

NATION 7
NIA ARRESTS ONE IN NAVAL SPY CASE

WORLD 9
MINNEAPOLIS, CALIFORNIA MOVE TO END POLICE NECK RESTRAINTS

SPORT 13
BALOTELLI SET TO BE RELEASED BY BRESCIA

LUCKNOW, SUNDAY JUNE 7, 2020; PAGES 14-4 ₹3



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USUAL SUSPECTS
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Poll e-campaign renews focus on local networks

On Tuesday morning, Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to address a "massive rally" aimed at the BJP's supporters in West Bengal. The posters for the meeting are already circulating on social media and the State BJP has encouraged individual leaders, MLAs and MPs to post posters of the meeting with their faces.

It is unlikely that any of these posters will be in evidence on the walls of houses in either Kolkata or other urban clusters of West Bengal. This absence is significant because the political culture of the State deems that a public meeting addressed by a political stalwart is preceded by posters, bunting and wall writings. There is a thriving industry in West Bengal that is centred on agitprop and there is fierce competition between political parties over high attendance. The biggest meetings are traditionally held at the Brigade Parade Ground in the Kolkata Maidan, just adjoining the iconic Victoria Memorial. Slightly smaller meetings — although huge by national standards — are held either at the Shahid Minar or the crossing of Chittaranjan Avenue and Bentinck Street. There is a set drill for public meetings and, by and large, political parties of all shades adhere to the rules.

On Tuesday morning, however, there will be no crowds either at the Kolkata Maidan or the Chowringhee crossing. BJP flags will not be in evidence and there will be no saffron-draped march where the local leaders will wait the arrival of Amit Shah. That's because the whole event will be virtual. The Home Minister will be speaking from his residence in Lutyens' Delhi and the party faithful will watch the proceeding from either a computer, a tablet or a smart phone. At best, some enterprising local leader will install a giant screen in the mohalla and a crowd will watch the speech from there. But even here, there will at least be a pretence of social distancing for the cameras, although, as a rule, the citizenry of West Bengal tend to remarkably casual about adhering to the norms of either a lockdown or social distancing.

Amit Shah's speech will be closely scrutinised by the entire class. What he has to say about the BJP's aggressive campaign to oust Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress from power will no doubt be interesting. After all, the leader from Gujarat has acquired a formidable reputation as a doughty political campaigner and shrewd strategist. The importance of the Tuesday meeting will, however, be different. The entire political class, cutting across parties, and all political observers will be trying to assess the impact of this new form of virtual campaigning that has been forced on the country by the Covid-19 crisis. Will grand events such as this one have the same impact and, indeed, appeal as a traditional public meeting? What will be the online viewership? Will it have to be supplemented by live telecasts on local channels? Will people view it in real time, keeping in mind that internet connectivity is still erratic, or will they view a recorded version at leisure? These are unanswered questions that need further probing.

At this point I can only narrate my own experiences of political engagement using video calls and other social media platforms. Since the lockdown began on March 25 and I found myself stranded in Delhi, unable to get back to the scene of action in West Bengal, I have spoken and participated in at least 20 programmes, big and small. Since Zoom — the platform that despite its China connections offers the best service — can accommodate only a maximum of 100 participants — if you want more, the charges are quite prohibitive — there is the tendency to link it with some other social media platform that has facilities for live broadcast. The only disadvantage is that while Zoom allows interaction with the audience, the other live broadcasts involve a silent audience. This can be disconcerting to speakers who depend, as I do, on audience reactions to mould a speech.

At the same time, Zoom has been invaluable in communicating with smaller and more targeted audiences. It has become the best substitute for face-to-face meetings with, say, 50 to 60 people. The additional advantage is that the audience is spared the trouble of commuting — and all the hassles that involves. My feeling is that these conference calls and small webinars have managed quite successfully to overcome the problems caused by the restrictions on travel. However, while these can maintain the activist network and bolster morale, they are of little use in communicating directly with ordinary people, particularly those uninvolved in day-to-day politics.

The issue is relevant in the context of the Assembly election in Bihar that is due by September-October this year. The elections in Assam and West Bengal are due by May 2021. If the Election Commission deems that the elections will go ahead as scheduled — despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic — there will have to be many adjustments. At one level there will have to be administrative modifications, keeping in mind social distancing. I believe that if the levels of participation are to be ensured, the EC should consider extending voting hours, even contemplating two-day voting. This would have presented huge logistical problems in the case of a general election but a State Assembly election is more manageable.

As for the political issues, I feel that the importance of TV is certain to be enhanced considerably. Secondly, because contacts with individual voters are certain to be more restricted, there will be a renewed emphasis on the existing local networks of parties and candidates. The incumbent may even enjoy a modest advantage, unless there is fierce anti-incumbency. Finally, if the fear of Covid-19 remains as intense as at present, there will be a significant reduction in the costs incurred by political parties — an unintended but desirable consequence.

LAC parleys raise hopes

No breakthrough, but it creates ground for more talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to defuse the nearly month-long stand-offs at various locations at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh, top military commanders of India and China held extensive talks on Saturday. There was no immediate breakthrough, and both the sides agreed to remain engaged to resolve the ongoing confrontations.

The high-level talks between Leh-based 14 Corps chief Lt General Harinder Singh and his Chinese counterpart Major General Liu Lin, commander of Tibet Military District in Chushul-Moldo in China, came a day after the video conference between the senior diplomats of the two countries — Naveen Srivastava, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the External Affairs Ministry, and Wu Jianguo, director general in China's foreign ministry.

They agreed not to let their "differences" turn into "disputes" and address contentious issues through peaceful dia-

logue while respecting each other's sensitivities and concerns.

India and China have also agreed that both the sides should implement the consensus reached between the leaderships of the two countries that the "two neighbours do not constitute a threat to each other and that each other is an opportunity for development and do not let differences turn into disputes." This is in a reference to decisions taken at the two informal summits between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

As expected, the talks between the senior military commanders were not to yield instant solution. However, the three-hour long parleys prepared the ground for some more rounds of talks at the local military level in the coming days, sources said.

At present, there are at least four flashpoints at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh and both the sides ramping up their troop strength. More than



12 rounds of talks at various levels of military were held in the last fortnight but failed to achieve any breakthrough.

Earlier in the day, the Indian Army officials said Indian and Chinese officials continue to remain engaged through the established military and diplomatic channels to address the current situation in the India-China border areas.

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RESOLUTION

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There are at least 4 flashpoints at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh

Another LU professor tests +ve for coronavirus

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Another Lucknow University professor was among the nine people who tested positive for coronavirus infection in the state capital on Saturday.

A senior official at the CMO office said that another Lucknow University professor living in a private apartment on Faizabad road had tested positive for coronavirus.

She most likely caught the infection from her husband, who is a businessman and had returned from Delhi, a red zone, by flight on June 1.

"The professor has not visited the university as it is closed. Swab samples of her husband will be collected on Sunday," the official said.

The others who have tested positive on Saturday include three Railway Protection Force personnel, a 61-year-old woman from Naubasta, a 63-year-old woman from Phoolbagh, one person from Mahatma Gandhi Marg, a ward boy from Charak Hospital and one person from Mohanlalganj.

Meanwhile, a sixth suspected COVID-19 death in the city is under audit. Mohammad Shafique of

Aishbagh who died at Balrampur Hospital on June 4 tested positive after his death. He was admitted to Balrampur Hospital with breathing problem and died an hour after his admission.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Narendra Agarwal said over 236 swab samples were collected for testing on Saturday.

Across the state, 382 more tested positive for coronavirus on Saturday, including 28 in Bhadohi, 19 in Ghaziabad, 18 in Varanasi, 11 in Etawah and 13 in Amethi taking the count of infected persons detected so far to 10,103.

Whopping over 10K cases in a day

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	82,968	2,969	37,390
Tamil Nadu	30,172	254	16,395
Delhi	27,654	761	10,664
Gujarat	19,617	1,219	13,324
Rajasthan	10,337	231	7,501
Uttar Pradesh	10,103	268	5,908
Madhya Pradesh	9,228	399	6,108
West Bengal	7,738	383	3,119
Karnataka	5,213	59	1,973
Bihar	4,831	29	2,298
Andhra Pradesh	4,460	73	2,621
Haryana	3,952	24	1,280
Telangana	3,496	123	1,710
Jammu & Kashmir	3,467	39	1,126
Odisha	2,781	10	1,716

India, China will have more cases than US if they test more: Trump

Washington: US President Donald Trump has said that countries like India and China would have much more coronavirus cases than America, the worst-hit country in the world, if they conduct more tests.

Trump, in his remarks at Puritan Medical Products in Maine, said that the US has carried out 20 million tests.

Compared to the US, Germany is at four million and much talked about South Korea is about three million tests, he said.

According to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, the US has reported nearly 1.9 million cases and over 1,09,000 deaths, making America the worst affected country, while the total number of coronavirus cases in India and China stand at 2,36,184 and 84,177 respectively. PTI

They can't afford water to wash out virus

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

Kusuma's struggle starts at 4 AM. She wakes up early to ensure her family can get water from the tanker which comes regularly in the Sarhat village of Manikpur in Chitrakut. "I get up so early and place the bucket and other utensils in line but there is no guarantee that I will get water," she said.

"Ours is a forgotten village where we live with scarcity of water for decades. We do not have enough water to drink. Washing hands regularly with water is a luxury which we cannot afford," she told this reporter on the telephone.

As the Unlock 1.0 began early this week with Government advocating people to maintain safe distance and asking them to wash hands regularly to beat Covid-19, the villagers in Bundelkhand have resigned to their fates. Their struggle for water begins in the morning and ends in the evening with fetching water to



wash, cook and drink on a daily basis and cannot think of washing water to wash hands every two hours, as advocated by experts and doctors.

The rugged Bundelkhand is known for water crisis and the summer months are the worst, with groundwater levels acutely low. Sarhat is one of the villages where water scarcity is routine, even during winters. The tankers are only source of water to these parched vil-

As 3 quit, Cong herds its Guj MLAs to resorts to thwart poaching bid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/AHEMDABAD

Alarmed by the resignation of three of its MLAs ahead of the June 19 Rajya Sabha polls in Gujarat, the Congress on Saturday shifted several of its legislators to resorts and bungalows near their constituencies to thwart any "poaching" bid.

With the resignations of Akshay Patel and Jitu Chaudhary on June 3 and that of Brijesh Merja on June 5, the Congress' strength in the 182-member House has been reduced to 65.

The effective strength of the House, however, stands at 172 as of now as ten seats are currently vacant — two due to court cases and the rest because of resignations.

The party has moved the MLAs to three separate locations keeping in mind the need to maintain social distancing in view of the Covid-19 outbreak. AICC sources said while

India risks Covid explosion as it opens up: WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus disease has not "exploded" in India, but the risk of that happening remains as the country moves towards removing its nationwide lockdown that was imposed in March to contain the Covid-19, a top WHO expert said.

India, which went past Italy on Friday to become the sixth worst-hit nation by the Covid-19 pandemic, is already witnessing huge spurt in cases each passing day.

WHO Health Emergencies Programme Executive Director Michael Ryan said the doubling time of the coronavirus cases in India is about three weeks at this stage. "Measures taken in India such as the nationwide lockdown has had an impact in slowing transmission but the risk of an increase in cases looms as the country opens up," he said while stressing that as the disease generates and creates a foothold in communities, it can accelerate at any time as has been seen in a number of settings.

In South Asia, not just in India but in Bangladesh, Pakistan and other countries in South Asia, with large dense



populations, the disease has not exploded. But there is always the risk of that happening, Ryan said in Geneva.

Ryan noted that measures taken in India such as the nationwide lockdown has had an impact in slowing transmission but the risk of an increase in cases looms as the country opens up.

"The measures taken in India certainly had an impact in dampening transmission and as India, as in other large countries, open up and as people begin to move again, there's always a risk of the disease bouncing back up," he said.

He added there are specific issues in India regarding a large amount of migration, the dense populations in the urban environment and the fact that many workers have no choice but to go to work every day.

Pregnant woman dies in 13-hour abortive hunt to get hospital bed

PTI ■ NOIDA

An eight-month pregnant woman died in an ambulance here after a frantic 13-hour hospital hunt failed to find her a bed as over half-a-dozen facilities, including a Government one, denied her treatment, her family claimed on Saturday.

Neelam, 30, and her husband Vijender Singh, 30, knocked the doors of eight hospitals, including Government ones, before she died in the ambulance outside a facility in Greater Noida on Friday, the family told PTI.

Taking note of the death and the claim, the Gautam Buddh Nagar district administration ordered an inquiry into the matter.

A resident of Khoda colony on the Noida-Ghaziabad border, Neelam was eight months pregnant and undergoing treatment at Shivalik Hospital here, a private facility, for pregnancy-related complications, her husband said.

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CAPSULE

IIT-HYD KIT CAN DETECT COVID IN 20 MINUTES
New Delhi: A team of researchers at the IIT, Hyderabad claims to have developed a first-of-its kind Covid-19 test kit that can deliver results within 20 minutes.

MAN FEEDS EXPLOSIVE LACED BALL TO COW IN HP
Shimla: A man was arrested in Bilaspur district near here on Saturday on an allegation by the owner of a pregnant cow that he injured the bovine by feeding her some eatables mixed with explosives, said police. The incident follows the shocking death of a pregnant elephant dying of drowning after collapsing in Palakkad district of Kerala due to starvation.

PAK VIOLATES CEASEFIRE ALONG LoC, IB IN J&K
Jammu: Pakistani troops on Saturday violated ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing on forward posts and villages along the LoC and IB in Poonch and Kathua districts of J&K.

CM Yogi stress on breaking coronavirus chain

'Unlocking does not mean freedom'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stressing on alertness and precautions at all levels to break the COVID-19 infection chain, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath made it clear that unlocking does not mean freedom, saying it is the responsibility of people to maintain social distancing.

Presiding over a high-level Unlock 1.0 review meeting at his official residence here on Saturday, the chief minister said that phase-wise exemptions were being given outside the containment zone and several activities would be exempted from June 8.

"Direction has been given to generate one crore man-days per day between June 15 and June 30. All the departments concerned should identify activities and work to make this action plan successful. During this period, employment opportunities should be created in works related to digging for plantations by Agriculture, Horticulture and Forest departments, check dam construction, Jal Jeevan Mission, PM Rural Road Scheme," Yogi said.

The chief minister directed the Urban Development and Rural Development departments to prepare a

model to link street vendors to the PM's package and choose one district to study it. Yogi said that loan of Rs 10,000 was envisaged for the street vendors through PM's special economic package. He directed officials to benefit street vendors from this scheme and also identify such places for them where they would do their business without obstructing traffic.

"It is the government's resolve to ensure that no one sleeps on road as there is provision in the PM's package for construction of houses for being given on rent to labourers. These provisions should be used to make available comfortable and safe houses for the labourers on reasonable rent," Yogi said, adding that it would benefit the labourers and urban poor a great deal.

The chief minister said that the labourers working in UP but belonging to other states would be facilitated for their safe return. He said the written consent of labourers who desired to stay back in UP should be obtained. He directed the officials to ensure the presence of the officers of administration, police and health departments at all railway stations in the state.

"The government wants



to ensure participation of returnee labourers in reconstruction of the state. Ensure employment to the labourers in every district. Develop a software for identifying job opportunities for workers in rural and urban areas and also make an action plan to explore employment possibilities for the construction labourers," Yogi said.

The chief minister directed the chief secretary to communicate with the industrial fraternity and traders' organisations beside maintaining regular communication with the divisional commissioners and district magistrates to ensure strengthening of medical and health services in the Covid hospitals.

Yogi asked officials to keep

surveillance committees activated all the time and also directed them to ensure that the coronavirus suspects were kept in quarantine centres and COVID-19 patients were treated in Covid hospitals only. He also stressed the need for imparting training to doctors and other medical staff on a regular basis.

Directing officials to keep arrangements in the Covid hospitals up to the mark, Yogi asked them to take care of cleanliness and security aspects in all hospitals. He said the doctors, nurses and paramedics were expected to take regular rounds and should look into the supply of lukewarm drinking water apart from digestive and nutritive food to the patients.

"Pay special attention on the health services in the medical colleges of Agra, Aligarh, Meerut, Kanpur and Ferozabad," he said.

The chief minister asked the officials to ensure all required arrangements in cow shelters including adequate fodder for cows. "The cattle should be protected from heat and rain," he said.

Yogi also directed continued sanitation work in urban and rural areas.

CENTRE'S JAL JEEVAN MISSION

UP takes lead in appointing implementation support agencies

Lucknow (PNS): Post-lockdown, Uttar Pradesh is among the first states to begin work on the Centre's Jal Jeevan Mission. UP has started the process of appointing implementation support agencies that will bring drinking water to 13 crore people in the state.

The Centre has set 2024 as the nation-wide deadline to provide a functional household tap connection (FHTC) to every rural household. The UP government has, however, decided to complete the same by 2022.

Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has

thanked UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the latter's resolve and assured that the state would be given unconditional support in the project.

"Around 54 lakh connections are expected to be provided to 12,515 villages in the state in the next six months," Shekhawat said in his letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The state has invited bids to select implementation support agencies by the end of June. "The fund allocated for Uttar Pradesh has been increased from Rs 1,163.04 crore to Rs 2,449.33 crore during the year 2020-21. Thus Rs

3,234.50 crore is available as Central fund. Therefore, in the year 2020-21, Rs 6,470 crore will be available as part of the fund from Centre and the state to provide tap connections to families of rural areas under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Keeping in mind, the state's target of achieving 100 per cent FHTC by the year 2022, a minimum target of 40 per cent of the total villages to be 'Har Ghar Jal Gaon' has been set for March 2021," Shekhawat stated in the letter.

UP has the biggest task among all states under the Jal Jeevan Mission. The state has

a total of 2.6 lakh rural habitations, of which 28,598 habitations have been saturated through water supply schemes. But nearly 2.31 lakh rural habitations covering nearly 13 crore people need to be provided clean drinking water through the scheme. The implementation support agency will verify the baseline data in all villages, visit each household which is to be connected for creating awareness, obtain minimum 80 per cent household consent, finalise village and water action plans and sign agreements with contractors for execution of the work.

Teacher accused of drawing ₹1 cr salary arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police finally arrested the teacher of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya who has been accused of receiving salary amounting to over ₹1 crore by fraudulently working simultaneously in 25 schools.

The accused, Animika Singh, who got these 25 jobs on the name of Anamika Shukla, was arrested after she came to submit her resignation letter to Basic Shiksha Adhikari Anjali Agarwal in Kasganj, police said on Saturday.

During preliminary investigation, it was found that a person identified as Raj, an employee of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in Faridpur, was behind this scam and he had appointed Animika in 25 KGBVs in the nearby districts. The accused teacher said that after hearing about her involvement in the scam, she came to the BSA office to submit her resignation when police arrested her.

However, she made similar attempt when on the notice of the BSA in Rae Bareilly, she sent her resignation letter to hush up the case.

Animika was a full-time science teacher at the Faridpur school and was appointed in October 2019 but she was rooted in other 24 schools too through fake orders. She was getting ₹22,000 per month as salary.

Now, after the scam came to light, the Education department officials issued notice to the teacher and stopped her salary. Interestingly, the address of her native place in Mainpuri, her educational certificates, and all other information were found to be fake during probe made so far. The notices were now also served to warden, accountant and district coordinator of girls' education in Aligarh.

The sensational fraud came to the fore when the database of teachers was being created by officials of Basic Education department.

Table with 9 columns: क्र.सं, जन्म का नाम, विद्यालय, कार्य का नाम, अनुमानित लागत, वारंश, निविदा प्रारंभ का मूल्य, कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि, ठेकेदार की पंजीयन श्रेणी. Includes details for Ramapada, Sankhita, and Kothavala.

विद्युत वायुमंडल सेवाएं http://elender.up.nic.in पर दिनांक 08.06.2020 से 15.06.2020 को दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक उपलब्ध है जो कि 15.06.2020 को दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक कार्यालय/अवकाश किंगे जा सकते हैं। निविदाओं की रकमों की विवरण दिनांक 16.06.2020 को अपरान्ह 12.30 बजे खोली जायेगी।

निविदा से सम्बंधित नियम/सर्वे सा विवरण वेबसाइट http://elender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। (वीरेंद्र चौधरी) अधिसूचना अधिनियम प्रांतीय सचिव, लोनिविदा, हरदोई

Table with 9 columns: क्र.सं, कार्य का विवरण, कार्य की अनुमानित लागत, मात्रा, वारंश, कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि, निविदा प्रारंभ का मूल्य, पंजीयन श्रेणी. Includes details for various construction and maintenance work.

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'UPPCL ensuring power supply amid coronavirus crisis'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that UP Power Corporation Limited had succeeded in ensuring power supply amid coronavirus crisis.

He said in the last two-and-half months, the power corporation had achieved good results in ensuring power supply amid coronavirus crisis. He said that by promoting a better work culture in the last three years, the state government had achieved considerable success in strengthening the trust of the common man towards the system.

Yogi said that UP Power Corporation had the biggest target to achieve. He said after Independence, there were over 1.24 crore families which had never seen electricity. "By providing free electricity con-

nections to them, their homes have been lit. The government has also achieved the goal of electrification of 1.75 lakh hamlets," he said.

The chief minister said that this work was possible because the Central and state governments and the people's representatives were working with a positive attitude. He said the government was continuously working towards the goal of 'Sabko bijli aur hardum bijli'.

Besides, he added, the state government was constantly making efforts to further improve its services. Energy Minister Shrikant Sharma, Minister of State Ramashankar Singh Patel, Chief Secretary RK Tiwari, Principal Secretary (Energy) Arvind Kumar and senior officials of the Energy department were present in the programme.

people and laid the foundation stones of 28 transmission sub-stations worth Rs 3,135 crore from his official residence.

Out of these, project worth Rs 1,881.78 crore were dedicated to people and foundation stones were laid of projects worth Rs 1,253.56 crore.

The chief minister said that this was a new series of steps being taken towards achieving the goal of 'Power for All'. He said that by promoting a better work culture in the last three years, the state government had achieved considerable success in strengthening the trust of the common man towards the system.

Yogi said that UP Power Corporation had the biggest target to achieve. He said after Independence, there were over 1.24 crore families which had never seen electricity. "By providing free electricity con-

Mayawati lashes out at Centre, UP govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on Saturday lashed out at the Centre and state governments and asked them to identify and resolve the issues plaguing small and medium businesses that were forcing them to shut operations amid the ongoing coronavirus-induced lockdown.

"There are several small and medium businesses and enterprises shutting down across the country amid the lockdown. These businesses employ crores of people. The Centre and state governments should identify reasons why these businesses are shutting down and resolve them," Mayawati told a news agency. She said that it would ensure that the livelihood of crores of people was not affected. "The government is also talking about starting new businesses. We are not opposed to new businesses and industries. But it would be a great respite for the poor if the government is able to keep the already established businesses run-

ning," Mayawati said. "Some states are calling back the migrant workers who left for their home states. When these migrant workers were in their state, they did not look after them or provide food to them. That is why these migrants went to their native places in the first place," she added.

Punjab Industries and Commerce Minister Sunder Sham Arora had recently written to the Central government to arrange trains for bringing back willing migrant workers from their home states to join work as industrial units resume operations.

Mayawati also posted tweets and urged the state governments to ensure employment for migrant workers within their states to ensure they did not have to leave their homes in search of work. "Take Uttar Pradesh for example, when migrant workers came back to the state in buses and trains, the UP government registered them based on their skills. Even after registration, a large number of migrant workers who have come back home are struggling to find means to survive," she

claimed. The BSP chief said that the migrant workers who came back to their homes in UP were in bad condition. "Well educated people are left with no other option but to dig holes in MGNREGA schemes to make a living," she said. Mayawati said that the poor, marginalised and migrant labourers seemed to be the section most-affected by the ongoing lockdown and added that they were struggling to make a living even after coming back to their homes. "The Central government should think about the impact it will have on education, if well-educated people are forced to do manual labour. People will think what is the point of getting education if they have to do manual labour," Mayawati tweeted.

Commending the Central government for deciding not to introduce any new schemes for a period of one year, Mayawati further tweeted, "Even the Centre is now saying that no expenses will be made on new schemes. Instead, they have decided to spend money on Garib Kalyan Yojana and Atmanirbhar Bharat Nirman," she said.

Keshav Maurya calls PGV 'Priyanka Twitter Vadra'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh's Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, on Saturday, taking a swipe at Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra described her as "Priyanka Twitter Vadra". "Social media projects her as a 'prominent national leader' but she could not even ensure victory of her brother and then party president Rahul Gandhi from Amethi in the 2019 parliamentary election," Maurya said.

Seeking to downplay the impact of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the state politics, Maurya said, "I do not take her seriously.... We have already named her 'Priyanka Twitter Vadra'. She only tweets for 2-3 days and the media remains busy and social media shows her as a prominent national leader." "But everyone knows when she came to Uttar Pradesh to campaign for the Congress in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections hoping that she would make her brother the prime minister, she could not even ensure his victory," he said.

Rahul Gandhi lost to Smriti Irani of the Bharatiya Janata Party in his pocket borough of Amethi in the 2019 elections. The deputy chief minister said the

Congress had lost its base in Uttar Pradesh and did not have any leader except those looking for just "photo opportunities". He said Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was critical of the policies of the Yogi Adityanath dispensation only because she looked at the BJP-ruled state "from a negative point of view".

Referring to a tweet by her, flagging problems faced by migrant labourers returning to their homes in Uttar Pradesh during the coronavirus-induced lockdown, Maurya said, "Congress does not want to see what is happening in Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. It is suffering from 'drishti dosh' (vision disorder). Congress leaders, be it Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra or any other, should get their eyes tested properly." "If they (Congress) want to see everything in a wrong manner because the BJP is ruling Uttar Pradesh... see it from a negative point of view and level allegations on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Yogi, then there is no cure to it. I can only suggest that they should consult a good doctor and wear good quality spectacles," he added.

Khanna tests negative

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Medical Education Minister Suresh Khanna has tested negative for coronavirus infection after his samples were taken following a hospital visit, an official attached to him said on Saturday. Khanna, also finance and parliamentary affairs minister, had visited the Government Medical College in Meerut on June 1 to enquire about the well-being of patients there and the facilities being provided to them, said Information Officer Jayendra Singh. A patient admitted at the hospital had tested positive for the coronavirus the next day. Though the minister had followed social distancing protocols at the hospital, he went into home quarantine after the patient tested positive and was discharging his duty from home only. On Saturday morning, a team from Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI), Lucknow, took his throat and nasal swab for testing. "The samples of Suresh Khanna were taken at his official residence in Lucknow. In the report, which came in the afternoon, no COVID-19 infection was detected. He has tested negative for COVID-19," an official said.

In a tweet on Friday, the minister had said that he was healthy and had no symptoms of coronavirus infection. Khanna had also said he was currently discharging his duties from home following "medical advice".

CLASSIFIEDS NOTICE

This is to inform that I have changed my name from Poonam Verma to Poonam Verma and in future the name considered will be Poonam Verma. Poonam Verma D/o Udal Narain Sarraf W/o Kaushal Kumar Verma, R/o E-201, Kalpataru Apartments, Vardan Khand Gomti Nagar Extension, Sector-1, Lucknow - 226010.

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Govt issues guidelines for malls, restaurants, religious places

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday rolled out its guidelines for safely reopening religious places, malls, hotels and restaurants, putting restrictions like only five people being allowed in religious places at a time, disposable menus in restaurants and staggered entry of people into the malls.

However, people above the age of 60 years or people with comorbidity, children below the age of 10 years and pregnant women have been asked to stay indoors because they are most vulnerable to the coronavirus. Chief Secretary RK Tiwari issued the guidelines approved by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, saying Uttar Pradesh issued the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as per the Centre's advisory as guidelines for reopening of religious places, hotels, restaurants and shopping malls in the state from June 8.

"All the temples, mosques, gurdwaras and other religious places, hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, except in the containment zones, would be allowed to open from Monday next but with certain restrictions that everyone should be wearing face masks, health screening during entry, hand sanitising and social distancing of 6 feet," Additional Chief Secretary Awanish Awasthi said here on Saturday.

He said spitting was totally banned while people were being made aware about the prevention from coronavirus, including by distribution of pamphlets and use of loudspeakers. The guidelines for the religious places say that not more than five people should enter the place at a time. Entry and exit gates will be separate and people will enter the place of worship by maintaining social distancing. The devotees will have to keep their footwear in their own vehicles or at one



place where it cannot mix with others. "There would be no touching of idols, no satsang, no prasad distribution and there should be no such event where people can touch one another," Awasthi said, adding that if the place has air-conditioner, it should operate between 24 degree and 30 degree Centigrade while humidity would be controlled between 40 per cent and 70 per cent. The flow of fresh air should be maintained.

The religious places are to be cleaned and mopped at regular interval and every event is to be held with social distancing. The guidelines for the

offices say that employees with comorbidity should be allowed to work from home and minimum staff should be allowed to attend the office. The lifts should be used with social distancing and regular disinfection should be done every day. If any coronavirus positive person is found in any office, the area would be closed for disinfection. Awasthi said that for hotels, restaurants and shopping malls, the guideline was specific that they should



Sanitisation being conducted at a shopping mall in Hazratganj (top) and Mankameshwar temple in Daliganj on Saturday

Pioneer

have working CCTV cameras and high risk employees should not be allowed to attend duties. In restaurants, shopping malls and hotels, e-payment and e-wallet should be promoted for minimum use of cash to avoid touch.

"Disposable menus and good quality napkin papers are a must in restaurants," Awasthi said. There should be crowd management to maintain social distancing with compulsory face mask for every

one, and regular disinfection of common places like lifts, escalators, toilets and parking lots. In restaurants and food courts, only 50 per cent of the seating capacity should be used and all the seats should be disinfected after a customer leaves.

In hotels, every customer will have to give his medical and travel history before being given entry in his room. All the details should be made online so that there is minimum use of touch.

Zoo to open in three shifts from Tuesday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Nawab Wajid Ali Shah Zoological Garden has got the nod from the district administration to open from June 9 (Tuesday) onwards, director RK Singh said on Saturday. The zoo will open in three shifts of two hours each — 8.30 am to 10.30 am, 11.30 am to 1.30 pm and 3 pm to 5 pm. After every shift, the visitors will have to come out and the zoo will be sanitised. Not more than 500 visitors will be allowed in the zoo at a time while those above 65 years and below ten years apart from pregnant women will not be allowed entry.

The zoo director said the entry would only be through e-tickets. "Thermal scanning of visitors will be carried out at the entrance. Washing hands & feet and using sanitisers will be a must for those entering the zoo," he said. The visitors will not be allowed to carry tobacco products and paan which will remain prohibited inside the premises.

NOTICES TO VENDORS

Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) on Saturday issued notices to 19 persons running makeshift shops at five parks in Gomti Nagar area. They were asked to remove their shops by Monday afternoon or the same will be seized and penalty imposed.

The Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) on Thursday removed seven makeshift shops from three parks in Gomti Nagar Extension. The step was taken on the advice of medical directorate on the ground that it could add to coronavirus spread. LDA secretary MP Singh said more precautions would be taken with shopping malls and religious places opening from Monday. He said they would keep an eye on vendors selling food items and the stress would be on ensuring better quality and hygiene.

Over 422 covered under contact surveillance



A hotspot in Sadar where movement of people has been restricted

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Over 422 persons have been covered under contact surveillance programme in Lucknow till now to detect the spread of coronavirus and they have been documented in detail by surveillance officials of the district. Giving this information, a senior official from the CMO office said it was a tough and challenging job. "The reports of patients testing positive come throughout the day, ranging from early morning to late night. We have to set out as soon as we receive the list because it is followed by another list," he said.

The official said while some cooperate in providing information, others hide it. "People who are aware and educated share details regarding their travel history and their contacts, but those who are not educated are not ready to divulge any details. The long time spent in telephonic inquiry may also irritate people," he pointed out.

He said another challenge is that of handling the emotions of people in communicating to them that they have

tested positive for coronavirus.

"If a person has got himself or herself tested in a private lab, the CMO office gets the report first. If the patients are informed that they are Covid-19 positive, it creates a panic situation for them and the information which we need to derive gets lost. We need to procure the information and also assure the patients that they need not worry about isolation and treatment," he said.

He admitted that it was difficult to extract information from women reluctant to divulge details. "There was one woman admitted to Silver Jubilee Hospital and was not ready to cooperate at all. She did not answer the calls made to her. We then approached the superintendent of the hospital but he also failed to convince the woman to cooperate. It was only after we sought police help that we could be able to get information about her residence and family members," he recalled. He said there were problems in getting the information from a family in Sadar hotspot because they believed that their community was being harassed. Some of the

patients even turned aggressive, he added.

He said the surveillance was done on phone because it was advisable not to come in contact with the patients or their contacts. "There have been cases where it was problematic to get details of migrants whose phones were not having the incoming facility. In these cases, we tapped other resources like those who had been admitted along with them to the hospitals. In the lower economic groups if people did not cooperate, we contacted their neighbours who always gave the details," he said. The official said all the details were documented, right from those of patients to their travel history, source of infection and contacts along with their addresses and phone numbers. "The information is uploaded on the District Surveillance Portal," he said.

Regarding the cases where it was difficult to track the infection, such as a 90-year-old woman in Model House area, he said they worked on the case and found that the infection came from domestic helps.

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1,857 liquor, bhang shops allotted

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Excise department allotted 1,857 liquor and bhang shops in the state during the second phase of e-lottery held here on Saturday.

Principal Secretary (Excise) Sanjay R Bhoosreddy said here on Saturday that the second phase of e-lottery for the settlement of 1,690 country liquor, 595 India-made foreign liquor, 614 beer, 591 bhang and 248 model shops were earlier scheduled for March 26 but was postponed due to the lockdown. He said

that the e-lottery was drawn on Saturday in 70 districts of the state. Bhoosreddy said in the second phase of e-lottery, 953 vends of country liquor, 397 shops of India made foreign liquor, 268 shops of beer, 124 shops of bhang and 115 model shops had been settled by the e-lottery. The state government would be earning additional revenue of Rs 164 crore in terms of licence fees from these liquor vends. The settlement of 953 vends for country liquor would result in sale of around three core bulk litre of country liquor.

A total of 4,445 applica-

tions were received for the allotment of the liquor vends through e-lottery in the second phase. The settlement of remaining shops would be done in the next phase of e-lottery, the principal secretary said.

Meanwhile, the Excise department allotted 105 shops in the city during e-lottery which was held on Saturday. District excise officer Sudarshan Singh said 85 licences were issued to desi liquor shops, two to IMFL, three to beer shops and 15 to model shops. "A total of 354 applications were submitted

online till June 4. The licences were issued for current fiscal," the officer said. However, less number of applicants was worrisome for the excise officials. "Earlier, there used to be a mad rush for liquor shops. But this time, the number of applicants was low and only 50 per cent of the applicants were allotted shops," sources said. They said the Excise department had the largest contribution in terms of revenue generation for the state government.

"If the numbers don't rise, there would be less revenue for the Excise department," the sources said.

Two stalkers arrested for acting fresh with girl

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two persons acted fresh with a Dalit girl in full public view in Bangla Bazaar area on Friday evening. The girl later lodged a case alleging that she was being stalked and harassed by the prime accused and his aide for a long time.

As per reports, the girl had gone shopping when the accused, identified as Sanjeev Kumar Mishra, and his aide Jitanshu (both of Bangla Bazaar) spotted her. They started stalking her and later asked her to share her mobile number. The girl confronted them and warned of police action, but it had no bearing on the accused. "Sanjeev caught hold of me and tried to force me into submission. As I wriggled myself free, they started abusing me and also hurled casteist slurs," the girl alleged.

"I lodged a complaint but the police did not take the issue seriously. However, they later agreed to take action

against the accused," she said. The police said they arrested both Sanjeev and Jitanshu when they were planning to flee the city. "They have also been booked under SC/ST Act," the police said.

Sources said both the accused claimed to be social workers and created a ruckus at the police station after their arrest. Interestingly, the police said they got to know that Sanjeev was a habitual criminal and was named in a case at Hazratganj police station and another at PGI police station.

Sources said the cops present at the Bangla Bazaar police outpost reacted only after they learnt of assemblage at the crime scene.

Meanwhile, in a case of domestic violence, a woman was allegedly thrashed by her father-in-law and brother-in-law, and was also issued death threats in Ghazipur police station area on Friday night. However, police termed it a case of brawl in the family.

As per reports, the com-

plainant, identified as Ram Devi of Ghazipur village in the area, was at her home while her husband was out for work. Around 7:45 pm, her father-in-law Shiv Balak Rawat and brother-in-law Sanjeev Rawat stormed her room. They argued with Rama Devi over some domestic issue and even abused her. "When I confronted them, they thrashed me. They even dragged me while catching me by my hair. They used cuss words deriding my character and used slang words. They also threatened to kill me," she alleged.

She said Sanjeev had a good rapport with some low-rung cops and he claimed that the police would not register a case against him. "When I reached the police station, my complaint was not taken easily. The cops asked me not to go against my in-laws," she claimed. Police spokesman Vaibhav said a case was registered in this connection and a sub-inspector was tasked with conducting a probe.

IIA appoints nodal officers to provide jobs to migrants

Lucknow (PNS): District nodal officers have been appointed by Indian Industries Association (IIA) to provide employment to migrant workers in the state. An MoU was signed between IIA and UP government to provide employment to migrant workers on May 29. According to this MoU, IIA will try to provide employment to three lakh migrant workers in industries and enterprises in UP in collaboration with the MSME department, DIC and Employment department.

"A user-friendly mobile survey form has been prepared by IIA to collect data on the requirement of workers in the industries, enterprises of the state. Any entrepreneur can fill this survey form in five minutes on mobile itself," executive director DS Verma said.

He said the data of manpower requirement available through this survey form would be shared with the MSME department and Directorate of Industries.

IIA district nodal officers have been nominated for coordination and liaison with the deputy commissioner and employment officer at district level. At the state level, this responsibility has been given to general secretary Manmohan Agarwal.

Entrepreneurs can fill up the online survey form and migrant labourers seeking employment may provide their information to the district administration, employment office, and nodal officers of IIA will contact the entrepreneurs who have given information about requirement of workers.

Two teenage lovers end lives

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Opposition to their love affair forced lovers in Moradabad and Deoria to commit suicide while two more lovers tried to end their lives in Bijnor and Sitapur.

In the first case, the bodies of a youth and his lover were found hanging from a tree in the farmhouses owned by Balbeer and Rakesh respectively in Kundeshwara locality on Thakurdwara in Moradabad on Saturday morning. The youth was identified as Kapil (28), son of Shishupal, a resident of the same locality. The body of the girl was found hanging from a tree 300 metre away in Rakesh's farm. She was identified as Nirma (22), daughter of Kailash.

Reports said that the two were in love with each other but their families were against it and had also stopped them from meeting each other. Upset by their parents' opposition, the duo eloped on

Friday evening after which their families launched a hunt and found their bodies hanging on Saturday morning.

A case was registered and investigations were on.

In another similar case in Deoria, the bodies of a boy and a girl were found on railway tracks between Belpar Dhala and Bhatparani railway stations on Saturday morning.

Station Master Brijesh informed the local police about the incident and the cops with the help of local residents identified the victims as 18-year-old Ajay, a resident of Sarai hamlet of Khampur, and 16-year-old Nisha, hailing from Teliyashukla hamlet of Barhaj. For the last several months, Nisha was living with in maternal aunt's house, which is just adjacent to youth's house and the two were having an affair. A few days back, the girl's relative had assaulted her for meeting Ajay. They both slipped out of their houses and later committed suicide.

In Bijnor, a youth hailing

from Inampur hamlet of Mandawar was having an affair with a girl residing in the same locality. The youth wanted to marry the girl but her family had fixed her marriage somewhere else, so he asked his lover to elope with him. On being refused, the youth went to her house on Saturday morning and stabbed her and later injured himself to commit suicide. Both were rushed to the district hospital from where they were referred to the medical college in Meerut after the doctors found them in critical state.

In a similar incident reported from Sitapur, a youth and a girl residing in Khairabad were having an affair for a long time. As their families were opposed to their affair, on Saturday morning both consumed poison to end their lives. Their family members found them vomiting and suspecting foul play, they rushed them to district hospital where the condition of the girl was critical.

Nursing student died of drowning: Autopsy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A day after the body of a nursing student of KGMU was recovered from Gomti river, the autopsy report ascertained drowning as the cause of death. Chowk SHO Vishwajeet Singh said the family was yet to speak up, and thus it was difficult to find out why she ended her life. "We are talking to her classmates,"

the SHO said. The 21-year-old girl's body was recovered from Gomti river on Friday. Her father had lodged a missing report with the Chowk police after she did not reach home on Thursday night.

Police spokesman Vaibhav had said on Friday that the girl committed suicide. However, he could not explain the reason. It surfaced during investigation that the girl had called

her parents on Thursday night and informed them that she would stay in the hostel room over night. On Friday, she did not attend her father's calls. Later, he reached the hostel, but could not find her.

"In a CCTV footage, the girl was seen leaving the KGMU premises on her scooter and moving towards Baikunth Dham," the sources said.

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Dated: 04.06.2020

U.P. Jal Nigam, E-tenders are invited on two bid system for (1) Supply, Installation and fitting of LED High Mask Light, at Konia MPS, Varanasi (2) Operation of 80 MLD STP, campus Dimapur, Varanasi. Intending tenderers must be registered in Electrical, Mechanical work with U.P. Jal Nigam, Sl. No. 1 Cost of tender form Rs. 1000.00+18% GST and Sl. No. 2 Cost of tender form Rs. 2000.00+18% GST. Tender document shall be available at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Interested contractors may view & download tender document and upload their tender, duly filled, online as per schedule given below:- Date for (1) Uploading bid document at website: 09.06.2020 onwards. (2) Online submission of e-bids upto: 20.06.2020 at 5:00 P.M. (3) Opening of pre-qualification bid : 22.06.2020 at 1:00 P.M. The tender notice can also be seen on U.P. Jal Nigam website www.jn.upsdc.gov.in.

कानपुर विद्युत आपूर्ति कम्पनी लिमिटेड 14/71, सिविल लाइन्स "केसा हाउस" कानपुर, अति-अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा ई-निविदा पृथक-पृथक दो भागों में निम्न सामग्रियों हेतु केस्को ई-निविदा वेबसाइट www.kesco.co.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। ई-निविदाएं प्रपत्र पूर्ण कर निविदादाताओं द्वारा वेबसाइट पर खुलने की तिथि के अपराह्न 12:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। उक्त ई-निविदा उसी दिन 15:00 बजे से 17:00 बजे तक वेबसाइट पर सार्वजनिक रूप से खोली जायेगी। उक्त तिथि को अवकाश घोषित होने पर निविदायें अगले कार्यदिवस में नियत समय पर खोली जायेगी। ई-निविदा धनराशि का भुगतान ऑफ लाईन एन0ए0एफ0टी0/आर0टी0जी0एस0 (खाता सं 628805018266 आ ई 0 ए फ 0 ए स 0 सी 0 - ICI00006288) के रूप में, केस्को कानपुर के पक्ष में देय होगी। ई-निविदा प्रपत्र निविदा खुलने की तिथि पर दिये गये समय से दो घण्टे पूर्व तक वेबसाइट से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रपत्रों के साथ यू0टी0आर0 की स्कैन प्रति अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है। ई-निविदा के प्रथम भाग में धरोहर धनराशि का भुगतान ऑफ लाईन एफ0डी0आर0/बैंक गारण्टी के रूप में स्वीकार किया जायेगा जो कि केस्को कानपुर के नाम पर देय होगी एवं निविदा प्रपत्र के प्रथम भाग में निर्धारित पी0क्यू0आर0 एवं तकनीकी अभिलेख होंगे तथा निविदा के द्वितीय भाग में दर्द एवं व्यवसायिक शर्तें होंगी, बिना धरोहर धनराशि के तथा सशर्त निविदायें खोली/स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी। निविदा सं 07/20-21 पात्र फर्म मूल निर्माता/अधिकृत विक्रेता/अनुभवी आपूर्तिकर्ता विवरण ए-4 साईज एवं लीगल साईज पेपर की आपूर्ति हेतु धरोहर धनराशि (रु०) 10000/- निविदा धनराशि रु० में (जी0एस0टी0 के साथ) 11800/- ई-निविदा अपलोड करने एवं खोलने की तिथि 16.06.2020 उपरोक्त ई-निविदा की पूर्ण प्रक्रिया केस्को के ई-टेंडरिंग वेबसाइट www.kesco.co.in पर <http://etender.up.nic.in> के माध्यम से की जायेगी। तकनीकी योग्यता पुरा न करने वाले निविदादाता के निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। सामग्री क्रय की मात्रा घट बढ़ सकती है। अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के पास बिना कोई कारण बताये किसी एक अथवा समस्त निविदाओं को स्वीकृत/अस्वीकृत करने का पूर्ण अधिकार सुरक्षित होगा। (सनीष कुमार गुप्ता) अधिशासी अभियन्ता (मण्डार क्रय) पत्रांक-155 दिनांक 6.6.2020 राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये

मध्यम विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड ई-निविदा सूचना अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा अनुभवी एवं कार्य में दक्ष ठेकेदारों से ई-निविदा दो भागों में निम्न विवरण अनुसार उ0प्र0 सरकार के पोर्टल etender.up.nic.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा सम्बन्धी विवरण www.mvnl.in पर भी अवलोकित किया जा सकता है। अधोहस्ताक्षरी को बिना कारण बताए निविदा को निरस्त करने/अवधि विस्तारण करने/विभिन्न फर्मों के मध्य विभक्त करने/संशोधन करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित है। 1. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं 07/विनिर्मा(पी)/लेसा/2020-21 अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत नगरीय निर्माण मण्डल - पंचम, लेसा, लखनऊ हेतु एक नया डीजल चलित वाहन की आपूर्ति। निविदा प्रपत्र मूल्य 1180.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रु० 3000.00, ई-निविदा अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि 23.06.2020 समय 17.00 बजे तक तथा ई-निविदा का प्रथम भाग खुलने की तिथि 24.06.2020 समय 14.00 बजे। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत नगरीय निर्माण मण्डल (पंचम) लेसा भवन, रेजीडेन्सी, लखनऊ। पत्रांक 415, दिनांक 06.06.2020, "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाये"

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Tender Notice
Opened E-tender based on two Packet system (Technical & Financial bid) (Tender notice No. M/C&W/05/2020-21 dt. 04-06-2020 are invited by Divisional Rail Manager/Mech./C&W/Varanasi/North Eastern Railway for and on behalf of President of India for following work:-

Description of works: Outsourcing of comprehensive Housekeeping & Mechanized Cleaning at MAU Junction station including platforms, yard, washable aprons, tracks, office buildings, reservation office, concourse area, circulating area, waiting halls, washing pit & depot premises, drains cleaning, Garbage disposal and Rag picking etc. and mechanized cleaning (Interior & Exterior), watering and padlocking in approx.18 coaches daily along with upper gear passenger amenity maintenance work, providing toiletries in 01 AC coaches daily on pit lines at MAU along with mechanized cleaning (Interior Clg.) watering, padlocking in platform return/RBPC (M/Exp) trains in 07 coaches daily at MAU platform and OBHS work in nominated trains of MAU for the period of 04 years. Approx Value (Rs.): ₹ 6,44,48,684.81, EMD Money (Rs.): ₹ 4,72,300/-, Cost of tender forms (Rs.): ₹ 10,000/-, Completion period from the date of commencement of work (Rs.): 48 months, Validity of offer: 180 days; • Date and time of closing of E-Tender: 29-06-2020 at 14:30 Hrs. • Date and time of opening of E-Tender: 29-06-2020 at 15:00 Hrs. • Tenderers may submit their offers online up to 29-06-2020 at 14:30 Hrs. • PL go to the website www.treps.gov.in to see the complete details and upload the tender.

DME/EnHMS
Varanasi
About any passenger amenity complaint
SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955
Never travel on roof and foot boards.

Ayodhya priests oppose curb on prasad in temples

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The decision of the Yogi Adityanath government to open religious places with restrictions from June 8 has not gone down well with the priests and mahants of the temples of Ayodhya as they say the decision to ban 'prasad' would hit the people who depend on temples for their survival.

Head of Ayodhya Samiti, Mahant Kanhaiya Das, said that the decision to ban prasad was not justified. "Prasad is an integral part of puja as per Hindu ritual. If you ban this, you are banning the true spirit of the puja," he told this reporter from Ayodhya. The mahant said in Ayodhya, 'lad-oo', 'peda' and 'mewa' were integral to any prasad and over 500 people were associated with making prasad. "The temples were closed for over two-and-a-half months and it has financially hit people who eke out their earning by selling memorabilia or prasad around temples. If they are not allowed to do business now they will be affected badly," he said.

Mahant Das said that temples in Ayodhya were not as

rich as in Tirupati where the temple administration made their own 'prasadam' and distributed it among the devotees. "Here people bring their own prasadam and after being blessed by Bhagwan it is taken back and distributed among family members and friends," he said.

"There are many organisations and government agencies which are distributing food to the poor. If distribution of food is not adding up to the spread of coronavirus, how will the sale of prasad spread coronavirus infection," the mahant said. He said the government did not consult mahants and priests before taking a decision to ban prasad in temples. "The government is interfering in temple functioning, which is not acceptable," he said and appealed to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to withdraw the decision at the earliest. As per the guidelines issued by the UP government on Saturday, not more than five people can enter a religious place at a time. Besides, touching the statues will not be allowed and prasad and offerings will not be allowed to be distributed.

Police discuss ways to check crime

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A meeting was called late Saturday night to review the crime in the state capital and devise a strategy to check crime incidents by arresting wanted criminals, maintaining law & order and get on with the fight against coronavirus through protocols. Sources said the meeting was called immediately after the Chief Minister's video-conferencing on law and order and implementation of lockdown. "The Commissioner of Police discussed these points with his subordinates, as also the challenges ahead. As most of the curbs have been lifted, movement of people in the city has increased. The police plan to increase the vigil in the areas which are prone to crime. They were preparing the list of the criminals who are absconding or those named in several heinous cases in the past," sources said.

Meanwhile, the Naka police arrested an accused, Sanju Singh, who had fled from custody on Friday afternoon. He was arrested from his house in Gomti Nagar on Thursday night. On Friday, he pretended to go to answer nature's call and gave the slip to the police. On being hauled up by senior officers, the local police launched a manhunt for the accused and nabbed him on Saturday.



Huge rush of commuters in Aminabad on Saturday

Pioneer

Recovery of chopped off leg sends police into tizzy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Recovery of a chopped off leg sent the police into a tizzy on Saturday. The police could not reach a conclusion till last report came in.

As per reports, caretaker of a graveyard in Purania locality informed the police about a chopped off leg which an unidentified youth brought and asked him for burial. The caretaker also told the police that the youth had given him

money for the favour. As the news reached senior officials, a team was sent to the place for investigation. Madaion SHO said it was the left leg of some adult man severed from upper thigh.

It surfaced during investigation that the youth had come on a red bike and told the caretaker that he came from Mahanagar. The youth asked the caretaker to bury the leg but the latter refused on the pretext of poor health. The

caretaker made an alibi as he sensed trouble. The caretaker asked the youth bury the leg but the latter said he was in a hurry to go to his office. He gave Rs 300 to the caretaker.

The incident exposed tall claims regarding police checking. "At a time when cops are carrying out intensive checking drives, the youth was carrying the chopped off leg stuffed in a polythene and he managed to evade checking," sources said.

LUCKNOW CANTONMENT BOARD
31, Nehru Road, Lucknow Cantt.
Tel No. 0522-2480037 Fax No. 0522-2480610 Email ID - cblucknow@dgst.org

TENDER NOTICE - I CALL

Online tenders are invited from the contractors having work experience in the relevant field in MES/ Cantt. Board/ Central or State Government departments through the Government e-procurement Portal <http://eprocure.gov.in/cppp/> by the Cantonment Board, Lucknow for 'Supply of stationery, Printing items in cantonment board office, school & hospital and Office Chairs & Office Tables for Cantonment Board office'.

The other relevant information/terms and conditions can be seen from the Government e-procurement Portal <http://eprocure.gov.in/cppp/>

No. LCB/11/Record/Stationery & Printing/2020-21 (Amit Kumar Mishra)
Office of the Cantonment Board Chief Executive Officer Lucknow Dated 06 June 2020

Office of the Superintending Engineer, Sultanpur-Amethi Circle, PWD, Sultanpur
E-mail Id: sepwdsuamethi01@gmail.com

Short Term E-Tender Notice
Short No. 1161/1com-Sul.A.Cir/2020-21 Date: 30.05.2020
On behalf of Hon'ble Governor, U.P., S.E. Sultanpur Amethi Circle P.W.D. Sultanpur invites online bids for the following works from the registered eligible contractors in Road Safety/Signage work in UP PWD.

Sl. No.	Division Name	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. In Lacs)
1	2	3	4	5
1	C.D.-3, Sultanpur	Road Safety Work on Sultanpur Kurwar Haliyapur Road (ODR Km. 0.00 to 30.00)	65.00	5.25

The bid can be seen and downloaded online from 08.06.2020 and can be uploaded up to 12.00 Noon of 16.06.2020. The Technical bid shall be opened on 16.06.2020 at 12:30 afternoon.

All the conditions related to bid can be seen on <http://etender.up.nic.in>

(Ravikant Rajak) Executive Engineer Construction Division-3, PWD, Sultanpur For and behalf of Governor of

(Arvind Kumar Jain) Superintending Engineer Sultanpur-Amethi Circle PWD, Sultanpur For and behalf of Governor of

U.P.: 152131, Date: 06.06.2020, विज्ञापन वेबसाइट www.up.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।

CITYBRIEFS

KEY DECISIONS TAKEN BY LU EXAM PANEL
The examination committee of Lucknow University held a meeting, which was presided by Vice-Chancellor AK Rai, on Saturday. Several decisions regarding annual and semester examinations were taken in the meeting. Although the examination schedule is being finalised, all these decisions will depend upon the state government's guidelines for prevention of coronavirus infection. Media spokesperson said annual and semester examinations would be held in July and August. PG exams will be held between July 25 and August 7. UG annual exams will be held between July 7 and July 25 while semester exams from July 23 to August 14. "With this, self-centres will be created for the examinations so that there is minimum mobility of candidates and teachers. The PG level examinations will be evaluated in the respective departments while UG exams in the university and in some colleges. The exam centres have been directed to follow state government's guidelines in view of the coronavirus pandemic," the spokesperson said. Meanwhile, the department of Business Administration is organising an international e-seminar on 'Changing paradigms in marketing' on Sunday. The seminar will be addressed by speakers from different countries, including Finland, USA and UAE apart from India. Academicians, research scholars, consultants, entrepreneurs and people from various public and private organisations besides students from across the world have registered for the seminar.

SILVER MEDALS
Special Olympics Bharat (UP) organised 2020 Virtual Unified Skipping Competition (VUSC) in which three students of ASHA School (Lucknow) won two silver medals. Hemant Singh & his sister Neha Singh and Dev Tomar & his sister Pojoa Tomar won silver medals while Indu Pal and her sister Sindhu Pal secured fourth position. Principal Sharmistha Basu and coach Neelam Srivastava said it was a proud moment for the school.

The event was held using e-platform. Asha Schools have been set up under AWWA as a 'Temple of Learning' for special children. The aim is to empower the specially-abled children so as to make them productive members of the society and enable them to live with dignity.

SCHOLARSHIP
Raj Sanjay Soni, a student of City Montessori School, Mahanagar, has been selected for admission with scholarship by three noted universities of Australia. He has been offered US\$ 19,790 scholarship by Macquarie University, US\$ 15,437 scholarship by University of Wollongong and US\$ 12,634 scholarship by Deakin University. He has been awarded these scholarships for the entire study period of four years. He has given credit for his success to the robust academic atmosphere of CMS.

New dy lokayukta assumes office
Lucknow (PNS): The state ombudsman lokayukta received a shot in the arm when under the zero tolerance policy towards corruption, the UP government appointed Dinesh Kumar Singh as another deputy lokayukta. With this the lokayukta office attained a rare milestone as this is the first time in its history that the lokayukta will have two deputies. Shambhu Singh Yadav is already working as deputy lokayukta and will retire in 2024. Dinesh Kumar Singh, who was former principal secretary (law) in the state government, assumed office here on Saturday morning. He was administered oath by Lokayukta Sanjay Mishra. He will remain in office for eight years from the date of his joining on Saturday. Singh earlier was judge of designated CBI court in Lucknow and had delivered judgement in important cases like foodgrains scam, EPF scam in NER, post office scam in Budaun etc. He joined the judicial services as munif magistrate in August 1985.

Corona graph continues to rise in Purvanchal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

With the starting of rush in the markets and other places under the ongoing Unlock 1.0, the city as well as this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP) may see a sharp and alarming spike in COVID-19 cases. It is expected that the rush of people may be increased further when the doors of temples and other religious places would be reopened after almost two-and-a-half months from Monday, an important weekly day when generally heavy rush is seen in temples of Lord Shiva including Dwadasjyotling Kashi Vishwanath temple.

In 10 districts of three divisions of this region, the number of corona positive cases has already crossed four-figure mark, posing a serious challenge for the district administration, police and Health department as in the manner the corona cases continued rising, it may pose crisis of beds for the patients in the hospitals in many districts. By Friday afternoon, the cases in this region have jumped up to 1,051. As many as four districts had already crossed three figure mark and two over 200-mark. There were 262 cases in



Police personnel deployed at ghats to check devotees from bathing after lunar eclipse in Varanasi on Saturday

Jaunpur, followed by 233 in Varanasi, 154 in Ghazipur, 149 in Azamgarh, 67 in Bhadohi, 56 in Mau, 52 in Ballia, 36 in Mirzapur, 27 in Chandauli and 14 in Sonbhadra. The worst situation is of Varanasi division where the cases have already reached 676 in its four districts. With the opening of markets and offices, clear laxity has started visible. The local administration has deployed security personnel at ghats for the third time during this week to check the devotees from taking holy dip in river Ganga as it was expected that they might reach there for prayer after the end of lunar eclipse. However, it would be a big challenge when all the places of worship

would open from June 8. Meanwhile, as many as 15 new corona cases have been detected from Jaunpur, increasing the number to 262 with 248 active patients. Out of total patients, only 11 have been discharged, while three have died. Such a big number of active patients indicated that the majority of them were found recently and most of them are migrants. Contrary to this, the situation is much better in Varanasi where out of 233 cases by Friday night, 126 have been discharged while five have died, leaving only 102 active patients. Even in Varanasi, a large number of recent cases were found among migrants who returned home

in rural areas from Mumbai and other cities recently. In other districts of the division, 154 patients have been found in Ghazipur, while 27 in Chandauli.

In Azamgarh, the corona graph has continued rising as six new cases have been found during the day after 18 a day ago. With this the total number of cases has jumped up to 149 with 115 active patients. Out of total patients, 31 have been recovered while three have died. In Mau district of the same division, four new cases have been detected and with this, the total number has increased to 56 with 43 active patients. In another district of the division, 53 patients have been found in Ballia. The total number of patients in the division is 258.

In Vindhyaachal division, Bhadohi saw the most patients and with the finding of nine new cases, the number in the district has increased to 67. Out of these nine, eight are migrants.

Only eight patients have been discharged from the district so far. In Mirzapur, 36 patients have been found while in Sonbhadra 14. The total number of corona patients in the division is 117.

IG directive to check movement in hotspots

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

IG Range Mohit Agarwal directed the district police officials to lodge FIR against people assembling in groups in highly sensitive hotspot areas of the city. He said the main reason for increase in coronavirus positive cases in these sealed areas was the frequent movement of people there.

During inspection of the containment zone in Shiv Nagar (Barra), the IG directed police to lodge FIR if anybody was found roaming out of his/her house and not using mask. He said monitoring of activities in these areas should be done by Smart City CCTV. Agarwal said as complete night curfew was not enforced in these areas, the number of coronavirus infected persons had suddenly increased especially in five hotspot areas.

Nine more test positive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Nine more people tested positive for coronavirus on Saturday, taking the count of those infected by the virus in the district so far to 504. Chief Medical Officer Dr AK Shukla said the new cases were mostly from Dudwa Jamauli, Shakkarmil Khalwa, Gwaltoli, Pheelkhana, Kakwan and Hoolaganj. He said six COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals on Saturday. With this, 316 COVID-19 patients have been cured in the district. With the death of one COVID-19 patient late Saturday night, the novel coronavirus has claimed 15 lives in the district, which now has 173 active cases.

The health department teams scanned 5,632 houses in Gora Kabristan, Roti Wali Gali, Chhoti Bakramandi, Swarup Nagar, Laxmipurwa, Govindnagar B Block and Barra 2 and collected 254 swab samples for testing.

MOBILE ATM VAN: Meanwhile, Municipal Commissioner Akshay Tripathi on Saturday inaugurated HDFC Bank's Mobile ATM especially meant for those who are unable to move out due to the spread of coronavirus and are unable to go to the banks. The ATM van will move in the city.

The IG said a study by the district administration, police and medical officers had brought to fore that people liv-

ing in the most sensitive hotspots of Shiv Nagar (Barra), Laxmipurwa (Raipurwa), Munshipurwa (Babupurwa), Tukaniapurwa and Anwarganj were in frequent contact with each other whereas, as per norms of lockdown in hotspot areas, nobody was allowed to move out of their houses.

He directed the police officials to install CCTV cameras and depute a sub-inspector in two shifts of 12 hours in each hotspot areas along police force. He also directed cops of respective police stations to arrange distribution of food and ration kits in through social organisations.

The IG was accompanied by Superintendent of Police (South) Aparna Gupta and Circle officer of Govind Nagar, Manoj Gupta.

DM directs officials to open bank accounts of all migrants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Cantonment Board will soon repair its four dilapidated roads. All the Board members have unanimously given their consent to this proposal in a Board meeting held on Thursday. The Board has allocated ₹ 2.50 crore for repairing these roads that include Jaipuria Road, Hardings Road and Tagore Road. For the purchase of other material, including hospital equipment, the Board has sanctioned a sum of ₹ 30 lakh. Many other decisions were

KANPUR (PNS): District Magistrate BR Tiwari has asked officials to open bank accounts of all migrant workers who are permanent residents of Kanpur and have returned to their native place but do not have a bank account. He issued this directive while addressing a meeting at Collectorate. He said the relief amount of ₹1,000 provided by the UP government should be transferred into the accounts of the migrant workers at the earliest. He said the relief amount need to be sent through RTGS and directed that the new accounts should be opened positively by Sunday. He also asked the officials concerned to assess the damage to crop by the recent hailstorm on a war footing. Later addressing the SPCA meeting regarding destitute cattle, Tiwari directed officials to make all temporary cattle shelter homes self-reliant by developing them on the pattern of Gausshala Society, Kanpur.

also taken in the Board meeting. The Board also decided to retrench the NTT teachers engaged for nursery teachers training. Out of 100 such teachers, 12 will be removed. Prior to retrenchment, a departmental test would be conducted and the unsuccessful candidates would be removed. On this occasion, Brig Navin Singh was given a farewell. Cantonment CEO Arvind Dwivedi, Vice Chairman Lakhman Omar, corporators Feroz Alam, Prastavna Tewari, Shikha Trivedi, Raju, Admn Commandant AK Rai, Col AK

Vaishya were present. Meanwhile, Lakhman Omar was elected unopposed vice chairman of the Cantonment Board for its six-month extended period.

KDA EXTENDS OTS SCHEME: Kanpur Development Authority has extended its One Time Settlement scheme to September 30, 2020. The scheme which began on March 3, was to end on June 5. This decision has been taken as due to lockdown, the beneficiaries were unable to avail the benefit of this scheme.

4 new COVID-19 cases found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as four new COVID-19 patients have been detected in the district here on Saturday. With this, the total number of positive patients in the district has increased to 236 and out of them, 135 have been discharged and five have died. There are 98 active patients. According to District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma, 22 reports have been received from Microbiology Lab of BHU and 18 of them were negative, while four positive. Among the negative, there were follow up reports of nine patients including five admitted at ESIC Hospital, while four at Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital. Later, they were discharged from the hospitals.

Among the positive patients, there is a 12 years old boy from hotspot Hariharpur who came here from Mumbai along with earlier found positive patient. The other two positive are 55 and 70 years old women who are also relatives of the boy. The fourth patient (27) is also a woman from Jagatganj (Chetganj) who works at a private company.

With the finding of these new patients, the number of hotspots has increased to 119 in the district with one new hotspot Jagarganj (Chetganj). Besides, seven new hotspots were made on Friday night and they included Nadesar (Cantt.), Hindpur (Shivpur), Chetganj, Bharatpuram (Manduadih), Belvaria (Shivpur), Gaura Uparvar (Choubeypur) and Kardhana (Mirza Murad). Out of total 119 hotspots, 48 have become green zones with four new ones including Shrawanpur (Phulpur), Pahadpur (Cholapur), Shivala (Bhelupur)



Security at sensitive hotspot Badi Piyari (Chowk) in Varanasi on Saturday

and Sujabad (Ramnagar) apart from five including Dulhigarhi (Kotwali), Habibpura (Chetganj), Khevasipur (Lohta), Karauta (Jansa) and Madhopur (Sigra) which became green zones. Among 71 active hotspots, 26 are in orange zones, while 45 are in red zones.

Earlier, as per the reports received by district administration on Friday night, as many as 14 more COVID-19 positive patients were found apart from four detected earlier in the day. These patients included yet another cop (30) who came into contact of earlier found patients live at Barrack No. 8 in the Police Lines. Besides, a security agency owner (45) of Nadesar was also found positive. However, the maximum number of six patients was found from the family of earlier

patient from hotspot Bada Piyari. They are his son (32), grand-daughter (four), grandson (five), nephew (30), grandson (one-and-a-half years) and daughter-in-law (28).

The rest of other six are migrants. The first is a youth (26) from Chetganj who is vendor in Chennai and returned recently by a train. The second one (31) is from Bharatpuram Colony (Manduadih) who works in a private company and returned by flight from Delhi. The third one (63) is from Hindpur (Shivpur) who drives an auto in Mumbai and returned by a train.

The fourth one (68) is from Belvaria (Shivpur) who is an electrician in Mumbai and returned by a car. The seventh one (26) is from Kardhana (Mirza Murad) who works as a medical representative in

Mumbai and came here by a train and last one (31) is from Gaura Uparvar (Choubeypur) who works in a private company at Surat and came by a train.

Earlier, as many as 26 persons have been arrested under Section 151 CrPC on Friday, while action was taken against 26 under Section 51 of Disaster Management Act. During checking at 14 border points and 49 police barriers, 1693 vehicles were challaned and one seized.

Since the imposing of lockdown, 293 FIRs have been lodged against 674 persons; 2476 were arrested under Section 151 of CrPC while action was taken against 3869 under Section 188 or Section 51 of Disaster Management Act. Besides, so far 87,037 vehicles were challaned and 1005 were seized.

Wanted criminal arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Maharajpur police arrested a wanted criminal of D-103 gang in an encounter late on Friday night. During exchange of fire, the criminal sustained bullet injury in his limb and was admitted to hospital.

He was involved in many cases of dacoity, loot, theft and other crimes registered against him in several police stations and was wanted by police for

the long time.

According to reports, Maharajpur Station Officer Raghvendra Singh along with Sub-Inspector Rahul Kumar and a police force was checking vehicles near Maholi in Purwamir area on Prayagraj highway late Friday night when he saw a youth jumping off a truck and escaping towards Maholi village.

On being chased, the youth opened fire on police party. During the exchange of fire, he

sustained bullet injury on his limb and fell unconscious on the ground. He was identified as Sanoj Paswan (23), a resident of Bhananapurwa, Raipurwa.

The Maharajpur station officer said Paswan was involved in around one-and-a-half-dozen cases registered against him at different police stations of the city and was wanted by Babupurwa police in a dacoity case. Police recovered a country-made pistol and live cartridges from Paswan.

Court allows UP govt to withdraw case against Maurya, 4 others

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Special Court (MP, MLA) has allowed the state government's application to withdraw a hate speech and assault case pending against state's Deputy Chief Minister, Keshav Prasad Maurya and four of his supporters, lodged at Kotwali police station of Kaushambi district in 2011.

The special judge Bal Mukund passed the above order after hearing prosecution counsels and others.

An FIR was registered against Maurya, then a leader of Bharatiya Janata Party and others on September 1, 2011 at Manjhanpur Kotwali of Kaushambi district by the police station incharge, alleging that they delivered a provocative speech during an agitation. Maurya's supporters were booked for allegedly assaulting a youth from another community and making derogatory remarks against him.

Subsequently, the state government had on August 19,

2018 passed an order to withdraw the case. An application was accordingly moved in the court concerned in this connection.

Later, in an order passed on June 5, 2020, the court allowed application moved by the government to withdraw a case in which Maurya and four others were accused. All accused persons are on bail.

According to district government counsel (criminal), Gulab Chandra Agrahri, during an agitation against the then government's actions and policies in September 2011, the accused had allegedly made derogatory remarks on a youth while he was passing through the area. Perturbed over the remarks, when the youth raised objections, the accused allegedly manhandled him. However, the matter was resolved at one point of time, when a police team arrived and rescued the victim.

Subsequently, an FIR was lodged against five persons under various sections of

Indian Penal Code (IPC). **SAPLINGS PLANTED:** JP Cement led by senior vice-president of the company SKP Gupta, planted the saplings at its cement plants and regional offices and made the general public aware on the occasion of World Environment Day.

On this occasion, SKP Gupta said that around 5.5 million people die due to polluted air in the world, which is about 10 per cent of the total deaths. In India alone, 1.2 million people die every year due to poisonous air, causing a loss of 38 billion dollars to the country. And it is quite surprising that 11 cities of India are among the most polluted cities in the world.

Even the sea is not left from ever-increasing pollution. 'We are leaving so much carbon dioxide in the environment that the water up to the sea is becoming acidic, we have cut so much forest to build our house that today the environmental balance is in great danger', he pointed out.

He further explained that the list of such things is so long that not everyone can be expressed here. The simple thing which one should understand is that if we do not start trying to save the environment now, we may not get the chance later and the coming generations will never forgive us for this mistake.

JP Cement has also taken several measures for environmental protection in its production process. With the help of devices such as electrostatic precipitators and dust filters, the cement is prevented from spreading into the atmosphere.

JP Cement is determined to make the most powerful and the highest quality cement. On the other hand, it also committed to environmental protection. JP Cement is doing its best for environmental protection and balance by planting several lakh trees around each of its production plants, added SKP Gupta.

Three criminals apprehended

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The police on Saturday claimed to have arrested a criminal, carrying cash reward of ₹ 25,000 on his head and his two aides wanted in many criminal incidents of loot and snatching. The police recovered 21.40 kg ganja, five gold blocks, motorcycle and cash from their possessions. The SP, City DK Singh produced the arrested criminals before the media-persons at Police Lines here on Saturday and informed that a team of police personnel led by Circle Officer, Chetganj Anil Kumar was constituted by the SSP Prabhakar Chaudhary in view of the incidents of chain snatching in Lanka, Chetganj and Sigra areas and team succeeded in arresting three members of inter-district gang including a criminal carrying cash reward of ₹ 25,000 Manoj Shukla of Adampur area. Two other arrested criminals were identified as Lalu Thethera aka Bala Lakhandar of Jaitpura

and Raju Seth of Jaitpura area. A total of 28 cases are pending in various police stations against rewarded criminal Manoj Shukla, informed the SP, City. The team at late night on Friday last got a tip-off about the presence of criminal Manoj Shukla with his one aide Lalu Thethera on Manduadih-Sunbeam Lahartara route and acting on information, the police of Sigra and Chetganj police station raided the place and succeeded in arresting the criminals Manoj and Lalu and on the basis of information provided by them, the police team also succeeded in arresting Raju Seth whom they sold the snatched chain.

The police team also recovered 21.40 kg ganja, five gold blocks, one motorcycle and Rs 1000 in cash from their possessions. The criminals Manoj and Lalu used to sell snatched chains to goldsmith Raju Seth.

The SSP announced cash award of ₹ 25,000 for the police team which registered

this success.

INDUCTED: Prof Vivek Singh, Department of Computer Science and Coordinator, Computer Centre, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), has been inducted as a member of a key thematic group as part of consultations for new Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020 of India. The office of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (Office of PSA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have jointly initiated the process of formulating STIP 2020. This will be India's 5th national policy on science and technology. The policy is being formulated at a crucial juncture where India and the world are tackling the crisis of COVID-19 pandemic. The post-COVID-19 world demands for a new outlook and strategy for STIP in terms of priorities, sectoral focus, and broadly the general public.

are developed and deployed for larger socio-economic welfare. 21 thematic groups have been constituted for the STIP-2020 policy drafting exercise. Prof Vivek Singh has been designated a key member of the Thematic Group on Research. A total of 130 experts have been selected from across the country to be part of these thematic groups. Prof Vivek Singh has expressed happiness over his inclusion in the thematic group on research. He has said that BHU being the capital of knowledge can contribute meaningfully to the STIP drafting process, especially in a vision for the future of multi-disciplinary universities. The six-month process involves broad-based consultations with all stakeholders within and beyond the scientific ecosystem of the country including academia, industry, government, global partners, young scientists and technologists, civic bodies, and the general public.

Cops recover body of Irfan's wife

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

In the couple's murder under the Shivkuti police station, the cops recovered the body of deceased's wife Husna from the Sangam Ghat on Saturday after the body of her husband Mohammad Irfan was found in Kareli area on Friday.

Police had already nabbed the accused nephews and their sons on Friday. Husna's body was found tied in a sheet near Sangam Ghat. Police took her body into custody and sent it to mortuary for postmortem examination.

People dwelling near the Sangam ghat spotted something wrapped in a sheet on Saturday afternoon near

Prayagraj Sangam Ghat. At first they did not pay attention to it. When they raised suspicion they gathered there. Meanwhile, after getting information, Daraganj police also reached the spot. The body of the woman was found when the sheet tied with rope was removed. The police suspected the body to be of Husna Begum.

The Shivkuti police also reached the place on being intimated about it. Husna's body was confirmed when the cops matched a photo of Husna with the body found there.

When the police investigated, it was found that the corpse was wrapped with a sheet and tied with a rope. The body has been sent to the

postmortem house. Husna's brother and others also reached the mortuary on getting information. SP City Brijesh Srivastava said that Husna's body has been recovered.

To recall, Mohammed Irfan and his wife Husna Begum, resident of Mehdauri Colony under the Sivakuti police station, were murdered by their nephews. After the murder, Irfan's body was dumped in the Kareli forest and Husna's body in the river Yamuna.

During investigation, cops recovered the mutilated body of Irfan from a dense forest in the Kareli area. At the same time, the police were searching for the body of Irfan's wife Husna Begum at Yamuna's

Arail and other ghats. The Sivakuti police, with the help of divers and water police, were engaged in the search for several hours but failed to trace the body.

Rizwan, the elder brother of Irfan, who was charged in the murder, and his four sons were sent to jail after being produced in court here on Saturday. Mohd Irfan and his wife used to live in Mehdauri Colony under the Shivkuti police station. The couple was issueless. In such a situation, the elder brother devised a murder plan to grab his property, after which the sons brutally killed Irfan and threw his body in the Kareli forest and dumped Husna's body along the Yamuna river in Sangam.

Commissioner inspects works being carried out under MGNREGA

CORRESPONDENT ■ BANDA

Commissioner Chitrakootdam division Gaurav Dayal inspected the works being carried out under MGNREGA and did their verification at Benda gram panchayat in Tindwari block on Friday. He inspected the work of building mounds between two fields and directed the authorities concerned to ensure that it was done in the fields of all farmers in the village on priority to check soil erosion and store rainwater. He said that the work would increase the underground water level. He found 35 labourers working in Benda gram panchayat under MGNREGA. Out of them two were migrant labourers. He directed programme officer Tindwari to make payment to all labourers on time. Later he inspected the works being carried out on Usra Nullah at



Commissioner Chitrakootdam division Gaurav Dayal inspecting the works being carried out at Benda gram panchayat in Tindwari block, Banda, on Friday. Pioneer

Benda. He found that 270 labourers were working on this project out of which 140 were women and 60 migrant labourers. Talking to *The Pioneer* he said that total 12 works were continuing at Benda under MGNREGA. They included drain digging, link road and construction of boundary wall of the school, construction of

that Usra Nullah was six-km-long which originated from Badokhar Khurd and connected with Gadra river via Kurseja, Mirgehni, Bhattora, Sindhauli, Khera, Jawharpur and Maacha villages. Dayal said that Minor Irrigation department had constructed five check dams on Usra Nullah.

He directed BDO Tindwari to get completed the works before the rainy season. He said that he had issued instructions to BDO to get examined the area by executive engineer, Minor Irrigation, for the construction of check dam, if required. He said that he had also directed CDO banda Harish Chandra Verma to start the work at all rivers and drains in all blocks of the district before rainy season. Dayal said that CDO has been asked to make preparation for plantation on the sides of drains to make the places beautiful.

'Engage maximum migrant labourers'

CORRESPONDENT ■ BANDA

District Magistrate Amit Singh Bansal inspected development works being carried out in Naraini tehsil on Friday. He inspected an under construction cow shelter centre at Kalinjar town with a budget of Rs 13.52 lakh. DM found that the construction was halted. BDO Naraini told the DM that the construction was halted due to continuous rain for the past two days. He found the construction of shade and cratch under progress. DM directed the BDO Naraini to construct a road from cow shelter and connect it with the main road. The cow shelter was being constructed between ponds, Sagra and Pahadi. DM found that the water of these ponds was not being preserved and directed the BDO to construct a small pond for



DM Amit Singh Bansal inspecting development works at Naraini tehsil in Banda

enabling preservation. DM directed the BDO to engage maximum migrant labourers in this work and complete it with optimum quality. Bansal also inspected the works of chak road being made under MGNREGA in Tarhathi gram panchayat under Kalinjar town and found that the work was

sand was dumped here recently. Bansal told *'The Pioneer'* that he inspected the spot where sand was dumped in Khairar village and he found its storage in right quantity. DM said that he checked overloaded trucks at Khairar and caught six overloaded trucks of sand/macadam. DM said that he asked the Mataundh police to take legal action against the overloaded trucks. He said that later he inspected another spot where sand was dumped and found some irregularities there and directed district mining officer to investigate the matter and send him a report. DM Bansal said that he inspected two crushers at Khairar and directed district mining officer to investigate and send him the feedback. Bansal said that overloading of sand/macadam would not be tolerated in the district.

Oath administered

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

NTPC Vindhyachal reaffirmed its commitment to protect and preserve the environment on World Environment Day. The occasion was celebrated with an oath-taking ceremony and a plantation drive. NTPC Vindhyachal maintained all social distancing norms during the celebrations in view of the



Covid-19 pandemic. The celebrations began with the message of Ramesh Babu V, Director (Operations), NTPC Ltd, on the importance of preserving biodiversity being conveyed to all NTPC Vindhyachal employees. ED (Vindhyachal) Debashis Sen administered an oath to the employees in stage I conference hall wherein everyone pledged to focus their efforts on protecting the environment and preserving its biodiversity. A special video highlighting the importance of biodiversity in preserving the balance of nature was also screened on the occasion. KVS Chaudhary, District Magistrate, Singrauli, TK Vidyarthi, Superintendent of Police, Singrauli, and Vijay Singh, DFO Singrauli, graced the plantation drive at the NH2 Grounds. Debashis Sen, ED (Vindhyachal) and RK Rout, CGM (O&M) also planted saplings on the occasion. SD Balmiki, Regional Officer, Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board, along with GMs and HoDs of NTPC Vindhyachal also participated in the plantation drive. On the occasion Sen urged all NTPC Vindhyachal employees to do their bit for the cause of environ-

ment preservation. NTPC Vindhyachal strives for sustainable business growth through effectively control of pollution, minimising and managing waste, developing and maintaining green cover and focusing on optimising the use of natural resources. Sen said. NTPC Vindhyachal organised competitions such as slogan writing, PPT making and drawing competitions themed around biodiversity in the run up to World Environment Day. The competitions were aimed at creating awareness around the issue as well as engaging different segments of the NTPC Vindhyachal family such as children, housewives and employees.

SAPLING PLANTED

On the occasion of World Environment Day Riti Pathak, Member of the Parliament from Singrauli/Sidhi districts of Madhya Pradesh planted a sapling in the Surya Bhawan Guesthouse



of NTPC Vindhyachal. Uttam Lal, GM (HR), Snehasis Bhattacharyya, AGM (HR), Nikhilesh Awasthy, AGM (TAD) and other NTPC Vindhyachal employees and representatives graced the occasion with their presence. Extending her wishes on the occasion, MP Pathak said that as India's largest power station, NTPC Vindhyachal fulfilled its responsibility towards the environment and people residing around the plant through its thoughtful and proactive initiatives.

PPE kits handed over to police

CORRESPONDENT ■ UNCHAHAR

As part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme, NTPC Unchahar handed over as many as 400 PPE kits, three tonnes of bleaching powder, sanitiser and 1.2 tonnes of sodium hypochlorite to Rae Bareilly police on Saturday. The NTPC team led by Group General Manager (GGM) Bhola Nath



and senior officials handed them over to RI BK Singh. GGM Unchahar Bhola Nath appreciated the work of Rae Bareilly police during Covid-19. RI BK Singh appreciated NTPC Unchahar for this noble work.

It may be pointed out here that to check the spread of deadly virus the NTPC Unchahar carried out a number of activities, like spraying of disinfectants in the project-affected villages and distributed grocery items and cotton masks among people recently.

Accused arrested

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Vindhyachal police on Friday arrested an accused and recovered the bell which had been stolen from a temple two days ago. Reports said that Ram Chandra Tiwari, priest of a temple located at Pakka Ghat Vindhyachal had lodged an FIR alleging a local that he had stolen the bell of the temple. The police swung into action swiftly and arrested Om Prakash Verma, a resident of Chikan Tola, Vindhyachal, along with the stolen bell and sent the accused to jail.

Youth's body recovered from well

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The body of a youth found in a well situated in field under Ahraura police station on Friday. Reports said Gangaram had left his house without informing his family on June 2 night. He was stressed due to family problems. His family was shocked when the body found in a well located in a field in Bhagautidei village was identified as that of Gangaram. Shrautasootr police took his body into custody for completing legal formalities. Meanwhile Sonu (18), a resident of Tilany village under the Lalganj police

station, consumed some toxic substance. When his health deteriorated his kin brought him to CHC Lalganj but during treatment he died. They said that the youth was mentally retarded. The police reached on the spot and took the body into custody for legal action. On the other hand, Jigna police arrested four murder accused on Friday and sent them to jail. As per the reports, on the accused had assaulted Ankit Giri (18) in a dispute in Chehra village under the Jigna police station June 2 who died during treatment in a hospital at Varanasi. Taking

action on the FIR lodged by his father the police arrested four accused identified as Lallu Giri, Satendra Giri and Anand Giri, residents of Chehra village and Babbu Giri, a resident of Jamuan village under the Kachhawan police station. After arrest the police sent the accused to jail.

MEETING HELD

District Magistrate Sushil Kumar Patel has asked the authorities concerned to complete the work of community toilets first then start any work of new toilet. Such directives

were given by him at a meeting to discuss recommendations related to projects under 14th Finance Commission. During the meeting he formed a committee including the technical experts under the chairmanship of city magistrate to verify the purchase of the equipment under 12th and 13th Finance Commission. The meeting was attended by ADM (F&R) UP Singh, Chief Medical Officer Dr OP Tiwari, EEs PWD and the executive officers EOs of Mirzapur, Ahraura and Chunar Nagar Palikas and Kachhawan nagar panchayat.

Webinar on 'Operation Kayakalp' organised

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

A webinar on the topic 'Operation Kayakalp' and prevention from Covid-19 infection and its control was organised under the joint aegis of district administration, UNICEF and Basic Education Department, Sonbhadra, in which 2,200 participants gave training to online group and 4,400 people through YouTube link. It may be pointed out here that the Uttar Pradesh government has set a target till September 30 this year to rejuvenate all schools of the Parishad. In the meeting of the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) in Sonbhadra ₹108 crore had been given earlier for rejuvenation of all schools of Basic Education Council and ₹17 crore for chair, table and other furniture for students. Through which rejuvenation of 1,324 schools of the district and chair, table and other furniture had to be arranged in as many as 2,258 schools. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had an impact on school rejuvenation



District Magistrate S Rajalingam seeking information about Son School Kayakalp during the webinar at his office in Collectorate in Sonbhadra on Friday. Pioneer

for which planned and coordinated effort was required. In the webinar the district administration, Panchayat Raj, Basic Education Department, Mining Department, corporate social responsibility (CSR)-linked industrial establishments got a chance to come on a platform. The webinar was started by District Magistrate S Rajalingam by explaining the status of the Son School Kayakalp going on in the district and future plans. He said

that all stakeholders would have to discharge their responsibilities honestly. Addressing the teachers, he said that they need to create an excellent environment for children and had to be self-motivated as they built the future of society and country. If teachers understood their responsibility then one need not worry about quality education, he added. Chief Development Officer (CDO) Ajay Dwivedi shared that for school rejuvenation the

plan for smart class and dual desk for children to sit in all schools through CSR and DMF had been passed. He said that necessary facilities in all schools according to the children and their use would be ensured. He gave information about important component to be established by UNICEF Uttar Pradesh in the school and its criteria. District Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) Dr Gorakhnath Patel spoke about the availability of the Aadhaar booklet for rejuvenation of all 2,458 schools in the district with all schools and pradhans. He said that the responsibility of BaLA (Building as Learning Aid) was entirely on the teachers and should develop it in their school carefully. This would not only make the campus of the school attractive but would also improve the learning level and attendance of the children. In the webinar the teachers put forth their problems related to rejuvenation in their schools to the panelists through a chat box. The programme was conducted by a UNICEF officer.

DRM inaugurates plantation programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Plantation was carried out on various units and stations of Varanasi Division of North-Eastern Railway (NER) on the occasion of World Environment Day on Friday. The plantation programme was inaugurated by the divisional rail manager (DRM) Vijay Kumar Panjari, following the social distancing in the garden premises of divisional office, Lahartara by planting sapling without gathering crowd. After this ADRM (Infra) Praveen Kumar, ADRM (Operations) SPS Yadav and station superintendents/station managers planted saplings at different major station premises, including Manduadih, Prayagraj Rambagh, Chhapra, Siwan,



NER DRM VK Panjari planting a sapling in Varanasi on Friday. Pioneer

Ballia, Ghazipur City, Mau, Deoria Sadar and Kaptanganj of Varanasi Division of NER. They also maintained social distancing. At all the places gathering of employees and

others was avoided. Besides, plantation was also done by departmental heads in various units of Varanasi division. On the occasion posters on environmental protection were displayed.

In addition to make people aware, SMS were sent to the units on biodiversity. Various units, factories, DEMU sheds and training centres along with voluntary organisations and schools organised online painting competitions on environment-related subjects.

Similarly, online drawing competition was organised under the joint aegis of Varanasi Division of NER and Sunbeam School, Lahartara.

Children participated extensively in the drawing competition. The best entries will be rewarded. Not only this recorded street plays on environmental protection were also uploaded by the headquarters on WhatsApp and Facebook to make the public aware.

Corona warriors working diligently

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. Besides, the movement of goods and passenger trains was being ensured in which its employees are engaged. Railway workers who have done commendable work in such a difficult situation are being honoured by being awarded 'Corona warriors of the day' every day by the NER administration for boosting their morale. In this series two railwaymen on NER were honoured on June 4. Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said.

SK Sharma posted as the station director, Chhapra, while doing monitoring continuously made arrangements for receiving 41 Shramik Special trains at the Chhapra station, got the maintenance work of empty rakes done at Jalalpur washing pit on time. Besides he

ensured that the empty coaching rakes of Shramik Special

Babban Kumar Singh, working as inspector at Railway



SK Sharma, Station Director, Chhapra, Varanasi division



Babban Kumar Singh, inspector, RPF Post, Lal Kuan, Izzatnagar division

in the railway security force barracks and offices under his jurisdiction from time to time. Apart from it he provided food to 810 needy and helpless people in such a situation and distributed food items among them. For these commendable works of Babban Kumar Singh, he was honoured by being declared as 'Corona warriors of the day' of Izzatnagar division.

The railway administration was proud of its such personnel.

PLANTATION

On World Environment Day on Friday Additional General Manager (AGM) Amit Kumar Agarwal, Senior Deputy General Manager Amitabh Ojha, Chief Project Director/Bridge Works VP Awathis and other senior officials did plantation at golf course by following the social distancing guidelines and without gathering crowd. Besides in order to make people aware about biodiversity an SMS campaign was carried out.

Around 2.43 cr trees planted: CMD

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

Chairman-cum-managing director (CMD) of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) Prabhat Kumar Sinha said that the NCL had planted around 2.43 crore trees so far. Besides, NCL in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU), was working on a plan for treatment of water going to Ballia nullah.

He was addressing a function organised in a very simplistic manner to celebrate World Environment Day at NCL headquarters premises in Singrauli, maintaining social distancing, on Friday. "We're also committed to conserving the environment and biodiversity in surrounding areas of NCL along with giving its contributions in energy security of the nation," said the CMD, adding that there was a continuous increase in coal remittances through rail and eco-friendly coal transport system (MGR & BPC).

He also said that in order to monitor and control air, water and sound pollution, modern techniques and equipment were being used. On the

occasion director (Personnel) Bimlendu Kumar, director (Technical/Planning and Project) Dr Anindya Sinha, Munnial Yadav of BMS, Ashok



CMD PK Sinha addressing World Environment Day function at NCL, Singrauli on Friday. Pioneer

Kumar Dubey of CMS and CMOAI secretary Sarvesh Singh were also present as distinguished guests. All the heads of departments were also present. Bimlendu Kumar said that NCL has obtained ISO: 14001 and other certifications by doing excellent work in the field of environment as per

international standards. He expressed confidence that in the coming time coal transport by road would be brought to the lowest level. Dr. Anindya Sinha said "NCL is fully aware of the environment and is striving to bring pollution from coal mines to the minimum level through its continuous efforts so that the balance in ecosystem and biodiversity in this region can be maintained."

Earlier, the programme was started by CMD by hoisting company's flag. General manager (Environment) CS Tiwari read the message of chairman, Coal India Limited (CIL) Pramod Agarwal and administered an oath to all participants to maintain the natural environment, including forests, water resources and wildlife.

Elsewhere, at NCL headquarters premises, the CMD, other directors, heads of departments, trade union representatives and officers' union office-bearers also planted trees. An online painting exhibition on biodiversity and other environmental related subjects was also organised and the best participants of essay, slogan writing and painting competitions were awarded.

Criminal nabbed

CORRESPONDENT ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI

A criminal carrying a reward of ₹10,000 on his head was arrested by Sadar Kotwali police here recently. The police recovered a motorcycle, a country-made pistol and two cartridges from his possession. Inspector incharge Ajay Prakash Mishra said that he was checking vehicles along with his team near Benipurva village in Mahewaganj area. In the meantime he was tipped off by an informer that an accused was coming on a stolen motorcycle. The accused was identified as Hamid alias Hameed, a resident of Umriya village under Kotwali Sadar. The police recovered a pistol and two cartridges besides a stolen motorcycle from his possession. Mishra said that he carried a reward of ₹10,000 on his head.

Meanwhile valuables worth around ₹3 lakh were reduced to ashes when a devastating fire broke out in a mobile shop situated in Milpurva Bazar here. It was feared that the fire broke out due to a short circuit.

Centre files affidavit in SC on migrants



Says with help of NHAI, migrants walking on foot provided transport

New Delhi: With the Supreme Court having taken suo moto cognizance of the problems faced by migrants, the Centre on Saturday filed a detailed affidavit in the top court regarding the matter, stating that it has, along with the support of NHAI, facilitated shifting of these workers, found walking on roads, by providing them requisite transport to the nearest railway stations. The Government further said that whenever necessary, the migrants are provided with food, drinking water, medi-

cines, clothes, slippers and other essentials free of cost, depending upon the requirements. In its affidavit, the Centre has said that States and the Railways have been providing food and water free of cost to the labourers travelling back to their native places. "Till 1st June, Railways has served 1.63 crore meals and over 2.10 crore packaged drinking water bottles, apart from services provided by respective State Governments," the affidavit reads. **Agencies**

Rahul accuses Modi Govt of ruining country's economy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing with his tirade against the Modi dispensation, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday accused the Government of actively destroying the country's economy by refusing to provide cash support to people and small and medium enterprises as he termed the Modi regime "Demon 2.0".

Sharing a news report on Twitter on the impact the coronavirus pandemic would have on the economy and the state of affairs of the MSME sector in the country, he called for an immediate provision of ₹10,000 to the poor and an economic stimulus package for the MSME industry to come out of the current situation. "Government is actively



destroying our economy by refusing to give cash support to people and MSMEs. This is Demon 2.0," he tweeted. The Congress has also been demanding an economic stimulus package for the MSME sector, which provides employment to a large number of people, together with cash in the hands of people, to help generate demand.

Rahul had earlier said that it was criminal on the part of the Government not to provide cash to people and the industry to emerge out of this crisis. He had termed the lockdown imposed by the Government to contain the spread of virus as one that "failed" in achieving its aim and purpose.

ITBP throws open its hospitals' gates for its veterans suffering from corona

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), that secures the frontier with China, has thrown open the gates of its countrywide health centres and hospitals for its veterans suffering from Covid-19, paramilitary chief SS Deswal said on Saturday.

Deswal has issued an official message to all his troops and formations saying the decision has been taken after the force came across media reports of people facing problems in getting admission or treatment at designated hospitals for the management of pandemic.

"We have come across news items that citizens are facing problems in hospital admissions and treatment or they are charged exorbitantly," the DG said in his message.

"Our Himveers (mountain warriors) have sweated throughout their life. We do not want that they suffer and hence all our veterans are being offered health services in case anyone of you are affected by COVID-19," he said.

He further said that all hospitals of the force throughout the country will admit veterans with coronavirus infection and treat them.

The ITBP has about 20,000 retired and dependent personnel.

The ITBP runs a super specialty Referral hospital for the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) or paramilitary forces in Greater Noida, has two base hospitals at Tigri in Delhi and Kimin in Arunachal Pradesh and composite hospitals at



Dehradun and Chandigarh apart from health centres at its every base in the country.

The DG, further in his message, said the COVID-19 situation is "under control" in the force as protocols were strictly followed by field units.

"Everyone of you have contributed in this tense period. We are grateful and proud of our doctors and paramedical staff who have sincerely and with utmost dedication treated our troops and policemen from all forces working in the national Capital region," the DG said.

According to latest data, the ITBP has 211 Covid-19 positive cases out of which 177 personnel have recovered and only 34 are undergoing treatment. One personnel has succumbed to the pandemic.

ITBP also reported three fresh cases of coronavirus infection on Saturday.

The ITBP was the first organisation in the country to have created a 1,000-bed quarantine centre for Covid-hit people.

The centre in Chhawla area of south-west Delhi has treated about 1,200 people including 42 foreigners who were brought to India on special evacuation flights from Wuhan in China and Italy after the Covid-19 outbreak earlier this year.

The facility is still operational and is taking care of those ITBP troops who are joining back work after easing of restrictions imposed during the countrywide lockdown.

It also created the first standard operating procedures (SOP) for management of the pandemic among the various Central paramilitary forces and Central police organisations.

The about 90,000 personnel-strong force is primarily tasked with guarding the 3,488 km-long Line of Actual Control with China and a good number of its troops along with Army personnel are at present engaged in the stand-off with the People's Liberation Army of the neighbouring country in the Ladakh area.

Air India books over 22K seats in just 15 hrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Air India opened booking for select destinations in the USA, Canada, the UK and Europe under the phase three of Vande Bharat mission, Air India (AI) on Saturday said that it has sold over 22,000 seats in 15 hours of opening bookings under Vande Bharat Mission-III. AI also informed that more seats to new destinations will be added in due course under the mission.

"Sale of tickets commenced at 5 p.m. Friday for select destinations in the USA, Canada, United Kingdom & Europe under Phase-3 of #VBM. Our website saw exceptionally high traffic without 60 million hits at peak & over 22,000 seats have been sold overall till 8 a.m now in a transparent manner. Heavy rush however slowed the website at times. More seats to more destinations will be added in due course," the AI tweeted.

The maximum demand is for flights to the US, with connection to San Francisco and Chicago being the most sought after there. As per schedule, AI will be operating 75 flights from India to select destinations in USA and Canada from June 9 to June 30.

People faced a difficult time due to huge demand as tickets are being sold on only AI channels. Passengers wonder why did AI not sell its inventory through online travel agents.

Several Twitter users then pointed out that the Air India website was down and the ticket purchase was not going through.

AI will operate 300 flights to North America, Canada and Europe from June 9 to June 30, 2020 under the third phase of Vande Bharat Mission.

AI has in Phase I operated 64 flights and evacuated 12,708 Indians.

In phase 2, till date 290 flights and 52,113 Indians have been brought home.

ED employees, including a spl director rank officer, test coronavirus positive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five Enforcement Directorate (ED) employees, including a special director rank officer, have tested positive for Covid-19, following which the headquarters of the Central anti-money laundering agency has been sealed for 48 hours till Monday.

Out of the five infected personnel, two persons are contract employees. The employees were found infected after the ED carried out section-wise testing at its headquarters in the wake of some Covid-19 cases being reported from other floors of the Lok Nayak Bhawan in the upscale Khan Market area here, where the agency office is located, the officials said on Saturday.

All the ED employees who were found infected with the

pandemic after "proactive testing" are asymptomatic, officials said.

The employees who have tested positive include a special director rank officer and an investigating officer. All of them have been admitted to isolation facilities at a designated hospital for treatment.

After detailed contact tracing, people who came in contact with the infected personnel have been quarantined.

As per procedure, the headquarters of the agency have been sealed for 48 hours and are expected to resume operations on Monday, the officials said.

The affected employees have not been coming to office since they tested positive, they said.

In order to check the spread of the viral infection, a

protocol has been put in place for sanitising the ED headquarters twice a week and all documents. "Daak" (post) is sanitised before it is handed over to officers and other staff of the agency, they added.

An ED employee had tested positive for Covid-19 in May also.

The ED is the federal agency mandated to probe money laundering, black money and hawala crimes under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

Earlier, headquarters of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Border Security Force (BSF) located at the CGO Complex here were sealed after detection of Covid positive cases in the respective Forces' ranks.

Min dispels notion about barrier-free trade in farm sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Government targeting the Centre over an ordinance which allows barrier-free trade in the farm sector, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Saturday asserted that the ordinance would not violate the spirit of federal structure in any way. The Union Minister also slammed people who create "illusions" over the minimum support price (MSP) for foodgrain and said the assured price to farmers would continue.

The Union Minister's statement came a day after Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh dubbed the ordinance as "violation" of the federal structure. The Chief Minister had also warned that it could pave the way for disbanding the MSP regime as well as the foodgrain procurement regime, triggering unrest among the state's farmers.

The Centre on Friday notified two key ordinances to kick in agriculture reforms and help farmers trade freely and fetch better prices.

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020 allows barrier-free trade in agriculture produce outside the notified APMC (Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees) mandis.

It proposes to bar state governments from imposing taxes on sale and purchase of farm produce undertaken outside the mandis and give farmers the freedom to sell their produce at remunerative prices.

Whereas the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020 empowers farmers to engage with processors, aggregators, wholesalers, large retailers and exporters through advanced agreements on pre-agreed prices.

Employment for migrants should be top priority for ruling NDA: Chirag

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Janshakti Party president Chirag Paswan on Saturday said that employment for migrants, who have returned to Bihar from across the country, should be the top priority for the ruling NDA as it prepares for the State Assembly polls.

With some of his comments seen to be critical of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led Government, Paswan said he never doubted Kumar's intentions but there have been "shortcomings" which he as an honest ally has highlighted. "Nitish ji emerged as an

alternative to jungle raaj and was known as 'vikas purush'. But, yes, there have been shortcomings. I am not levelling allegations but offering suggestions for improvement as an honest ally," he told PTI.

Paswan said the Bihar government's handling of the migrant crisis, triggered by the nationwide lockdown to curb COVID-19, "could have been better" and counted law and order as a concern, saying serious crimes like murder and robbery have been rising.

The Lok Sabha MP from Jamui in Bihar called for a common minimum programme to

guide the NDA government in case it retains power.

The assembly elections in Bihar are due in October-November.

Employment, especially for its migrant population, health and education should be the top priorities for the NDA, Paswan said.

Asserting that the opposition alliance, which includes the RJD and Congress, is not in a position to pose any serious challenge to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, he said the saffron combine may win more than 225 of the state's 243 assembly seats.

NIA arrests one in Naval spy case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Saturday arrested an accused terror funding conspirator in the infamous Visakhapatnam espionage case in which 11 Indian Navy personnel allegedly leaked sensitive information to Pakistan's spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

Abdul Rehman Abdul Jabbar Sheikh, 53, a resident of Mumbai, was involved in the terror funding along with his arrested wife Shaista Qaiser and others, an official spokesman said.

During the search of his house, a number of digital devices and incriminating documents were seized by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) which took over the case in December last year, he said.

The Indian intelligence agencies had busted the espionage racket linked to Pakistan in December last year.

The NIA arrested Mohammed Haroon Haji Abdul Rehman Lakdawala, a resident of Mumbai, last month. A probe found that he was one of the "key conspirators" in the case.

With the arrest of Sheikh, as many as 15 accused have so far been arrested, including the 11 Navy personnel, Pakistan-born Indian national Qaiser and her associates.

ISI recruits agents in India for collecting sensitive and classified information regarding locations and movements of Indian naval ships and submarines, and other defence establishments along with their deployment pattern.

"Investigation revealed that a few Navy personnel came in contact with Pakistani nationals through various social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, and were involved in sharing classified information in lieu of monetary gains. The money was deposited into the bank accounts of the Navy personnel through Indian associates having business interests in Pakistan," the NIA had said in a statement last month.



WHO favours wider use of face masks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after maintaining that there was not enough evidence to suggest that healthy individuals should wear masks and encouraged the use of medical face masks only by those who were sick or caring for the sick, the World Health Organisation on Friday did a U-turn by recommending wider use of face masks.

The guidelines issued by the WHO on Friday said that people aged 60 years and above, and those with underlying conditions are recommended to wear a face mask in situations where physical distancing is not possible.

The new guidelines also advise use of medical masks for all people who are working in clinical areas of health facilities in areas with the widespread transmission, and not



Based on new research and evidence, the WHO also advises that fabric masks should consist of at least three layers of different materials

only healthcare workers who deal with Covid-19 patients. "That means, for example, when a doctor is doing a ward

round on the cardiology or palliative care units where there are no confirmed Covid-19 patients, they should still wear a medical mask," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a virtual press conference.

For people who are in areas of widespread transmission, "In light of evolving evi-

dence, WHO advises that Governments should encourage the general public to wear masks where there is widespread transmission and physical distancing is difficult," Tedros said while introducing the new guidance.

Based on new research and evidence, the WHO also advises that fabric masks should consist of at least three layers of different materials. At the same time, WHO also warned that masks are not a replacement for social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene - and all measures should be strictly followed to keep the risk of Covid-19 transmission at bay. The cornerstone of the response in every country must be to find, isolate, test and care for every case, and to trace and quarantine every contact," Tedros stressed.

Bee biz may be on track with easing curbs

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Stung by the Coronavirus pandemic-triggered restrictions, quarantine requirements and border closures, beekeepers are now, as the lockdown eases gradually, exploring ways on how to move their bee boxes from one place to another across the country.

While the tough regulations have already disrupted their earnings particularly of those engaged in exports, it also suggests that their bees could not be fed as usual on seasonal flowers, neither will they pollinate this summer, warn experts.

Gopinathan Maheswaran, scientist with Birds section of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) said that the Covid-19 lockdown presented a peculiar problem for the beekeepers and the bees. "As countries went into extended lockdowns, movement of non-

essential vehicles also came to a standstill. In India, the restrictions made it difficult for the farmers to move the huge number of beehive boxes from one State to another or even within the States. As a result, the bees are starving to death."

He explained that during the summer months between February and July, farmers, especially in Northern India, go from one state to the other with their bee boxes to feed the bees (Apis indica) on seasonal flowers of mango and litchi trees.

"Bees feed on the flower honey for nutrition and farmers sell the honey the insects store in their hives. The bees also help pollinate the mango and litchi trees, thereby increasing the production of these two cash fruit crops, and also a variety of other plants," he said in a report published in Nature India recently.

In India, there are more than 9,698 government-registered entities - individuals, societies, firms, companies and a few self-help groups who are engaged in beekeeping. A whopping 15,59,771 registered bee colonies are spread across various states in the country. Rakesh Kumar, chief consultant with Lucknow-based Golden Hive Products talked about challenges faced by those selling their products in local market as abroad. "With all their movements' restricted inter-state and intra-state, many apiaries were trapped in areas which had nothing to offer to the bees. Many apiaries were left with none to care for them for an extended period of time. Though bee keeping was under essential services, it was not easy for the farmers to take up the risk in view of mandatory quarantine period and scare spread all across the country.

"As a result, the strength of the bees depleted. Lots of beekeepers were unable to migrate their apiaries to different regions as per their planned movement calendar and lost on honey production. The inability to do anything in the face of looming crisis was indeed stressful."

Satinder Singh, a small time beekeeper from Punjab too said that they could not travel across State lines to move the hives around and feed them. "As the temperature increases, we have to shift the bee boxes to the shade" otherwise they will die from the heat, he said. Rakesh Kumar pointed out that even though lockdown has eased, seven days compulsory quarantine period cross-border will add up to the input cost, even as natives of the respective states are also not keen welcoming the outsiders, unlike earlier, fearing Covid-19 spread.

With 1,458 testing +ve TN breaches 30K mark

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

A day after the State's top bureaucrat expressed his reservations and apprehensions about the approach of the administration in managing the Covid-19 pandemic, Tamil Nadu saw 1,458 persons (highest number till date) testing positive for coronavirus on Saturday.

This took the total number of covid-19 cases tested positive in the State till date to 30,152. The State Government in its medical bulletin issued on Saturday evening put the total number of covid-19 active cases in Tamil Nadu on 13,503. But if the number of deaths are any indication, there are fear among medical fraternity that things are going out of control in the State.

The death toll in Tamil Nadu reached 251 on Saturday as 19 persons breathed their last on a single day. This is the highest number of deaths in a single day due to the pandemic.

The Government claimed in the bulletin that 15,389 persons were tested on a single day. Till date, 5,50,643 samples have been tested in Tamil Nadu. The day also saw 633 getting discharged from the hospitals fully cured while till date a total of 16,395 persons have been discharged all over the State.

Chennai, with its narrow lanes and cramped homes, continued to top the table of districts in the State with highest positive cases- 1,146. The metropolis has tested 20,993 positive cases till date, said the bulletin. Thiruvallur, Chengalpattu, Cuddalore and Kancheepuram are closely following the city of Chennai with high number of covid patients.

K Shanmugam, Chief secretary of Tamil Nadu has told the Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner G Prakash that there are gaps in the approach to manage the Covid-19 pandemic and there is a need to dynamically "revise the strategy".

Adding to the woes of the government of Tamil Nadu are reports appearing in local media about the severe shortage of staff in the government run hospitals to take care of the covid patients. "More patients are getting admitted to hospitals late. We are increasing more wards and hence we need more manpower," a government doctor has been quoted of saying.

Seriousness of the covid pandemic in Chennai could be understood as three judges of the Madras High Court have been afflicted with the pandemic. J Anbazhagan, the DMK's volatile MLA has been admitted to a corporate hospital in Chennai as he was diagnosed with Covid-19 pandemic. Chief Minister Palaniswamy, DMK Chief M K Stalin and party's senior leaders are keeping track of the health status of the DMK leader who is on ventilator support.

Kerala sees 108 more infections

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

The acclaimed Kerala strategy in containing covid-19 has come under the scanner as the general public in the State is upset over reports of the renewed vigour with which the pandemic has come back to haunt the people. On Friday 111 persons were tested positive for covid-19 while Saturday saw 108 persons testing positive in the State.

The State which had declared in the first week of May that it has managed to flatten the coronavirus is faced with the unenviable task of managing the pandemic which is on the rise again. On Saturday, the number of hotspots in the state shot up to 138.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan who opted out from briefing the media on Saturday had warned on Friday that things are going out of control in the State. "Situation has turned serious in the State.



This is the first time the State sees the number of positive cases crossing hundred on a single day," Vijayan had said on Friday.

Dr Ranjit Vijayahari, lead physician keeping track of the progress of the coronavirus in Kerala said the hike in number of positive cases could be the result of ramping up of testing in the State.

"Moreover the number of people afflicted with covid could be due to the spurt in the return of West Asia based expatriates as well as those from outside the State," said Dr Vijayahari. He also said that the recent developments in the State which saw a Christian priest succumbing to the pandemic signalled the beginning of community transmission.

"The source from where the priest developed the infection remains undetected. If we fail to find out the source of the infection, it is proof of community transmission," he said.

3 die, 143 more test +ve in J&K

PNS ■ JAMMU

Three coronavirus positive patients died, one in Jammu and two in Kashmir valley, while a total number of 143 cases tested positive on Saturday taking the total tally of cases to 3,467 and active cases to 2,302 in Jammu & Kashmir.

According to official sources, "a 62-year-old woman from Kharian village in Miran Sahib, area of Jammu district, died due to coronavirus at the Government Medical College Jammu on Saturday morning". According to the hospital records, the woman was admitted in the hospital on May 24 while two patients died in Kashmir. Unconfirmed reports claimed another elderly man from Baghat Barzulla Srinagar died due to Covid-19 infection at JLN Rainawari Hospital Saturday evening.

According to the media bulletin, 43 cases were reported from Jammu division while 100 cases were reported from

Kashmir division. Moreover, 40 more COVID-19 patients were recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 15 from Jammu division and 25 from Kashmir division.

According to the media bulletin, out of 3467 positive cases, 2302 are Active Positive, 1126 have recovered and 39 have died; 05 in Jammu division and 34 in Kashmir division.

According to the media bulletin, more than 51 percent of total positive cases have been detected across five districts of Anantnag, Baramulla, Srinagar, Kulgam and Kupwara.

Out of 3467 cases, these districts have recorded 1769 positive cases so far.

In Kashmir valley, out of 100 positive cases, Shopian district reported a maximum number of 64 cases followed by Baramulla with 14 fresh cases.

Jammu district has so far reported 200 positive cases followed by Ramban with 168 cases and Udhampur with 129 cases.

Mosques, churches to remain shut for now in Goa

Panaji: Mosques in Goa will continue to remain shut at least till June 30 and even churches in the coastal state will not reopen on June 8, even though Chief Minister Pramod Sawant had given the go-ahead for reopening of religious places as per Central Government guidelines.

Association of All Goa Muslim Jamaats President Shaikh Bashir Ahmed said the decision to continue with closure of mosques was taken due to a sudden spike in coronavirus cases in the state.

"In Goa, since June 1, corona positive cases have been on the rise. We have touched almost 196 cases (including those who are cured) in the past one week and it is an alarming spike in cases," a statement issued by the Association said.

"We have decided to delay the reopening of all masjids in the state till June 30 for the safety of members of our community and society," the statement added, urging mosque committee members to ensure closure of mosques to prevent community transmission.

Goa's Roman Catholic Church's Diocesan Centre for Social Communications media wing said: "We would like to inform our priests and faithful that we are critically assessing the coronavirus-related situation... therefore, we are not in a position to declare our places of worship open from June 8."

"When we eventually decide to open up, with prudence, vigilance and careful discernment, it will be in consonance with the state government's SOPs, which we expect to receive by then," the statement added.

Catholic and Muslims account for nearly a third of the state's 1.5 million population. The state has 130 active cases at present, including nearly two third from South Goa's Vasco town.

On Friday, Sawant had said that places of worship could open on June 8, provided no mass gatherings or group prayers were held on their premises. IANS

378 new cases take K'taka's tally to 5,213

Bengaluru: Karnataka registered 378 Covid-19 cases in the past 24 hours, breaching the 5,000-mark to settle at 5,213, said an official, here on Saturday. "New cases reported from Friday 5 p.m. to Saturday 6 p.m. is 378," said a health official.

Of the new cases, 333 are local returnees, comprising 88 per cent of the new infections. Returnees from Maharashtra accounted for 99 per cent new cases at 329.

Majority infections in Karnataka nowadays are returnees, mostly from the state's northern neighbour. Only 27 new infections were contacts of earlier cases.

On Saturday, cases spiked in Udipi, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Bengaluru Urban, Belagavi, Vijayapura, Davangere and

Dakshina Kannada. Udipi witnessed the highest number of cases (121), followed by Yadgir (103), Kalaburagi (69), Dakshina Kannada (24), Bengaluru Urban (18), Vijayapura and Davangere (6 each), Belagavi (5), Gadag (4), Mandya, Hassan, Dharwad and Haveri (3 each), Raichur, Chikkaballapura and Uttara Kannada (2 each) and Bidar, Tumkur, Kolar and Koppal (1 each).

Among the new cases, three patients from Bengaluru Urban are suffering from Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and another from Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI). There were seven cases with international travel history to United Arab Emirates (UAE) and one to Turkey. IANS

Conspiracy against Indian system of medicine in Kerala?

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

The unabated increase in the number of Covid-19 pandemic in India could not more be attributed to the 'disregard' and 'scant respect' shown by the people of the country but only due to the ego complex and hunger for power among a group of bureaucrats and practitioners of modern medicine, according to seasoned and highly venerated physicians belonging to the modern medicine and Indian system of medicine stream.

Though a drug with protocol for treatment of Covid-19 was submitted to the Ministry of Ayush on April 15 this year by a medical research team led by Dr PR Krishnakumar of Coimbatore, the Ministry has not bothered to consider the proposal.

Despite thousands dying per day because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the number of patients increasing by the hour, the Ministry or the department of Ayush which has been constituted by the Central Government to promote the Indian system of medicine has not bothered to put for clinical trials the Ayurvedic drug developed by Dr Krishnakumar and his research team.

Adding insult to injury, the Ayush department of Kerala has banned the practitioners of Indian system of medicine from attending to Covid-19 patients.

A Kerala Government order issued by the Secretary (Ayush) dated June 1, 2020 mandates that "all patients with symptoms such as fever, cough, headache and respiratory tract infections should be referred to

Modern Medicine Hospitals in accordance with the protocols of Health Department".

The Government Order further states that all inpatient therapies requiring physical contact may be avoided. Interestingly, the Secretary (Ayush) in the Kerala Government is Dr Sharmila Mary Joseph, a MBBS graduate turned IAS officer.

"This is yet another proof of the conspiracy by vested interests against the Indian System of Medicine, especially the Ayurvedic stream," said Dr CV Krishnaswamy, eminent physician and diabetologist who strongly believes that Ayurveda is the answer to the covid-19 pandemic. Dr Krishnaswamy, a widely respected medical scientist because of his acumen and expertise in treating Type 2 Diabetics.

Dr P R Krishnakumar, a globally respected Ayurvedic physician, whose advice is sought by countries in Europe and other Asian nations is shocked over the callousness being shown by 'babus' in New Delhi towards Ayurveda. "The Indian Council of Medical Research has been monopolised by modern medicine specialists. How can medical experts with no knowledge about Ayurveda preside over meetings to decide the fate of this branch of medicine? It takes six years of hard work and perseverance for a person to graduate as an Ayurvedic practitioner. Even after emerging as a practitioner, his/her studies do not end. It is a lifelong study," said Dr Krishnakumar from Coimbatore.

Both Dr Krishnakumar and Dr Krishnaswamy are not surprised by the ever growing number of covid patients in India. "The Government should understand that there is no ready made medicine available in modern medicine and a vaccine materialising in the near future looks bleak," said Dr Krishnaswamy.

Dr PLT Girija, Ayurvedic physician said the term clinical trial was alien to the Ayurvedic system. "Clinical trials are to test the possibility of adverse reaction of a medicine. If the medicine given to a patient causes adverse drug reaction, it is not chikilsa (treatment)," said Dr Girija whose clinic has no dearth of any covid-19 patients whom she cures like a mother does to her kids.

Dr Krishnakumar is of the view that the day is not far off when India would reach the top of the hill, boasting of the highest number of covid-19 patients.

Kerala expects most migrant workers to return

IANS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Since May 1, when the first train carrying migrant labourers left Kerala, 132 trains have carried 1,82,072 stranded workers to various states. On Friday, three more trains left Kerala with workers.

A Kerala labour official told IANS some of those who returned had expressed their wish to return. "Calls have come from Bihar, Jharkhand and a few other states from the migrant labourers who returned. They want to return as things have changed and work has begun in Kerala," said the labour official.

At the height of the lockdown, over 3.80 lakh migrant labourers were housed at 18,000 camps, manned by the Labour Department along with the district administration. The workers were provided free food and recreation facilities at these camps.

The Labour Department is not running any labour camp any more and is trying to put on trains those labourers who wanted to return to their home states.

Also, the state government is busy bringing back Kerala's stranded in various states and who have registered on the Norka-Roots web portal.

A leading builder here told

IANS as the construction work had resumed, workers staying at its accommodations were being deployed.

A labour contractor who supplies migrant workers to various firms told IANS it was natural for all to return home when there were issues.

He said according to information, these migrant labourers were being asked to return to the states they were working in by their family members and village heads.

"The situation in many states is not as good as in Kerala. People who have left will definitely return," said the contractor.

In Kerala, while most migrant labourers get around Rs 700 a day, back home it's much less. Also, the state government has started a few schemes, like Awaaz and Apna Ghar, for the migrant labourers.

Under Awaaz, which is an insurance scheme, the state government pays the premium on the migrant labourers' behalf. On enrolment to the scheme, the labourer gets a chip-based card, which carries all his/her details.

Under the Apna Ghar scheme, labourers are provided houses for the rent of Rs 1,000 a month. The first scheme was started in Palakkad, where 620 migrant labourers were put up in flats.

Catholic Cardinal wants people above 65 years to be permitted in church

Thiruvananthapuram: On the eve of easing of lockdown norms, starting from Monday, when the places of worship are to be thrown open to public, the decision to not allow those aged above 65 years, has left the former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India disappointed over the decision.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Cardinal Moran Mar Baselios Cleemis Catholicos, head of the capital city headquartered Syro Malankara Catholic Church, wished that the decision would allow all to come to the Church, when everything else is now opened.

"Today the situation is, following the easing of lockdown norms, shops, malls, restaurants, liquor vendors all have opened, but there is a restriction on places of worship, especially with the cap on above 65 years age, which is not fair," said the 60-year-old Cardinal.

"We are ready to make special arrangements for such people when they come to the Church by even earmarking a special time for them," added the Cardinal who had cast his vote for electing the present Pope Francis.

He also pointed out that following the restrictions imposed during Covid times, all adhered to the directives including the Church. "We served the 'holy communion' in the hands and not in the mouth," added the Cardinal when elevated to the post eight years back was one of the youngest. IANS

B'luru temples, mosque sanitise premises before reopening

Bengaluru: In view of the return of devotees after a gap of more than two months to pay obeisance, officials at different religious places in the city are cleaning and sanitising their premises.

These included the Venkateshwara Temple at Rajaji Nagar, Jain Temple at Jaya Nagar, and Jamia mosque at Kalasipalam New Extension.

At the Venkateshwara Temple, the priests could be seen spraying disinfectant on Navagraha idols covered with leaves in the sanctum.

Wearing masks, three other priests were cleaning the idols with their hands as one sprayed a sanitiser.

Similarly, the temple has got the floor stickered to help devotees maintain physical distance.

Similarly, Congress MLA Sowmya Reddy helped sanitise Jaya Nagar Jain Temple. The Jaya Nagar legislator sprayed the temple's interiors with a sanitiser.

Likewise, officials at Jamia Mosque in Kalasipalyam also got the premises sanitised. A disinfectant tunnel has also been set up at the mosque entrance. IANS

Maha: 120 more die, 2,739 test +ve

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

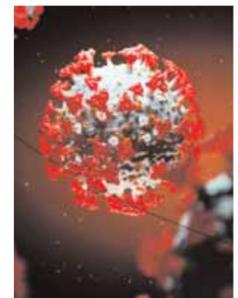
With no let up in the worsening coronavirus situation in Maharashtra, as many as 120 more people succumbed to the pandemic and 2,739 others tested positive for Covid-19 in various parts of the State on Saturday.

With fresh deaths and infections, the total number of deaths mounted to 2,969 and the total number of infected cases rose to 82,968 in the state.

Having taken into consideration the total 2,969 deaths and 37,390 patients discharged from various hospitals ever since the outbreak of pandemic in the state, the state health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the State at 42,600.

Of the deaths reported on Saturday, Mumbai accounted for 58, while there were 10 deaths each in Thane and Pune, six deaths each in Navi Mumbai and Ulhasnagar, five deaths each in Mira-Bhayandar, Nashik and Satara, three deaths in Bhiwandi, two deaths each in Malegaon, Solapur, Aurangabad, Akola and Amravati and one death each in Vasai-Virar and Palghar.

With 58 new deaths and 1,274 fresh infections, the total



there were 105 deaths on May 27, 85 deaths on May 28, 116 deaths on May 29 and 99 deaths on May 30, 89 deaths on May 31, 76 on June 1, 103 on June 2, 122 on June 3, 123 on June 4, 139 on June 5 and 120 on June 6.

Some key observations made in Saturday's bulletin are: the recovery rate in the state is 45.06 per cent and case fatality rate in the state is 3.57 per cent.

Currently, 5,46,566 people are in home quarantine. There are 75,741 beds available in quarantine institutions while 29,098 people are in institutional quarantine now.

Out of the total deaths reported today, 30 deaths occurred in the last two days and the rest are from the period 3 rd May to 3 rd June 2020.

As many as 85 laboratories are functional in the state for Covid-19 diagnosis - 47 government ones and 38 private ones.

Out of 5,37,124 samples sent for laboratory, 82,968 have tested positive for Covid-19 until Saturday. There are 3603 active containment zones in the state currently. Total 18,422 surveillance squads worked across the State on Saturday and surveillance of 69.82 lakh people has been done so far.

LAC parleys...

From Page 1
At this stage, therefore, any speculative and unsubstantiated reporting about these engagements would not be helpful and the media is advised to refrain from such reporting, they said.

As of now, the Chinese have deployed more than 5,000 troops at the various stand-off sites in a frontage of 20 to 30 km. Moreover, the Chinese have also intruded more than three kms into the Hot Springs area in the Galwan valley. They have pitched tents and constructed barracks and bunkers.

With China adopting an aggressive stance on the LAC in the last one month triggering eyeball to eyeball confrontations, India is deter-

mined that the withdrawal has to be mutual and simultaneous. Moreover, the China should also pull back its artillery and heavy armour which was brought forward thereby further aggravating the situation, sources said adding situation should return to pre-May period. China tried to re-define its claim line on the LAC by intruding into the Indian territory in first week of May.

Also, India says the Chinese military is hindering normal patrolling by its troops along the LAC in Ladakh and Sikkim, and strongly refutes Beijing's contention that the escalating tension between the two armies was triggered by trespassing of Indian forces across the Chinese side.

As 3 quit, Cong herds its Guj...

From Page 1
The polls were deferred due to the coronavirus-driven lockdown.

With the reduced strength at 65, the Congress may find it difficult to win two Rajya Sabha seats for which it has fielded senior leaders Bharatsinh Solanki and Shaktisinh Gohil.

A party MLA said Solanki remains the second preference after Gohil, and that they will vote as per the directive of the party on June 19.

Congress has accused the ruling BJP of adopting means like "blackmailing, threatening or using money to poach its MLAs".

"In each case, we can see how these people in power are either offering money or positions or blackmailing MLAs to make them resign. It is clear these (three) MLAs were bought over with crores of rupees," he said.

The BJP, which has 103 MLAs in the Assembly, has fielded Abhay Bhardwaj, Ramlaben Bara, and Narhari Amin for the June 19 polls.

While the Bharatiya Tribal Party has two MLAs, NCP has one legislator and there is one Independent legislator, Jignesh Mevani.

Pregnant woman dies in 13-hour abortive hunt...

From Page 1
On Friday, the hospital refused to admit her and then they were forced to run from one facility to another, he added.

"We first went to the ESI hospital. Thereafter, we went to a hospital in Sector 30 (the Child PGD), from there we went to the Sharda Hospital and then to the Government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) in Greater Noida. But all refused to admit her," the man is seen alleging in a video circulating on social media.

He said the family also tried to get admission in the private facility Jaypee, Fortis Hospital in Gautam Buddh Nagar and Max in Vaishali, Ghaziabad, but were allegedly told that no beds were available.

"Kul mila ke humari ambulance mein hi death ho gayi (ultimately, she died in the ambulance). Finally, we got to the GIMS where she was put on a ventilator but it was too late," he said.

Gautam Buddh Nagar District Magistrate Suhals L Y ordered a probe into the episode. "Additional DM Munindra Nath Upadhyay and Chief Medical Officer Deepak Ohri will probe the matter. The DM has instructed them to immediately carry out a probe and take action," an official statement said. This is at least the second instance within a fortnight when a life has been lost in Gautam Buddh Nagar due to unavailability of timely medical treatment.

On the night of May 25, a newborn child had died due to lack of medical support as his father kept running from one hospital to another between Greater Noida and Noida.

Three Kashmiri youths counselled against joining terrorists' ranks

Srinagar: Timely intervention by security forces and counselling of three youths from Tral, including a teenager, helped authorities persuade them against joining militant ranks in Jammu and Kashmir and arrest two 'sympathisers' of terrorists.

Sources said that police had received secret information that some youths at Tral in south Kashmir's Pulwama district were on the verge of joining a terror outfit. Police said the trio had contacted terrorists active in their area through two sympathisers who have since been arrested. Security forces acted swiftly and rounded up Ilyas Amin Wani, 21, Abrar Ahmad Reshi, 17, both residents of Mandoor village in Tral, and Ubaid Ahmad Shah, 19, of Shaldraman village in Tral.

The three youths were taken to Tral police station, counselled against joining terrorists' ranks, and later handed over to their parents.

Meanwhile, Rizwan Ahmad Wani and Rayees Ahmad Chopan of Mandoor village were arrested on charge of motivating the Kashmiri youth to join terrorists' ranks. IANS

Protesters support Black Lives Matter on 3 continents

Berlin: Thousands of people rallied in Australia and Europe to honour George Floyd and to voice support on Saturday for what is becoming an international Black Lives Matter movement, as a worldwide wave of solidarity with protests over the death of a black man in Minneapolis highlights racial discrimination outside the United States.

Demonstrators in Paris tried to gather in front of the U.S. Embassy in Paris, defying restrictions imposed by authorities because of the coronavirus pandemic. They were met by riot police who turned people on their way to the embassy, which French security forces sealed off behind an imposing ring of metal barriers and road blocks.

"You can fine me 10,000 or 20,000 times, the revolt will happen anyway," Egountchi Behanzin, a founder of the Black African Defense League, told officers who stopped him to check his ID documents before he got close to the diplomatic building. "It is because of you that we are here."

Pamela Carper, who joined an afternoon protest at London's Parliament Square that headed towards the U.K. Home Office, which oversees the country's police, said she was demonstrating to show "solidarity for the people of America who have suffered



A woman kneels during a Black Lives Matter rally in London on Saturday

AP

for too long."

The British government urged people not to gather in large numbers and police have warned that mass demonstrations could be unlawful. In England, for example, gatherings of more than six people are not permitted.

Carper said the coronavirus had "no relevance" to her attendance and noted that she had a mask on.

"I am showing the government that I am heeding to

their rules and everybody is staying away," Carper said. "But I need to be here because the government is the problem. The government needs to change." In Sydney, protesters won a last-minute appeal against a Friday ruling declaring their rally unauthorised. The New South Wales Court of Appeal gave the green light just 12 minutes before the rally was scheduled to start, meaning those taking part could not be arrested.

Up to 1,000 protesters had already gathered in the Town Hall area of downtown Sydney ahead of the decision. Floyd, a black man, died in handcuffs on May 25 while a Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee on his neck even after he pleaded for air and stopped moving. His death has struck a chord with minorities protesting discrimination elsewhere, including deaths of indigenous Australians in custody. AP

Minneapolis, California move to end Police neck restraints

ANENY ■
LOS ANGELES/MINNESOTA

The Minneapolis City Council on Friday voted to end use of chokeholds and neck restraints like that used by a white police officer who pressed his knee into the neck of unarmed black man George Floyd on May 25, sparking coast-to-coast protests.

In California, Governor Gavin Newsom said he would end state police training in carotid restraints similar to the technique used on Floyd by former Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin while three officers stood by and watched as Floyd died after pleading for his life.

The Minneapolis police fired all four officers, and they have been charged with murder. The incident has communities across the United States reconsidering use of such restraints.

The Minneapolis decision came in response to a Minnesota state human rights complaint against the city. In a proposed court order that must be approved by a judge, the Minneapolis City Council said it would ban all chokeholds and

neck holds, and require any member of the police department to immediately report any unauthorized use of force by an officer.

"Black, Indigenous, and communities of color have suffered generational pain and trauma as a result of systemic and institutional racism and long-standing problems in policing," said the proposed order which the council approved unanimously.

San Diego County in California this week also banned the carotid restraint, in which an officer blocks the flow of blood to a detainee's brain, leading to unconsciousness. Newsom said he supports legislation to ban use of the technique in local police departments throughout California.

"At the end of the day the carotid hold is literally designed to stop people's blood from flowing into their brain," Newsom said. "That has no place any longer."

Many police departments have ended the use of so-called chokeholds, which put pressure on a detainee's windpipe, but have still allowed carotid restraints.

2 Buffalo police officers charged with assault

Buffalo (US): Two Buffalo police officers were charged with assault Saturday, prosecutors said, after a video showed them shoving a 75-year-old protester in recent demonstrations over the death of George Floyd in Minnesota.

Both pleaded not guilty to second-degree assault. They were released without bail.

The officers had been suspended without pay Friday after a TV crew captured the confrontation the night before near the end of protests.

The footage shows a man identified as Martin Gugino

approaching a line of helmeted officers holding batons as they clear demonstrators from Niagara Square around the time of an 8 p.m. Curfew.

Two officers push Gugino backward, and he hits his head on the pavement. Blood spills as officers walk past. One officer leans down to check on the injured man before another officer urges the colleague to keep walking.

Dozens of police officers stepped down from the department's crowd control unit Friday, in response to their fellow officers' suspensions. AP



People raise their fists during a rally in Las Vegas

AP

4 soldiers killed in helicopter crash in Indonesia

Semarang: An Indonesian army helicopter crashed on the main island of Java on Saturday, killing four of the nine people on board, officials said.

The Russian-made MI17 helicopter was carrying nine soldiers on a training mission when it went down and burst into flames in Central Java province's Kendal district about an hour after taking off from the provincial capital, Semarang, said army spokesman Brig. Gen. Nefra Firdaus.

In addition to the four who were killed, five others were hospitalized with serious injuries after managing to escape the wreckage, Firdaus said in a statement.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known. "The helicopter was flying very low and getting lower



until it crashed with a very loud sound," Eka, a witness, was quoted as saying by Kompas TV. "Two passengers escaped before it crashed, and after that there were three or four explosions." Indonesia, a sprawling archipelago nation of about 270 million people, has been plagued by transportation accidents in recent years, including plane crashes and ferry sinkings.

The military, which suffers from low funding, has also regularly suffered airplane and helicopter crashes. AP

Taiwanese voters oust mayor who sought presidency

Taipei (Taiwan): Voters in the Taiwanese port city of Kaohsiung on Saturday ousted their mayor, whose failed bid for the presidency on behalf of the China-friendly Nationalist Party earlier this year brought widespread disapproval among residents.

The number of votes to recall Han Kuo-yu far exceeded the 574,996 needed to remove him. Han accepted the result in a statement to supporters and media after the threshold was passed.

But he blamed the media in part for the result, saying he had been subjected to "constant smears, rumours and attacks." He has one week to leave office, unless he decides to appeal.

The success of the recall vote — Taiwan's first — was hailed by commentators as the latest sign of politicians being held accountable in the island's robust democracy.

It is also a further blow to the Nationalists, who moved

their government to the island after Mao Zedong's Communists swept to power in mainland China in 1949.

The party's continued association with China's demand for eventual unification between the sides has continuously hurt it at the polls, but a failure to generate popular candidates has also resulted in recent major defeats.

The measure to remove Han needed the support of 25 per cent of the city's more than 2 million eligible voters. Just over 22,000 voted to oppose his recall. Han won a surprise victory in 2018 in what had long been a stronghold of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party, which rejects China's demand that it recognize Taiwan as a part of China.

His decision to take a leave of absence to seek the presidency just months after taking office drew heavy criticism and a petition campaign was launched to seek his recall. Han was blasted for his

contacts with China's ruling Communist Party and lost in January's presidential election to DPP incumbent Tsai Ing-wen by a whopping 57% to 38%, with a third-party candidate taking the remaining percentage. Strong Taiwanese disapproval of the heavy crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory of Hong Kong and questions about how Han had acquired expensive properties on his modest civil servant's salary also helped Tsai to the landslide win.

China has shunned Tsai since shortly after her 2016 inauguration, shutting the already diplomatically isolated island out of international forums and stepping up its threat to conquer the island by military force. She has, however, received strong support from the Trump administration amid sharply deteriorating relations between Beijing and Washington. AP

Separate attacks kill 14 Afghan forces in Kabul, northeast

AP ■ KABUL

Two separate militant attacks killed 14 Afghan security personnel on Saturday in the northeastern Badakhshan province and the capital of Kabul, officials said.

A roadside bomb killed 11 security force members in Badakhshan when it tore through a security vehicle responding to attacks on checkpoints in Khash district.

Sanaullah Rohani, spokesman for Badakhshan's provincial police chief, said a local commander was among the dead, and that four militants were killed in the fighting.

An hour-long gunbattle also erupted in Kabul's Gul Dara district when insurgents attacked a police checkpoint, killing three police officers, said Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian.

Both Afghan officials said

the Taliban had carried out the attacks, although no one immediately claimed responsibility. The Taliban on Saturday claimed an attack a day earlier that killed 10 policemen in the southern Zabul province. Afghan government officials said the Taliban ambushed an Afghan police convoy on Friday after setting off a roadside bomb.

US forces had carried out two sets of airstrikes Friday against the Taliban in western and southern Afghanistan. These were the first U.S. strikes following a brief cease-fire declared by the insurgents for a major Muslim holiday last month.

Since the signing of a US-Taliban peace agreement at the end of February, U.S. forces have only once before announced a strike against the Taliban, in defense of Afghan forces. AP

Clashes, tear gas in Beirut as protests turn to riots

Beirut: Lebanese riot police fired tear gas at protesters in central Beirut on Saturday, after a planned anti-government demonstration quickly degenerated into rioting and stone-throwing confrontations between opposing camps.

A few thousand demonstrators had gathered in Martyrs' Square hoping to reboot nationwide protests that began late last year amid an unprecedented economic and financial crisis. But tensions and divisions among protesters over the goals of the demonstration quickly became apparent as groups of protesters faced off, with the army standing between them. Scattered groups of protesters arrived in the capital's downtown area, only some of them wearing masks and face shields to protect against the spread of the coronavirus, in response to calls for a centralised protest to press for demands. AP

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Around the Globe

Jakarta: Indonesia reported nearly 1,000 new cases of the coronavirus on Saturday, a new single-day high for the country that brought its total caseload past 30,000, as the government unveiled an enhanced stimulus package worth \$47.6 billion to anchor the virus-battered economy.

Moscow: Russia reported its second-highest one-day death toll from COVID-19 even as the number of new coronavirus infections remained steady.

Washington: Researchers have found that the drug hydroxychloroquine — with or without the antibiotic azithromycin — did not reduce the risk of ventilation or death, and was associated with longer length of hospital stay in COVID-19 patients. The analysis, published in the journal Med, is the first in the US to report data on hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) outcomes for COVID-19 from a nationwide integrated health system.

Kathmandu: Nepal's COVID-19 cases crossed 3,000 on Saturday after a record 323 new infections were detected across the country, while the death toll due to the coronavirus has gone up to 13, according to the health ministry.

New York: The New York State, which has been the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US, has recorded the lowest number of 42 deaths and 2,728 hospitalisations since the pandemic began, Governor Andrew Cuomo has said.

China accords highest level of protection to pangolins

Beijing: China has upgraded the protection of the pangolin, believed to be the intermediate host of the coronavirus, to that of the first-class protected animals on par with the endangered species like giant pandas.

Pangolin meat is viewed as a delicacy in China and its scales are commonly used in traditional Chinese medicines to promote lactation and cure impotence resulting in the massive poaching of the mammal.

The pangolin is also believed to be the world's most trafficked mammal. About one million pangolins are estimated

to have been poached in the last decade, and 20 tonnes of pangolins and their parts are trafficked internationally every year, according to the wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC.

After initially suspecting the snake and the bat for the COVID-19, Chinese scientists believe that the pangolin may be an intermediate host of the novel coronavirus to humans.

The contagion, which has turned into a pandemic resulting in the worst global health crisis, was believed to have been spread from Huanan

seafood wholesale market in Wuhan, the virus' first epicentre which was subsequently closed.

This weekend, China announced to upgrade all species of the pangolin from second-class to first-class protected animals considering their rapidly decreasing numbers due to overhunting and habitat destruction, state-run Global Times reported on Saturday.

Other first-class protected animals include giant pandas, Tibetan antelopes and red-crowned cranes. PTI

Most of 51 new S Korea cases linked to door sales

Seoul: South Korea reported 51 new cases of the coronavirus on Saturday, mostly in the densely populated capital region, as authorities scramble to stem transmissions among low-income workers who can't afford to stay home.

As of Saturday afternoon, at least 42 of the new cases were linked to door-to-door sellers hired by Richway, a Seoul-based health product provider.

Vice Health Minister Kim Gang-lip said the spread of the virus among Richway sellers was particularly alarming as most of them are in their 60s and 70s. He called for officials to strengthen their efforts to find and examine workplaces vulnerable to infections.



At least 130 infections have also been linked to a massive warehouse operated by Coupang, a local e-commerce giant, which has been accused of failing to properly implement preventive measures and having employees work even when sick.

South Korea has now confirmed 11,719 cases, including 273 deaths.

The country was reporting around 500 new cases per day in early March due to a massive outbreak surrounding the southern city of Daegu, before officials managed to stabilize

the situation with aggressive tracking and testing.

But the recent resurgence of COVID-19 in the greater capital area, where about half of South Korea's 51 million people live, is now threatening to erase some of the country's hard-won gains. It has also led to second-guessing whether officials were too quick to ease social distancing and reopen schools.

Health authorities and hospital officials on Friday participated in a table-top exercise for sharing hospital capacities between Seoul and nearby cities and ensure swift transports of patients so that a spike of cases in one area doesn't overwhelm its hospital system. AP

Sri Lanka to reopen for foreign tourists from Aug

Colombo: Sri Lanka is set to welcome back foreign tourists from August under strict measures to boost the tourism sector that has been crippled by the coronavirus pandemic, authorities said on Saturday.

Sri Lanka announced lockdown in mid-March to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

The severest impact was recorded in the tourism sector, with a drop of tourist arrivals by over 70 per cent year-on-year in March.

According to new guidelines, all travellers will be issued a visa valid for 30 days and extendable up to six

months.

"Further relaxation of long stay guests is currently under consideration, enabling tourist to be granted five-year multiple-entry visas with a maximum six-month stay," Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority said.

On COVID-19 measures, the authority said there won't be mandatory quarantine upon arrival unless symptoms are detected.

All travellers would be subject to PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) tests at the airport. The PCR tests reports are to be released in 4-6 hours. PTI

Wear masks in public: WHO's new advice

Geneva, Switzerland: The World Health Organization Friday changed its advice on face masks amid the coronavirus pandemic, saying they should be worn in places where the virus is widespread and physical distancing is difficult.

The use of masks has been a hot topic ever since the pandemic first emerged in China in December.

"In light of evolving evidence, WHO advises that governments should encourage the general public to wear masks where there is widespread transmission and physical distancing is difficult," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

In areas with community-level virus transmission, "we advise that people aged 60 years or over, or those with underlying conditions, should wear a medical mask in situations where physical distancing is not possible", he added.

But the UN health agency stressed that facemasks alone "will not protect you from COVID-19" — and people suffering with the virus should not be out in public if they can avoid it.

The WHO maintained its recommendation that people who are sick with COVID-19 symptoms should stay at home and if it is absolutely necessary for them or their contacts to leave home, they should wear a medical mask.

As before, those caring for an infected person at home should wear a medical mask when in the same room; and health workers should wear medical masks plus protective equipment when dealing with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

But in an update affecting healthcare workers, the WHO now recommends that in areas with widespread virus transmission, all people working in clinical sections of a health facility should wear medical masks — not just those dealing with patients with COVID-19.

The WHO also issued new guidance on the composition of non-medical fabric masks for the general public, advising that they should consist of at least three layers of different material. The inner layer should be made of a water-absorbent material such as cotton, the middle layer — which acts as a filter — from a material like non-woven polypropylene, while the outer layer should be a water-resistant material such as polyester.

The WHO's emergencies director Michael Ryan stressed that putting on a fabric mask is primarily about preventing the wearer from possibly infecting others, rather than self-protection. "It's an altruistic act," he said. And Tedros stressed that

masks were only one part of an effective strategy to suppress the virus — and should not lure people into a false sense of security. He said they were not a replacement for physical distancing and hand hygiene.

"Find, isolate, test and care for every case, and to trace and quarantine every contact. That is what we know works. That is every country's best defence against COVID-19."

The novel coronavirus has infected at least 6.7 million people and killed more than 390,000 since the outbreak first emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP. AP

HOME THEATRE

Lacks thrill factor



MRS SERIAL KILLER
Netflix India
*ing: Manoj Bajpai,
Jacqueline Fernandez, Mohit
Raina, Darshan Jariwala
Rated: 4.5/10

Though it has been just over a month since the film was released, it appears to have caught the imagination of the OTT platform viewers of late. But there are a few things that inherently don't sit well with *Mrs Serial Killer*. First and most important, a defense lawyer telling his client that the only way to prove the innocence of the jailed beloved is to become a copycat killer.

Imagine the consequences and ramifications of such advice. Even if one manages to overlook this bizarre piece of ill-advice, there is the whole backdrop that the film has been shot at.

It is dark, dingy and seedy looking. Why Shirish Kunder? What was it that you were looking for? Is it to tell the viewers that it is a dark movie? The title is a give-away. It is unfortunate that there are few scenes in the entire film that are not shot in the dark. It is more annoying rather than the director trying to be scary and freaking you out that there is a serial killer out there gunning for unwed pregnant girls. Showing a mangled bloody body suspended from chains and six bottles with foetus is nowhere near shocking or worth pucking.

There is a bit on a disconnect as well. While the subject is interesting enough, the subject is far removed from what happens in India. We may have had our share of serial killers — the 2006 Noida serial murders. But these are few and far between. We also

don't want to know that there is a male gynae doctor out to get you.

Then there is Jacqueline Fernandez. This is the second time that we are watching her in a Netflix Original, the first being *Drive*. Here, all she does is either cry or try to pop her eyes like she is shocked but all one will end up doing is roll one's eyes. And what is with the accent?

As for Manoj Bajpai, one hopes that the actor is trying to experiment with different scripts and hence taking up such projects. Otherwise how is it possible for an actor who has been part of films like *Drohkaal*, *Special 26* and *Aligarh* end up doing *Mrs Serial Killer*? It boggles the mind.

Over all, this movie should only be watched if one wants to see the kind of experimenting that is taking place on OTT platforms. — Shalini Sakseena

TELLYTALE

SRK DEBUTS AS SINGER

The king of Bollywood, recently made his debut as a singer with his unique version of *Bella Ciao* for the 'I for India' concert. A concert that was organised to raise awareness and reach out to the masses, taking this opportunity Star Bharat is all set to broadcast the worldwide television premier of the concert from the celebrities' home to yours today at 9 pm.

With 85+ artists coming together for the first-ever virtual concert was a treat to all the Bollywood and Hollywood lovers. Actors, sportspersons and famous artists from all over the entertainment industry have contributed their time and energy to make this fundraiser a successful one.

Amongst the many famous stars, Bollywood's extraordinary star Shahrukh Khan held the mic in and sang the famous tune of *Bella Ciao* in his own unique version. The lyrics of the song highlighted today's scenario with a beautiful message at the end. Sharukh Khan's youngest son Abraham's cameo at the end was also said to be the cutest moment in the song.

The superstar said: "Life is all about chances. Good chances. About hope, compassion & love. And that's what we are here to do on this platform. Share love and compassion, in whatever way we can."

'ACTORS TODAY HAVE IT EASY'

During this crucial phase of social distancing, Zee TV gives its viewers a daily shot of inspiration with the mythological show, *Vishnu Puran*. Based on an ancient collection of stories and scriptures, BR Chopra's *Vishnu Puran* depicts the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Giving a larger than life feel to these incarnations was veteran actor, Nitish Bharadwaj who skillfully essayed his part.

Recollecting memories from the time while Nitish was still shooting for the show, he recalls Lord Parshuram and Lord Ram as the two most challenging characters he had to essay back then.

Adding further about swiftly adapting from one character to another, Nitish commented, "While it was difficult, I manage to step into the characters

easily because I connected and accustomed myself to the character well before I could shoot for it. Before embarking on a new role, I used to rehearse so much that even before the shoots would start, I was well prepared."

Comparing with some of the many challenges that actors face today, Nitish said, "As difficult and challenging it is to portray mythological characters on screen, back in time the challenges dealing with language barriers or the ability to fit into a character were dealt with greater ease. There is no denying the fact that for most of the actors today, the language barrier is real, and they have to work hard to overcome that. Back then, we had to deliver long scenes at one go without having to cut in between. Actors today have it easy, but we overcame most of these challenges with much ease or rather we never considered these factors to be a major challenge."

ASHISH ESCAPED ACCIDENT

When actors decide to take up certain roles which has a set of action sequences, a natural risk of safety is put forth. Ashish Sharma, who is seen in multiple movies and television shows doing his own stunts, shares one such life threatening incident from the sets of *Chandragupt Maurya*.

Recollecting the experience Ashish narrates: "I was on top of a structure that was around 20-30 feet high and I was supposed to swing across on a rope to another building that was around 50 feet away. It was very windy and we couldn't predict its speed. Once I started gliding, I gained greater than the required momentum and slid through much faster than I was supposed to. I almost banged straight into a brick of wall but somehow fortunately due to my quick reflexes managed to avoid the collision with the help of my feet. After the incident, I was hanging mid-air for around 20 minutes till the team managed to get me down safely."

The show talks about how Chandragupta Maurya overcomes several obstacles in his path to establishing the Maurya Empire under the able guidance of his chief advisor, Chanakya. It currently airs on Dangal TV.

Plan Your Stay At Home Week



As sporting events all around the world gear up to get back in action, here is a list of some of the best sports docu-series that you can watch, just to get you into the mood as you brace yourselves for all the excitement that your favourite games will bring.

Cribbs: Footballers Stay Home: *Cribbs: Footballers Stay Home* is a special series adapted for the lockdown era, featuring the homes of famous football players. The series will feature a number of well-known footballers from the biggest leagues in the world, including Arsenal's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and David Luiz, England and Manchester United Midfielder Jesse Lingard, Argentina and Juventus footballer Paulo Dybala, Brazil and Manchester United midfielder Andreas Pereira, Belgian footballing legend Axel Witsel and FIFA 2017 female player of the year, Lieke Martens. Watch the premiere featuring Axel Witsel & Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang at 8:00 pm, every Tuesday on Vh1 India. Streaming on Voot Select.

The Last Dance: The Last Dance showcases the rise of the 1990's Chicago Bulls, led by Michael Jordan, one of the greatest players in the history of the NBA, and arguably the most iconic sporting figure of all times. The documentary features interviews with virtually every important figure in Jordan's career, from his mother, to former teammates, to musicians and stars like Justin Timberlake. Packed with unaired footage from the 1997-98 season the docu-series is undoubtedly one of the best watch of this year. Streaming on Netflix.

Icarus: Like all great documentaries,

Icarus isn't about what it was initially supposed to be about. In this Oscar winning series, filmmaker Bryan Fogel set out to investigate the use of steroids in professional cycling, what he found instead was the man behind one of the largest doping scandals in the history of world athletics. *Icarus* won the Oscar award for Best Documentary Feature in 2017. Streaming on Netflix

Free Solo: This award-winning special is a dramatic portrait of the free soloist climber Alex Honnold, who prepares to achieve his life-long dream of climbing the face of the 3,300 ft El Capitan rock in Yosemite National Park. Streaming on Disney+ Hotstar

The Test: The Test: A New Era for Australia's Team: is a docuseries showcasing the much-celebrated Australian Men's Cricket. A nerve wracking offering for lovers of the sport, the series showcases behind-the-scenes look at how one of the world's best cricket teams fell from grace and fought back to reclaim their title and integrity. Streaming on Amazon Prime Video

Formula one — Drive to Survive: Covering the 2018 and 2019 Formula One championships, this series is a one-of-a-kind viewing experience for fans of Formula One. For the ones who don't know, Formula One is a complex, technical sport and one that can clearly not be understood overnight. But once you get into the setup of cars and the different specifications, it feels more like a lesson in physics than a sport. Watch it to witness drivers, managers and owners live life in the fast lane-both on and off the track- during each outthrust season of Formula One racing. Streaming on Netflix

'I will play Lord Krishna every time I am asked'

VISHAL KARWAL, who plays Lord Krishna in *Dwarkadheesh-Bhagwan Shri Krishna* that airs on Dangal TV talks to SHALINI SAKSENA about how he got into acting, challenges that come with playing a mythological character, among other things

What got you interested in acting?

I have done engineering in Computer Science from Chandigarh. When I was in third year, I auditioned for *MTV Roadies 4*. Back then I was interested in bike riding. I gave the audition and got selected. I did that show and finished my course. I then went to Texas for a flying course. When I finished my flying, I got another call from MTV for *Splitsville 1*. I flew down straight from Dallas to Mumbai. I was told it would be a month's shooting and a month's promotion and then I could go back. But I won and they offered me another show to host. This was in 2008. Back then there weren't many jobs in aviation. But I kept getting TV offers. I got *Bhagyavidhaata* and the rest of the shows followed. I had not planned to be an actor, they just happened.

So, you had a different trajectory?

Yes, I come from a business family. We have jewellery shows. From the very beginning, I was against doing things that were routine and go to one place. When I studied engineering, I knew that it was not my cup of tea. A friend of mine had applied for a flying course and that interested me and asked him how to go about applying for the same. The idea of being up in the clouds and going places really piqued my interest.

Was it a struggle to make space in the industry?

If I had not given the first audition, I would have never gone to Mumbai to become an actor. I had no acting background. I never even got a portfolio done for the first four-five years of my career. The industry has very kind to me. When I went to Mumbai, I already had a show in my hand. I have done around 12 shows in a career spanning 12 years and a few films as well.

How did you come on board to play Lord Krishna?

This is the fourth time that I am playing Lord Krishna in *Dwarkadheesh-Bhagwan Shri Krishna 2*. I was doing *Rishton Se Badi Pratha* back in 2010-11. Sagar Pictures were conducting auditions through an actor friend. I didn't really prepare for it but got selected. Before doing this show, I had done two fictional shows and reality show but I started enjoying acting when I played Krishna for the first time. The whole idea of standing in front of the

I have noticed that not many actors want to do mythological shows. Also, not all of them suit the role. Doing such shows is a different ball game. One needs to do his homework to play these roles



camera and to play a God really got me interested.

This is not the first time you have played this character. Why say yes, each time?

I have noticed that not many actors want to do mythological shows and I have also seen that not all actors are suited to do them. It is a different ball game. While I had not prepped for the first mythological show, I enjoyed the whole process. As an actor I am truly blessed that I have got this opportunity. I will continue to play this role as long as I keep getting them since people remember you.

How tough is it to live up to people's expectation when you are part of a mytho show?

Many actors have played Krishna but have not been exacted. Personally, I have to be able to look the part. I was offered to play Shiv but I refused. Because I don't think that I can do justice to the look since Shiv has a rough and rugged personality. I know what my traits are. For me to be able to convince the audience that I am God, I have to be convinced otherwise that conviction will not come across.

What are the challenges that come in such shows?

I don't think there are very many since people know the man behind the show due to social media. But when you play such roles, you do your own research. Before I took up the role back in 2011, I never used to practice yoga or meditate. But I do that regularly. I have lots of books as well. It has changed in a way but it has not been intentionally.

Is there a need to change content that we see on TV?

Definitely. If we don't do it now then, when? If not, TV is going to suffer since there are so many OTT platforms that offer great content. People even in small towns and cities have access to good Internet connectivity. If makers want people to sit in front on their sets at 8 pm and come back day after day, they need to find content that is brilliant. We must do away with the concept of daily soaps and come up with finite shows. When you do daily soaps, one tends to compromise because there is a deadline and we must do away with this.

Should viewers change their choice?

Not really. It is wrong to assume that because the audience watches such shows, makers are producing them. There was a time when the entire family would sit and watch shows, back in the 90s. If you give good content, people will watch it.

What next?

I am back home and looking at the change to open a boarding school in Palampur. But I would love to do web series provided the content and script that I am offered is good.

Lively and charismatic

MUSBA HASHMI speaks with SNEHA WAGH about her debut, how she chose to play a mother on screen at an early age and, above all, her passion for acting

At the age of 13, when most girls are busy watching fairy tales and imagining a life in la la land, Sneha Wagh, who plays Mata Anjana in &TV's *Kahat Hanuman Jai Shri Ram*, was giving wings to her career.

Wagh started from Marathi theatre and then went on doing Marathi shows. However, acting was never on her cards whatsoever.

"I never dreamt of being an actor. I was a classical dancer and my goal was to have my dance academy one day. But like any other family, my father wanted me to be an engineer," she tells you.

But destiny had something else planned for her. Wagh developed interest in theatre and joined a group. She got a chance to do Marathi shows like *Adhuri Ek Kahani* and *Kaata Rute Konala*.

"My father was not very happy with my decision of being an actor initially. But then, my mother knew what I wanted. She told my father and with time he too embraced the fact that acting was my calling," Wagh tells you.

That was not all. She was then offered the lead in NDTV *Imagine's Jyoti*. "That came as a surprise. The producer saw me on TV in one of the Marathi shows and she wanted me to play the title lead in *Jyoti*. She searched for me and then contacted me. But the funny thing is I failed the audition 16 times. Because the character was so serious and I was just 19 back then. I said I just couldn't do that. I was like a newcomer in the industry. But then I gave it another try and it went well. That's how I was finalised for the role," Wagh tells you.

Playing a mature character like *Jyoti* changed Wagh inside out. "The character was indeed challenging. I had to learn a lot of things to get into the skin of the character. But it changed my life 360 degrees. It changed me from within and I started looking at things differently. The character was so emotional that there were times when I used to shed tears after reading the script. I wondered how could someone who is going through so much in life can still manage to smile in front of the family. *Jyoti* was like the man of the house. And there are girls



like her in the society," Wagh explains.

She recalls how she used to receive a lot of messages from fans appreciating her performance and character. "So many men used to message and tell me that they are able to relate to the character. I felt so good that not only the women but the men too are able to connect with *Jyoti*," she says.

After *Jyoti*, Wagh went on doing *Ek Veer Ki Ardas...Veera* that earned her much fame. "I remember, I came back from

London after learning film making and I was offered the role of Ratanjeet Sampooran Singh. I was so excited to be a part of that show because the story was amazing and the character was neither completely positive nor purely negative. That was the beauty. But back then, I didn't know that the show will become so popular and will run for so long," Wagh tells you.

From playing a young girl *Jyoti* to Ratan, a mother of two in her second Hindi TV show,

Wagh says, she didn't thought of the consequences that time. "Like I said, I returned from London and was offered the role, so that time I didn't think too much about whether people in the industry will typecast me. For me work was work and I looked at it that way. However, later on I realised that I should have given it a second thought. I even went into depression. But then, I picked myself up and thought how does it matter if I played a mother. What should matter is my craft and my talent.

Then there are so many people out there who don't have work and that I should feel blessed that I have been working all this while. And now I can see my career trajectory has been so good. I have never repeated anything and that's the best part of my career," she says.

She adds that she has never been choosy when it comes to projects. "If I like the script, I just take up the project. I took all the good projects that came my way. Acting is what I love the most and as long as I am acting I am at my happy place," Wagh, who in future wants to be a part of a real-life inspired series, tells you. Wagh is extremely happy to be a part of *Kahat Hanuman Jai Shri Ram*. The reason for increasing popularity of mythological shows, she says, is positivity. "It is human nature that whenever we are in danger or the time is not right *hum ya toh mummy ko yaad karte hain ya bhagwaan ko*. Also these shows bring in so much of positivity, they give out a message that good will always win against evil. These shows kind of validate our trust and just create a positive atmosphere that everything will be fine," she says.

Burqa avenger

From a burqa clad woman sanitising temples, to young souls distributing raksha kits and immunity boosters to frontline workers — people from all walks of life have come out during this pandemic to contribute to the welfare of humanity, says MUSBA HASHMI

Words, shields, capes and magical powers are what folklore tells us about superheroes and warriors. But not all superheroes wear a cape. One just needs to have the eye for detail to find one. Clad in a burqa, mouth covered with a mask and a sanitising machine tied like a backpack, the 30-year-old Lucknow University graduate, Syed Uzma Parveen is making headlines and for all the right reasons.

A mother of two — Veer Abdul Hameed (1) and Wali Ullah (6), Parveen has been sanitising *galis*, *mohallas*, mosques and temples of Lucknow for the last two months now. However, she came in the limelight because of a video in which she is seen sanitising a temple. Social media and news channels were quick to appreciate Parveen and the video went viral.

The idea hit her when she realised that there is a dire need to disinfect the surroundings. "Day in and out we hear these debates on new channels about Hindu-Muslim, we need to realise that these topics are not at all important when we are fighting a pandemic. It is not the right time to sit and scream about our ideologies but to come out in the open and do our bit. Temples and mosques are places of worship and people do visit them. That's how I thought of sanitising these places as well apart from the *mohallas*. I started two months back and since then there is no stopping me," Parveen, who has sanitised 38 *galis* till date, tells you.

Parveen started the work from her area, Saadatganj and then proceeded to the Sitaram temple in Faizullahganj. It was love for the country and its people that made her take up the cause and risk her life. "When someone in the family falls ill, we just don't let them be on their own. Such should be the case when it comes to our nation. Just when the country and its people need us, I cannot run away from my duty. My neighbours are like a family and it is my responsibility to ensure that our surroundings are clean and infection-free," she says.

The social work that Parveen is doing is not once in a blue moon thing. She has been actively helping people in every possible way since her college days. "My inspiration has been my father, Syed Javed Hussain, who taught us to be kind. The life lessons that he gave us are engraved in our hearts," she says.

Recalling the first time when she helped someone, she says: "The sense of empathy aroused when I was 10. My family and I were off to some place. On our way, we saw an old man, helplessly lying on the road, covered in ragged clothes, in biting cold. Abba stopped the car, and he gave the old man a blanket and offered him some food. That kind of act my father inspired me to help people even more. During my college days, I used to offer people free rides on my Scooty. Whenever I used to see a student or elderly walking in the sun, I used to offer them a ride to their place," she tells you. Parveen's kind act inspired her friends to do something on similar grounds.

But not everything in the garden is rosy. Her idea of sanitising streets met with a lot of resistance from the family and society. "Initially, my idea of going out on streets, sanitising didn't sit well with my family. They told me that I should stop worrying about all this and look after the family. People around me, asked me: 'Sirf tum hi kyun karogi yeh kaam, koi aur kyun nahin?' To which I replied: 'Main hi kyun nahin?' So, they gave up and realised that I was firm in my decision. However, my husband, Saiful Hassan, never stopped me from doing the social work," Parveen tells you.

That was not all. Her neighbours started complaining about how she is roaming around sanitising streets and temples. "One day after another, my neighbours would tell my mother-in-law: 'Your daughter-in-law has no shame. She is out on the streets freely and doing a man's job' and that it will put a question mark on my character too," she tells you.

OUT OF ALL THE ABUSES, THE ONE THAT SHOCKED ME WAS OF A WOMAN WHO POSTED A VIDEO ON SOCIAL MEDIA, CALLING ME NAMES AND ABUSING IN EVERY POSSIBLE MANNER. IT AFFECTED ME A LOT. MORE SO, BECAUSE IT CAME FROM A WOMAN. BUT I PICKED MYSELF UP AND DECIDED TO NOT LOSE MOTIVATION BECAUSE OF A PERSON WHO IS HIDING BEHIND HER MOBILE PHONE AND SPEAKING RUBBISH



Despite all the hurdles and abuses that she faced daily, Parveen was determined to not give up. "Out of all the abuses, the one that shocked me was of a woman who posted a video on social media, calling me names and abusing in every possible manner. It affected me a lot. More so, because it came from a woman. But I picked myself up and decided to not lose motivation because of a person who is hiding behind her mobile phone and speaking rubbish," Parveen tells you.

The resistance was not only from family but also from the people who didn't want

a burqa clad to sanitise a *mandir*. "It is indeed an unusual sight, because not many times people have seen a woman in burqa outside a temple. Therefore, there were unusual stares from people but then I learnt to brave them. When I first went to sanitise the temple, a man sitting there told me to go back as there is no need to sanitise the area and that they will do it on their own. But then the *pujari* (priest) came out and told me that I was doing a humble job and no one has the audacity to stop me. He asked me to continue the humanitarian work that I was doing. Just a few

moments later, an old lady, of that my grandmother's age walked up to me and showered her blessings on me for what I was doing. All these sweet gestures encouraged me to do it all the way more," Parveen tells you.

But not all is lost in Parveen's story. After coming in the limelight, her mother-in-law and the rest of the family and neighbours appreciated the fact that the work she is doing is for a good cause. "When they saw my video on a news channel and my photos in newspapers, my neighbours congratulated me. They were

happy that I am making the society proud," Parveen tells you.

Managing family and work was a task for Parveen especially during Ramzaan. She used to wake up at 3 am, do *sehri*, offer *namaz* and then went on for sanitising the streets. "I did it throughout Ramzaan. I used to leave my house at around 5 am and return by 9 am. The reason being to not feel the heat while fasting. Then after an hour of rest, I used to get back to household chores," she says.

For a person who is fasting to carry a sanitising machine as heavy as 16 kg can be a Herculean task. "Yes, the machine is heavy and it was difficult to carry for such long hours. When I returned after sanitising places my back ached a lot, it still does but then I don't have an option but to carry it," she says. Parveen usually goes for the work alone, but sometimes her friends lend a helping hand.

Sanitisation is only one of the many things that Parveen is doing. There is much more in the list. "It all started when the lockdown was announced. Just two days into the period, and I came to know about people living in nearby areas who don't have enough money or ration to survive the lockdown. That's when I decided to distribute ration to each one of them. Then after few days, I came across the migrant labourers who were returning home, starving. I decided to help them as well," Parveen, who lives in a joint family, tells you.

Not only in Lucknow, Parveen is helping people in other cities as well. "We have created a Facebook group where the volunteers post about the needy. We try and help these people in every possible way," she tells you.

During the lockdown, Parveen also tried to make sure that people are following the guidelines. "When I went for sanitising streets, I saw people in groups violating the lockdown norms. I told them that by doing this they are not only putting their lives at risk but their family's too. Some were generous enough to understand while others retaliated and asked 'who am I to dictate them' and that I should focus my work. But their response never bothered me. I used to humbly tell them that it was my duty to stop them for their own safety, rest they are all by themselves," she tells you.

The cost of the humanitarian work that Parveen is doing daily, is the money that she saved for her children's education. "Till date ₹95,000 has been spent on sanitising and around ₹5 lakh on distributing ration. This is the money that I have saved all these years for my children's education. It was difficult for me to use it but then there was no one I could look up to for help. When I asked my son, who is six, that whether I could take the amount that I have saved for his education, he replied: 'Mummy, you go ahead. Education is important and we can earn the money back. But what is more important right now is that no one should stay hungry and that our surroundings remain infection-free.' Hearing that coming from a child was astonishing but then I am glad that my son, at such a young age, has a better understanding of things than most people," she says.

She tells you that it was a little frightening to be on the streets during such a time when stepping out of the house is not a good option. "It was and is a little scary but then someone needs to do the job. My children are young, that is more worrisome. But I take all the precautions and follow the preventive measures stringently. At all times, I wear a mask. And when I return home, I head straight to the washroom to have a bath before meeting my children," she tells you.

For her work, the Lucknow administration has awarded Parveen a Corona Warrior Certificate.

"This is not the end. Since, places are opening up, I am now disinfecting bus stands and railway stations and will continue to do so," Parveen, whose aim is to sanitise the complete city, tells you.



KEEPING THEM SAFE

While many of us have the privilege to adjust to the new normal by working from home and staying safe, the frontline warriors — the police officers — are walking an extra mile and working round the clock to ensure that we are safe and sound. There are many instances when the officers have gone out of the way to bring a smile on people's faces. A case in point is when a group of police officers in Punjab surprised a boy with a birthday cake and sang 'Happy Birthday'.

The officers are at the forefront of an invisible war and the need of the hour is to ensure their safety. To contribute to the cause, Rohit Shelatkar, vice-president, Meyer Vitabiotics in partnership with

Shelatkar's Grand Maratha Foundation have come forward to provide Mumbai Police with immunity boosting supplements.

"It gives us immense pleasure to support Mumbai Police who are working day and night to fight this pandemic. Wellman and Wellwoman tablets are scientifically researched and have proven to boost one's immunity. We want to thank the police personnel for their commitment to the cause and extend our care by providing them with the supplements," Shelatkar says.

The company will distribute over 45,000 units immunity boosting supplements. In addition, the company will also be distributing 46,000 packs of Vitamin D supplements to the entire force.

A THANK YOU FOR WARRIORS

Another unsung hero is helping the frontline health workers by providing them with raksha kits which includes sanitary pads, masks, gloves and sanitisers. Meet 26-year-old Shivang Tayal, Director, TSL Group from Hisar, Haryana.

"We started the *Rakshak ki Raksha* campaign at the end of March and since then we have provided raksha kits to more than 10,000 frontline workers which include Asha and anganwadi workers, ANMs, multi-purpose health-care workers who work in villages to protect our communities," Tayal tells you.

Besides providing resources to COVID-19 hotspots, they are focusing on building capacity in rural India's under-resourced public health system. "After spending three years in New

York doing management consulting, I returned to India and then this pandemic happened. I realised that the country is going through and that there is a need to safeguard our healthline workers. That's how I came up with the campaign and started distributing raksha kits," Tayal, whose parents Mukul and Sumita supported him in the cause, tells you.

Tayal says this campaign is just a minor way to thank the frontline workers for their endless efforts. "I just want to thank all the COVID-19 warriors who are risking their lives and helping people in time of need. And I would request all the citizens to try and help these warriors in every way they can. To take care of their wellbeing is the least we could do in the recent times," he says.

It'll take at least 6-8 weeks to play int'l matches: Arun



combine it with skill-work," Arun said in *Lockdown But Not Out* series by *FanCode*.

Arun said players will take at least a month and a half to achieve match fitness and hoped BCCI can conduct a tournament before they play international cricket.

"It'd take us at least 6-8 weeks for us to play international matches, whereby we'd be first working on the skill, and fitness in the camps and then we'll progress onto match simulations, and hopefully the BCCI can organize a tournament just before we play the international matches, that would be great for us," he said.

The 57-year-old said the lockdown was an opportunity for the bowlers to recover from niggles and work on their fitness.

"I'm not worried about the bowlers because they've had ample time in the last 2 months, to work on strength and their fitness," he said.

"Very rarely does an international cricketer, especially our bowlers, would get this kind of time to work on their fitness. Also, it is a wonderful opportunity for them to get over the little niggles, that they may have got over the long season."

The former all-rounder said he has no doubts that the players will be raring to go once the camp starts.

"I'm very confident that when we regroup, they would be raring to go mentally and physically. They would be really raring to go and that augurs well for them," he said.

I'M NOT SHORT-TEMPERED: RABADA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

He might have landed in trouble for his on-field aggressive behaviour but South African speedster Kagiso Rabada says the perception that he is short-tempered is not true and it is just passion which drives him as a bowler.

The 25-year-old was suspended for the series-deciding final Test against England earlier this year after collecting a fourth demerit point in a 24-month period for celebrating too close to visiting captain Joe Root after claiming his wicket in the third Test.

"Lot of people feel like I've a short temper. I don't think so, it's just passion. Also if you look at sledging it's part of the game. That's what every fast bowler does," Rabada said during an *Instagram Live* chat with his IPL franchise Delhi Capitals.

"There's no fast bowler who is going to be nice to a batter. It's not like you being personal and telling people about their family or whatever."

Following Rabada's suspension, South Africa went on to lose the final Test and concede the series 1-3.

The pacer had collected two of his previous demerit points during the 2018 Test series against Australia when he had screamed into David Warner's face and brushed shoulders with Steve Smith.

The third incident was when he used provocative language in sending off India's Shikhar Dhawan after dismissing him during an ODI in the same year.

Rabada was also banned for accumulation of demerit points during South Africa's tour of England in 2017. "You celebrate the wicket and after the game you are going to shake



the guy's hand and respect the craft. Most of the time, I'm not really aggro on the field. But that's just International cricket. Every player wants to be the best. That's just the drive coming out," he said.

"As cricketers we have put in a lot of work under pressure, the grind to play for people's entertainment and also for ourselves. It's nice to see when you get results. You just don't play a

game of cricket. It does not work like that."

The lynchpin of South African attack said it is his emotions which makes him a dangerous bowler.

"Sometimes, an emotion can ignite you. And that's when I feel like I'm the most dangerous because that's when I let everything loose and stop thinking and everything becomes automatic. That's for me

when I bowl my best is when I'm not thinking," he said.

Having claimed the wicket of Virat Kohli as his maiden Test scalp in his debut at Mohali in 2015, Rabada went on to become the No 1 Test bowler in three years' time.

"It feels surreal. You just keep hearing stats, you did this and that. It was pretty amazing but nothing changes. You still have another game to play," he said.

"You don't think about award when you play. You just perform your craft, the awards are byproducts and can serve as motivation as well."

Rabada said he would have loved to bowl to former greats Sir Vivian Richards and Sachin Tendulkar among others.

"I think Kevin Pietersen, Sachin Tendulkar, Vivian Richards and Ricky Ponting would be the batsmen I would love to bowl to..."

Having joined the franchise in 2017, Rabada was instrumental in taking Delhi to the IPL playoffs for the first time in seven years in 2019.

The biggest highlight of their campaign was the Super Over win over Kolkata Knight Riders where Rabada defended 10 runs and nailed big-hitter Andre Russell with his brilliant execution of yorkers.

"I remember when I was bowling that Super Over... We had such a fantastic season but unfortunately couldn't go all the way. Off the field, by far the most enjoyable IPL I had and I thoroughly enjoyed," said Rabada, who was later ruled out because of an injury.

"It's pity that IPL can't happen because of a stupid virus. We hope the crowd continues to support us and we are there to entertain you guys... So it's a fair exchange," he concluded.

UAE cricket board confirms offer to host IPL

PTI ■ DUBAI

The Emirates Cricket Board has confirmed that it had expressed interest in hosting the IPL this year if India decides to shift the cash-rich T20 tournament out of the country in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A report in the *Gulf News* said that the UAE Cricket Board has made an offer to the BCCI that it can host the IPL.

"In the past, Emirates Cricket Board has successfully hosted IPL matches in UAE. We have a proven record of being hosts as a neutral venue for various bilateral and multi-nation cricket activities in the past," its general secretary Mubashshir Usmani was quoted as saying by the newspaper. "Our state-of-the-art venues and facilities make the Emirates a desired place for hosting all types of cricket."

Usmani said the Emirates Cricket Board had, in fact, offered their venues to the England and Wales Cricket Board to complete the English season here as well.

"We have come forward and offered our venues to both England and India. We have also hosted matches involving England team on multiple occasions previously. If our offer is taken up by either of the Boards, then we will be pleased to facilitate hosting of their matches," he said.

Sri Lanka Cricket is the other Board which has expressed interest to host the IPL if India decides to hold the tournament abroad.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With inter-state travel still banned due to the coronavirus-forced lockdown, Indian cricketers will have to avail the grounds of their respective home states to indulge in running and focus on their skill-work, said national bowling coach Bharath Arun.

Confined to their homes since a nationwide lockdown was enforced to contain the health crisis, the Indian cricketers have not been able to indulge in running which is an important part of their fitness regime.

"Partially now the lockdown is lifted but inter-state travel is going to be a problem. What the players are going to do is, they will be going to their respective hometown, the grounds that are available, they would do their running and they would also

Bravo, Hetmyer decision to not travel must be respected: Holding, Bishop

PTI ■ LONDON

Former West Indies fast bowlers Michael Holding and Ian Bishop say Darren Bravo and Shimron Hetmyer's decision to not travel to England for the three-Test series due to safety concerns arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic should be respected though the team will miss "them".

Besides Bravo and Hetmyer, Keemo Paul also refused to travel to the UK for the Wisden Trophy starting

July 8.

"I think it's unfortunate as far as West Indies cricket is concerned. I'm not going to tell anyone that they should be going to England because Covid-19 is around, someone may get sick or even worse."

"But at the same time I think it's unfortunate for the West Indies team because these guys have quite a bit of talent, and they'll be missed," Holding said on his *YouTube* channel.

Holding said England series would have been a good chance for Bravo to revive his

career after being dropped for the Afghanistan Test in November. "I'm sorry that Bravo in particular isn't going because Bravo, I think, needs to resuscitate his career. He started off so brilliantly, everybody thought he was going to be another great West Indian batsman."

"He hasn't really fulfilled that. I think the more cricket he can play now, especially for West Indies, the better chance he has of getting back on track and showing everyone the great player that he could be."

Joe Root in doubt for 1st Test against WI

PTI ■ LONDON

England captain Joe Root is a doubtful starter for the first Test against the West Indies next month as he will be required to undergo seven days of self-isolation after attending the birth of his second child.

The first game of the three-Test series begins at the Aegeas Bowl from July 8 and Root's wife is due around the same time, *The Telegraph* reported.

As per the guidelines from England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), Root will need to self-isolate for a week before rejoining the national team. However, ECB is constantly reviewing its guidelines and the self-isolation rule may be relaxed by next month.

ICC should allow more subs for bio-secure match, says Atherton

PTI ■ LONDON

Former England skipper Atherton believes the ICC should consider allowing more substitutions for injuries which require players to visit a hospital for treatment during a match amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Atherton, who has led England in 54 Tests, said there "will be one or two issues" when international cricket resume after the break.

"What, for example, happens if a batsman breaks a finger and he's got to go to hospital for an X-ray? He's got to leave the bubble and then come back, and if there's a delay on testing or the results. I think you'll see one or two compromises," Atherton told Shaun Pollock and host Neil Manthorpe in the *Following On Cricket Podcast*.

The 52-year-old former batsman, who has scored 7728 runs in 115 Tests for England, said if such a situation arises

then "you'll see is that there'll be an extension for the concussion rule."

"If you remember, Marnus Labuschagne became the first concussion substitute for Steve Smith last year, and what will probably happen, as just a short-term measure, is if there's an injury that'll require someone to go to hospital, they'll probably allow a substitute for that, whether it's a broken finger or a torn hamstring or whatever."

₹285 cr fraud in 4 loan a/cs in Karnataka Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Private sector lender Karnataka Bank has reported to the RBI that it has been defrauded of over ₹285 crore consequent to loans gone bad to four entities including DHFL.

A total of ₹285.52 crore has been reported as fraud wherein the bank was one of the consortium lenders during 2009 to 2014 to Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL), Religare Finvest, Fedders Electric and Engineering Ltd and Leel Electricals Ltd, Karnataka Bank said in a regulatory filing on Friday.

The maximum is owed by DHFL at ₹180.13 crore, followed by Religare Finvest ₹43.44 crore, Fedders Electric ₹41.30 crore and Leel Electricals ₹20.65 crore.

"DHFL (defaulted entity)

dealing with us since 2014 had availed various credit facilities under consortium arrangement wherein, we were one of the member banks. In view of Early Warning Signals (EWS) in the conduct of the account and other developments, the account was red flagged on November 11, 2019.

"The borrowing account was classified as Non-Performing Asset on October 30, 2019 and now, for misappropriation & criminal breach of trust & diversion of funds in the credit facilities extended earlier to the company, a fraud amounting ₹180.13 crore has been reported to RBI," Karnataka Bank said.

Likewise, Religare Finvest Ltd (RFL) was dealing with the bank since 2014, availing various credit facilities.

Following classification of this account as non-performing in October 2019 by a con-

sortium member, Karnataka Bank reported to RBI a fraud amounting to ₹43.44 crore in the credit facilities extended earlier, on account of diversion of funds.

Leel Electricals was classified as NPA account in March 2019 and it reported to RBI a fraud amounting to ₹20.65 crore in the credit facilities to the company on account of diversion of funds.

"In all the referred three non-performing accounts, necessary provisions have been made in full to be spread across four quarters," it said.

Fedders Electric and Engineering Limited was reported as NPA in July 2018 by a member bank in consortium, subsequent to which Karnataka Bank reported fraud of Rs 41.30 crore on account of fund diversion. The account has already been fully provided for, it added.

India imposes anti-dumping duty on Malaysian calculators for 5 yrs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has imposed anti-dumping duty on imports of electronic calculators from Malaysia for five years with a view to guard domestic players from cheap imports from that country.

After conducting a probe, the commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) had recommended anti-dumping duty on electronic calculators from Malaysia.

"The anti-dumping duty imposed (USD 0.92 per piece)...shall be effective for a period of five years (unless revoked, amended or superseded earlier)," the department of revenue has said in a notification.

In its findings of the probe, the DGTR had concluded that the product has been exported to India from Malaysia below its associated normal value, which is amounting to dumping and

DGTR had concluded that the product has been exported to India from Malaysia below its associated normal value

the domestic industry has suffered material injury due to the dumping. While DGTR recommends the duty, the finance ministry will take the final call to impose the same. Ajanta LLP had filed the application for imposition of anti-dumping duty on imports from Malaysia.

Malaysia is a key trading partner of India in the Southeast Asian region.

The bilateral trade between the countries increased to USD 17.25 billion in 2018-19 from USD 14.71 billion in 2017-18. In international trade parlance, dump-

ing happens when a country or a firm exports an item at a price lower than the price that product in its domestic market.

Dumping impacts the price of that product in the importing country, hitting margins and profits of manufacturing firms.

According to global trade norms, a country is allowed to impose tariffs on such dumped products to provide a level-playing field to domestic manufacturers. The duty is imposed only after a thorough investigation by a quasi-judicial body, such as DGTR, in India. The imposition of anti-dumping duty is permissible under the World Trade Organization (WTO) regime.

India and Malaysia are members of this Geneva-based multi-lateral body.

The duty is aimed at ensuring fair trading practices and creating a level-playing field for domestic producers vis-a-vis foreign producers and exporters.

COVID-19 Near-term outlook for FMCG sector 'extremely uncertain, says HUL'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The near-term outlook for the FMCG market is "extremely uncertain" as the COVID-19 outbreak had a "terrible impact" and the situation remains volatile with the trajectory of the coronavirus undetermined, according to HUL.

While describing the current situation as "much more uncertain than normal", the FMCG major added that it is confident about its ability to manage the immediate crisis. "The situation remains volatile with the trajectory of the virus undetermined, evolving hot spot geographies, the success of containment measures uncertain, the severity and duration of resulting economic crisis and the extent of structural damage unknown," HUL Chairman and Managing Director Sanjiv Mehta said in his address to shareholders in the company's annual report for 2019-20.

"There are many unknowns today and hence, the near-term outlook is extremely uncertain," he added. Though the coronavirus and containment efforts have resulted in supply and demand disruptions, leading to a sharper growth deceleration, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) is confident about medium to long-term growth prospects of the sector.

"Despite the near-term ambiguity, we remain confident of the medium to long-term growth prospects of the FMCG sector," HUL said, adding its strong portfolio of trusted brands and capable teams is built to survive times like these.

According to the company, despite being one of the fastest growing markets globally for FMCG products, the per capita FMCG consumption in India is still amongst the lowest in the world, giving the industry a long runway for growth. "The complexity and volatility continue to rise. In the last quarter of financial year 2019-20, we have seen an unprecedented global breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic leading to a humanitarian crisis, lockdown across many countries and a significant economic fallout," it said, adding, "In India, the economic impact of COVID-19 is trickling in on the backdrop of an already challenging macro-economic environment."

Mehta said various containment measures and the nationwide lockdown from March 25 caused disruptions across the company's value chain. "We continue to work closely with the government at different levels, prioritise key SKUs, make planning cycles more agile and create flexible alternatives."

This is helping us reboot our supply lines to a large extent," he added. Mehta said 2019-20 witnessed a challenging business environment with lower GDP growth and slowdown in consumption, which resulted in a weakening consumer sentiment and lower demand for the categories in which HUL operates.

For FY20, HUL's net profit was up 11.48 per cent at ₹6,756 crore, compared to ₹6,060 crore in the previous year. Sales stood at ₹39,136 crore, marginally up 1.44 per cent.

NITI Aayog CEO Kant Arogya Setu remains among top 10 downloaded apps globally in May

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Arogya Setu, a Govt app developed for tracking COVID-19 patients, retained its position as one of the top 10 downloaded mobile apps in the world in May, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said on Saturday. The Centre has made the app mandatory for government employees to bolster efforts to fight the COVID-

19 pandemic. "Arogya Setu one of the top 10 downloaded mobile apps globally since launch, second month in running. India has led the way in effectively leveraging technology to combat the COVID-19 pandemic," Kant said in a tweet. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation on April 14 appealed to people to download the app.

Amul Twitter handle briefly blocked

Twitter cites security processes; account restored

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD

The Twitter account of Amul was briefly blocked, sparking public outrage, but the social networking and microblogging firm on Saturday said the account was restricted after being caught in the platform's security processes. Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) - which makes

Amul brand of food products - found its Twitter account blocked on June 4 evening. The account was restored on June 5.

Some sought to link the blockage to Amul advertising for use of its Make in India products and boycott Chinese products.

Amul had posted 'Exit the Dragon' tweet on June 3 afternoon and its account went down on June 4 evening.

On accessing the account, a message saying "This account is temporarily restricted. You're seeing this warning because there has been some unusual activity from this account. Do

you still want to view it?" was displayed.

Twitter did not link the account restriction to the advertisement.

"Safety and security of the accounts is a key priority for us and to ensure an account has not been compromised sometimes we require the account owner to complete a simple reCAPTCHA process.

These challenges are simple for authentic account owners to solve, but difficult (or costly) for spammy or malicious account owners to complete," a Twitter spokesperson said in an emailed statement. Once the account clears this

security step, the account regains full access, the statement added.

"To protect the accounts, we routinely require them to clear this security key for login verification," the spokesperson said. Amul Managing Director RS Sodhi said the company's Twitter account was blocked on the night of June 4, and restored on June 5 morning when the issue was taken up with Twitter.

"Our Twitter account was blocked on the night of June 4 and restored on June 5 morning when we again took up the process of reactivation with Twitter," he said.

Title in sight for Bayern

Flick's side comes from goal down to beat Havertz-less Leverkusen 4-2; Leipzig slip up again



Robert Lewandowski, center, of Bayern Munich scores his team's fourth during the Bundesliga match against Bayer Leverkusen at BayArena on Saturday

AFF ■ BERLIN

Robert Lewandowski scored his 30th league goal of the season on Saturday as Bayern Munich came from behind to claim a 4-2 victory at Bayer Leverkusen and move a step closer to the Bundesliga title.

After Lucas Alario secured an early lead for the home side, Bayern struck twice in quick succession just before half-time to turn the game in their favour after Kingsley Coman's equaliser.

Lewandowski netted in the second half as Bayern established a 10-point lead over title rivals Borussia Dortmund, who later host Hertha Berlin.

The game also saw Bayern lend their support to protests over the death of black American man George Floyd, with all their players wearing armbands bearing the slogan *Black Lives Matter*.

With their talisman and Bayern transfer target Kai Havertz ruled out with a muscle injury, Leverkusen turned to Alario to lead

the line against the champions. The Argentine delivered after just nine minutes, beating the off-side trap after a throw-in to slot the ball past Manuel Neuer.

A mistake from Moussa Diaby allowed Coman to curl in the equaliser, before a fizzing shot from Leon Goretzka and an elegant lob from Serge Gnabry saw Bayern take a two-goal lead before half-time.

Lewandowski finished the job

with a well-placed header after the break, reaching the 30-goal mark for only the second time in his Bundesliga career, but there was still time for 17-year-old Florian Wirtz to curl in a consolation goal for Leverkusen before the final whistle.

Elsewhere, a late equaliser from Christian Strohdiek gave bottom-of-the-table Paderborn a faint glimmer of hope in the race for survival, as they snatched a 1-1 draw away to RB Leipzig.



FIGURATIVELY

- 30** Robert Lewandowski has scored 30 goals in a single Bundesliga season for a third time (also 2015-16 and 2016-17) — Gerd Müller is the only other player in the competition's history to do so more than once (five times)
- 20** Thomas Müller is the first player in Europe's top five leagues to reach 20 league assists in a single season since Kevin De Bruyne for VfL Wolfsburg in 2014-15
- 90** After 30 matches Bayern Munich have scored 90 goals. New Bundesliga record
- 62** Hansi Flick celebrates the 62nd goal of his team in his 20th Bundesliga match as a manager for Bayern Munich. No other coach in Bundesliga history has seen as many goals in his first 20 matches
- 5** Leon Goretzka of Bayern Munich scores his 5th goal in this Bundesliga season — all of them in the second half of the season
- 17** At 17 years and 43 days, Florian Wirtz of Bayer Leverkusen has become the youngest player in the entire history of the Bundesliga to score a goal

Chelsea-bound Leipzig striker Timo Werner set up Patrik Schick on 27 minutes to give Leipzig the lead, but they were forced to defend it with 10 men after Dayot Upamecano was booked twice in the first half.

Strohdiek's last-minute strike gave Paderborn their fourth draw in five games, though Steffen Baumgart's side remain eight points off Fortuna Dusseldorf who occupy the relegation play-off place. Dusseldorf themselves missed the chance to move towards safety, as they battled to a dramatic 2-2 draw against 10-man Hoffenheim.

A headed opener from Rouven Hennings and a red card for Hoffenheim's Benjamin Huebner put the home side in pole position, but the visitors struck back with goals from Munas Dabbur and Steven Zuber before Hennings saved a point with a late penalty.

Uwe Roesler's side remain three points adrift of survival, after goals from Moussa Niakhate and Pierre Kunde Malong gave fellow strugglers Mainz a rare 2-0 win over local rivals Eintracht Frankfurt.



'Asian Cup great chance to develop interest in Indian women's football'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian women's football team members are delighted at the prospect of playing the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 finals in front of home fans and feel the event can do wonders for the development of the game in the country.

India will host the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 finals, continent's biggest tournament for the first time since 1979.

"I am very excited that a tournament of this magnitude will take place in India and I thank the AIFF for bringing the Asian Cup to our country. We have one-and-a-half years to prepare for it and I am sure that we will put on a good show," head coach Maymol Rocky told AIFF website.

"People are getting more and more aware of the progress made in women's football in India.

"The girls will get the opportunity to play against the top countries in Asia and fans will get to see the best teams such as Japan, Australia, Korea and China Live in the stadium, which will go a long way to develop interest among young girls and parents," the coach added.

The Indian side is currently ranked 55 in the world, having won the Gold medal in its most recent outing at the South Asian Games 2019 and recording draws in away friendly

games against Uzbekistan and Vietnam — both of whom are ranked higher.

Captain Ashalata Devi, who was among the three nominees for the *AFC Women's Player of the Year 2019*, said that getting to play in the Asian Cup will be a 'dream come true' moment.

"I would like to thank the AIFF and Women's Committee as they made a lot of efforts to bring the tournament to India. It's a huge step for us and the entire continent's eyes will be on us," the centre-back said.

She also highlighted the importance of the tournament to her and the players.

"Ever since I have been playing football, I have never shown any of my matches to my mother. I was waiting for the right moment and now in 2022, I want my mother to come and watch me play against Asia's best teams."

Goalkeeper Aditi Chauhan feels it would be a "huge responsibility" to live up to the expectations of fans in the tournament.

"It is an amazing opportunity for us to prove and show our supporters why they should believe us when we say women's team has the potential to play at the top level.

"There is now a huge responsibility for us to put forward the image that we want our supporters to have of women's football," Chauhan said.

PL stadiums to be split into 'zones'

AFF ■ LONDON

Premier League stadiums will be divided into three zones when the season resumes behind closed doors on June 17, West Ham vice-chairman Karren Brady said on Saturday.

Clubs met on Thursday to discuss logistics and safety protocols, with Brady saying stadiums would be divided into red, amber and green zones.

"Red zone will be the most severely restricted area, including the pitch, the tunnel, technical areas, changing rooms will be limited to 105 people maximum, to include players, coaching staff, match officials and all the essential staff only," Brady wrote in her *Sun* newspaper column.

"And only those who have tested negative for Covid-19 in the past five days can enter this area..."



"The amber zone will be restricted to the minimum number of staff required to meet contractual requirements for broadcasting, media and club staff... And anyone entering this area will be subject to a temperature check and a health questionnaire.

"And the green zone is the stadium exterior, eg car parking."

Players have been told they must not shake hands, spit or share drinks, while social distancing will be observed even in the dressing room and show-

ers, with a 15-minute limit for pre-match talks by managers.

"A new strict accreditation process will be developed, including an isolation room should someone unfortunately develop symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the stadium," Brady added.

Television viewers will have access to 360 degree replays and pre-match tunnel shots, while players' shirts will feature the logo of Britain's state-run National Health Service.

"So we are in good shape," Brady said. "We are ready. We are raring to go."

Solskjaer backs extra subs change

AFF ■ MANCHESTER

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer believes the introduction of extra substitutions will be "welcome" when Manchester United resume their Premier League campaign later this month with action away to Tottenham Hotspur on June 19.

United face fellow European qualification hopefuls Sheffield United on June 24, with the FA Cup quarter-final at Norwich and league match at Brighton following soon afterwards.

With games coming thick and fast, Premier League clubs have agreed managers will be able to make up to five substitutions per match from an expanded nine-strong bench as a way of helping sides cope with a three-month backlog of fixtures.

"I think that's helpful because footballers, after being out for so long, going into competitive games will be a challenge for them and we have to look after them injury-wise and fitness-wise," United manager Solskjaer told the club's website.

"We can't just flog one player and say to them, 'you play every game and every minute' because it might be

a period when we have to rotate quite often."

United are currently three points adrift of a place in next season's Champions League, and Solskjaer said: "It does feel like a new season but then again, the first two games against Tottenham and Sheffield United are vital for the league standings, the table.

"And it's a short season, it's only nine (league) games so can we get as many points and good performances as possible. "If we do get a good spell now, we could end up with some trophies and something to cheer about."

The enforced suspension has allowed the likes of Paul Pogba and Marcus Rashford to regain fitness following ankle and back injuries respectively.

But former United striker Solskjaer was cautious about their prospects of playing against Spurs.

"Well, we hope everybody's going to be ready for the first game.

"We've had time out so I don't think we can expect that those lads who've missed lots of the football can last the full game."



Hard to believe Ronaldo is 35 in training: De Ligt

IANS ■ TURIN

Juventus centre back Matthijs De Ligt said that it is difficult to believe that Cristiano Ronaldo is 35-years-old when one sees him training. Calling the Portuguese superstar as the best striker of his generation, 20-year-old De Ligt said that Ronaldo is a huge example for younger players.

"I always try to improve the way I play by watching him because even in training he has a crazy intensity and you wonder if he really is 35-years-old," the Dutchman told *Tuttosport*.

De Ligt was all praise for his Juventus squad, which he joined this year from Ajax.

"We really have a good team, a lot of good guys. The most fun are the South Americans. Beside Ronaldo, I was impressed by Paulo Dybala and Rodrigo Bentancur: both players with an amazing technique. Rodrigo in particular is underestimated, he will have a great future ahead of him."



Lionel Messi returned to Camp Nou on Saturday after missing two group training sessions with a slight leg injury. Twitter

Djoker worried by US Open health restrictions

AFF ■ BELGRADE

World number one Novak Djokovic described the strict hygiene restrictions under which the US Open is likely to be played as "extreme" and a cap on support teams as "really impossible" on Friday.

As doubts grow over whether or not the Grand Slam event can go ahead as scheduled in New York, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak in the United States, Djokovic admitted the demands of organisers could create severe strain.

"Just yesterday I had a telephone conversation with the leaders of world tennis, there were talks about the continuation of the season, mostly about the US Open due in late August, but it is not known whether it will be held," the 33-year-old Serb told *Prva TV* television and quoted by *Blic online* daily.

"The rules that they told us that we would have to respect to be there, to play at all, they are extreme."

Djokovic, champion at the US Open in 2011, 2015 and 2018, described planned limits on player entourages as "really impossible."

"We would not have access to Manhattan, we would have to sleep in hotels at the airport, to be tested twice or three times per week.

"Also, we could bring one person to the club which is really impossible.

"I mean, you need your coach, then a fitness trainer, then a physiotherapist.

"All their suggestions are really rigorous but I can understand that due to financial reasons, due to already existing contracts, organisers (want the event to be) held. We will see what will happen."

Balotelli set to be released by Brescia

AFF ■ BRESCIA

Mario Balotelli's ill-fated stint at hometown club Brescia appears to be coming to an end, with local media reporting on Saturday his contract will be terminated after repeated absences from training.

A letter notifying Balotelli of his release was sent to the Italy international by the club's lawyers on Friday, according to *Sky Sport*, *Gazzetta dello Sport* and the *AGI* news agency.

Balotelli has reportedly missed a number of sessions since Serie A teams returned to training at the start of May. Players initially worked out individually before clearance was given for them to resume team training.

The 29-year-old said this week he had been sick and would send the club medical certificates as proof. Brescia coach Diego Lopez



said on Friday he was "disappointed" with the forward's attitude.

"Mario is training separately because his team-mates have done work that he hasn't," Lopez told *Corriere della Sera*.

"The (individual) training sessions were optional, okay. But the group took one road and he took another. On Zoom, during the quarantine, we didn't see him. Even if he says he feels good, he's not at the level of his team-mates."

"Today everyone is sure that they will start on July 23, 2021," he told Belgian newspaper *L'Avener*.

"We are convinced that the Games will take place in 2021 or they won't take place.

"It's unthinkable to keep

Serie A confirm 5 substitutions

ROME: Serie A has announced that each team will have five substitutions per game for the rest of the season which begins on June 20 after the Covid-19 shutdown.

According to the statement of Italy football federation, each team can make the substitutions using a maximum of three game interruptions, in addition to the interval

between the two game times, as well as, in the event of dispute of the extra time, a fourth interruption, in addition to those scheduled between the end of regular time and the start of the first extra period and between the first and second extra time, only if at the end of the regular time less than five players have been replaced. IANS

FIFA open to salary cap & transfer fee limit proposals

AFF ■ NYON

FIFA president Gianni Infantino called on Saturday for discussions over proposals to introduce salary and transfer fee caps to football in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Last month, the German FA and Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge urged industry talks about a salary cap and reforming the transfer system to keep football "credible."

"On the financial and governance aspects, I also heard some interesting proposals on a wide range of topics," Infantino wrote in an open letter to FIFA's members.

"From salary caps to transfer fee caps or other taxation mechanisms, to the possible obligation for governing bodies, competition organisers and clubs to build reserves or to contribute to a reserve fund which can be of assistance in hours of need such as now.

"I personally advocate for clearer and stricter financial regulations, imposing full



transparency and good governance principles, and not only limiting this to the transfer system, but to the entire football ecosystem.

"FIFA is doing already a lot of work on this area, even if we face some strong vested interests who fight against our plea for a better global governance in our sport."

A recent study by accounting firm *KPMG* said the transfer value of players in 10 of Europe's top leagues could plummet by up to 10 billion euros due to the economic crash caused by coronavirus.

It's 2021 or never for Tokyo

AFF ■ TOKYO

High-ranking Olympic official Pierre-Olivier Beckers on Saturday made plain that the delayed Tokyo Olympics "will be held in 2021 or not at all".

The Belgian was reiterating the stance put forward by Japan and International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach that next year was the last chance to hold the Games postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Today everyone is sure that they will start on July 23, 2021," he told Belgian newspaper *L'Avener*.

"We are convinced that the Games will take place in 2021 or they won't take place.

"It's unthinkable to keep



such a project on the go for any longer considering the enormous costs and all the thousands of people involved."

Beckers suggested it was "essential" that the traditional sporting calendar emerges from its Covid-19 lockdown before allowing major sporting events like the Olympics to be staged.

"All the sporting federations have to adapt to the Games' postponement.

"We can't envisage a similar upheaval a second time," stressed the president of Belgium's Olympic Committee.

According to Beckers a final decision on Tokyo "will be taken in the spring if questions (over the global health crisis) persist."

He said he was optimistic over the staging of the Games, rejecting any notion that it would be held behind closed doors.

'This movie is a calling from beyond'

Why did you choose this project?

This movie is a calling from beyond. A calling of four very important people in my life who are no more. Initially, I was not a part of this film. But it was destined. Director Ram Kamal and I were discussing something else, when he popped up with this script. After reading it, I realised it's God's way of saying that I need to take this equal rights LGBTQI movement for which I have been a spokesperson for 18 years. Another major reason why I wanted to do this film. I

recently lost my mother, and while I was reading the script, I could only relate to the intense relationship that I shared with her. I had tears rolling down, as I was going through the character graph of the daughter in the film.

How did you come on board?

I met director Ram Kamal Mukherjee in Dubai, when he was there for his film *Cakewalk*. That's when he narrated me a couple of story ideas, which he was planning to make. *Season's Greetings* was one of them, which I strongly connected with. I have known Ram Kamal as an author and journalist for many years, and I knew that someday he will make a film. We had salad and soup, and bid adieu. We didn't discuss anything about the film. Much later, he called me and said that he would like me to consider for the lead role. After reading the script, I was completely bowled over, because it's a tribute to one of my favourite director Rituparno Ghosh. Without giving away the major plot of the movie, I would say that it's a unique attempt.

How tough was it to make a comeback?

I actually didn't want to come back to films. When I lost my parents last year one of my mother's last few wishes was for me to return to cinema. I took this break on purpose.

I didn't want to come back to films. When I lost my parents last year, one of my mother's last few wishes was for me to return to cinema. I took this break on purpose. I was tired of being cast in roles which did not do justice to the actor within me

I was tired of being cast in roles which did not do justice to the actor within me. In addition, I have been enjoying the limelight since I was 16 years old; I reached a point of exhaustion. I started my professional career when people enjoy their teens. When Peter (Haag) came in my life, he was my Prince Charming. I knew that if I have to settle in life, it has to be with him. Then we were blessed with twins twice, Winston, Viraj, Arthur and Shamsheer. I wanted to enjoy the amazing new season of being a wife and mother without it being documented by a daily on a regular basis. I wanted to explore other aspects of my life like my music and working with the UN in order to be able to endeavour to achieve my maximum potential as a human being.

Why do you think OTT platforms are becoming popular?

Simply in order to take advantage of the convenience that OTT has to offer. The lack of commercials and saving viewers from show interruptions. You don't need to limit your subscription to only one service provider and the choice of options available to watch is brilliant plus it is all available in the comfort of your home or mobile or a laptop or an iPad.

There was a time when actors would never talk about their personal problems. What has changed?

Actors are embracing their respon-

sibility towards their fans seriously. It's not only about entertaining it is also about their social responsibility.

How will actors talking about depression help?

Experts say that talking openly about mental health issues breaks down stigmas that persist around depression, addictions, eating disorders and other issues. Research has proved that the best way to change someone's belief around mental illnesses is to have direct contact with someone who has had mental illness that you relate to. People with highly visible platforms can be particularly influential when they share their stories, it is a living inspiration and hope to many who feel like giving up.

Do you think that India has a long to go before, we can accept that depression is a disease?

Yes absolutely. In our country depression is equated with *pagalpan*. Unfortunately, many derogatory terms and cruel stereotypes are associated with it. According to WHO, India is facing a serious mental health crisis, with an estimated 56 million people suffering from depression and 38 million from anxiety disorders. What is surprising is that many Indians are afraid of being categorised as mentally ill.

What next?

That is easy to answer. Definitely more films.

Talktime

CELINA JAITLEY

The actor has made a comeback with *Season's Greeting*, a short film, available on ZEE5. She speaks with Shalini Saksena why she chose to do this film, the increasing popularity of OTT platforms and the need to talk about mental illnesses like depression



Cash in on change

SHALINI SAKSENA tells you that it is time for you and your family to revisit your collection of old coins, stamps and notes to help you make some money on the side and keep the entire family engaged

Did you know that a ₹1 silver coin of King George VI of 1939 can fetch you a minimum of ₹2 lakh, depending upon its condition? Or that a ₹1/2 silver coin issued by Queen Victoria dated 1880 can fetch you a minimum of a lakh, depending on its condition? Or ₹2.8 anna bank note of King George V can fetch you up to ₹3.5 lakh to ₹4.5 lakh depending on its condition?

Well, it is time to break it and sort it out because you never know that you could be sitting on a pile of money that is gathering dust in the corner of your home or tucked away in a book that you were reading while travelling abroad.

Almost all of us love to keep change or those extra small currency amount notes when we go abroad. Besides the stamp of approval on the passport, the currency is a kind of proof that we have been to a particular country. In other cases, we pass on the change to our kids who love play with it given the fact that it is not fake money. Most of this money ultimately ends up in a piggy bank.

While there are a few places where one can go to sell this currency, this is for the very first time that there is an online museum for vintage and current coins, stamps and currency notes. The website: mintageworld.com offers a lot more than just a way for people to make money. Just like in a museum, the entire history of the coin is explained.

Sushil Kumar Agrawal, CEO Mintageworld tells you that people love to know the story behind things that they buy especially when it comes to currency. "Each item on sale on our website comes with a little note that explains the importance of it, the year it was printed and its significance. We don't believe in just selling coins. We want people to know the history behind the currency that they have bought. If they have bought a Shivaji coin. The note will tell you about the metal used, why it was used, the his-



tory behind it and why the coin was minted," Agrawal says. They also sell coins in combinations. In most cases it could be aluminum coins of Paise 1, 2, 5, 10 and 20. The younger generation has not seen these coins. "We package these and sell," he says.

He tells you, that to begin with, the idea was to just provide academic information to the people about the various vintage and rare coins. "This is my passion and back when we started in 2014, there was no such online initiative, I went ahead with the idea. But then I found that there was a lot of cost involved in even providing the history of the currency. I love visiting museums and whenever I am abroad, I visit places that house collectible items. Last year, I had visited a physical museum in Singapore that housed mintage of the country. But there were some problems that I faced. I couldn't read what was written and one could not see one side of the coin. That gave me an idea

and decided that I would add to the online museum and trade in it as well," Agrawal says.

It was been five years since they went live and have been promoting their idea as a hobby. This means they get all kind of people like students, children who are trying to understand this world. "Take an example. We have a five-rupee album. The note has been in existence since 1968. Not many would know how many times the note and the coin have been minted. It is more than 125 varieties. Our album gives you the picture of the coin and the note till 2018. The kids can dip into their piggy banks to look for these. There is an album on the website where they can put their coin according to the year," Agrawal explains.

Believe it or not the size of this industry stands at ₹60,000 crore globally but in India, it stands at less than ₹600 crore for organised market. "In order to determine the value of the cur-

rency. There are global experts who are in touch with. Then there are some local experts who are on our panel, there are traders and collectors who have been in this field for over five decades. Our country has minted over 60,000 coins till now. It is not possible for each expert to know all the coins. This is where other experts come in," Agrawal says.

The most expensive coins on offer are ancient Indian coins worth ₹6,000-₹7,000 a coin. Then there is an album with 50 country currency notes or coins that were and are in circulation that one can buy for a price ranging between ₹15,000-₹20,000

What does one do to sell a rare coin? It is rather simple or will be once the lockdown opens. All one has to do is visit the website and put the price after looking at the price recommended by the experts and sell it through mintage mart. Another option is to sell it via auction with a minimum

sell price. Of course, before it goes up for auction, the panel will have to approve the price put up by you.

Bimal Trivedi a numismatist says that the market for vintage and rare coins in the country has been growing in leaps and bounds. "There had been many auction houses and online shops mushrooming in the recent years. Also, various coins and numismatic exhibitions are being held in various parts of the country with increasing numbers of participants and visitors," Trivedi explains.

He tells you that there are certain aspects that work as a barometer in order to determine the value of the currency like rarity of the coin, the numbers of coins actually minted at that specific period and why was it minted or its historical importance, inscription on it, weight, mintmarks, condition of the coin. The value of a coin is also determined by demand by the collectors for it.

A patron and collector of currency tells you that his interest in vintage and old coins started as a childhood hobby and continued for a long time, but then with the passage and lack of time and other responsibilities, it dimmed a bit, but it was always there in the back of his mind and became an interesting idea to dabble in.

"But it slowly turned into a passion. I used to source it requesting from friends and exchanging our collections with each other. I also used to get it from dealers and auctioneers and other collectors across the country. I came to know about Mintageworld through their Facebook and Instagram handles. What I found it was engaging and very informative," he tells you.

Though he has yet to either buy or sell, what he has come across has piqued his interest. "I have come across some very interesting and rare collections. I have a couple of coins in mind which I might explore and buy. But I will do so once the lockdown ends and things go back to normalcy since I want to research more," he says.

'I didn't want my dad's help for a big launch'

AVKASH MANN, who has recently released his video track *Jatt Di Star*, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about how tough it was to shoot for it and why he chose to debut with an English song before venturing into Punjabi

What is your new single about?

It is a song to acknowledge that someone special; the star in your life. A lot of thought went behind the song when we were making it. There are songs that talk about relationships, or about their life or even something personal. We wanted to make a happy and positive song to acknowledge somebody else. When we did the song there was no lockdown due to COVID-19. But then I realised that in this lockdown, there are so many stars around us and I wanted my song to make that connection.

Where did you shoot the song? How much hard work did it involve?

We shot the song in Havana, Cuba. We wanted the song to come across that we were having lots of fun. But the truth is that it was tough to shoot the video. It was very hot there and have 12-13-hour shoots. It was a two-day shoot and had to wake up at 4 am and be on the sets by 6 am and be there till beyond 7-8 pm. But I am glad that the vibe in the song comes across as energetic and people having a good time. If people are able to see that, it was a job well-done.

Is it necessary for a singer now to be a performer as well?

It depends on the artist, how he wants his career to move forward and the perception he wants people to have. If he wants people to know him just for his voice, he can concentrate on that alone and how well you sing and do stage shows. If one wants to be in front of the camera as well, then that has to be done properly since people are going to watch every single thing you do - how you express yourself, how you move and look. If you want to optimise your career in that sense, you need to be a performer as well.

This is your second Punjabi track and is different from the usual songs that we associate with the language. Has it been a conscious decision to be different?

Yes. But this comes organically to me. I want to do music that is meaningful and resonates with the kind of person that I am. I want to be known for my kind of music. I don't want to take stuff that is out there. There are many artists out there who are doing good work, why replicate that.

What is your kind of music?

It is a mix of music that is from all over the world. I never see music as having any kind of language or any sort of rules. Music can be anything. Every time I make music I am in a new space with new motivations, things that are around me and music that I am listening to reflects on the kind of work that I am doing.

How much did your father (Harbhajan Mann) inspire you to become a singer?

It was the atmosphere that inspired me to be a singer. The whole experience of going to a studio and shows and being in an environment where songs were being created influenced me and important for me. He never told me that I had to be a singer. It was something that I wanted to do because I loved the art so much.

Is it tough to make a mark outside of your father's shadow?

It is a difficult situation with age. I was always known my life as son of Harbhajan Mann. That I how I was treated when I went out in public. I knew it would be there once I came out as a singer professionally and there would instance comparisons and was prepared for it. I am ready for that challenge, to step out of the shadow and build my identity and this has been my focus. My father is his own entity and his own music, I am doing my own thing.

You made your debut with an English song before venturing in Punjabi. Why?

I was making a lot of songs back then and felt that it was the perfect song to be put out there. And alluding to the earlier question, just to carve out my own path. I didn't want my dad's help for a big launch. I wanted to know what I could do on my own do something completely unexpected.

How did you get to collaborate with VYRL Originals?

After my first song, English track, we had a mutual understanding for my first Punjabi track. I have been with them for less than year but it feels that I know for years. They treat me like family and look for many more collaborations with them.

Sushmita all set to dazzle as Aarya

MUSBA HASHMI ■ NEW DELHI

While lockdown has been lifted, a return to normalcy is still a far cry. With rising cases and deaths, India's coronavirus graph is only rising. Amid relaxations, certain shoots are ready to resume this month but cinema halls are yet to open. But that doesn't mean one has to compromise on entertainment. OTT platforms are filling the vacuum.

To add to your list of must watch web series, Disney+Hotstar Premium is all set to unveil the web series *Aarya* on June 19, 2020. There are reasons that make it worth watching. First, the wait for Sushmita Sen's fans will be over as she is making a comeback after almost a decade. She plays the title role. Second, there is Chandrachur Singh aka *CCji*, as the series cast

fondly calls him. To make things better, Ajay from *Kya Kehna*, will also be making a comeback. Third, it is the brainchild of Ram Madhvani who directed *Neerja*. So you know that you are in for good entertainment. Fourth, Namit Das will be seen in a different avatar. So different, that when the actor was offered the role he was in doubt whether would fit in.

"But then there is a reason why I am Namit and why Ram Madhvani is Ram Madhvani," says Das whose performance one can look forward to.

The trailer is intense, emotional, gripping and thrilling. The music adds to it. Just when one thinks the trailer suggests Sushmita is back, it throws up a surprise, claiming Sushmita is...Aarya.

"The story is so beautiful that I fell in love with it immediately. If I would have



not got the chance to play it, I would have begged for it. Ram Madhvani has rightly mixed Sushmita and Aarya in a single mould," Sen explains. She adds that Aarya is a manifestation of making mis-

takes and learning from them. "In my 23-year career, this is the first time I have taken workshops for a role. This is how different the role is," she says. Sen recalls an incident

from the shoot: "There was a scene where I had to cry but there was no cut. So I asked Ram how will I cry since there is no cut in the scene and will have no time to put glycerine in my eyes? To which he replied 'haan, to mat rona na. Agar rona aaye to achha hai natural hoga, nahin aaye to mat rona'. This was the kind of atmosphere on the sets. Ram gave us full liberty to live our characters," Sen tells you.

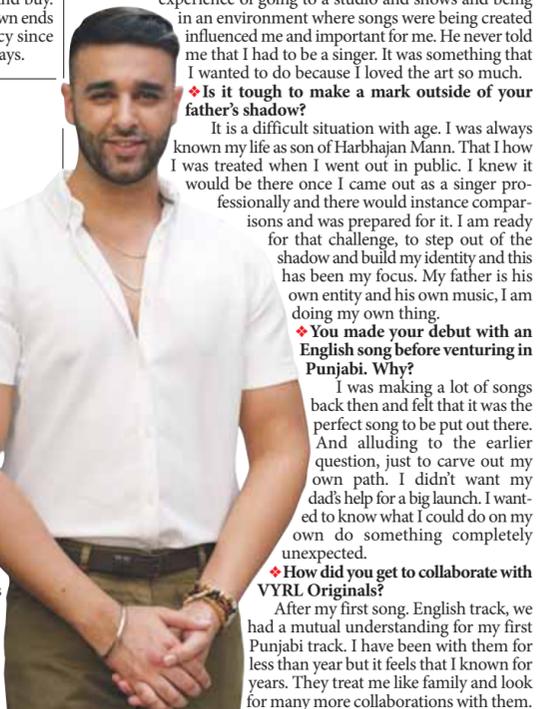
Chandrachur says that when he heard the script he felt that this was the right time to come back. "I am an instinctive person. When I was approached for the series I just felt that it was the right time. I got such good vibes from it. There was so much of positivity that I just took it up," he tells you.

Sandeep Modi, co-director of *Aarya*, tells you that

Madhvani has lived with the story for nine years and that is what makes it even more beautiful.

"When we started working on the project, we were clear that it was a crime family drama but then Ram said that 'no, it will be a family crime drama'. So family is at the forefront here," Modi tells you.

Time to gear up to watch the drama and fall in love with Sushmita all over again.



the pioneer agenda

Women know what they're doing all the time, and they're pretending that they don't — Phoebe Waller-Bridge



FROM THE INSIDE

The spirit of oneness

As we stand together to face a global pandemic, it is time to reflect within and embrace all humanity as one

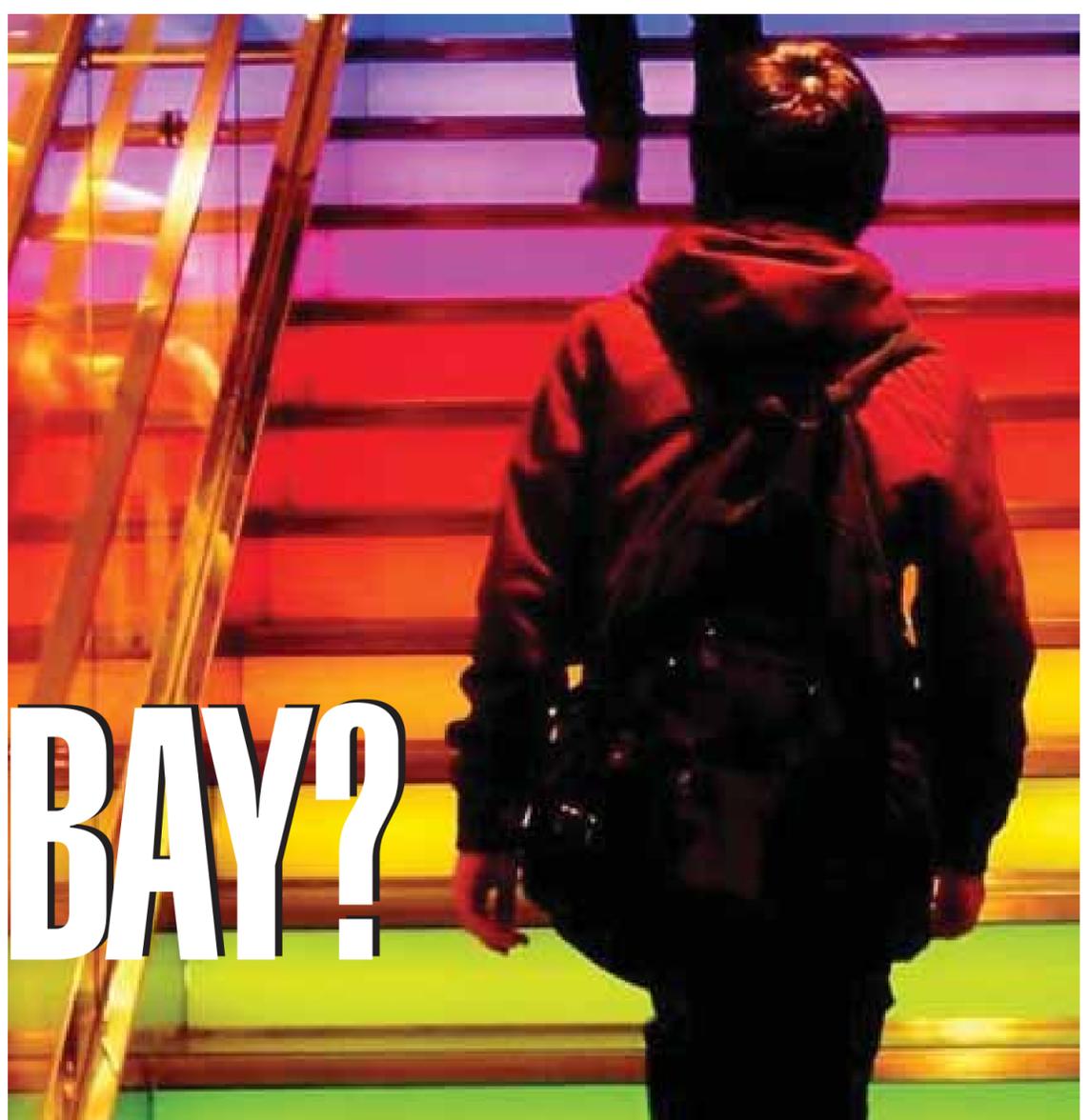


Awareness for mindpower

If we remain alert to optimally use the functional coordinates of mind, we shall be able to come out with our best

As queer citizens all over India join others across the world in celebrating a very atypical Pride Month, PARMESH SHAHANI reflects on how the world has changed so much between when the first edition of *Gay Bombay* came out in 2008 and now, when this revised edition is out. An edited excerpt..

WHAT DOES BEING GAY MEAN IN GAY BOMBAY?

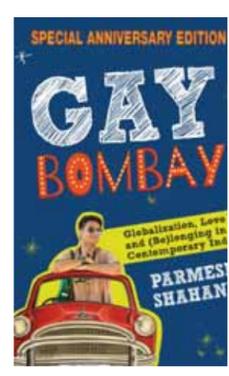


“OVERALL, I THINK THAT TO BE GAY IN GAY BOMBAY SIGNIFIES BEING *GLOCAL*; GAYNESS HERE STANDS FOR *INDIANIZED* GAYNESS. SO, ONE MIGHT DANCE IN A WESTERN STYLE DISCO ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD, BUT ONE CAN ONLY MUNCH ON A POST-DANCE *JALEBI* IN INDIA”

AUTHOR'S NOTE

“When the book first came out, it was anthropology but now I think it can be read as a slice of queer history. As you can see in this excerpt below, even 12 years ago, members of the group were contesting ideas around queerness and Indianness, and I read these discussions alongside the other rich activism that was happening in the country then, and also as precursors to the intersectional queer projects that have followed over the years. In the preface to this book's new edition I ask the question — what kind of world are we going to create together now that Section 377 is gone but we have a regressive trans act? How do we find the connectedness between trans rights, Dalit rights, Adivasi rights, and the rights of other minorities and move ahead together? Can we recognise that the #blacklivesmatter struggle that is going on all around the world, is also connected to our queer struggle? I am glad to see how many young queer projects in the country are about intersectionality. This Pride month, I sincerely hope that the queer movement in our country galvanises around the important issue of the regressive Trans Act, the same way as it did around 377. There are so many other laws that need to change in future. A lot of work ahead, and this pride month, I invite all our country's straight citizens to join us queers in creating a more inclusive India together.”

course of my research. Take the case of Harbhajan to whom being gay was 'just sex, over and out' and who was also married to a woman who was aware of his sexual orientation. I observed him at several GB events and he was an intrinsic part of the organizing committees for these. It was clear that he experienced his sexuality as something much more than 'just sex'. He felt a part of the community and there was camaraderie between him and others. Or Bhuvan, who clearly told me that he was not willing to shout out in public about his sexuality. Two years later, he was one of the lead panelists at a CNN talk show, openly discussing his life as a gay man on television!



For the gay identified respondents, being gay signified different things to each of them. For some gay just represented their sexual desires, for others it was a political statement or a social identity. Many respondents felt that it was a state of being or a way of life, while some spoke of it as an emotional commitment to other men. For all of them, the common element about being gay was the imagination of themselves as gay, in whatever way they wished to articulate this imagination. It was fascinating to meet someone like Nachiket, for example. He was married with kids, had never had sex with another man, but still described himself as gay, because he *imagined* himself so. Many respondents felt that they were bound by the *contract of silence* and that being discreet about their sexuality was the pragmatic thing to do. Within this silent space, they found society to be pretty flexible and accommodating with regard to their sexuality. Some, citing responsibilities towards their parents, families and society, had either chosen to get married, or were contemplating doing so in the near future. As Vanita (2001) writes, this is typical in India — The parental family remains a major locus of social and emotional interaction for adults. There are few public places where people can comfortably interact, so friends are entertained at home and absorbed into the family or turned into fictive kin. The family is also the only form of social security and old age insurance available to most people. This means that heterosexual marriage and parenthood hold many attractions even for

homosexually inclined people. Many deal with the dilemma by marrying and then leading a double life. For these married men, or soon to be married men, marriage did not indicate a change in their sexual identity. They were clear that their marriage was an obligation, but that their sexual gratification would continue to rest with men, even after marriage. There was very little sensitivity expressed towards the feelings or desires of women in these worldviews. Other respondents were avoiding marriage and devising means to negotiate what was best for them. For some of these individuals, this meant coming out, for others it meant discreetly fighting for what they felt was important and making creative compromises to attain their goals. But for all respondents, there was a constant reflexivity- an acute consciousness of their thoughts and actions vis-a-vis their sexuality. Overall, I think that to be gay in Gay Bombay signifies being *glocal*; gayness here stands for *Indianized* gayness. So, one might dance in a Western style disco anywhere else in the world, but one can only munch on a post-dance *jalebi* in India. My respondents wanted to selectively draw on a buffet of Indian and western influences in conjuring their own *thali* of gayness! Most of them, even those who had access to the El Dorado of *abroad*, still wanted to configure their gay experiences within an Indian matrix. As Cholan said, hanging out in the Castro was not important, but coming back home and being with his father was. Even for the younger Gul, travelling to America opened his eyes to *Queer as Folk* and gay strip bars, but he used the experience to be more confident in India. Gay Bombay is certainly inspired by Western notions of what it means to be gay-its dance parties, PFLAG style meets, website and so on, have all drawn from Western experiences; but they have been customized, *glocal*-ized and made uniquely Indian, uniquely Gay Bombay. Thus, as I noted in Chapter 3, even though I talk about flows throughout this book, I do not want to diminish the agency of my respondents or their locatedness in Bombay itself. For Gay Bombay, as I have realized, place does matter and this is true both offline and online, where even though it is a *virtual* world, it is still a manifestation of Bombay and Indianness at large.

Excerpted with permission from *Gay Bombay: Globalization, Love and (Be)longing in Contemporary India (Special Anniversary Edition)*, by Parmesh Shahani — Vice President at Godrej Industries Ltd., SAGE Select, ₹595; Ebook (Kindle Edition): ₹435. The book is also available on KOBO and Google Play

Large numbers of Asian men and women continue to live within the 'traditional' spaces for gender or sex difference and to understand themselves and their lives in 'pre-gay' terms that often relate more to the pre-industrial rural pasts of their societies than to the post modernizing urban present. However, there are also large numbers of men and women who are reacting against what they see as the historic constraint on homoeroticism in their respective societies and who are actively engaging in relocating homoeroticism from the shadows and the periphery, to the centre stage of their lives. (Jackson, 2000)

I encountered two opposing conceptions of homosexuality among my interviewees. One version equated homosexuality with being *gay*; this camp wished to assimilate and appropriate the term within the Indian context, recognizing fully well the unique set of circumstances within which this would take place. For them, social interaction was the key to building a sense of gay community in Bombay, but they recognized that cutting across class and gender norms may be a problem within these kinds of interactions. The other version of homosexuality I encountered questioned terms like *gay* and deemed them Western imports and negative influences and preferred to use *gay* as just one term, alongside indigenous terminology such as *kothi* or functional terms like 'MSM'. They were interested in social interaction across class norms, an assimilation of the various LGBT identities that exist in India and were also concerned with issues such as HIV/AIDS. Proponents of both these views used the gay Bombay newsgroup as well as real world events like parties and meetings as a battleground for their respective ideologies. The archive facility of the Gay Bombay newsgroup provides a fascinating and rich look at their debates as they have played out through the volatile posts over the years. However, this is not to suggest that these were the only two positions that my respondents adopted-as we have seen in Chapter 7, there existed a variety of other stances that were sandwiched between and around these two prominent takes on the nature of Indian homosexuality. Many of these included reconciliatory stances advocating a middle ground, which echoed Shivananda Khan's (2000) line of reasoning that 'to say gay is appropriate and right. But at the same time to denigrate or deny other frameworks of identities and choices is not...'. Let us stop seeing a debate that pits those who work for *gay* rights and those who work in preventing HIV/AIDS, among men who have sex with men, against each other. Let us work together, whatever our own frameworks and priorities and recognize that in a region of over one billion people there is space for everyone to work out their destinies. (Khan, 2000)

Indeed I find it difficult to look at things in black or white after my experiences in the field. What people said often contradicted with what they did and people's views changed over the



HOWEVER DIFFICULT LIFE MAY SEEM, THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING YOU CAN DO AND SUCCEED AT —STEPHEN HAWKING



HIDDEN SOULS
 PRAMOD PATHAK

Rethinking public health



As the entire humanity reels under the pandemic impact an important question crops up. Do we give public health the same kind of priority that Defence gets? In all probability, no. The global obsession with war preparedness is rather an ancient phenomenon that indicates our insecurity and inclination to be ready to repel any attack from an enemy known or unknown. Even a cursory review of human history since the ancient times would reveal that wars have killed millions causing wide spread devastation. The economic, social and psychological costs of war have been huge in enormity and wide in scale. But, so also have proved the epidemics, in their impact on human history. If we take into account the disruption and death caused by epidemics it could be more than what wars have done. Why, then, have the epidemics been not accorded the same priority that wars get? Why our preparedness against epidemics does not reflect the same degree of concern? These questions may not be easy to answer as many would compare the budgets that are earmarked for defence and health. It is true that on this count many nations do show a tilt in favour of health. Nonetheless, there are some nations who are found wanting on this count as they put more money for defence than public health. But that, notwithstanding, budgetary allocation as a percentage of health is not the issue. That epidemics strike and disrupt irrespective of budgets is just one side of the story. The other and more important one is that preparedness is much more than mere allocation of funds. How much effort and planning goes in defence and how much in health is what makes the difference. So, despite allocating much more budget for health than defence, the US was in no less precarious position than Saudi Arabia and several others that had marked more funds for defence. This is the issue that needs to be resolved. But before that one important assertion. In many cases war and epidemic connection can also be seen if we take a closer look at many past major epidemics. Of course, there may be a few other variables, too, that would need to be examined, but some moderate degree of correlation can be found. The other significant pointer is the fact that epidemics have played more havoc at commercial hubs. All these factors need to be examined by the big data analysts who are busy finding out how many are going to die, when and where. To begin with the first lesson that governments all over the globe have to learn is that like equipping military to defend the borders, they need to equip the doctors and nurses to defend public health. Had there been a well oiled health machinery and a battle ready health army, many decisions that proved costly and painful could have been avoided. There is one more requirement. We must revive the idea of barefoot doctors, the concept that proved useful in the past but went out of practice. The paramedical personnel is a medically trained force, like the para military forces, that must be reared and trained for such exigencies. Nevertheless, this is not the last time that a pandemic has struck nations. Let good sense prevail so that we not only learn but practice the age old lesson that prevention is better than cure. And much less costly. Health is wealth, literally.

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love and tolerance towards people, or do they perpetrate more prejudice and discrimination?

At every opportunity, we should inspire the people with whom we work to make decisions and take actions that promote peace and unity.

MEDITATION AND HUMAN UNITY

One of the most effective methods to make human unity a living reality in our own hearts is through meditation. Spending time daily in silent meditation helps us commune with our true self and the divine Power that created us.

Those moments are filled with bliss, peace and love. As we enter the inner sanctum of our hearts, we find that there is Light within us.

That Light is the Light of the Creator. The realisation dawns on us that the same Light that is within us is in all other human beings. We start to recognise that Light within others. Then the outer differences that separate us start to dissolve. We see one Light expressed by many different outer coverings, each beautiful in its own way. We start to see all life as one.

When we begin to have love for all, a transformation occurs within us. Our behaviour towards others changes. We become nonviolent in all our dealings. We begin to have understanding and compassion towards the idiosyncrasies and habits of others. We stop criticising people in our minds. First, we realise that they are bound by the shrouds of ignorance and illusion of this world. We know that deep within them is the soul, a part of God, that it is only their mind and their state of spiritual ignorance that causes them to behave the way they do. Secondly, we are so steeped in God's love and the bliss which permeates us that we do not want to be distracted from that rapturous state by petty thoughts of others.

Criticising others in our thoughts only pulls us away from the state of happiness that union with God brings. Since our thoughts will be filled with divine love of God, our words will become sweet and loving. We will not say anything unkind to anyone. People who come within our sphere will find only words love and kindness. We will become sensitive to the hearts of others and will wish them no harm. Finally, we will never do anything to physically harm anyone. We will not become violent with anyone. We will even have regard for the life of animals. When this happens, we will be truly living human unity in our own lives.

The writer is a spiritual leader

THE SPIRIT OF ONENESS

As we all stand together to face a global pandemic, it is time to reflect within and embrace all humanity as one, writes SANT RAJINDER SINGH



Our world is in need of human unity. We are connected to each other through the silken thread of love, and that is the core of human existence. In our homes, families, societies and cities, there is a need to come together and embrace each other in the spirit of love, tolerance and oneness. Doing so can help bring about peace in our homes, our neighbourhoods, our communities and in the world at large. How do we live human unity? It is not enough to tell others to practice unity and peace; we must live it ourselves if we want our words to be effective. Here are some ways that have proven effective in making unity a reality:

CLEAR OUR HEARTS

The first step is to make sure that

our hearts are clear of any hatred and prejudice for others who we think are different from us. We must develop true love in our hearts for all people. We must eliminate prejudice and discrimination from our heart and our mind. It is said that out of the abundance of our heart we speak.

If we feel hatred towards any group, we cannot hide it for long; it is bound to come out from our lips or show on our face. Our actions will speak even louder than our words. Thus, living human unity begins with clearing our hearts of any animosity towards others.

When we clean the chamber of our heart from any prejudice and ill will for others, then God can reside there. God is love. God is all-encompassing and embraces all creation as one family. That love will enter our heart when we keep it clear of any

AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY, WE SHOULD INSPIRE THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE WORK TO MAKE DECISIONS AND TAKE ACTIONS THAT PROMOTE PEACE AND UNITY

negative thoughts towards others.

WATCH OUR WORDS

Next, we live human unity by making sure our words express appreciation and tolerance for all people. We need to watch our words lest we injure any heart. Do our words cause division or do they bring people together? Loving, caring words that make people feel comfortable bring people together. We need to become living examples of sweet and loving speech.

LIVE IT THROUGH OUR ACTIONS

Every day we are faced with choices. Are we going to take action that tears people apart or action that brings people together? In our jobs, we often have to work on committees or make decisions on policy. Do our voices promote policies that show

Astrology & LGBTQ partners

The universe teaches acceptance of all that it embodies, says ACHARYA PRAVEEN CHAUHAN as he shares the leanings of planets in the ancient science

One form of Lord Shiva is Ardhanarishvara, one form of Lord Vishnu is also Mohini. In the Mahabharata, Lord Krishna transformed into a woman named Mohini and married Iravan for one night. In the Mahabharata, Arjuna took the form of Brihannala, when during their exile, Arjuna used to dress like a woman and teach dance to Uttara. Shikhandi gender change is probably an example of reassignment. In Konark Sun Temple, statues depicting homosexual relationships can also be seen. Impotence, homosexuality is an issue that has existed since the early period of human civilisation.

Let's understand this mystery from the eyes of Indian Vedic astrologers

According to Indian astrology, there is also a gender difference in the Navagraha. The planets are also divided on the basis of gender. The gender of the king of the planets, Sun, is male. The Moon is called the queen of planets and is considered a female. Commander Mars is a male planet. Devguru Jupiter is also considered male. Daityaguru Venus has been given the title of a woman. The prince of the planets Mercury is male but impotent. Saturn is referred to as female (impotent) and the shadow planet Rahu is male.

Mercury leans towards homosexuality. The reason behind this logic is that Mercury is considered a child planet and not fit for sexual activity. Saturn has a low libido due to physical deformity. Ketu (south node of the moon) is also marked impotent. Ketu has been ascribed the status of a monk planet, and it offers salvation away from indulgence.

Accordingly, the zodiac signs are also determined on the basis of gender. Aries, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius are considered male and Taurus, Cancer, Virgo, and Libra are female signs. Gemini, Capricorn, Sagittarius, and Pisces are considered im-



tent. In a chart, the seventh, eighth, and twelfth houses of the horoscope are associated with sexual organs.

Marriage is the most important sacrament of human life. In Hindu culture, the tradition of matching horoscopes of a bride and groom is prevalent even today. In this, the decisions are made on the basis of mutual equality, friendship, and the relationship between the birth planets and planetary constellations of a boy and a girl. But today, when a man comes to ask about his male partner or a woman, comes to ask about his female partner, which is called same-sex marriage, also known as gay marriage, then there is no such arrangement in the horoscope match making of Vedic astrology to answer their questions.

According to Vedic astrology, sexuality and homosexuality is mainly related to the Lagmesh (1st house), Panchamesh (5th house), Saptamesh (7th house), Ashtamesh (8th house) and Dwadash (12th house) house of horoscope. The role of Mercury is seen in the horoscope of gay people. Also, Venus and Ketu also have an influence on

them, thus it is noted that gay people are proficient in various arts and sciences. Moreover, the Saptamesh (7th house) of the horoscope, Mars, and Venus signify the person's sexual desire, as well as the Dwadash Bhav (12th house) denotes that how much physical pleasure a person will get. Moon position reflects your mindset. Whereas Rahu and curved planets show how different two people are. Since Venus is also the planet of sexual desires, it increases sentimentality in a person due to its retrograde, and emotionality has its special significance in same-sex marriage.

I remember a book written by American author and relationship counselor John Gray named "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus" so where are the rest of us from? In my view, they came from the universe and they should be given equal treatment as we give to straight couples. The universe teaches acceptance and reverence of all that it embodies. It never discriminates. So why should we?

The writer is a Delhi-based Astrologer and Palmist and can be reached at info@astropraveen.com

Fear of coronavirus

Death is destined; the cause is unimportant, says AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI as he urges people to take care of themselves instead of living in fear

Hardly anyone can claim that the threat of Corona is not affecting them, especially since the most advanced nations with the best medical facilities are the worst hit. Affect it should but not terrorise as it is happening in many cases. Why? I'll explain.

This creation is God's own; He is the controller. It is His responsibility that the world functions properly. It appears to me, rather I am reasonably sure that the Lord has decided that the humanity has abandoned its responsibilities towards one another, climate, etc. Therefore, God had to act and He did in a very decisive way. Only God can bring about the changes in the way we live.

What does God want? What has Him so upset? We, human beings, have been given free will for proper use. And what have we done? A lot many of us, who are reasonably well off have shown blatant disregard for others, climate etc. They are so much engrossed in unlimited sense gratification that no bar is too low for them. In spite of a very active protest by climate activists, mostly young who are rightfully protesting, world leaders have chosen to ignore their concern. These leaders seem to forget or do not realise that there is someone, who is the Master of the universe, and He has acted. We may blame someone for it, but the fact remains that it is God, who is active. And He will remain so till He has brought us to our senses. It will happen but not quite so soon. Habit changes take time. Till then, we, as individuals, must accept whatever is happening.

Yes, acceptance is the key. This is reality right now. No one can deny it. Don't fight it; focus on protecting yourself. You are safe if you do that. It does not matter if the person you come across is infected or not, as long as you



maintain your distance such that any discharge from another person cannot reach you, you should be safe, as safe as one can be. And, it is time to turn to God, who alone can give the feeling of security, because He is the controller. And as stated earlier, this will end when the Lord inspires a scientist or a group of them in finding a vaccine for it as well as drugs to cure this dreaded virus. Till then, take all the precautions, which are relevant.

Some of them are as follows. Social distancing is the bedrock on which this virus is to be avoided. Then, comes wearing masks. Wearing one is crucial but not as crucial as the one worn by the person is your close proximity, and if he or she is talking or sneezing as well. But your wearing a mask is critical for others. Therefore, everyone in public must wear a mask period. Hygiene of the highest standard should be practised. Sanitise whenever in doubt. Don't be lazy. Similarly, trust no one; treat every stranger as a suspect.

Before I end this article, let me put the matter of death due to Corona in the

proper perspective. No one is dying because of Corona; people are dying because it's their turn to die. Death is destined; the cause is unimportant. Life span of everyone is unrelated to any current event. It is fixed at the time of birth itself. Number of deaths due to Corona is a number only, and it should not scare anyone. Do you know that deaths due to road accidents in India was down to almost zero from 400 per day in the initial lockdown period? Even death due to Corona is in low percentage of people infected by it. Intelligent people do not fear death due to Corona but avoid suffering due to getting infected by taking the necessary precautions.

And, finally I will venture my personal opinion about this virus. Since God is involved, as is evident from its scale, it is to reset the style of living of the modern man. Good people need not fear; they will gain something. Yes, bad people have something to fear, i.e. those who are harming this climate, etc; they need to reset their lives.

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American angle in China-Taiwan face-off

The new crisis that has cropped up between China and its rebel nation Taiwan highlights the “love-hate” relationship between the two. The root of the current stand-off lies in the belligerent posture maintained by the Xi Jinping regime. And the face-off has escalated with the re-election of the pro-independence Democratic People's Party (DPP) candidate Tsai Ing-wen as the President and William Lai as her Vice-President of Taiwan.

Clearly the election outcome in Taiwan is a sharp rebuke to both Beijing and the pro-China parties in the island such as the Kuomintang (KMT). Besides China's constant threat to reunify Taiwan with the mainland and the two groups of political actors — one for pro-independence and the other for merger in China — there is an external element, the strong voices from the international community mainly led by the US.

This results into the cross-strait relations between Taipei and Beijing getting more complicated, with the latest saga of events like the island nation's inclusion in the World Health Assembly meeting on the sidelines of the current Covid-19 crisis.

China claims Taiwan as an inseparable part of it. However, the majority of the Taiwanese reject China's claim as bluffs and declare itself as absolutely independent from Beijing. Whenever the matter of complete independence erupts, Beijing either threatens Taipei or airs strong warnings about possible fallout of such steps by the latter. Such extreme pronouncements from the mainland are quite common. In 2017, Yin Zhuo, a Chinese Rear Admiral in the Navy, said, “If the Democratic Progressive Party (Taiwan's ruling party) declares independence, then we must go to war without any hesitation. If they declare independence, we will use military force to bring about unification, we must be very clear about that.”

Needless to say that with the coming of the DPP to power, the centrist forces in the island and the Communist Party in China have become equally concerned about the real intentions of the Tsai regime. Thus any move that leads to complete separation of Taiwan from the sovereign territory of China would tantamount to causing war.

The major cause of irritant for China in Taiwan is the constant American interference and engagement with the island. But then there is an official act known as the “1979 Taiwan Relations Act” that provides the legal basis for the unofficial relations between the US and Taiwan. This particular Act enshrines the American commitment to assist Taiwan in maintaining its



In this image taken from video footage run by Taiwan's FTV, Mayor Han Kuo-yu speaks to the media in Kaohsiung, Taiwan on June 6, 2020. Residents of the Taiwanese port city of Kaohsiung voted on Saturday to oust their mayor, whose failed bid for the presidency on behalf of the China-friendly Nationalist Party earlier this year brought widespread disapproval among residents. The success of the recall vote — Taiwan's first — was hailed by commentators as the latest sign of politicians being held accountable in the island's robust democracy. AP

defensive capability. Though the US officially does not support Taiwan's independence, but the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) is solely responsible for implementing the US policy towards Taiwan.

Clearly, this is the bone of contention between the US and China. Washington has been developing close contacts with the island and its administration, but that is simply not acceptable to Beijing.

Historically, the 1979 US-PRC Joint Communiqué (PRC) Joint Communiqué switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing. In this communiqué, America recognised the Government of the PRC as the sole Government of China. This again reiterates the fact that there is but one China and Taiwan is a part of China. But what has taken an ugly turn today is that only under this communiqué, the US is allowed to maintain cultural, commercial and other unofficial relations with Taiwan.

After this, what we need to know is the historic 1992 consensus that is critical in shaping and reshaping the relations between Taiwan and China. When Lee Teng-huei became the chairman of the KMT in 1988 and also became the first elected President of Taiwan in 1996 after the demise of Chiang Ching-kuo, the son of the founder of Taiwan i.e. Chiang Kai-shek. In 1988, he initiated talks with the mainland, and associations representing Beijing and Taipei met in Singapore in 1992. At the end of this historic meet, the

representatives issued a document which read like this: Both sides agree that there is only one Chinese nation comprising all of mainland China, Taiwan, Penghu and the offshore islands; under this Chinese nation, there are two states and both sides agree to disagree on the definition of control of these two states. What follows from this is that basically both sides agreed that the other side existed, but they would disagree about everything else. What many of us miss in this agreement is that both sides agreed that Taiwan belonged to China, while continuing to disagree on which ‘China, whether it is Republic of China or the Peoples Republic of China. As years passed, this came to be known as the ‘1992 Consensus’, which has been rightly rejected by the current ruling party in Taiwan.

The US, being the predominant power of the world, has a strong military presence in the Asia-Pacific, backed by its allies. Therefore any war-like situation over Taiwan would surely drag not only the US into this maelstrom, but also all its allies. And this could probably be the beginning of the Third World War. America's growing influence in Taiwan starting from defence cooperation to people to people contact has irked China for long. When Tsai won her second term this year, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo congratulated her saying, “Her re-election by a huge margin shows that she has earned the respect, admiration and trust of the people on Taiwan. Her courage and

vision in leading Taiwan's vibrant democracy is an inspiration to the region and the world.”

With this remark coming from Washington last month, China has flashed its anger yet again for the US coming ever closer to Taiwan. In fact, the praise prompted China's Ministry of Defense to issue a statement expressing strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to Pompeo's remarks. At the same time, its Foreign Ministry said it was “extremely indignant” at the message and accused Washington of breaching its diplomatic commitments. And what happened in the beginning of March was another pointer to America's deeper ties with Taiwan, especially under the Donald Trump administration. On March 4, the US House of Representatives unanimously passed the Taiwan Alliances International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act. What is adding more weight towards the maintenance of Taiwan's unique identity and independence in future is the very special character of the Act. This Act aims at inducing governments that are allies of Taiwan to maintain diplomatic ties with the country and to identify those at risk of sovereign relations with it.

It also calls for the US to supplement its diplomatic presence in countries that support Taiwan and reduce its diplomatic footprint if they side with Beijing. Further, the Act would give the Secretary of State the power to expand, reduce, or terminate US aid to countries

depending on whether they improve, worsen or sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan. It finally calls for increased American support for Taiwan's participation in global affairs. Closely looked at, this directly wants to bolster Taiwan's claim for de facto independence.

What comes from the other side of the spectrum is that Beijing adheres to its one China policy as it is. That is why China registered its utter dissatisfaction with the US by saying the latest words coming from Pompeo is hurting the “sentiments of the 1.4 billion Chinese people.”

Taiwan's re-elected President Tsai hoped for peaceful co-existence with China, but clearly disavows “one China framework” of Beijing. She again highlighted that “Here, I want to reiterate the words ‘peace, parity, democracy, and dialogue’. We will not accept the Beijing authorities’ use of ‘one country, two systems’ to downgrade Taiwan and undermine the cross-strait status quo. We stand fast by this principle.”

These words directly indicate what Taiwan under Tsai is looking for. On her inaugural speech, she vowed to fight for Taiwan's participation in international organisations, strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation with its allies and bolster ties with the US, Japan, Europe and other like-minded countries. This definitely is slated for a tough fight with the Xi regime in the days to come.

At the centre of the China-Taiwan bitterness lies the sheer

Taiwan issue will remain intact as a permanent thaw between Washington and Beijing is far-fetched. With Xi's war theatrics and grand propaganda of fulfilling his “China Dream”, the cross-strait relations would continue to be in focus.

Again, if Trump returns to power, it may bolster the China skeptics to continue the trade war with China. It would be a big mistake to think that Trump's anti-China rhetoric is just an election gimmick. It is a permanent policy plank of the core team of Trump presidency to exert pressure on Beijing whether it comes to trade, technology, South China Sea, Taiwan, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Tibet and even to China's border conflicts with India.

Hence, the future of China-Taiwan relations is heading for a chaos. Certainly, there is no chance of an imminent war. But it serves as one of the most dangerous flashpoints in the world, particularly when two nuclear giants are engaged. China's status of being a trade behemoth mainly emboldens it to spur its campaign against major powers of the world, especially against the US. But then derailing a powerful coalition of Western forces would be extremely difficult for China at any time in future.

Instead of competing and contesting the US, China must see to it that its own territories are secured and its citizens enjoy basic human rights. Suppressing the populace back home in the mainland and particularly in Hong Kong would cost Beijing in future. Only mere force applying through the PLA would not help sustaining the Xi model of permanent presidency across all the overseas territories of China.

What seems permanent is that the ill-will between Taipei and Beijing is going to continue. Admittedly, the tension between the two has risen to an all-time high under Xi. Though Tsai is leaving after this term, the DPP and its liberation philosophy can't be obliterated from the Taiwanese soil. With a sixth generation of leadership not coming to take over (because of Xi's permanent presidency), it definitely adds worry to internal party consensus over Xi's presidency after his two terms. These are serious threats to Xi and his core team. Therefore maintaining an iron fist at home and sloganeering unification over Taiwan and Hong Kong would be successful only in rhetoric.

Taiwan would remain what it is today, physically alienated, economically tied with the mainland and politically distant foes forever. So the war of words and weapons between the ROC and the PRC will nowhere head for perpetual peace.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

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MAKHAN SANKAR DAS

PERSPECTIVE

Covid-induced vaccination pause puts children at risk

Recording over 6.8 million cases in more than 200 countries, the coronavirus pandemic has undoubtedly become the most widespread infectious disease outbreak, leaving SARS, Ebola and H1N1 influenza far behind. Across the globe, countries have deployed aggressive containment measures, including stringent lockdowns, domestic and international border-sealing and trade restrictions. Tourism, hospitality, public transport, manufacturing and other such “non-essential” services have been affected in most countries, which are likely to have a resounding impact on domestic economies.

In two dozen countries, national routine immunisation programmes have been paused. In India, too, routine immunisation has been suspended to help ease the burden on the already overstretched

health system and to help limit transmission. Of course, this temporary halting is critical to recalibrate efforts to arrest the spread of Covid-19, but it is also deeply concerning. My fear is, this temporary suspension could place children at risk and disrupt the significant momentum we have achieved through our immunisation efforts in the country. Let me elaborate.

Since its inception, the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) — one of the largest public health programmes in the world — has protected millions of children from vaccine-preventable diseases like diphtheria, pertussis, measles, pneumonia, diarrhoea, etc. From offering protection against 6 vaccine-preventable diseases in the mid-eighties, today, the UIP has expanded to provide protection against 12 such diseases! New vaccines like measles rubella,

pneumococcal conjugate, inactivated polio and rotavirus have been introduced to improve the health of our children. In fact, our UIP targets to serve more than 26 million newborns and about 27 million pregnant women every year. Concerted efforts have helped us beat polio, maintain our polio-free status for over half a decade and eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus — which were all responsible for significant child morbidities.

Mission Indradhanush is testament to the Government's commitment to reach and protect the most vulnerable through targeted immunisation. In just 3 years, the mission fully immunised over 8 million children. Today, the Government has strengthened its mission to leave no-one behind, through intensified mission Indradhanush. We have also made strides in

strengthening our systems to better monitor and manage vaccine stocks, logistics, temperature tracking, all of which are essential to ensure that vaccines are accessible to everyone.

Of course, these are just a few of the encouraging results of a more robust UIP and the benefits of new vaccines. But it would be safe to say that, through dedicated efforts of the government and partners, we have managed to considerably improve child health in the country.

So how has the current suspension affected us? Unfortunately, vaccine-preventable diseases have not taken a break. For instance, globally, there has been rising concern about how the current situation could lead to a spike in vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles. In fact, WHO and others predict that more

than 117 million children across the world could miss out on essential vaccines needed to protect against measles. Women are also missing out on a vaccine that protects against rubella — an infectious disease that if contracted by pregnant women could cause spontaneous abortions, fetal deaths and serious congenital defects. These are grave concerns, especially since India, in the recent past, has already witnessed several outbreaks of measles and rubella. Similarly, while we are a polio-free country today and there's much to celebrate, the recent outbreaks of vaccine-derived polio in parts of the world is a sobering reality. We need to ensure that children receive the inactivated polio vaccine on time to avoid the possibility of such an outbreak in India.

The temporary suspension has also significantly affected

vaccine management systems and logistics, including activities that were underway to produce new and existing vaccines. While I am certain that all activities to sustain and expand the immunisation programme will eventually resume, the disruption caused by Covid-19 may lead to delays in restoring full capacity.

This pause has also dealt a severe blow to our plans of scaling up pneumococcal conjugate and rotavirus vaccines across the country. A quarter of our children still die of pneumonia and diarrhoea, yet we may have to wait longer than earlier expected to ensure everyone has access to these life-saving vaccines. The on-going economic downturn affects us all, including vaccine manufacturers, impacting overall production and distribution.

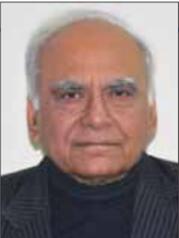
Let's explore the possibi-

ty of declaring vaccinators as first line responders. With protective gear and mobile technology, they could effectively sustain immunisation activities while practicing the mandated physical distancing.

Intersectoral collaborations will be critical to immunisation infrastructure — scientists, researchers, policymakers, economists, and civil society organisations and private organisations have to come together to design a roadmap to cover lost ground.

Even as all hands are on deck to develop a Covid-19 vaccine, we need to collectively carve out a meticulous risk management, financing and executive plan to ensure that once an emergency vaccine is available, everyone has access to it.

(The writer is former Director General, ICMR)



NIRMAL K GANGULY



BELIEVE IN YOUR INFINITE POTENTIAL. YOUR ONLY LIMITATIONS ARE THOSE YOU SET UPON YOURSELF — ROY T. BENNETT

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

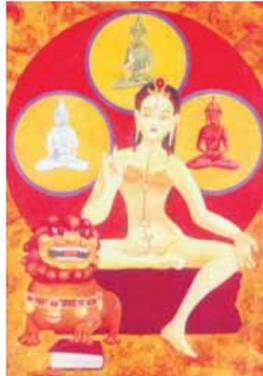
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

Overall health remains good. You will feel energetic and enthusiastic. There is a need to bring about change in your nutrition. Adopt new approach and ideas. You are filled with positive energy through the week. Those who have recovered from serious ailment must do the follow-through. On the career front, if you are involved in any sort of competition, then you are advised to keep a close eye out for any cheating. The bottom line is basically to cover your tail. Make sure you are doing things the right way, and then you'll have nothing to worry about. You are not very vocal in a relationship. Express yourself to those you love by saying loving words. Your introvert and individual persona does not help you to get closer to the one you love.

Lucky number 28
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Tuesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week health will be good. This is the time when you feel at your best, physically, mentally and emotionally. Health, vitality and inner vibrancy will fill you with energy and inspiration. Some creative ideas will occupy your mind and shine you bright. Females who are on the family way, would feel healthier and nourished. Make sure you take out adequate time for relaxation. On the work front, this could be that phase in your life which begs you to bring some desirable changes in your career. You might not be satisfied with your current job. Switching to a new job is likely. Some of you may opt for business, instead of a job. Don't ignore your personal life. Your loved ones mean a lot to you. Take some time out and show your concern, let the heart speak louder than the mind.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Camel brown
Lucky day Sunday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week you will reap the results of your past efforts. You will be focused on the reality that life comes a full circle and that what goes around always, without fail, will come around. Remember that when you make a point to be generous, whether, with time, energy, or money, that too is an investment in your future. Professionally, you may be inspired to start a new creative project. You are at that point in your life where you feel comfortable with who you are and what you feel. You see new potential in allowing your creativity to flow. On the relationship front if you are in love and decide to make him or her your life partner, take the approval of your parents. You will be able to maintain good relations with the seniors at home and take their blessings.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Friday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week you will enjoy happiness, good health and worldly pleasures. You tend to be enthusiastic and will carefully weigh what others ask you now. You will get inspired by everything around you. Connecting to yoga, meditation cosmic healing, learning new interests is indicated. Professionally, you will be torn between work and entertainment. This is the time to weigh your priorities and responsibilities. Make a decision in favour of better work conditions and output. If you wish for improved working conditions, stay away from tension and stress. Don't let negative forces bother you. On the personal front, look hard at yourself and analyse whether you are being realistic about love. Don't spend too much time in self-pity or wishing your life away.

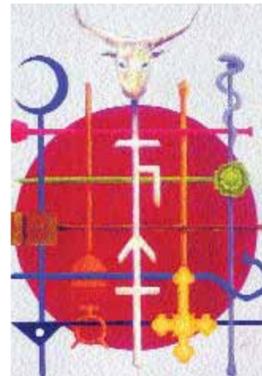
Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week you are extraordinarily active on a mental level. You find that your drive to make things happen is ignited. Your analytical and reasoning powers are very strong and you will not listen to others. You think what you say or what you do is right. Don't find faults in others. On the career front, some good news is on the cards. An out-of-the-blue opportunity may surprise you. Your focussed attitude will help you sail through difficult times. Avoid work politics. Deceit, clashes could be experienced this week in love matters. You could ruin the very things that you want the most such as close, intimate relationships with your friends and lover. Lack of communication and understanding could be harmful at this point.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week you are a quiet and keen observer. A positive outlook will change your perception of life. You feel healthier than ever. Spiritually, things will move along well, and you will feel hopeful about the future. You may have to decide whether to put your energy into things, people, and situations that you are involved with. On the career front, you will want your time and space and may be in isolation for a while. You will feel exhausted. The trauma of losing your job, financial and health worries may overpower you. You find most of the answers in your isolation. This is not the time to make decisions. The beginning of love, happiness and compassion is on the cards. The start of a new relationship, be it a friendship or a romance will bring a smile on your face.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Self-improvement is on top of your mind. Plan some creative activity to stay busy and avoid stress. The tension you have been experiencing lately would ease. Don't hesitate to share your feelings with your trusted ones or ask for help from them. Professionally, this is a very good time to start planning long term. Where do you want to be in the coming five years? How will you make it happen? Focus on your skills and potentials. You have great expectation from life and are happy about the surprises it often brings. The investments you made in the past are likely to return with interest. An existing relationship may suffer due to lack of understanding. Think calmly and carefully about what your limitations are in a relationship.

Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Wednesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week you may be restricted in your life. Health issues seem to be out of control. One after another problem may crop up on the health front. You need to analyse why you are feeling this way and work to release yourself from these restrictions. You need an emotional release from whatever it is that is making you feel stuck. Professionally, you are in mood for enjoyment and wish to have blast. Spend some time to pamper yourself, feel good and look good. Money is not a problem, earning will be good. This is a good time to look into home décor and consider renovation. On the relationship front, messages of love and affection are likely to come your way. If you are single, a new suitor with whom you have a lot in common may come into your life.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Running away from reality does not suit your personality. Those dealing with a health problem should consult a doctor. A change in environment will rejuvenate your health. Do not stress over unnecessary issues. On the career front, you are ready to confront any unfinished business in your life. You are decisive and determined. You have reviewed your past experiences and have learned from them. All the pieces of the puzzle of your life are finally coming together to form one. On the personal front, it is a good time to listen to your mind than your heart. You find that your drive to make things happen is ignited. At home, your domineering attitude could make others irritated, and you may be left alone. Listen more and say less.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Saturday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This is a good week. You will encounter new experiences and warm people who will invite you into their world. Everything is starting to fall into place and you can be one with the situation. On the career front, an enhanced status, promotion or designation is on the cards. This week you are very sound and grounded therefore, you are likely to take important decision related to career or relationship. You are hardworking and focused. Expect some stressful moments this week. Abundance of energy and self-confidence will give you a boost to move ahead. On the personal front, you are charged up with extra energy. You have great clarity on a situation and can now argue your case out with the view to emerge victorious.

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week you can solve many problems with your wisdom. With your experience and maturity, you would be able to take hold of your life. Instead of being innovative, you need to adapt to the existing set of beliefs and systems. Any new theory will not suit you this week. You have to follow an orthodox approach. On the career front, you may be your own worst enemy. How you speak your mind is as important as what you say. There may be some unfairness at play at work. Be sure that your behaviour is impeccable. Try to cut unnecessary expenses. If you are already in a committed relationship the clear message is that trust is crucial. If you are feeling suspicious for some reason about your partner, make a point to talk about this even if it is difficult.

Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week you will have to make some efforts to improve your health condition. You need more exercise under expert or nutritional guidance to make sure that you stay fit and are eating better. Take charge of your life. This can be a very creative time for you. Enjoy being with yourself and your childlike energy will help you enrich your life. This week, working environment will be friendly, consistent and this will increase your efficiency. You will enjoy working in a group and come out with productive results. You will be able to win the support of your senior. True love, balanced partnership, commitment, and all of the good are easily available for you. You could expect a genuine and long term relationship as the foundation of your love is very strong.

Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Awareness for mindpower

Continuing from where we left last week, it comes out that 'Freewill' serves as a double-edged sword. If, on one hand, it binds you to fate, at the same time, it also enjoins you with the potential to come out of its limitations. What choice to make, remains the prerogative of 'ahamkara' (Ego consciousness). The paradox, however, is that we are all born with inherent desire and mind-trends, coming as they may as Karmic carryover from the past birth, which serves as the defining principle of mind. We are, thus, born with a pre-conditioned mind.

As a consequence, more often than not, ahamkara is inclined to identify itself with indwelling desires, which it wishes to passionately pursue as the end game. Going through the run of life, ahamkara also gets drawn towards tempting influences of the seeming world, and instinctively makes it as a dream destination. Taking them on their face value, ahamkara doesn't allow time and space to look beyond for a better option if any. Nor, is it keen to invoke buddhi (faculty of discriminate intelligence) for due diligence either. With such a narrow frame of vision, one fails

to have a holistic understanding of the living realities of life. One, thus, can't see things in the right perspective due, and therefore, fails to pick up the right lead. So, we end up helplessly fated.

The question now is: Is there any scope to come out of the binds of fate? If so, what is the way forward? Remember, the inherent limitations, with which we are born, don't grant us access to the full landscape of our mind. Consequently, the processing power of the mind gets compromised. The obvious calling, therefore, is to first service our empowerment tool, the mind — by clearing all clutter and inherent limitations. Following which, you may then be able to discriminate between 'what you want' and 'what is right'. Also, you could explore all options available with an open mind, free from all limitations whatsoever, to pick up the most appropriate lead. The next question would be: how to go about?

Awareness is the key. The first step called for in this direction is to look for an enlightened Guru, who may lead you through. Otherwise, you may end up being stuck to your mental mesh. The Guru will first give you exposure to the



construct, chemistry, and operating principles of mind. Remember, mind is the prime mover of a being. All actions out in the open, be it chasing a desired destination or respond and react to an external stimuli, originates in mind, which following processing translates into action. Even the imprints of all your inherent tendencies are there in the mind itself, in the form of thought-seeds. It is again following a mental process that could help purify the mind, so as to have access to its full landscape with its wholesome powers. Unless you become conversant with the working modalities of the instrument in use, it will not be possible to use it efficiently.

Be it known, Mind has three functional tools — *Buddhi*, *Ahamkara* and *Manasa*. *Buddhi* is the faculty of discriminate intelligence, intrinsic to which is the sense of dispassion. It analyses issues in hand in an unbiased manner, arrives at the right judgment, and accordingly guides how to act upon. But, *buddhi* can't act upon by itself unless directed by *ahamkara*. *Ahamkara* brings in the sense of 'I' consciousness, which makes you take the call of life, and own up for the consequences of all your doings. *Manasa* is the sense-driven mind, which with the

help of its perceptive instruments is supposed to collect outer field data. And then deliver them for due diligence to *buddhi*, which following due consideration directs *manasa* to accordingly act upon. *Manasa*, again as directed by *ahamkara*, puts into action usual functional mandates of mind. Guided by indwelling mind-trends, often *ahamkara* takes things on their face value, when it ignores *buddhi*, following which *manasa* acts on instinctive judgement, and with obvious consequences.

All these three coordinates are supposed to work in a coordinated way as a unified organism. If we remain alert enough to optimally use the functional coordinates of mind exactly as mandated, we shall be able to come out with our best. For, then, wholesome powers of mind shall be available. The paradox, however, is that stuck to the usual grinds of life, we often lose our sense of alert, and with obvious consequences.

To be continued...
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