because he was really close to us. Wajid bhai was just like family. I am too shocked to say anything. Last week, I spoke to him over a video call. He was absolutely fine and I thought he would be discharged in a few days. Meanwhile, this happened. I am still not out of this trauma. I cannot think of anything right now. Whatever I am today, it is because of him. Over the call, I was in tears looking at him but the smile on his face was intact and he was consoling me and saying 'Don't worry, I am ok, I am good, I will be alright.' He was such a strong person and a pillar of positivity."

"Rest in harmony my friend. Had the pleasure of working with both Sajid-Wajid most loving and brilliant. My condolences to his family and especially Sajid. #RIPWajidKhan," Abhishek Bachchan tweeted.

"Gone too soon," music composer A R Rahman tweeted. —With inputs from TN Raghunatha

Let's pledge for climate justice: Bhumi



Actor Bhumi Pednekar is urging the nation to become climate conscious and is looking to bring together the who's who of the film industry to spread awareness for nature conservation. She is a vocal climate activist and runs her own non-profit initiative called Climate Warrior that celebrates real-life heroes working towards climate change and as an advocacy platform to engage and rally the youth towards this cause. On this World Environment Day, Bhumi is looking to bring more awareness on this burning issue.

"Climate change, as a concept, is still not considered as a real issue today by a lot of people. There are such varied and grave climatic issues happening across the world which people are not even realising. For instance, increase of famines, forest fires, droughts,

floods, melting ice caps, increase in sea levels, food and crop getting destroyed, heat waves across countries and continents," says Bhumi.

The actor says she wants every citizen to become a climate warrior and do their bit for the cause that is threatening our future generations.

Bhumi says, "For World Environment Day, Climate Warrior is starting a small campaign — *One Wish For The Earth*. At this time and in this current scenario, there are many issues that the world is facing as an impact of the climate crisis.

The campaign endeavours to get thought leaders from my industry to tell the world what is the 'one wish they have for the earth.' I can't wait to share their thoughts to make the earth a better place. Let's pledge for climate justice and let's unite to save our planet."

Avoid Vaping

A team of US researchers led by an Indian-origin scientist revealed that just a few months of vaping may put healthy people on the brink of oral disease. The study found that the collection of oral bacteria in daily e-cigarette users' mouths is teeming with potent infection-causing organisms that put vapers at substantial risk for ailments ranging from gum disease to cancer



DOCYARD DR PARTAP CHAUHAN

Director

JIVA AYURVEDA



Keep hormones in check

A woman undergoes many physical and hormonal changes in her life. Some are easy, but some can bring complications with them. Menstrual cycles, for instance, tend to be accompanied by problems like irregular periods, excessive bleeding, pain, and cramps.

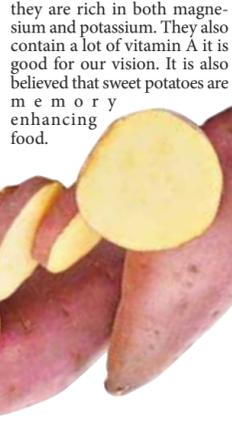
Causes of menstrual disorders
Factors that are responsible for this condition include the increased intake of sour, salty, hot, pungent, heavy, and fermented food; meat of fatty and domestic animals; alcoholic beverages; indigestion; and eating before the previous meal is digested. Conditions that also have a strong effect include repeated abortions, excessive sexual activity, increased physical exertion (walking, riding, weight lifting), emaciation, trauma, and day sleeping. Psychological conditions such as grief, anger, lust, and anxiety are also known to play a key role in aggravating menstrual problems.

According to Ayurveda, poor diet and inefficient digestion are the main causative factors for these disorders. Improperly digested food leads to the production of toxins in the body. These toxins are circulated by the blood to the deep tissues and channels, where they cause blockages and stagnation. These conditions cause aggravation of *vata dosha* (air) and the *rakta dhatu* (blood). The aggravated *vata* brings impaired blood into the channels carrying the *raj* (menstrual blood), leading to increase menstrual blood flow. Ayurveda recommends different types of treatment to treat menstrual problems. These include nourishing and toning herbs as well as rejuvenative treatment in accordance with the nature of the disorder. Massage and the incorporation of meditation and yoga may also be beneficial for permanent elimination of the problems. It is important to address these menstruation problems because a woman expels a large proportion of her wastes and toxins through this process. If these toxins remain in the body, they cause further stagnation and blockage within the body.

- Factors that are responsible for this condition include the increased intake of sour, salty, hot, pungent, heavy, and fermented food; meat of fatty and domestic animals; alcoholic beverages; indigestion; and eating before the previous meal is digested**
- Ayurvedic tips that will help fight menstrual problems
 - Take one crushed garlic clove (lahsun) with two cloves (laung) twice a day during your periods.
 - When suffering from period cramps, take a teaspoon of aloe vera gel mixed with a pinch of black pepper or cinnamon (dalchini) powder.
 - Drinking ginger infused herbal tea helps. You can also mix 1 tsp of ginger powder in warm water and have that.
 - Take the following decoction from the first day of your periods helps to alleviate the symptoms: Boil one tsp of cumin seeds with two glasses of water over moderate heat until the mixture reduces to half. Sieve the seeds. Add a teaspoon of honey and drink it warm.
 - Cooling showers and bathing with sandalwood and mint essence are helpful.
 - Include spices like cumin (jeera), fenugreek seeds (methi), black pepper (kali mirch), cloves (laung), coriander (dhaniya), and mint (pudina) in your diet.
 - Include pumpkin, papaya, cucumber, potato, cauliflower, and peas in your diet.

SUMMERCoolERS

SWEET POTATO: A sweet potato is a sweet and starchy root vegetable. It is a great source of fibre, vitamins and minerals. They are also rich in antioxidants which help promote gut health. Sweet potatoes also contain significant amount of magnesium which help to reduce stress and anxiety. They are also known for their anti-inflammatory properties which help reduce inflammation on the body. Sweet potatoes can help in controlling blood pressure because



No Tobacco Day was on May 31. Doctors tell you how to be tobacco free to boost immunity during Coronavirus pandemic

Tobacco consumption happens in two forms- either chewing tobacco in the form of smokeless tobacco (*pan masala, gutka & khaini*) or smoking (cigarettes & *beedi*). Tobacco consumed in any form is extremely addictive because of nicotine and three hundred cancer causing carcinogens. Chewing tobacco accounts for major consumption of tobacco in India, making head and neck cancers the most commonly reported forms. Smokeless tobacco is usually a mixture of aromatic betel leaves and nuts that the user keeps in the mouth and chews on it for hours. When these leaves are chewed upon constantly for long durations, nicotine is released in the mouth along with other flavours, that causes the mouth to produce excessive saliva. Users generally end up spitting this out. While smoking tobacco, nicotine is released in the lungs and affects the other organs, tobacco when chewed stays in the mouth. Development of tartar can lead to gum disease and can negatively impact saliva flow in the mouth. It makes it easier for bacteria to stick to teeth and gums. Repeated consumption causes various damage to the oral health:

- **Impacts on oral health**
- **Bad breath:** This is the most initial and primary impact of repeated consumption of smokeless tobacco, happens due to the residue of smokeless tobacco is left in the mouth and stained teeth.
- **Gum infections:** Smokeless tobacco can irritate your gums,

The most common cause of lung cancer is smoking. Risk of lung cancer is up to 30 times higher in long term smokers compared with lifetime non smoker. Moreover, tobacco smokers may be more susceptible to contracting COVID-19, as the act of smoking involves contact of fingers with the lips, which increases the possibility of transmission of viruses from hand to mouth. Smoking shisha or hookah, often involves the sharing of mouth pieces and hoses, which could facilitate the transmission of the COVID-19 virus in communal and social settings
— Dr Vikas Goswami, Senior Consultant Medical Oncologist, Max Hospital

- causing gum (periodontal) disease.
- **Tooth decay or dental caries:** Sugar is often added to enhance the flavor of smokeless tobacco, increasing the risk for tooth decay. The main ingredients of smokeless tobacco are sand and grit, that wear down teeth, causing erosion and sensitivity
- **Leukoplakia-** Thick white patches inside the mouth, are known to be early signs of mouth cancer
- **Oral submucous fibrosis:** A chronic disease affecting any part of the oral cavity leading to stiffness of

Say no to tobacco

Even from studies before COVID-19 crisis, extensive proof underlining the deleterious impact of tobacco use on lung health and its causative connotation with respiratory diseases is all over healthcare research papers. The effects are damaging to the immune system of the smokers too and they are twofold more susceptible to influenza than non-smokers. Furthermore other severe symptoms along with a higher mortality rate were reported in smokers in the preceding MERS-CoV outbreak. Now we know well that tobacco use is damaging to our respiratory system, with or without COVID-19. Moreover, COVID-19 has made the previously deleterious effects of tobacco, lethal. If you want to quit smoking, no time can be better than this. Research also support that the effects of smoking starts to

- subside as soon as the habit is controlled. Near normal body system settings can soon be restored.
- There have been several studies reiterating the deadly effect of smoking on lungs.
- Chemicals present in tobacco smoking causes irritation of windpipe, voice box and other parts of respiratory tract.
- Excessive mucous is secreted as a response to the irritation. It also deposits in the alveoli of lungs reducing lung function and causing distressed breathing.
- Gradually the entire air way reduces in size.
- You are already aware of the chemicals found in tobacco harmful and cancer causing for both users and passive smokers.

The writer is Dr Anshuman Kumar, Senior Consultant & Director, Surgical Oncology at Dharamshila Narayana Superspeciality Hospital

The writer is Dr Nikhil Modi, Senior Consultant, Respiratory, Critical care & Sleep Disorder, Institutes of Critical Care, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi

Binging on chips, chocolates, popcorn while watching a Netflix series or two is our guilty pleasure. We all have had a cheat diet once a day to satisfy our sudden cravings, especially during the recent times when many of us are spending time back at home. Watching a movie without something to munch on seems like a big no, but that doesn't mean you have to take the unhealthy ways.

For all those who are looking for a healthy snacking option, pistachios are here to solve your woes. Not only they are much healthy but a recent study has found that they are a complete protein too. Dr Mike Roussell, globally renowned Nutrition Consultant, Author and Advisor, tells you that the research showing that American Pistachios are a complete protein is extremely important because it shows that they contain nine essential amino acids that your body needs in a form that is readily absorbable and available for your body to use. "This is unlike other plant proteins that are incomplete and where you need to add other complementary proteins to get the essential amino acids," he explains. Dr Roussell adds that American pistachios are your one stop shop as a source of plant-based protein. They are portable, they don't need to be cooked, you can enjoy it as an any-

Go nuts

Snacking on pistachios is a missing element in India. DR MIKE ROUSELL tells MUSBA HASHMI the numerous benefits of incorporating the nut in diet

time snack wherever you are. "American pistachios makes for a superfood for children as they being a complete protein promotes growth. They have more protein than any other nuts. It is also a good source of fibre for children and unlike broccoli you won't have to force feed it your kid," he says. American pistachios are also a great food for people with Diabetes. "If a person eats a cup or half of pistachios at night, it might help keep their blood sugar in control the next morning," Dr Roussell tells you. Pistachio being an easy to eat snack, also promotes mindful eating in adults. "One has to slow down, break the nut and then eat it. This leads to mindful eating.



from the traditional carbohydrates," he tells you. In a study done in China on pregnant women, it was shown that the nut prevents gestational Diabetes in them. To add to the benefits, one can eat them anytime throughout the year. Unlike other nuts, they don't need refrigeration too. "You can eat them as much as you want. Preferably one to three cups a day, is a better option," Dr Roussell tells you. For those who want differentiate between Iranian and American pistachios, the later are naturally white and a little bit oily. "Even if one is on diet, he can eat it without gaining extra weight. A serving or half won't affect the weight. The reason being they are full of healthy fat," he says.

KEEP SKIN SUPPLE AND GLOWING



It is time that we take extra care of our skin. DR AJAY RANA shares tips that one can follow to keep it glowing

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to be locked at our home and self-isolate. It's been more than two months that we are stuck at home. At this time, wearing any makeup seems to be a thing of the past. It feels so liberating not to use any makeup or skin products. It is giving our skin some time to breathe.

But at this time we almost neglect to care for our skin. Because this is the time it needs unique care and attention. We generally forget that our skin is exposed to the summer heat and dust even if you are sitting in your home. And, because we all are under the air conditioner all the time, it may just make things even worse. Some people are observing a skin breakout and many other skin problems during the COVID-19 lockdown. We should know the reasons and how can take care to avoid such skin conditions:

- During this time of summer, heat and warm weather tends to aggravate dry skin, and especially in low humidity conditions. Going outdoors under the harsh sunlight has become minimal these days, still drying of skin is unavoidable.
- Hydrate yourself through the day, as water help to get rid of toxins in the body. Most people don't drink water on a regular basis, and this also causes acne.
- Stop washing your face with any soap. Always use a good face wash to clean your skin. It removes dirt from the surface of the skin and keeps the face fresh, and will not dry out the skin as soaps do.
- Don't eat any kind of junk food. Always take a healthy diet, exercise, hydrate yourself at regular intervals, sleep well and have foods which are rich in Vitamin D. So that it can keep your skin acne free.
- Even if we are confined to our house, we still need to follow a dedicated skincare regime for the nourishment of our skin. Nourish the skin with a face pack once a week and follow a nightly cleansing ritual every day. These are important for a glowing and healthy skin.
- We should stop using wrong products, especially for your skin. If anybody suffers from dry skin conditions, it is mandatory to use products that are suitable for the skin type.
- Wash your face regularly. Sitting at home does not mean that we do not need to wash our face. In this scorching heat, it makes us sweat and the dust clog the pores on the skin surface. So, it is always necessary to keep your face clean and fresh. Wash your face properly twice a day.
- But do not wash your face harshly. Splash some water on the face if you feel tired or hot. This will keep the facial skin free of excess oil, sweat and bacteria and it rescues acne and pimples like skin problems.
- Always use moisturiser especially at these times when there is high chances of dry skin. Use moisturiser two-three times a day.

The writer is Dermatologist and Aesthetic Physician, Founder-Director, ILAMED

SLIMLINE

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weakness of food and health systems, disproportionately impacting already vulnerable populations. As inequalities and malnutrition continue to sweep the world and India, the 2020 Global Nutrition Report stresses that the need to address malnutrition in all its forms by tackling injustices in food and health systems is now more urgent than ever. The report finds that India remains severely affected by malnutrition, with one of the highest rates of within-country inequalities in malnutrition globally. However, some progress has been made to tackle stunting and underweight, and the country has put in place innovative programmes aimed at reaching the most vulnerable. India has had some success in reducing rates of underweight in child and adolescents. Between 2000 and 2016, rates have decreased from 66.0% to 58.1% for boys and 54.2% to 50.1% in girls. However, this is still high compared to the average of 35.6% for boys and 31.8% for girls in the Asia region. In addition, 37.9% of children under 5 years of age are stunted and 20.8% are wasted, compared to the Asia average of 22.7% and 9.4% respectively.

We need an alternative to saliva: Bumrah

Rohit & Virat defining pair of modern era

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Premier India pacer Jasprit Bumrah won't miss the hugs and high-fives as part of a wicket celebration but he will certainly miss applying saliva on the ball and feels an alternative should be provided to maintain the red cherry.

The ICC Cricket Committee, led by former India captain Anil Kumble, recommended a ban on using saliva on the ball as an interim measure to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Committee did not allow the use of artificial substances as a substitute move.

The new rule makes life tougher for the bowlers and Bumrah, like many former and current fast bowlers, feels there ought to be an alternative.

"I was not much of a hugger anyway and not a high-five person as well, so that doesn't trouble me a lot. The only thing that interests me is the saliva bit," said.

"I don't know what guidelines we'll have to follow when we come back, but I feel there should be an alternative," he added.

Bumrah said not being able to use saliva makes the game more batsman-friendly.

"If the ball is not well maintained, it's difficult for the bowlers. The grounds are getting shorter and shorter, the wickets are becoming flatter and flatter.

"So we need something, some alternative for the bowlers to maintain the ball so that it can do something - maybe reverse in the end or conventional swing."

When former West Indian



pacer Bishop pointed out that the conditions have been favourable to the fast bowlers over the last couple of years, Bumrah nodded in agreement. "In Test match cricket, yes. That is why it's my favourite format, because we have something over there. But in one-day cricket and T20 cricket... one-day cricket there are two

"I WAS NOT MUCH OF A HUGGER ANYWAY AND NOT A HIGH-FIVE PERSON AS WELL, SO THAT DOESN'T TROUBLE ME A LOT. THE ONLY THING THAT INTERESTS ME IS THE SALIVA BIT,"

new balls, so it hardly reverses at the end.

"We played in New Zealand, the ground (boundary) was 50 metres. So even if you are not looking to hit a six, it will go for six. In Test matches I have no problem, I'm very happy with the way things are going."

He finds it amusing that

the batsmen keep complaining about the swinging ball.

"Whenever you play, I've heard the batsmen - not in our team, everywhere - complaining the ball is swinging. But the ball is supposed to swing! The ball is supposed to do something! We are not here just to give throwdowns, isn't it? (laughter)

"This is what I tell batsmen all the time. In one-day cricket, when did the ball reverse last, I don't know. Nowadays the new ball doesn't swing a lot as well. So whenever I see batsmen say the ball is swinging or seaming and that is why I got out - the ball is supposed to do that.

"Because it doesn't happen so much in the other formats, it's a new thing for the batsmen when the ball is swinging or seaming," said the 26-year-old.

The Ahmedabad-born pacer finds himself in an unusual position as he has not bowled for over two months due to the lockdown imposed in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

When India will play next is not clear yet and Bumrah said he is not sure about how his body will hold up when he returns to action.

"I really don't know how your body reacts when you don't bowl for two months, three months. I'm trying to keep up with training so that as soon as the grounds open up, the body is in decent shape.

"I've been training almost six days a week but I've not bowled for a long period of time so I don't know how the body will react when I bowl the first ball.

"I'm looking at it as a way to renew your own body. We'll never get such a break again, so even if you have a small niggle here and there, you can be a refreshed person when you come back. You can prolong your career," he said.

Bumrah has risen rapidly in international cricket despite experts having reservations about his longevity due to his unorthodox action.



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Every cricketing era has a "defining pair" which builds the narrative and the duo of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma is a special one for India in modern times, says Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara.

Kohli and Rohit have aggregated nearly 36,000 runs (35,930 runs) across three formats and Sangakkara feels the duo has the same aura which Sourav Ganguly and Rahul Dravid had in the late '90s and early 2000s.

"There is something very special about Virat and Rohit. That fact that rules have changed and run-scoring might have become slightly easier in one-day cricket, but it's incredibly hard, the volume of cricket that India athletes play," Sangakkara said on Star Sports' 'Cricket Connected'.

Sangakkara feels that Kohli and Rohit deserve the respect also for the fact that players from bygone era didn't have to constantly play three formats.

"So, I think you have to have a lot of respect for Rohit and Virat but understand that it's all because of the players that

have gone before and have done all the hard work then as well.

"So, it's a knock-on effect, so in every era, there's always a defining pair and in the modern era, it's Rohit and Virat for India for sure." Sangakkara recalled the era of Dravid and Ganguly and drew a parallel with Kohli and Rohit where batsmen have been destructive despite being orthodox in their technique.

"If you look at Rahul and Dada, both of them are orthodox batsmen. They play beautiful cricket shots and are very technically correct. Dravid may be a little bit more so, but the ability to be as destructive with such rate and precision stroke-making is something that has to be really admired."

"If you take the modern-day game, India has two of the best players in Virat and Rohit, who play orthodox cricket but who are just absolutely destructive in any format of the game. You don't have to muscle the ball or put too much effort or look ugly doing it, they just play good cricket shots and results come," he concluded.

Advantage for Aus in D/N Test: Smith

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Star batsman Steve Smith says the experience of having played more pink ball games than India would give Australia 'slight advantage' when the two sides clash under flood lights in December but the Virat Kohli-led side has the batsmen to stand up to the challenge.

Cricket Australia last week confirmed that India will tour Down Under for a full tour comprising four Tests, three ODIs and three T20Is. The second Test will be a day-night affair, starting from December 11 in Adelaide.

"We played a few more pink ball games, perhaps, than India which might be a slight advantage," the Aussie star batsman said in a Facebook session, hosted by Sony Sports India.

"India played pretty well in the day-night game they played at Kolkata. It's a different game but they certainly got the batsmen that can stand up to the conditions when it gets tough with the Pink Ball. And their bowlers, they stand the seam up with quality."

"They are world class play-



ers who are able to adapt to anything, so I see it being a pretty amazing contest," he said.

India will first clash with Australia in a T20I series beginning October 11 and then return to defend the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with the opening match at Gabba, where the hosts have tremendous record.

"Our record at Gabba (Brisbane) against anyone, is good to be fair, that is a fortress

Smith in best shape despite not picking up bat

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Top Australian cricketers resumed training on Monday at the Sydney Olympic Park with batting mainstay Steve Smith saying that he is in his best shape in years after putting the bat aside for two months to focus on physical and mental fitness.

David Warner and Mitchell Starc were among those who reported for training as the domestic pre-season began behind closed doors. Australia is one of the less-affected countries from the

COVID-19 pandemic with little over 7000 cases reported so far.

"I'm probably in the best shape I've been in in years, doing lots of running, lots of gym stuff at home. It's been a couple of months of good hard work," said Smith.

"I haven't touched a bat, really. A couple of little drills at home but that's about it. I've just tried to switch off from it a bit, which I don't do very often. I was just focusing on getting myself fit and strong and refreshing mentally," he said.

for us, we wanted to play first Test there for a long period of time," the 30-year-old said.

Smith, one of the world's best Test batsmen, also admired the way the Indian captain goes about chases in white-ball cricket.

"Look at his average in winning chases in one-day cricket. It's phenomenal. He's so good under pressure and calm. Just gets the job done and unfortunately for an

opposition player. You got to admire someone like that and what he has done for Indian cricket."

Asked about his comparisons with the Indian icon, he said, "I admire Virat a lot. He's an amazing player. The way they play the game now, the sheer passion he has for cricket... His body sort of transformed over time. He's so fit, strong and powerful now. Pretty amazing for cricket."

ECB to resume cricket behind closed doors

AFF ■ LONDON

The ECB has welcomed the UK government's decision to allow the resumption of professional sports behind closed doors which allows the board to go ahead with its plan of hosting international cricket starting next month.

In the latest health and safety guidelines designed to prevent the spread of coron-

avirus, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Oliver Dowden on Saturday gave the green light for live competitive sport to return behind closed doors in safe and carefully controlled environments from June 1.

"We are extremely heartened by Saturday's announcement from the Secretary of State, which will support the return of professional, domes-

tic cricket behind closed doors, and provides a meaningful next step for recreational players to begin playing at their clubs again," England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement.

The board added that it will study the guidelines laid down by the government to safely resume the game.

"Over the coming week, we will seek to understand the spe-

cific guidance from Government's medical teams so that we can provide support for cricket clubs who will be eager to see their communities safely playing in small groups."

"We extend our thanks to all those in Government who have worked hard to support the return of sport and we look forward to seeing players from across the game start returning to the field," it added.

Everyone entitled to their own opinion: Rabada on his aggression

IAN ■ CAPE TOWN

South Africa speedster Kagiso Rabada reflected on the previous season and admitted he felt out of place and rusty. Rabada, who has been leading the Proteas' bowling attack for a while now, also opened up regarding his on-field aggression, which has gotten him into trouble many-a-times in recent past.

The 2019-20 season was rather indifferent for Rabada, according to his own high

standards. He failed to live up to the expectations on the India tour and scalped just seven wickets in three Tests as the hosts romped to a 3-0 victory.

"The past season was a disappointment," Rabada was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "Even though I see that my stats are okay, I just felt really rusty and a bit out of place."

Rabada did better on home soil against England, where he scalped 14 wickets in three

matches. Rabada couldn't feature in the fourth Test as he was handed a one-Test ban for his celebration after taking the wicket of England Test captain Joe Root in the third Test.

"It's passion, but everyone has their opinion and they are entitled to their own opinion," Rabada said.

"I have identified things that I needed to identify and I will address them with the people that are closest to me and who I feel should be helping me address it."



Man U extend Ighalo's loan deal

AFF ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United extended Odion Ighalo's loan spell until January 2021 on Monday to ensure the Nigerian striker will be able to finish the 2019/20 season with the Premier League club.

Ighalo's initial loan deal from Shanghai Shenhua expired at the end of May, but the 30-year-old has been rewarded for an impressive return of four goals in eight appearances for United before football was shut down by the coronavirus pandemic in March.

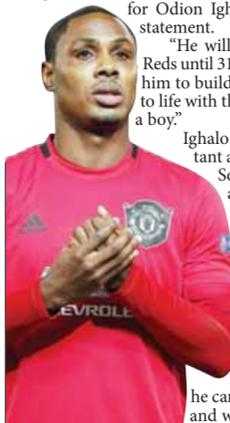
"Manchester United have reached agreement with Shanghai Greenland Shenhua to extend the loan deal for Odion Ighalo," United said in a statement.

"He will now remain with the Reds until 31 January 2021, enabling him to build on an impressive start to life with the club he supported as a boy."

Ighalo could prove an important addition to Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's squad ahead of a packed schedule once games get back under way later this month.

"They (Shanghai) have been great towards us, allowing him to play for his dream club," said Solskjaer last week.

"It's been a dream for him and hopefully he can finish what he started and win a trophy with us."



BFI to nominate Phangal for Khel Ratna

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World Silver-medallist Amit Phangal and the seasoned Vikas Krishan were on Monday nominated for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award by the Boxing Federation of India, which picked only Olympic-bound names as its nominees for the annual honours.

The BFI has nominated world Bronze-winning trio of Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), Simranjit Kaur (64kg) and Manish Kaushik (63kg) for the Arjuna awards. Of these, Borgohain has won the world Bronze twice, the most recent being last year.

For the Dronacharya awards, the BFI has finalised the names of national women's coach Mohammed Ali Qamar and assistant coach Chhote Lal Yadav.

"The nominations of the athletes and coaches have been on the basis of their performance during the last four years," the BFI said.

The 24-year-old Phangal (52kg), also an Asian Games champion, has not won any national sports award. He was being nominated for the Arjuna award for the past three years but was not considered by the selection committee because of a 2012 "inadvertent" dope offence.

"He is allowed to compete for the country and his medals are celebrated. He deserves to be honoured as well," BFI Executive Director R K Sacheti told PTI.

"Youth level ki galtiyan to sab jagah maaf hoti hain. I didn't do it intention-



ally. I only took a medicine prescribed to me without knowing the consequences. I am hopeful I will be considered," Phangal had told PTI in a recent interaction.

Commonwealth and Asian Games Gold-medallist Krishan (69kg) won the Arjuna award in 2012. The 28-year-old had turned professional in 2018 after his CWG top finish followed by a third Asian Games medal — a Bronze.

He returned to the amateur circuit last year with the South Asian Games, winning a gold there before qualifying for the Olympics at the Asian qualifiers in Jordan in March this year.

Of the three Arjuna contenders, Kaushik has had a great run for the past couple of years, winning a Bronze in his maiden world championship (2019) to qualify for the Olympics after a Silver at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Both Kaur and Borgohain booked their Tokyo tickets at the Asian qualifiers. Qamar, an Arjuna awardee, was India's first Commonwealth Games gold-medallist in boxing and has been in charge of the women's camp for over a year now. This was after serving as an assistant coach for one year.

Yadav is closely associated with six-time world champion M C Mary Kom and she has been crediting him for keeping her focussed in the past couple of years.

Former world-medallist N Usha has been nominated for the Dhyani Chand award for lifetime contribution to sports.

Real to play at training center on La Liga restart

AP ■ MADRID

The Spanish league is resuming in less than two weeks with Real Madrid playing its games at the club's training center.

Madrid will host Eibar on June 14 at the 6,000-capacity Alfredo Di Stefano Stadium, a venue used mostly by the club's "B" team at the Ciudad Real Madrid center on the city's outskirts.

Madrid is not stopping renovation work at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium as all remaining league games are likely to be played without fans because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The league on Sunday confirmed the dates and times of the first two rounds of matches to be played after the competition was stopped mid-March because of the pandemic. The first game will be the Sevilla derby between Sevilla and Real Betis on June 11 at 10 p.m. Local time (2000 GMT).

Defending champion Barcelona, which has a two-point lead over Real Madrid after 27 rounds, will resume at Mallorca on June 13, while Atlético Madrid visits Athletic Bilbao the following day.

The league has announced that every game will include an "applause

to infinity" tribute to the "heroes who are fighting to overcome" the pandemic. Pre-recorded applause uploaded in videos by fans will be played in the 20th minute of matches.

"We have created this initiative to help fans be a part of La Liga's return and also as an opportunity for them to show their support for the heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic," said league president Javier Tebas, who gave his weekly interview to league broadcaster Movistar on Sunday.

"We want them to feel close to their team, even if they cannot be in the stadiums cheering them on, and for players to feel the support of their fans."

Most games will be played late in the day to take into account high temperatures in Spain, but some will be brought forward based on favorable weather forecasts. There will be a couple of matches at 1 p.m. Local time in the first weekend.

The second division will resume June 11 with the second half of the game between Rayo Vallecano and Albacete, which was suspended at halftime in December after Ukrainian Roman Zozulia of Albacete was subjected to Nazi taunts by opposing fans.