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RESET TIES
WITH NEPAL

WORLD 8
HONG KONGERS HIT PANIC BUTTON,
BIG SPIKE IN IMMIGRATION INQUIRIES

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SL CRICKETERS TO
RESUME TRAINING

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA
*Late City Vol. 9 Issue 149
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RAIPUR, MONDAY JUNE 1, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



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EVERY ROLE
HAS TAUGHT
ME: JACQUELINE
10 VIVACITY

Alternate LS, RS sittings in Central Hall

Parliamentary proceedings in ample space will ensure social distancing

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

If the current spate of corona pandemic goes unabated, then it is likely that both Houses of Parliament — Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha — may function from the Central Hall and that too on alternate days. Well-placed sources said considering the need to maintain the social distancing norm, the Monsoon Session beginning next month will conduct its proceedings from the spacious Central Hall in a staggered manner and on a rotational basis. For instance, if the Lok Sabha meets on Monday then the Rajya Sabha will sit on Tuesday, in such a scenario, Parliament will function six days a week with three each for both the Houses.



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

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

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

President of India (twice annually) or any visiting dignitary. In normal days, the space is used by members of both the

Houses to spend time and interact and is also a coveted place for journalists who have restricted access to the Central

Hall where they are privileged to exchange greetings.

As per the Parliamentary rules, both the Houses should be convened at least once in six months after the President prorogues it. The last time when Parliament functioned was on March 23 after which the Centre imposed a complete national lockdown in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic. The Budget Session of Parliament which began on January 31 was supposed to end on April 2.

"The last Parliament was adjourned sine die on March 23 and we have time till September 22 to convene Parliament for the Monsoon Session. However this prerogative is with the Government of India when to begin its legislative business. We will be

prepared to welcome the members and keep the democratic norms ahead," sources privy to the development said.

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

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

Nepal tables Bill for new 'biased' map

Madhesi rejects Nepal Govt's bid

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

The Nepal Government on Sunday tabled a Constitution amendment bill in parliament aimed at altering the country's map amid a border dispute with India.

Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Shivamaya Tumbahangphe, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, tabled the Bill, a day



after the main Opposition Nepali Congress also backed the legislation. Nepal's Madhesi parties refused to welcome the Bill as of now.

Lockdown till June 30 in 9 States; varied rules for inter-State travel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the guidelines by the Centre on opening up economic activities, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, UP, Karnataka, Bihar, Gujarat, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, have come out with fresh guidelines extending the lockdown in the containment zones till June 30 and allowing opening of economy in phased wise manner.

Inter-state travel by road, air and trains from Maharashtra will remain prohibited in the latest phase of the lockdown until June 30 with exceptions being made for migrant workers, stranded people and 'Shramik' special trains, as per the latest guidelines issued on Sunday. The Chhattisgarh Government on Sunday said inter-state travel without requisite permission from authorities will continue to remain prohibited.

Maharashtra, which is

worst affected from coronavirus, extended till June 30 the lockdown and announced easing of restrictions and phase-wise resumption of activities under the "Mission Begin Again".

As per the revised guidelines issued on Sunday, all markets, market areas and shops, except malls, will be allowed to function from June 5 on odd-even basis. While all private offices can operate with up to 10 per cent their employee strength as per the requirement from June 8 with others working from home. This will exclude containment zones.

Under 'Mission Begin Again', outdoor physical activities like morning walks, cycling will be allowed. Self employed persons like plumbers, electricians, pest control staff and technicians will be allowed to work, but they will have to follow social distancing norms.

Flyod rage engulfs US



AP ■ MINNEAPOLIS

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

Cars and businesses were torched, the words "I can't breathe" were spray-painted all over buildings, a fire in a trash bin burned near the gates of the White House, and thousands marched peacefully through

city streets to protest the death of George Floyd, a black man who died Monday after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee on his neck until he stopped breathing.

His death is one of a litany of racial tragedies that have thrown the country into chaos amid the coronavirus pandemic that has left millions out of work and killed more than 100,000 people in the US, including disproportionate numbers of black people. "We're sick of it. The cops are out of control," protester Olga Hall said in Washington DC.



To mitigate the losses owing to the Corona pandemic

- Rs. 2 lakh crore have been allocated to provide additional concessional credit through Kisan Credit Card.
- Rs. 6000 is being given in three equal installments of Rs. 2000 each under PM-KISAN.
- 9.72 crore farmer families have been given Rs. 19,457 crore during the lockdown period.

Strengthening Farm-gate infrastructure, to increase farmers' income

- A scheme worth Rs. 1 lakh crore launched to strengthen cold storage chain and supply chain.

Creating better pricing structure for farmers

- In addition to the APMCs, several agriculture market reforms carried out to provide better market options. Farmers can now sell their crops anywhere and avail better prices.
- Amendments announced in Essential Commodities Act, APMC Act, Mandi Act to offer better price to Farmers.
- A scheme worth Rs. 10,000 crore is dedicated to over 2 lakh unorganized Micro Food Processing Enterprises. This will help in them establishing their own brand.

Standing by Fishermen

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

For the Animal Husbandry Farmers

- A total of Rs. 15,000 crore have been allocated to revive the animal husbandry sector.

War Against Corona - Nation's Victory lies in your victory



"The crisis the world is facing today teaches us that way forward is - Aatmanirbhar Bharat (A self-reliant India)"
- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



For more information, visit - transformingindia.mygov.in/aatmanirbharbharat

TACKLING CORONAVIRUS

HARYANA COVID-19 TALLY CROSSES 2K MARK

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In yet another day of a major spike in Covid-19 cases, 168 cases were reported on Sunday, taking Haryana's tally to 2091.

A day before, 202 positive cases were reported in the state. Haryana has so far reported 20 Coronavirus related fatalities.

"Out of 53 fresh cases, 97 were reported from Gurugram, 28 from Faridabad, 20 from Bhiwani, 9 from Hisar 4 each from Ambala and Kurukshetra, 2 each from Narnaul and Karnal, one each from Palwal and Panipat," according to the state Health Department's evening bulletin.

The total active Covid-19 patients in the state are 1023 while 1048 patients have been cured and discharged from hospitals, as per the state's health bulletin.

On May 18, Haryana's total count of Covid patients had reached 928, out of which 316 were active patients. However, on May 31, the total count crossed 2000 with 1023 active cases.

The worst-affected districts of the state with the maximum number of positive cases are Gurugram with 774 cases, Faridabad with 367 cases and Sonapat with 199.

Gurugram, the worst-hit by Coronavirus in Haryana, has reported 369 Covid-19 patients in the last three days, surpassing the total number of cases recorded in the last two months. The total cases in Gurugram stood at 774 on Sunday.

Gurugram had recorded its biggest single-day jump in the number of Covid-19 cases on Saturday with 157 new patients testing positive for the highly infectious illness in 24 hours.

About 70 per cent of the cases in Haryana are from the districts adjoining the national capital, which has the third highest number of Covid-19 cases in India, the state's Health Minister Anil Vij had said earlier this week, insisting that state borders should remain closed.

As many as 1.18 lakh samples have been tested till date in Haryana. The report of 4338 samples is awaited, the state's

bulletin stated.

The Covid-19 positive rate stood at 1.84 percent, recovery rate at 50.12 percent and doubling rate of Coronavirus cases at 9 days on Sunday in Haryana, it stated. Meanwhile, more than 52.43 lakh persons have so far downloaded Aarogya Setu App in Haryana.

4 NEW CASES IN CHANDIGARH

Four Covid-19 positive cases including of a foreign returnee was reported in Chandigarh on Sunday. The total number of positive cases now stood at 293 in the city.

"A 27 years old female, who returned from Canada (Toronto) and is in an institutional quarantine has tested positive for Covid-19. She was studying in Canada while her family resides in Chandigarh. She has three family members here," stated Chandigarh Health Department's evening bulletin.

After her return, she is quarantined at Hotel Mountview here. As per the Central guidelines, those flying

from abroad will have to serve 14-day mandatory quarantine including seven-day paid institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by seven days of isolation at home. More than 100 persons have reached Chandigarh from abroad, out of which 29 have been discharged after necessary testing till now.

Other positive cases reported were from Babu Dham colony and Khuda Ali Sher.

With two more cases, the Babu Dham colony, a containment zone has till now reported 218 positive persons, which accounts for more than 74 percent out of the total cases in the city.

The colony in Sector 26 here has an approximate population of 60000 people.

"The total cases stood at 293 while the active cases are 90 in Chandigarh. 199 patients have so far been declared cured of Coronavirus and discharged from the hospital, the bulletin said. 4785 samples have been tested till now while report of 13 is awaited, it added.

Three of Hoshiarpur's four cases were contacts of already

diagnosed cases and the last person had a travel history. Two of Jalandhar's cases were new cases and two were contacts of already diagnosed cases.

Of Amritsar's three cases, two were contacts of already diagnosed cases, and one was from the flu corner. Barnala and Moga both had people with travel histories testing positive.

Among the districts, Amritsar is having the maximum 377 cases, followed by

Jalandhar (246), Ludhiana (189), Tarn Taran (157), Gurdaspur (136), Patiala (118), Hoshiarpur (120), SAS Nagar (109), SBS Nagar (106), Sangrur (96), Muktsar (66), Faridkot (62), Ropar (70), Moga (62), Pathankot (60), Fatehgarh Sahib (58), Bathinda (47), Ferozepur (46), Kapurthala (36), Mansa (32), and Barnala (24).

20 MORE RECOVERED, 231 ACTIVE CASES

As many as 20 more

30 new cases in Punjab, total 2,263

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab on Sunday reported 30 fresh cases of the novel coronavirus, of which 10 have the source of infection from out of the state, besides reporting one more death. In a span of 24 hours, the number of total Covid-19 cases in the state has gone up to 2,263, while the Punjab's death toll has reached 45. Among the new cases, Ludhiana has reported nine, with eight from Ropar, four each from Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar, three from Amritsar, and one each from Moga and Barnala districts.

Seven of Ludhiana's nine cases on Sunday were contacts of previously diagnosed cases, while one was a prisoner and one was a patient with severe acute respiratory infection (SARI). Seven of Ropar's eight cases had travel histories, and the last case was an ASHA worker.

Three of Hoshiarpur's four cases were contacts of already



diagnosed cases and the last person had a travel history. Two of Jalandhar's cases were new cases and two were contacts of already diagnosed cases.

Of Amritsar's three cases, two were contacts of already diagnosed cases, and one was from the flu corner. Barnala and Moga both had people with travel histories testing positive.

Among the districts, Amritsar is having the maximum 377 cases, followed by

patients — five from Hoshiarpur, four each from Amritsar and Ludhiana, three from Pathankot, one each from Tarn Taran, Gurdaspur, Patiala, and Mohali — have recovered, taking the total cured and discharged patients to 1987 at a recovery rate of 87.80 percent.

Currently, Mansa, Kapurthala, Ferozepur, and Muktsar districts have no active cases, while Tarn Taran, Gurdaspur, Mohali, Nawanshahr, Sangrur, Faridkot, Moga, Fatehgarh Sahib, Bathinda, Fazilka and Barnala have less than 10 active cases in the state.

PATHNAKOT MAN DIES OF COVID

One more person succumbed to coronavirus in the state, pushing the death toll to 45. A 54-year-old resident of Pathankot died due to the contagion at a Civil Hospital on Friday, a health official said. The patient had diabetes, an official said.

Capt clears appointments of 8 next of kin of martyrs

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Sunday cleared the appointments of eight next of kin of the martyrs in recognition of their gallantry actions.

The appointments were recommended by a high powered committee, headed by the state Chief Secretary Karan Avtar Singh, said a spokesperson of the Chief Minister's Office.

The appointees include Akwinder Kaur as Naib Tehsildar, Astha Garg as Excise and Taxation Officer, Malkeet Kaur as Library Restorer in Education Department, Tanveer Kaur as Tehsildar, Amandeep as Clerk in the Defence Services Welfare Department, Guralp Singh as Junior Engineer (Electrical) in PWD, Radha Rani as Inspector in Cooperative Societies and Amritbir Singh as Tehsildar.

The State Government has appointed Amritbir Singh as Tehsildar in the Revenue Department for the supreme sacrifice made by his father, Inspector Ragbir Singh, who belonged to Sathiala village in Amritsar district and had joined CRPF in 1991. "He was an outstanding sportsperson and had won medals in Athletics at the national level. He attained martyrdom on April 24, 2017, while fighting Naxalites in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh," said the spokesperson.

Major Ravi Inder Singh Sandhu's wife Tanveer Kaur has been appointed as Tehsildar in the Revenue Department. Commissioned in the Corps of Signals in 2007, the officer had also done two stints in counter insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir and laid down his life while serving in the UN Mission in South Sudan and was awarded "Dag Hammarskjold Medal" by the United Nations for courage and sacrifice in line of duty.

Aastha Garg's husband Flt Lt Mohit Garg belonged to Samana in Patiala district, and was commissioned as a pilot in the Indian Air Force in 2014. The officer died when the AN 32 aircraft, which he was flying, crashed in high altitude area of Arunachal Pradesh.

Malkeet Kaur's husband Constable (GD) Mukhtiar Singh, who belonged to Fattuwalla village in Ferozepur district, attained martyrdom on July 15, 2018, while fighting valiantly Naxalites in Pakhanjore Sub Division in Chhattisgarh.

Guralp Singh, the brother of martyr Rifleman Sukhwinder Singh, has been given appointment of Junior Engineer (Electrical) in PWD. Born in Fatehpur village in Hoshiarpur district, rifleman Sukhwinder Singh joined 18

JAK Rifles in 2017 and was martyred on December 16, 2019 while fighting at the Line of Control in Sunderbani area of Jammu and Kashmir.

Radha Rani, sister of Gdr Sanjay Kumar, has been appointed as Inspector in Registrar, Co-operative Societies. Kumar belonged to village Rajwal in Hoshiarpur district, and died on April 9, 2019, while he was carrying out field firing exercise with live ammunition.

Amandeep's brother Gnr Lekh Raj attained martyrdom on August 7, 2018, while he was on patrolling duty on the Line of Actual Control in Arunachal Pradesh.

Akwinder's husband Naik Manwinder Singh, who hailed from Ghoneval village in Amritsar district, attained martyrdom on November 18, 2019, when he was on operational duty in High Altitude area in Siachen Glacier.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had on Saturday issued the new guidelines for a phased reopening of areas outside the containment zones.

The SOP to open salons

More relaxation in Chandigarh from today, Night curfew for 8 hours now

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A day after the Central Government issued guidelines for lockdown 5.0, the Chandigarh Administration on Sunday gave more relaxations and night curfew will now be from 9 pm to 5 am with effect from June 1. Earlier, this was from 7 pm to 7 am.

"There shall be prohibition of movement of individuals, for all non-essential activities between 9 pm to 5 am. Any breach of this order shall invite action under Section 188 of Indian Penal Code," stated an order issued by District Magistrate, Chandigarh.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had on Saturday issued the new guidelines for a phased reopening of areas outside the containment

zones. The guidelines will come into effect from June 1, when Lockdown 4.0 gets over, and will be effective till June 30.

Manoj Parida, Adviser to UT Administrator said that Chandigarh being a union territory, the Administration will follow MHA directions. The decision regarding containment zones will be taken by UT Administration in a meeting on Monday.

The SOP to open salons

will also be issued on Monday after approval from the Administrator, he said.

Restaurants, hotels, places of worship and shopping malls will be opened from June 8 while educational institutions are likely to be open in July. However, cinema halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres, bars and auditoriums will remain closed for now.

Among various relaxations under lockdown 4.0, the Chandigarh Administration had resumed public transport including autos, buses and taxis with limited capacity and allowed opening of shops in main markets from May 19 onwards in non-containment zones, where people can now move out of houses from 5 am to 9 pm for essential activities.

2nd international flight with 144 passengers lands in UT

PNS ■ MOHALI

The second international flight, after the lockdown came into effect, to Chandigarh from Kiev (Ukraine) via Delhi landed at the Chandigarh International Airport Limited (CHIAL) on early Sunday morning (at 3:12 am) with 144 passengers, including 34 from Punjab.

Mohali Deputy Commissioner Girish Dayalan said that the flight included two passengers from Chandigarh, 54 from Himachal Pradesh, 53 from Haryana, and 34 from Punjab which included five from Mohali and one from Rajasthan.

As per the Health Department protocol, all the passengers belonging to Mohali district arriving through International flight have been put under home quarantine for 14 days.

Those passengers who belong to other States and other districts were sent to their respective places where they would undergo similar quarantine.

4.86 lakh given distress tokens for ration, says Haryana CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Sunday said that various steps are being taken by the State Government in its fight against on-going global pandemic Covid-19 and the topmost priority is that no one remains hungry in this hour of crisis.

"The ration cardholders as well as those who do not have any card, have been provided ration through 'distress tokens'.

This facility was provided to around 4,86,000 (4 lakh 86 thousand) people in the state" the Chief Minister said.

He said that the State Government through Haryana Roadways buses and special

sharmik trains made elaborate arrangements to send labourers back to their respective home states from Haryana in a safe and systematic manner.

The Chief Minister said this while addressing the officers of District Administration at Kaithal. The Minister of State for Women and Child Development Kamlesh Dhanda was also present at the meeting.

Manohar Lal while addressing the officers, said that to fight the battle against this pandemic, the State Government and the District Administration have worked day and night, as a result of which Haryana is in a better position as compared to other states.

He said that this is the

worst pandemic which is being witnessed worldwide and the world is badly affected by this.

At the initial stage itself Prime Minister Narendra Modi took an important decision of announcing lockdown in the entire country to prevent the virus from spreading. Haryana too took many important steps to prevent the spread of infection in the state, he added.

The Chief Minister said that as no vaccine is available for the treatment of this infection till now, therefore each one of us has to ensure that precautions like wearing masks, adhering to social distancing norms are incorporated in our lifestyle.

He said that the number of Covid-19 testing labs would be



increased in Haryana.

He said that the state as well as the district administration of Kaithal has worked vigorously in curbing this global pandemic, for which everyone deserves to be applauded. Arrangements were also made

by the government to provide ration to all the people. In Kaithal district, around 25,416 people were provided ration through distress tokens, the Chief Minister shared.

The Chief Minister further said that additional procure-

ment centers were set up by the government for hassle-free procurement of farmers' crops during COVID-19 crisis. If the farmers' payment of this season is outstanding, then the concerned department should make sure to release the pending amount to the concerned farmer immediately, he said.

He also said that as lockdown-4 is over, and now the Ministry of Health has announced unlock-1, therefore during this period, everyone should wear masks and ensure strict adherence to social distancing norms.

As Corona infection spreads rapidly, therefore we all have to remain cautious to prevent the spread. A provision

of penalty has also been made for those found violating guidelines, he added.

The Chief Minister said that the State Government is also making plans for the future. It is very important to save the water for our future generations which is the most precious gift of nature.

The micro-irrigation system is very beneficial for water conservation. About 3000-liter water is required for sowing one kg rice. Therefore, to save water for ourselves and for the coming generations, we have to adopt crop diversification, he added.

He said that farmers have been called upon to save water by sowing other crops instead of paddy.

Punjab extends lockdown for 4 weeks, issues guidelines on Unlock 1.0

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

A day after Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh announced a four-week extension in the lockdown in the State till June 30, the State Government on Sunday issued fresh guidelines regarding 'Unlock 1.0' announcing certain relaxations in the night curfew, opening of shops, interstate movements, among others.

Issuing the new guidelines, in line with the Centre's guidelines, the State Government has changed the timing of night curfew to 9 pm to 5 am as per guidelines of Union Ministry of Home Affairs. The timings of opening of shops have also been changed from 7 am to 7 pm.

Allowing all employees, government or private, to move without any requirement of pass during permitted hours — 5 am to 9 pm, the guidelines maintained that there would be no restriction on inter-state movement of persons, no separate permission or e-permit required for movement, but at the same time, made the use of COVA-app and self-generated 'e-pass' mandatory.

As of now, the State

Government has decided to prohibit the functioning of cinema halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres, bars, auditoriums, assembly hall, and similar places. Besides, the social, political, sports, entertainment or academic, cultural or religious functions and other large congregations would also continue to be banned.

At the same time, the Government has declared that spitting in public places and consumption of liquor, pan, gutka, tobacco etc in public places would also continue to be prohibited, however, there would be no restriction on their sale.

As per the guidelines, issued by the Department of Home Affairs and Justice to all the Administrative Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Zonal IGTs, Commissioners of Police, DIGs and SSPs in the State, the dine-in services by restaurants, hotels and other hospitality services, shopping malls, religious places or places of worship for public would remain closed till June 7.

"The government would resume the dine-in services by restaurants, open hotels and

other hospitality services, open shopping malls, open religious places or places of worship for public after the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will issue detailed standard operation procedures (SOPs) before June 8.

"Restaurants may be opened for take-home or home delivery services, but in-dine services to remain closed till June 7, 2020. However, the State Government, based on the SOP of the MoHFW, would issue SOP before June 8, 2020, for resuming in-dine services by restaurants," read the guidelines.

Making it clear that the Central guidelines could not be diluted, it stated that the district authorities may, however, impose additional restrictions, as deemed necessary, based on their assessment of the situation.

Lockdown 5.0 would continue in Containment Zones till June 30, 2020. The Containment Zones will be demarcated by the district authorities after taking into consideration the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). In the Containment Zones, only essential activities shall be allowed.

Punjab opens up

- ◆ Night curfew from 9 pm to 5 am
- ◆ Opening of shops allowed from 7 am to 7 pm
- ◆ All employees to be allowed to move without any requirement of pass during permitted hours — 5 am to 9 pm
- ◆ No restriction on inter-state movement of persons
- ◆ No separate permission or e-permit required for such movement
- ◆ Use of COVA-app and self-generated 'e-pass' would be mandatory.
- ◆ Disallows cinema halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres, bars, etc
- ◆ Prohibits social, political, sports, entertainment or academic, cultural or religious functions and other large congregations
- ◆ Bans spitting and consumption of liquor, pan, gutka, tobacco etc in public places
- ◆ Dine-in services by restaurants, hotels and other hospitality services, shopping malls, religious places or places of worship for public to remain closed till June 7
- ◆ To open dine-in in restaurants, hotels and other hospitality services, shopping malls, religious places by June 8
- ◆ Lockdown to continue in Containment Zones till June 30, only essential activities allowed
- ◆ Marriage related gatherings limited to 50; 20 for funeral or last rites
- ◆ Inter-state movement of persons by domestic flights, trains, buses or cars required to either download COVA-app and get self-generated 'e-pass' or declare their particulars at airport, railway station, bus stand or inter-state border
- ◆ Inter-state movement of buses and vehicles to be allowed with "mutual consent of the States"
- ◆ Inter-state movement of passenger vehicles to be permitted against self-generated e-pass
- ◆ Intra-state movement of passenger vehicles allowed without any restriction
- ◆ No pass required for permitted activities like shopping, going to office and work place
- ◆ No restriction on inter-state movement of goods

There shall be a strict perimeter control. There are separate guidelines of MoHFW in regard to activities in the Containment Zones and those will be strictly followed," it stated.

As per the guidelines, the district authorities would also identify buffer zone; outside containment zones wherein restrictions as considered necessary, may be put in place.

As per the guidelines, the marriage related gatherings have been limited to 50 guests, while persons not to exceeding 20 would be allowed for funeral or last rites.

The state government has also allowed the inter-state movement of persons by domestic flights, trains, buses or cars "subject to the condition that the inward passengers would follow the SOP of the Health Department.

The passengers would be required to either download COVA-app and get self-generated 'e-pass' or declare their particulars at airport, railway station, bus stand or inter-state border as the case may be."

Regarding inter-state movement of buses and vehicles, it will be allowed with "mutual consent of the States", subject to compliance of the

SOP which shall be issued by the state Transport Department. The intra-state movement of buses is already allowed.

The inter-state movement of passenger vehicles like taxis, cabs, stage carriers, tempo-travellers and cars will be permitted against self-generated e-pass, while the intra-state movement of passenger vehicles, like taxis, cabs, stage carriers, tempo-travellers and cars, will be allowed without any restriction.

Bicycles, rickshaws and auto-rickshaws will be allowed, also two-wheelers (1+1 passengers), four-wheelers (1+ 2 passengers) will also be allowed "subject to compliance of the SOP as issued by the Transport Department".

"No pass would be required for permitted activities like shopping, going to office and work place," it stated adding that there would be no restriction on inter-state movement of goods.

Shopping malls shall continue to remain closed. All shops including shops in main bazars allowed to open between 7 am to 7 pm. Liquor vends shall, however, remain open from 8 am to 8 pm.

However, for shops situated in main bazars, market complexes and rehri markets and other crowded places, district authorities can exercise their discretion and in order to avoid crowding shall stagger the opening of shops," stated the guidelines.

Barber shops, hair-cut saloons, beauty parlours and spas will also be allowed to function from 7 am to 7 pm subject to compliance of the SOP as issued by the Health Department, Punjab.

All categories of industries are allowed to operate in both rural and urban areas. Likewise, construction activities are allowed without any restriction in both the urban and rural areas. Agricultural, horticultural, animal husbandry, veterinary services are allowed without any restriction. E-Commerce are also permitted for all goods.

The Central Government and Private Offices are also allowed to open as per required strength without any restrictions except that compliance of social distancing and wearing of masks at all times, shall be ensured.

All Punjab government offices would remain open as per required strength.

47 more Covid-19 patients detected in Chhattisgarh

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Covid Hospital, Bilaspur (50), Medical College Hospital, Ambikapur (49), Raigarh (27), Medical College Hospital, Jagdalpur (5) and Medical College Hospital Rajnandgaon (35).

Forty-seven fresh coronavirus positive cases were reported across Chhattisgarh on Sunday.

The state Covid-19 Control and Command Centre gave the break-up of the new cases: Mahasamund (18), Jashpur (16), Korba (5), Raipur (3), Bilaspur (2), and one each in Kanker, Balod and Rajnandgaon.

The latest findings have increased the number of positive cases in the state to 379.

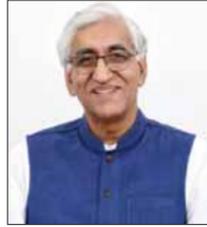
Patients taking treatment in the state are admitted at AIIMS Raipur (77), Covid Hospital Mana, Raipur (89),

C'garh seeks support of MPs, MLAs to battle Covid-19

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Health and Family Welfare Minister T.S. Singh Deo has urged MPs and MLAs in the state to provide suggestions to battle the coronavirus pandemic better.

In a letter to MPs, MLAs and Zila Panchayat Chairmen, the Minister has sought suggestions for improved management of



the specialized Covid-19 Hospitals as well as quarantine centres.

It will help to ensure a total integrated arrangement based on the expectations of the public representatives.

The letter states that complaints regarding drawbacks in the hospitals and quarantine centres should be shared. This will help to ensure a total integrated arrangement based on the

expectations of the public representatives.

The suggestions, complaints and recommendations can be sent by letter or emailed to tsingdeominister@gmail.com

Singh Deo said that with the rising number of active and suspected positive cases both in rural and urban areas, emergency arrangements have been made in Covid Hospitals and quarantine centres.

Coronavirus may remain active in high 40s Celcius

BY SUMIT SAXENA New Delhi, May 29 (IANS)

Temperatures in the high 40s Celsius (as in India these days) would not make much difference to the coronavirus. It may still be active at these temperatures for six to 12 hours, said leading virologist Shahid Jameel, who is also CEO of DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance.

Detailing on the peak of the viral infection, in an exclusive interview to IANS, Jameel insisted if on average 5,000 cases are reported daily, then in six weeks believing, peak will arrive around mid-July, when cumulative cases may touch 4 lakh. He also did not attach much importance to the happy percentages as he said they varied from time to time, given the number of tests increasing.

He disagreed to connect the sharp spike in cases in May due to reverse migration of the migrant workers. "If migrating people were infected and had not migrated, these would still show up in the total count. But, there is good reason to believe that the spike we are seeing now in newer areas, and in rural and small town India is due to it," said Jameel.

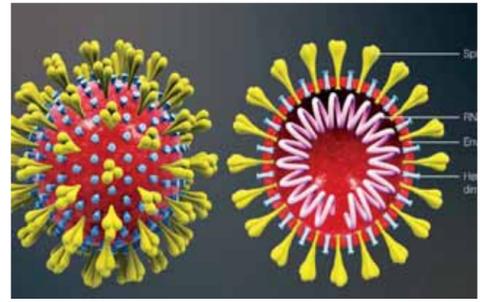
Jameel also showed surprise at Bihar and West Bengal figures, as he said the former's health structure was worse compared to the latter.

Excerpts:
Q: AIIMS director had said the spike will come in June or July, we are already reporting more than 5,000 cases daily for more than a week now in May. How bad would be the peak of this viral infection?
A: Some leading epidemiologists believe that the peak in India would come around mid-July. If that were the case, and if we continue to get on average 5,000 cases daily, in 6 weeks we would add about 2.25 lakh cases to 1.65 lakh cases at present, amounting to about 4 lakh cumulative cases at peak. At the current case fatality ratio (CFR) of about 3, we are looking at about 12,000 deaths by peak time. But there is every indication that the infection rate is picking up with easing of the nationwide lockdown, so we may see more than 5,000 daily cases and a bigger number at peak.

Let me use another way of calculating e from the death figures. Even death figures are underestimated since many who die at home after short symptomatic disease are not counted. Though the CFR is about 7 per cent globally and about 3 per cent in India, the population mortality rate would be in the range of 0.5 to 0.7 per cent. There are a number of studies to suggest this rate.
As of today, we have about 4,700 Covid-19 deaths reported from India. If we multiply this by 200 (assuming 0.5 per cent mortality), we are looking at 9.4 lakh infections. But this number was 18 days ago, since that is the average time from infection to death.
And if the outbreak is doubling every 14 days, by today we have about 22-25 Lakh infections, instead of the 1.65 lakh confirmed cases. Therefore, it appears that population infection is underestimated by about 15-fold if you simply look at confirmed cases. By this measure, we should be looking at about 60 Lakh cumulative infections and about 30,000 total deaths by peak time.

Do remember that there would be a 6-8 week period of decline from the peak to baseline, which would add more cases and mortality. All this assumes that the projected numbers are factual estimates. Since more testing is throwing up more cases, the present numbers are likely to be an underestimate. But this gives you an idea of what we are looking at in the coming months.

Q: Initially few studies pointed out that heat may have an adverse effect on the virus, it is already 47 degrees Celsius and Covid-19 cases are increasing rapidly. What do



you have to say on this?

A: There are two published international studies that have directly addressed the susceptibility of SARS-CoV-2 to high temperatures. A study from the WHO Collaborating Centres shows that SARS-CoV-2 is more stable at room temperature than other coronaviruses, and at 56 degrees Celsius there is quick reduction in infectivity.
Another study from Hong Kong published in the British medical journal Lancet shows that at 37 degrees Celsius, 56 degrees Celsius and 70 degrees Celsius the virus is inactivated in 2 days, 30 minutes and 5 minutes, respectively. Extrapolating from these data, temperatures in the high 40s (as in India these days) would not make much difference. The virus may still be active at these temperatures for 6 to 12 hours.

Q: Do you think movement of migrant workers' across the country led to this sudden spike in Covid-19 cases in May?
A: Based on the 2011 Census, 37 per cent of India's population or about 45 crore people were internal migrants. Of these, there were 5.6 crore inter-state migrants, most coming from the Hindi speaking belt of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The Economic Survey 2016 pegged the migrant workforce at 10 crore. A Report from Aajeevika suggests that there are currently about 12 crore people who migrate from rural areas to urban labour markets, industries and farms. The major net migration flows (see Figure) show that people migrate to states and cities that are today the hotspots for Covid-19. A World Bank report estimates the nationwide lockdown to have impacted the lives of over 4 crore migrant workers. It is estimated that about 10 per cent of these have already gone back home in the past few weeks.

Data in the public domain on new or cumulative infections are not granular enough to address what fractions of these are in migrant populations. Newspaper reports show infection rates in Bihar to have surged during May, coinciding with the arrival of migrants. Similar trends are being reported from Assam, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and the North Eastern states.

Workers in the unorganized sector that are on a reverse migration generally live in crowded dwellings in urban slums. Unhygienic and dense living conditions and poor healthcare access make them vulnerable to all sorts of infectious diseases, especially those like tuberculosis and Covid-19 that spread through aerosol.

I don't think the spike in total cases in India in May is due to this reverse migration. If migrating people were infected and had not migrated, these would still show up in the total count. But, there is good reason to believe that the spike we are seeing now in newer areas, and in rural and small towns in India is due to it. This trend is likely to continue in the coming weeks, and should be of much concern. There is poor healthcare infrastructure in these areas, which may spike up the mortality rates.

Q: India has a low case fatality rate (CFR), is it the silver lining in the backdrop of

5,000 to 6,000 cases every day?
A: One would have to think so, assuming that we are capturing the death figures accurately. If that is the case, we don't understand why that is so. There are a few hypotheses, but there is no data to prove any.
But let me also make another point. Reducing CFR with time is due to increased testing. Earlier we were testing only very sick people. Then as testing volume picked up we started testing symptomatic people and now we are testing increasing numbers of asymptomatic people. So, the CFR would naturally fall. There is too much being made of this number. It makes little sense.

Q: Covid-19 death rate per million people is very high in two states and one UT -- Gujarat, Maharashtra and Delhi. What are the main factors for this spike? Whereas death per million is low in other states.
A: There may be multiple reasons for this. The virus possibly arrived early in these places due to international connectivity and commercial activity, and got time to circulate. This coupled with high population density (in Mumbai and Delhi) and delayed government response (in Gujarat and Maharashtra) has likely led to this situation.

The CFR in India is 2.8 per cent. If we compare state-wise data to this average, Gujarat is high at 6 per cent, Maharashtra average at 3.3 per cent and Delhi lower at 1.9 per cent.

There is other data that makes me suspicious about mortality figures. Bihar with one of the worst hospital capacity per unit population shows a CFR of only 0.4 per cent, whereas West Bengal with one of the best ratios shows a CFR of 6.5 per cent. Further, anecdotal data from cremation and burial sites in Delhi show a 4-fold spike in funerals than normally recorded at this time. A suo motu order of the High Court of Delhi of May 28, notes that there is no room left in the Covid-19 mortuary of Lok Nayak Hospital, which is Delhi's largest Covid-19 treatment centre. All this suggests that mortality figures everywhere may be underestimated.

Q: How many times should a person be tested before saying he/she is Covid-19 free? In China, they are testing nearly 5 or 6 times on RT-PCR.
A: The RT-PCR test used to confirm Covid-19 has very high (>99%) sensitivity in laboratory settings. But in clinical settings, its sensitivity was found to be 66-88 per cent. This could be due to multiple reasons. The most common one is improper nasopharyngeal sample collection and storage. Failure to acquire enough samples or not taking it from deep in the nasopharynx does not give the right sample. If not stored properly, viral RNA degrades. In one study a positive test result was highest at week one (100%), followed by 89.3%, 66.1%, 32.1%, 5.4% and zero by week six. The timing of sample collection is also important. If collected too early or too late in the symptomatic phase, there may be too little virus to detect even by the sensitive RT-PCR test. Every test has a threshold. If done properly one or two tests should be sufficient to confirm a Covid-19 free state.

Sonwani appointed CGPSC Chairman



RAIPUR: Taman Singh Sonwani has been appointed as Chairman of the Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission (CGPSC).

As order issued by the Governor said that Sonwani, a 2004 batch IAS officer, will head the CGPSC. He was till now the Secretary in the Chief Minister's Secretariat with additional charge of Director (Agriculture).

Sonwani has taken voluntary retirement from the Indian Administrative Services to become the CGPSC Chairman.

Sonwani had earlier served as the District Collector of Narayanpur and Kanker.

CM directs DGP to take steps to reduce stress among forces

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

With several incidents of security personnel killing colleagues over petty issues, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has told the Director General of Police (DGP) to take special steps to reduce mental stress among the police force and paramilitary troopers.

An official release said that the Chief Minister pointed out the violent incidents occurred due to 19, keeping distance from family members and lack of entertainment was generating tension, stress and depression among them.

Therefore, it is vital that a conducive environment is created in the working place of the jawans.

Baghel suggested providing regular counselling of psychologists to the security personnel. This would help cut down their stress.

It is important they should not feel home sick.



working in unusually taxing and challenging conditions. Their higher work load arising due to Covid-19, keeping distance from family members and lack of entertainment was generating tension, stress and depression among them.

Accordingly, the process of providing leave should be simplified. The jawans can be also involved in yoga as well as sports and entertainment activities. And their medical check-ups should be conducted at regular intervals, the Chief Minister underlined.

Forest Department made nodal agency for forest rights

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government had made the Forest Department the nodal agency for Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR) -- under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act 2006.

A press release from the Chhattisgarh government on Saturday stated that "Community members will be given community forest rights for the conservation of forests, participation of the villagers in the management and proper use of trees by forest dwellers."

The entire process for its rapid implementation has been chalked out by the state government.

The statement quoted Forest Minister Mohammad Akbar as saying that under the 2006 Act, CFRR have been given to Gram Sabha.

The government also stated that a committee for community forest resource management will be formed by

This committee will work for the conservation of forests, wildlife and biodiversity in community forest areas

the Gram Sabhas. This committee will work for the conservation of forests, wildlife and biodiversity in community forest areas.

Members of the Gram Sabha will be included in this committee. This committee will prepare a management plan in accordance with the work plan of the Forest Department and the Wild Wildlife Management Plan.

Based on this management plan, the Forest Department will do the work of plantation, wood, bamboo wells, forest growing work and wildlife management among others.

Curbs on transport to continue in Chhattisgarh

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Restrictions imposed on interstate transport of persons will continue, the Chhattisgarh government announced on Sunday, as the central government extended the lockdown to battle Covid-19 till June 30 but with fewer restrictions.

An order issued by the General Administration Department Secretary, Dr Kamalpreet Singh, said the interstate transport will be permitted only through e-pass.

Inter-district movement of persons will also continue through e-pass, the order said.

Regarding bus transport services within the state and outside, the Transport Department will issue a separate order.

In line with the central Home Ministry's directive, the Chhattisgarh order said that

public parks will remain closed till June 7.

The Department of Commercial Tax (Excise) will issue a separate notification on operating clubs and bars.

In all the containment zones, only essential services will be permitted.

Meanwhile, the Commercial Tax (Excise) Department in a separate order stated that all restaurants, hotels and bars and FL 4/4 club-based bar rooms, stock rooms and clubs will remain shut till June 7.

Earlier, the order shutting down these places was effective till May 31, when the fourth phase of the nationwide lockdown ends. It has now been extended till June 7.

The state government has directed all District Collectors to implement the latest order sternly.

There is economic emergency in C'garh: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

An economic emergency prevails in Chhattisgarh, where two increments of employees have been withheld and a ban on new recruitment has been put in place in the name of fighting Covid-19, former Chief Minister and BJP leader Dr Raman Singh said on Sunday.

Now there is a plan to go for 30% curtailment of wages, Dr Singh said, adding that the Congress-led state government has failed in all sectors.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP Divisional Headquarters Ekatma Parisar, Dr Singh, who held the Finance portfolio for 15 years, said that Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, to



prove transparency, had declared the allocations and donations received in the CM Relief Fund.

But how much fund has been given to the quarantine centres, the BJP leader asked. A White Paper should be released on the expenses made by the state government during this period.

On the conditions in quarantine centres, he said the government has no strategic policy and snake bite deaths have been reported in some camps.

Asking who is responsible for these deaths, he said: "Action should be taken against the concerned District Collectors and

administrative officials."

On the reported 80 deaths in Shramik trains, the former Chief Minister said: "The Centre's responsibility to provide trains on time. It was the responsibility of the state governments to ensure food packets to the workers. In times of such crisis, shortcomings from both

sides can happen."

He added that now people have to learn to live with coronavirus. Districts with no more face lockdown, he said, adding that if positive cases are found, the area will be declared a containment zone.

Earlier, he listed the achievements of the Narendra Modi government in the first year of its second term. He said many decisions were taken on issues that had been bothering people for decades.

"Due to the timely steps taken by the Modi government to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, a country with 130 crore population has till date seen only 4,981 deaths which is 2.7% rate while other countries have higher rates," Dr Singh said.

India opening up slowly, but be extra alert: Modi



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



ered boats.

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

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

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

Responding strongly, the Indian army said here on Sunday "it has been brought to our notice that a video is doing rounds on social media on an incident on borders. Contents of video being circulated aren't authenticated. Attempt to link it with situation on Northern borders is malafide. Currently, no violence is happening."

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Moms should continue breastfeeding despite corona: WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Health Assembly.

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

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

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

Babies who are exclusively breastfed are 14 times less

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

combination of microbes.

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

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

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Coronavirus pandemic will impact political narrative

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

with the influx.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Agencies



A man rides a bicycle on a graffiti painted on a street at a containment zone of the walled city, during the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown in Jaipur on Sunday



A view of a crowded Besant Road as people shop for clothing and footwear items, during the fourth phase of Covid-19 lockdown, in Vijayawada on Sunday



Migrants undergo thermal screening before they board a train to reach their native places in Mumbai at a railway station, during the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown, in Jodhpur on Sunday

Maha cases spike by 2,487; 89 die

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

With the fresh fatalities and infections, the total number of deaths mounted to 2,286 and infected cases jumped to a staggering 68,655.

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

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

There have been a total of 591 deaths in Maharashtra during the six days. On May 26 (Tuesday) the State had witnessed 97 deaths, while there were 105 deaths on Wednesday, 85 deaths on Thursday, 116 deaths on Friday and 99 deaths on Saturday. Sunday's Covid-19 toll was 89.



Police personnel stop commuters at Dharavi T Junction in Mumbai on Sunday

Of the dead, 46 were men while 43 were women. Forty seven of them aged over 60 years, 35 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 7 were aged below 40 years.

"Fifty six out of 89 patients (63 per cent) had high-risk comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease," a State health bulletin said. Out of the total deaths reported today, 39 deaths occurred in the last two days and the rest are from the period April 27 to May 27, 2020.

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

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

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

70.14 lakh population was done.

Some key observations made in the State health bulletin were: Patient doubling time for the State was 11.7 days in the last week, it has now improved to 17.5 days. The same for the country is 15.7 days. Recovery rate in the state is 43.35 per cent. Case fatality rate in the State: 3.37 per cent.

Currently, 5,58,100 people are in home quarantine. There are 72,704 beds available in quarantine institutions and 34,480 people are in institutional quarantine currently.

Cases peak in TN, total breaches 22,000 mark

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In other States

52 FINED FOR VIOLATING LOCKDOWN IN LADAKH

Leh: As many as 52 people were fined on Sunday for violating lockdown norms in Leh district of Ladakh, an official spokesperson said. A joint team of civil and police officers conducted extensive checking of the vulnerable areas of Leh town and its neighbouring areas and collected Rs 26,000 as fine from 52 people for not wearing masks or face covers, the spokesperson said.

SIX MIGRANT WORKERS FROM AP HURT IN MISHAP

Hyderabad: Six migrant workers from Andhra Pradesh were injured, three seriously, when the mini truck in which they were travelling was rammed by a lorry from the rear in Nalgonda district of Telangana on Sunday, police said.

CASES IN AHMEDABAD RISE BY 299

Ahmedabad: The Covid-19 case count in Ahmedabad went up by 299 to 12,180 on Sunday while the death toll rose by 20 to 842, a Health department official said. A total of 601 patients were discharged from hospitals after recovery, the official said.

MIZORAM EXTENDS LOCKDOWN TILL JUNE 30

Aizawl: The Mizoram Government on Sunday extended the ongoing lockdown for another one month till June 30. The State Government also issued new guidelines for the fifth phase of the lockdown with special emphasis on social distancing and maintenance of strict vigilance along the international and inter-state borders, which will come into effect from Monday.

1,436 STRANDED PEOPLE RETURN TO MIZORAM

Aizawl: At least 1,436 Mizos stranded in Delhi and other north Indian cities returned to Mizoram on Sunday, officials said. An official statement said that the stranded people arrived at Bairabi railway station on the Mizoram-Assam border in the early hours of Sunday.

300 INDIANS STRANDED IN NIGERIA ARRIVES IN KOCHI

Kochi: A chartered flight carrying over 300 Indian nationals stranded in Nigeria due to Covid-19-induced lockdown arrived here on Sunday afternoon, an airport official said. The Air Peace flight from Lagos, Nigeria carrying 312 passengers on board, landed at the airport at 3.30 pm. Cochin International Airport spokesperson said.

MAN DIES ON RETIREMENT DAY; ₹1 CR, PROBE SOUGHT

Thane: A labour union has demanded Rs 1 crore in compensation for the kin of a Thane municipal employee deployed at a quarantine centre who died of Covid-19 on retirement day on Saturday. The man, deployed to provide food and water at Bhayander Pada quarantine centre, had tested positive on May 18, and was under treatment, and died at around 1:30 pm on Saturday, hours before he would have superannuated at the end of his shift under normal circumstances.

1ST NORMAL DELIVERY IN COVID HOSPITAL IN LADAKH

Leh: A normal delivery was conducted at a Covid hospital for the first time in Ladakh, where three cases were reported on Sunday, taking the tally in the Union Territory to 80, an official bulletin said. The normal delivery was conducted at the dedicated Covid-19 hospital in Kargil district on Saturday and the condition of both the mother and the baby is stable, a media bulletin issued by the Directorate of Health Services, Ladakh, read.

MISSION BEGINS AGAIN

Maha extends lockdown till June 30, announces phase-wise easing

Mumbaikars will have to wait for suburban trains, metro to resume; lockdown to continue in containment areas, night curfew to continue

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Mumbaikars will have to wait for a few more weeks before the suburban trains and Metro Rail resume their operations, a fact that became evident on Sunday as the Maharashtra government extended the lockdown till June 30 to facilitate the gradual easing of restrictions and phase-wise lifting of lockdown across the State.

Some of the salient features of the extended lockdown were: Night curfew will remain in force from 9 pm to 5 am till June 30, complete lockdown will continue in 'containment zones', except for essential services, ban will continue on international air travel and cinema halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres, bars and auditoriums, assembly halls and similar places will continue to remain closed.

"Persons above 65 years of age, persons with comorbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 years are advised to stay home, except for essential and medical services," one of the guidelines stated.

In what it called the order as "Mission Begins Again", the Maharashtra government permitted easing of restrictions and phase-wise Opening in Municipal Corporations of MMR Region including MCGM, Municipal Corporations of Pune, Solapur, Aurangabad, Malegaon, Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Akola, Amravati and Nagpur where activities will be additionally permitted with restrictions, in phases as described below except containment zones. This is in addition to the activities already allowed and permitted in these areas.

As part of the new guidelines, intra-district bus service will be allowed with maximum 50% capacity per bus with physical distancing and sanitation measures, while inter-district bus service orders will not be permitted. Orders will be separately issued in this regard.

"Beginning June 5, all markets/shops will be allowed to remain open from 9 am. to 5 p.m on a P1-P2 basis. If any crowding or failure of social distancing norms is seen, then authorities will immediately close down such shops/markets," one of the guidelines stated. The State Government has authorised the Municipal-district authorities after taking into consideration the guidelines of Ministry of Home Affairs.

"The containment zone will be residential colony, mohalla, a slum, building, group of buildings, lane, ward, police station area, villages, small cluster of villages etc. Anything larger than this (eg. whole taluka/ whole Municipal Corporation etc.) can be declared as containment zone only after consultation with Chief Secretary," the guidelines stated.

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TN Govt rejects Ayurveda drugs for virus treatment

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Though the number of coronavirus afflicted persons is increasing in the State by leaps and bounds, Tamil Nadu Government is reluctant to take up drugs developed by a team of eminent physicians who has assured the authorities that it would cure the pandemic.

Closely on the heels of the Union Government's Ministry of Ayush cold shouldering the drug and treatment protocol developed and submitted by Dr PR Krishnakumar, the legendary ayurvedic acharya from the State and his team of researchers, yet another instance of an ayurvedic medicine getting raw deal from Tamil Nadu Government has come out.

This time a drug protocol developed by Dr PLT Girija, a Chennai based Ayurvedic physician who is also into research and development of ayurvedic medicine, and her team of scientists has been ignored by the Government of Tamil Nadu despite the evidence based proof about the efficacy of the drug.

"According to Ayurveda, Covid-19, with the predominant symptoms of fever, respiratory distress and cough, with associated symptoms can be

classified as Vata-kapha predominant fever. Ayurvedic practitioners are used to treating similar conditions with medicines recommended in the classical Ayurvedic texts," said Dr Girija in her protocol proposal to the State Government.

Dr CV Krishnaswamy, leading diabetologist and physician in Tamil Nadu who was the advisor to the seven member research team said it was unfortunate that the Government chose to ignore the request for clinical trials for the medicine.

Dr Girija said that she has treated many patients and cured them of the pandemic with this ayurvedic drug. "It is only because of our confidence in the medicine that we submitted it to the Government for trials or treatment. As such there is no need for clinical trials for Ayurveda medicine. The clinical trials are for checking the possibility of adverse drug reaction (ADR). But Ayurveda system of medicine itself is different and does not require trials," she said.

Dr Girija also disclosed that she has treated many Covid-19 patients and all of them had been cured of the disease.

IAS officer tested +ve in J&K, over 2 dozen senior officers quarantined

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

At least over two dozen bureaucrats, along with Principal of Government Medical College, Jammu and several other functionaries of the health department were home quarantined in Jammu hours after one of the Principal secretary rank officer tested positive for coronavirus late on Saturday.

The said IAS officer was deputed to Srinagar to supervise arrangements of returning passengers via air.

On his return from Srinagar he went through mandatory screening at the Jammu airport and late evening he tested positive, sending shock wave among the senior authorities in the corridors of power.

According to official sources, the said officer, had also attended a high level meeting with senior colleagues in Jammu on Saturday. The meeting was chaired by one of the senior most bureaucrat of the rank of financial commissioner, a principal secretary, a senior bureaucrat in the disaster management authority and

officials from health and medical education department.

Early Sunday morning, while IAS officer was shifted to a dedicated Covid-19 hospital in Katra and all others, who had attended the meeting were advised to remain in home quarantine for next couple of days. A senior officer told The Pioneer, "senior officers have been advised to isolate themselves and remain in home quarantine." "We will collect their samples at the appropriate time", he added.

Earlier, wife and son of a senior Advisor to Lt-Gov GC Murmu had tested positive and he too was advised to remain in administrative quarantine.

Meanwhile, 105 Cases were detected across Jammu & Kashmir on Sunday taking the total tally to 2446.

The total number of active cases touched 1491, 380 from Jammu and 1111 from Kashmir division.

According to the media bulletin, out of 105 fresh cases, 90 cases were detected from Kashmir division and 15 from Jammu division on Sunday.

Ceasefire violation by Pak along LoC

Jammu: The Pakistan Army on Sunday once again targeted civilian houses along the Line of Control (LoC) in Mendhar sector of Poonch. One civilian received injuries while several civilian houses were damaged in intense mortar shelling from across the line of control. Defence PRO in Jammu, Lt-Col Devender Anand said, "early Sunday morning Pakistan targeted civilian areas by firing with small arms & intense shelling with mortars along LoC in Mendhar sector of Poonch causing damage to civilian houses". He said, in the evening at about 7.50 p.m Pakistan again initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation in Kirni, Qasba & Degwar sectors of Poonch. Till the time of filing the report, Indian Army was retaliating befittingly. PNS

Corona cases rising in Bengal amid 'unlock 1.0'

WORLD'S SECOND OLDEST RATH YATRA POSTPONED

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Amid a desperate attempt by the powers that be to inject a 'feel-better' impression to upset the corona gloom in the society — by effecting a controlled relaxation of the lockdown — there has been a steep elevation in Bengal's number of corona cases over the past few days. Health Department reports suggest.

While Kolkata and Howrah were the more affected places till recently the "graphic worm" has started climbing up in the districts too. Coochbehar in North Bengal which had reported no cases till the last week has suddenly found at least 59 infected patients most of whom

are migrant workers travelling in from Rajasthan and Delhi, sources said.

Coochbehar District Magistrate P Kandian said the "patients were asymptomatic and perhaps were on the path of self-recovery. Still we have sent them to the Chang Hospital in Siliguri."

Darjeeling district too has shown a rise in the number of cases reporting 4 infections till Saturday night, sources said. Down south Brigham which had a better performance till the middle half of lockdown 4.0 has suddenly seen a spurt in the number of cases mostly among the migrant workers. The district has seen 44 new cases which are in addition to the 54 cases

which were found earlier, sources said.

The neighbouring district of Banker had 26 new cases till Saturday evening while East Birdman has seen 74 cases, sources said. Forty out of the 74 cases have been witnessed in the past 3-4 days, sources said adding the number of cases was rising in the adjoining district of Murshidabad too where 45 out of 55 migrant workers were tested positive.

The report of the sudden spurt in the number of cases comes in the backdrop of at least two people's representatives getting the infection. While an MLA from South Kolkata has been attacked by the corona virus and is in a critical condition, Bengal Minister Sujit Bose two has contracted the disease along with his wife. Both have



Passengers from Chennai arrive at Howrah Station by a special train in Kolkata on Sunday

been in home isolation. With the number of cases in Bengal crossing the 9,500 mark the 624-year-old Maahesh Rath Yatra committee in Seerampore sub-division of Hooghly district has decided to cancel the Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath this

time round. "Seerampore and neighbouring areas have witnessed quite a few number of cases and we do not want to take any chances," said an official of India's second oldest and biggest Rath Yatra (after Puri).

One year of ills

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



The best part about "forces of nature" is that they obfuscate human effort or even the lack of it. They are simply too tidal and overwhelming, swamping our reason, judgment and mind. They are an opportunity to prove ourselves and excuse our failings at the same time. Which is why the shroud of the Corona pandemic, which has left our nation distraught, has kept us busy grappling with the "before" and "after" scenario that could spare Prime Minister Narendra Damodar Modi from a rigorous assessment of his first year in office. Perhaps, his familiarity in an upending, unfamiliar scenario is the reason why he continues to be the preferred leader in opinion polls of the moment. And it is this familiarity which could be his biggest shield for what he could not deliver, saying he tried his best, despite the tokenism of empathising with the migrants and common people. Under the shadow of India's biggest health and economic crisis, he is still drawing on his "before" seen muscularity to retain popularity among the masses, which is desperately looking to clutch on to a reassuring and paternal figurehead in the "after" phase. And having won a monolithic verdict last May, he is playing up his perceived deliverer image by addressing the nation, writing letters to his citizens, relying on shared emotions and even praising and consulting Chief Ministers in a new-found spirit of cooperative federalism. Except such optics are not enough for a nation gasping for breath, squeezed by the pandemic on one side and a collapsing economy on the other. And the mammoth surge of a human tragedy unfolding, in the form of deaths due to disease, joblessness, starvation and migration, clearly needs superhuman action, not just humane reactions. Truth be told, India's pandemic is now a people's war, being waged by not just the Government but cumulatively by doctors, scientists, police, Samaritans, activists, citizens, NGOs and corporates. And it is this combined "let's save our nation" spirit unitedly and inclusively that has triumphed over the imposed idea of "One India" that thrives on eliminating and filtering all kinds of otherness. So yes, the memories of attacks on minorities, dissenters and students are off the board at the moment, excused even in the pandemic era as aberrations of a party that has to feed its core majoritarian voter base rather than being an assault on democracy. That's what the "after" scenario does, pushes back the "before."

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

Racist attack

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



There's a sense of *déjà vu* about the Minneapolis protests that come on the back of the use of excessive force by a White policeman Derek Chauvin, resulting in the death of a peaceful, 46-year-old Black man George Floyd, who was not resisting arrest. Remember the 2014 death of unarmed Black teenager Michael Brown by the police in Ferguson, Missouri and the race riots that it sparked off? Nothing seems to have changed since then. White supremacists in the US police force continue to slaughter innocent law-abiding Black people with impunity. Floyd's death has also prompted action in other US cities like New York City, Denver, Columbus and particularly Louisville in Kentucky, which witnessed the death of an innocent Black woman Breonna Taylor in March. Here the victim was shot in her own apartment by police officers for an investigation that she wasn't involved in. Relations between police and citizens of colour have been bad for years in the US, yet only one in every 100 citizen complaints leads to disciplinary action. So, the big question is when will America learn its lesson and reform the police force? Or practise diversity from the heart and not as a ritual?

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

Reset ties with Nepal

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



ASHOK K MEHTA

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

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

For India, Kalapani is the origin of the river near where military posts have existed since the mid-1960s and from where the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) patrols regularly up to the Lipulekh Pass.

When King Tribhuvan invited the Indian Military Mission in 1952 to Nepal, besides training the Royal Nepal Army (RNA), it had established, according to border expert on Nepal, BN Shrestha, 18 border check-posts on the Tibet border start-



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The media on both sides should call a truce. On Wednesday afternoon, Nepali TV channels were playing patriotic music centred on Kalapani and showing clips of its legendary military prowess that extended the Himalayan Kingdom from the rivers Chenab to Teesta, inducing fears of "Greater Nepal." Nepal's decision to put on hold the second

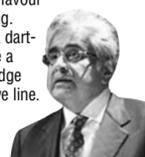
Constitutional Amendment Bill is a prudent step welcomed by India that has averted a showdown. Already, strained India-Nepal relations are too precious to be damaged by territorial nationalism. Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla must call up his counterpart Shankar Das Bairagi and break the ice.

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

SOUNDBITE

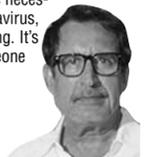
To say judgement is to favour a political party is wrong. Supreme Court is not a dart-board. You can criticise a judgment saying the judge has taken a conservative line.

Jurist
—Harish Salve



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

Actor
—Kiran Kumar



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

US President
—Donald Trump



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

Union Minister
—Rajnath Singh



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No end to woes

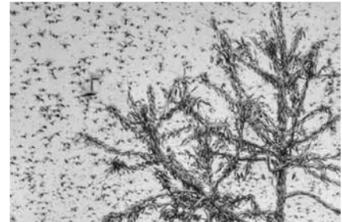
Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Labour woes" (May 29). It was surprising to note that over 91 lakh migrants have been sent back to their home States since May 1. Arranging basic screening facilities for the safety of passengers in trains has been a Herculean task. Besides, the migrants need not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

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

Mounting problems amid pandemic

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

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



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

G David Milton
 Maruthancode

Open colleges

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

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

Sritoma
 Via email

Look back at home

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

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

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

SC Agrawal
 Delhi

Border matters

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

Prakash Saini
 Via email

Send your feedback to:
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Making hay during a crisis

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



SONAM CHANDWANI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



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

—MINNEAPOLIS'S MAYOR JACOB FREY

Make (in) India great

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



ANIRUDDHA CHAKRAVARTY

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The age of judicial populism

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



NADEEM PARACHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Courtesy: Dawn)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— adding to deaths in Detroit and Minneapolis in recent days. In Minneapolis, the city where the protests began, police, state troopers and National Guard members moved in soon after an 8 pm curfew took effect to break up protests, firing tear gas and rubber bullets to clear streets outside a police precinct and elsewhere. At least 13 police officers were injured in Philadelphia when peaceful protests turned violent and at least four police vehicles were set on fire. In New York City, dangerous confrontations flared repeatedly as officers made arrests and cleared streets. A video showed

two NYPD cruisers lurching into a crowd of demonstrators who were pushing a barricade against one of them and pelting it with objects. Several people were knocked to the ground, and it was unclear if anyone was hurt. "The mistakes that are happening are not mistakes. They're repeated violent terrorist offenses and people need to stop killing black people," Brooklyn protester Meryl Makielski said.

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

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

Police have arrested at least 1,669 people in 22 cities since Thursday. Nearly a third of those arrests came in Los Angeles, where the governor declared a state of emergency and ordered the National Guard to back up the city's 10,000 police officers as dozens of fires burned across the city.

The damage in US cities came as many Americans plan

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

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden condemned the violence as he continued to express common cause with those demonstrating after Floyd's death. "The act of protesting should never be allowed to overshadow the reason we protest," Biden said in a statement Saturday night.

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

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

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

thousands arrested, with property damage topping \$1 billion.

But not all protests were marred by violence. In Juneau, Alaska, local police joined protesters at a rally in front of a giant whale sculpture on the city's waterfront.

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

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

National Guard called in to quell violence in Los Angeles

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

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

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

Biden condemns violence overshadowing protests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AFTER CHINA'S SECURITY LAW

Hong Kongers hit panic button, big spike in immigration inquiries

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With Hong Kong now becoming the centre of the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Taiwan, which is having a stormy relationship with China

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Communal tension in Quetta over mob lynching of youth

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

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

Around the Globe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Spanish PM wants state of emergency extension

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Greece to allow incoming tourists from 29 countries

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

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

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

Israeli Def Min apologises for Palestinian's death

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

is then exposed to UV light.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nawaz Sharif's leaked photo sparks debate over his health

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

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

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

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

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

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

Punjab Information Minister Fayyazul Hasan Chohan said that how come Sharif roam on London's streets without a mask. He should be brought back to face corruption cases against him.

As the picture went viral on social media on Saturday it became top trend, sparking a debate about Sharif's health with his detractors asking why he does not return to Pakistan if he is well while his supporters expressed joy at seeing their leader in good health and spirits.

ITR forms for 2019-20 notified

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on Saturday notified Sahaj (ITR-1), Form ITR-2, Form ITR-3, Form Sugam (ITR-4), Form ITR-5, Form ITR-6, Form ITR-7 and Form ITR-V (Verification) for the assessment year 2020-21 (income earned between April 1, 2019, and March 31, 2020). The new ITR forms require

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

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

a foreign country for yourself or for any other person?

Have you incurred expenditure of amount or aggregate of amount exceeding ₹1 lakh on consumption of electricity during the previous year?

Hence, any entity, that is otherwise not required to file ITR, will have to file it for the financial year 2019-20 if the answer to any the above questions is 'Yes'. The CBDT, which is the apex policy-making body on direct taxes, has also revised the I-T return forms to allow assesses to avail benefits of various timeline extension granted by the Govt following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accordingly, the new ITR forms have introduced

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

The Govt had extended various timelines under the Income Tax Act, 1961, through the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation of Certain Provisions) Ordinance, 2020. Accordingly, the time for making investment or payments for claiming deduction under Chapter-VIA-B of IT Act that include Section 80C (LIC, PPF, NSC etc.), 80D (Mediclaime) and 80G (Donations) for the financial year 2019-20 had been extended by 3 months till June 30, 2020. Nangia

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

"The ITR forms are modified in line with new disclosure requirements made in the Income Tax Act for AY 2020-21. Taxpayers would need to be careful of these new disclosure requirements, before filing their ITR and to select an appropriate ITR form," Kumar said. AKM Global Tax Partner Amit Maheshwari said this comes as a relief as now joint owners of house properties and big spenders can use the same Sahaj and Sugam forms,

Disclosure of electricity bill over ₹1L mandatory

which are easier to fill.

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

Currently, individuals and other non-corporate taxpayers not subject to tax audit and transfer pricing are required to file ITR by July 31. Corporate taxpayers and other non-corporate taxpayers subject to tax audit (including partners/directors of firms/ companies subject to tax audit) but not subject to transfer pricing are required to file ITR by October 31.

Indian economy is on path of revival: Pradhan

Women to play leading role in post Covid-19 economy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday said Indian economy is on the path of revival and women will play a leading role in the post Covid-19 economy.

"Women's economic contribution will be included going forward, which has been close to negligible till now," he said adding that women entrepreneurs can become business aggregators in the country.

Addressing a webinar organised by FICCI FLO on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat: Inclusive Growth for Transforming India', Pradhan said, "With

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

Jahnabi Phookan, President, FLO said for an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', it is important to take the women along.

UNLOCK 1 India Inc welcomes norms, expects revival

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

India Inc welcomed the Centre's norms — Unlock 1 — meant to ease restrictions on businesses and other daily aspect of life.

Accordingly, the fifth phase of the nationwide lockdown was announced which would last in the containment zones from June 8-30.

The guidelines said that only a limited number of activities will remain prohibited throughout the country, including international air travel till June-end.

However, barring essential services, no activity will be allowed in the containment zones.

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

"After a stringent lockdown of over two months, the economic dimension of the pandemic had to be considered ensuring both life and livelihood," Sood said.

"The Central Government has taken a right call, freeing a

Hotel industry welcomes move, will follow health safety SoPs

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

India's hotel industry has welcomed the Centre's norms under 'Unlock 1, which allow them to re-commence operations.

These norms are part of the fifth phase of the nationwide lockdown which was announced on Saturday for the containment zones till June 30, providing relaxations for the hotel industry from June 8 onwards.

This phase relaxes many

restrictions on businesses.

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

He urged the Centre to

consider setting up of a Tourism COVID 19 Fund for enabling the tourism industry to meet its salary and working capital needs.

Major Industry player such as Ritesh Agarwal, Founder & Group CEO - OYO Hotels & Homes said: "We welcome the government's decision to reopen hotels. We are excited and prepared to host guests with the new sanitised stay experience. Similarly, Nakul Anand, Executive Director, ITC, and Chairman of the

Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality, thanked the Centre for realising the commencement of business operations of hotels, restaurants and other hospitality services under Unlock 1.

"We welcome the government's decision to reopen hotels. We are excited and prepared to host guests with the new sanitised stay experience. At OYO, our topmost priorities are maintaining health, hygiene & well-being of our guests and staff.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday asked pharmaceutical companies to explore export opportunities in untapped markets of Russia and Eastern European nations.

The Minister also advised the firms to bring to his notice if the companies face any roadblock or unfair competition in a country, with which India has a free trade agreement (FTA).

He said this while interacting with representatives of pharmaceutical industry, and office-bearers of pharma associations, through video conference.

The Minister said, "They should look at large untapped market in Eastern Europe and Russia and in case of ongoing

bilateral FTAs, if any roadblock or unfair competition is being noticed, the Government may be informed and prompt remedial action will be taken."

Pharma exports in 2019-20 grew by 8 per cent to USD 20.7 billion as against USD 19.14 billion in 2018-19.

Eastern European nations include Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Moldova.

Calling upon a collaborative route in the R&D efforts, Goyal said academicians, universities, ICMR and private sector should join hands.

Informing the industry that the government has decided to disinvest in certain pharma PSUs, the minister invited the Indian companies to use PSUs for plug and play model of manufacturing.

He assured that all suggest-

tions presented in the meeting will be quickly examined and wherever required, the inter-ministerial consultations will be completed at the earliest.

The Minister also said that the country should become self reliant in APIs (active pharma ingredients) as early as possible, as the Government has taken a number of steps in this regard.

It has already approved the scheme on promotion of bulk drug parks for financing common infrastructure facilities in three such parks.

Also, production linked incentive scheme for promotion of domestic manufacturing of critical KSMs (key starting materials)/drug intermediates and APIs in the country has been given a go ahead, he said.

large part of the economy outside the containment zones. With these measures, the Indian economy should bounce back steadily but surely," he added.

However, he pointed out that states need to work in a well-coordinated manner to ensure that the movement of goods and persons, restrictions on which have now been lifted, must be adhered to.

"We need to realise, for sure, that the country is still grappling with the Covid-19 crisis, reaching a critical stage. The coming weeks would remain critical and the new normal must be respected for

the desired results," Sood said.

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

On its part, Geojit Financial Services' Chief Investment Strategist V.K. Vijayakumar said: "Phased reopening of the economy, in line with global trends, will go a long way in boosting business

confidence apart from opening opportunities for jobs and incomes. It is important to understand that the unprecedented high global unemployment is the product of the great lockdown and not due to any economic crisis.

"Therefore, we can expect jobs and incomes to bounce back sharply. However, managing the spread of the disease arising out of opening would be a challenge."

According to Ankur Bhatia, Executive Director, Bird Group: "We are already pushed to the walls. A little more extension of lockdown would have done irreversible economic damage. We welcome government's move to allow us to operate."

In a statement, Zubin Saxena, Managing Director and Vice President, Operations, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group, said: "We are looking forward to resuming operations within government guidelines.

"Apart from hygiene, our go forward business model is concentrated on leveraging the synergies of our network which we believe will work in a sustainable manner to ensure business uplift overtime. We remain dedicated to exceeding guest expectations in the new era of hospitality that awaits us."

Confederation of All India Traders, which claims to represent 7 crore traders, said it has identified about 3,000 categories of heavily imported Chinese products "which must immediately be replaced by Indian products as good quality Indian replacements are available for such products."

CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said it will educate traders across the country to stop importing as well as selling these products, and more products will soon be verified and added to the list. The trader's body said, "The whole country understands the importance of hurting China economically and therefore we wholeheartedly welcome this great initiative.

CAIT supports call to boycott Chinese products

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Trader's body CAIT on Sunday expressed solidarity with Ladakh-based educational reformer and visionary Sonam Wangchuk's appeal to boycott Chinese goods.

Amid tensions between India and China, Wangchuk, the man who inspired the Bollywood block-buster '3 Idiots', has appealed and asked Indians to boycott all Chinese companies. In a tweet, engineer-turned-educational reformer asked people to boycott all Chinese products to stop Beijing's "bullying" in Ladakh and liberate 1.4 billion bonded labourers in the country.

Confederation of All India

Toyota Kirloskar sales dip 86% in May

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Sunday reported a 86.49 per cent decline in domestic vehicle sales to 1,639 units in May. Company had posted sales of 12,138 units in May 2019, TKM said in a statement.

"We are conscious of the dealer business conditions in various parts of the country and we have been prioritising production at our end as per dealer requirements, both in terms of quantity as well as the grades that they require," TKM Senior Vice president, Sales & Service, Naveen Soni said.

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Confederation of All India

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

The Prime Minister will deliver the inaugural address at the Annual Session of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to mark 125 years since its inception in 1895, sources in the industry chamber told PTI.

The day-long virtual event on the theme 'Getting Growth Back' will also witness participation from top corporate honchos.

MFs invest ₹1,230 crore in equities during lockdown

Keeping high liquidity for possible redemptions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mutual funds have invested just ₹1,230 crore in stock markets during the lockdown and industry experts believe they are still waiting for a good "entry point" and maintaining high liquidity for any possible redemptions by corporate houses.

Going ahead, the primary factor that will determine mutual fund (MF) investment into equity will be their own inflows from investors. This will be put to test as many retail

investors are facing risk of pay cuts and job loss over the next quarter or so, said Vidya Bala, co-founder of Primeinvestor. In Overall, mutual funds have made a net investment of ₹1,230 crore in stocks since the nationwide lockdown was announced on March 24 to tackle the coronavirus, latest data available with the Securities and Exchange Board of India showed.

MFs invested ₹6,363 crore in stocks in the last week of March, while they pulled out ₹ 7,965 crore in April. Reversing the selling trend in May, they put in ₹2,832 crore, the data showed. Amit Jain, co-founder and CEO at Ashika Wealth Advisors, said mutual funds are not investing big amounts in equities as they are waiting for a good entry point, which he believes will come within two months.

RIL- REs: Big game window opens Mon

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Trai says not recommended 11 digit mobile numbering plan

10-digit numbers to continue

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator Trai on Sunday said it has not recommended 11 digit mobile numbers but only suggested prefixing '0' when mobile numbers are called from landlines.

The recommendation on prefixing '0' for calls from fixed line to mobile numbers will generate 2,544 million additional numbering resources for mobile services to

cater to the future requirements, it said. As per Trai recommendation, the country will continue to follow a 10-digit numbering for mobile services, and the regulator has "categorically rejected" shifting to an 11-digit mobile numbering plan.

"Trai has not recommended 11-digit numbering scheme for mobile services," the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) said in a statement. Trai has recommended a dialling prefix '0' while making a call from a fixed line number to mobile number, the statement said, adding that

introduction of a dialling prefix for a particular type of call "is not akin to increasing the number of digits in the telephone number". "This change in dialling pattern will generate 2,544 million additional numbering resources for mobile services to cater to the future requirements," it added.

The regulator on Friday had said that migration to a unified or single numbering scheme for fixed line and mobile services is not required for now and that sufficient numbering space can be created by various methods, including prefixing '0' for all fixed to mobile calls.

New Delhi-Lucknow one-way Lucknow Mail Special train today

New Delhi: It is notified for the information of the all concerned that Northern Railway shall run one way Lucknow Mail Special train on 01.06.2020 from New Delhi to Lucknow as per the following programme: The 02232 New Delhi-Lucknow Mail Special train will depart from New Delhi at 10.05 pm on June 1 to arrive at Lucknow at 06.55 am the next day.

Comprising of AC, Sleeper Class and General class coaches, the 02232 New Delhi-Lucknow Mail Special train

will stop at Ghaziabad, Hapur, Moradabad, Rampur, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Hardoi and Alamnagar Nagar stations enroute.

Stoppage of 02425 / 02426 New Delhi-Jammutawi- New Delhi Special train at Pathankot Cantt station from June 1 to June 30.

It is notified for the information of the all concerned that stoppage to 02425/02426 New Delhi-Jammutawi- New Delhi Special train will be provided at Pathankot Cantt station from June 1 to June 30.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Equity market sentiment this week will be guided by macroeconomic data, global cues and COVID-19 trends amid the phased reopening of the economy, analysts said.

The Home Ministry on Saturday said 'Unlock-1' will be initiated in the country from June 8 under which the nationwide lockdown effectuated on March 25 will be relaxed to a great extent, including opening of shopping malls, restaurants and religious places.

However, strict restrictions will remain in place till June 30 in the containment zones. "Phased reopening of the economy, in line with global trends,

will go a long way in boosting business confidence apart from opening opportunities for jobs and incomes. It is important to understand that the unprecedented high global unemployment is the product of the Great Lockdown and not due to any economic crisis.

"Therefore, we can expect jobs and incomes to bounce back sharply. However, managing the spread of the disease arising out of opening would be a challenge," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

Bourses may also react to the GDP numbers released post market hours on Friday. India's economic growth

slowed to 3.1 per cent in January-March and to an 11-year low of 4.2 per cent for the full fiscal 2019-20, reflecting the early impact of the coronavirus crisis.

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

Religare Broking Ltd, VP - Research, Ajit Mishra, said the US-China tensions would also be on the radar of market participants.

"India PMI Manufacturing for May will be announced on June 1, PMI May services data will be out on June 3.

US non farm payrolls data for May will be announced on June 5," said Deepak Jasani, Head Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Quarterly earnings from companies such as InterGlobe Aviation, Motherhood Sumi Systems, BPCL and Larsen and Toubro will also be tracked. During the last week, the Sensex rallied 1,751.51 points or 5.71 per cent.

Noida leads NCR market in office space leasing: 360 Realtors

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian software major Infosys is among the many UK companies to benefit from UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, it emerged on Sunday.

Infosys, co-founded by Sunak's father-in-law Narayana Murthy, said it had used the furlough - or forced leave - option for 3 per cent of its staff in order to tide through the lockdown imposed to curb the spread of the deadly virus.

"In light of the current situation, Infosys has furloughed 3 per cent of its UK workforce.

We are reviewing this on a weekly basis," Infosys told "The Sunday Times".

The scheme was unveiled by the Indian-origin Finance Minister, married to Murthy's daughter Akshata, at the peak of the crisis and is set to gradually wind down until it is fully closed at the end of October.

Under the provisions, the Govt covers 80 per cent of salaries of furloughed staff, up to the value of GBP 2,500 a month, in order to prevent companies having to resort to redundancies. In a latest set of announcements earlier this week, Sunak had added more

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

Trend Glazer

Salman donates hand sanitisers

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

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

Fans were moved by Salman's gesture.

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



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

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

—Jacqueline Fernandez

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



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

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

'This time has brought balance'

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

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

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

THEATRE IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

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

"In the dark times Will there also be singing? Yes, there will also be singing. About the dark times." —Bertolt Brecht (German theatre practitioner, playwright, and poet)

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

EFFECTS ON THE ART FORM

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

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

REFLECTION OF TIMES

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

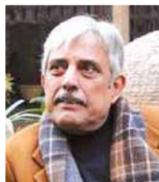
Shivani Wazir Pasrich, founder of Commonwealth Cultural Forum and director of Study School, says, "Theatre is a reflection of life. It is a way of cataloguing history. It evolves according to the time. The first theatre performance was the dance in a temple, which was a prayer to God, and these evolved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

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

Alam on the other hand points out that existing plays would have to incorporate changes to reflect the new reality. "One of our most popular comedy, *Ghalib in New Delhi* will see the poet take rebirth in a big way. "Modern society was disintegrated and we were becoming self-centered. Ironically, it was social distancing that made us realise the worth of society and the importance of social interaction. Whenever the threat of the pandemic ebbs, people will return to the theatre with a vengeance because they have realised its value."

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

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



Bhanu Bharti



Amal Allana



M Sayeed Alam



Shivani Wazir Pasrich



Papiha Desai



Mauraya Sharma

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

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

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

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

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

REHEARSALS

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

SOCIALLY DISTANT AUDIENCE

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

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

IS ONLINE AN OPTION?

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

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

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

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

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

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

REINVENTION: WILL THAT BE THE BYWORD?

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

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

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

We all look forward to that.

WEBBED

SPELLING THE DREAM

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



CAN YOU HEAR ME?

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

THE LAST DAYS OF AMERICAN CRIME

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



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

Push for inclusion



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BEYOND BORDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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



lage.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



SEARCH YOUR SOUL

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

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

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

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

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



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

In an interview with Dr BN Gangadhar, director of National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences, Bengaluru, he says, "Yoga research at NIMHANS has shown very impressive results with respect to

Journey through the self

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



the biological changes in the brain and other organs of the body. It should be conducive for better emotional recovery as well as mental health promotion. Yoga can help repair the brain. There is an inbuilt system by which the brain could dynamically keep getting 'repaired' and one of the chemicals required for this is called the 'brain derived



neurotropic factor'. We have demonstrated that the practice of yoga produced an increase in its level. So it means that the brain started developing some inherent strength to repair itself."

Esther Seegers, Teachers Training Course Student, Sivananda Yoga Farm, USA, explains, "I have seen the chaos among teenagers, especially the substance abuse in high schools.

They need help. They have no idea about whom they should turn to and they are basically numbing their feelings and their true nature because they feel that they are not able to be who they

are. And yes, there is not enough compassion or it's just that they need help at the end of the day. It is yoga that can give us that."

Yoga researcher and expert, Dr Sat Bir Khalsa from Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, USA, believes that yoga has a relevance. "It provides skills and outcomes that society currently doesn't have. These are essentially behavioural skills that allow us to manage our minds, bodies and emotions in very effective ways," shares he.

In another interview, Landon Gallant, sportsman and Teachers Training Course Student, Sivananda Yoga Farm, USA, says, "I played soccer for 28 years and the last half of that time was very aggressive. The physical nature of game called for a certain body type. So as I have slowly evolved away from that, I have completely surrendered to the practice of yoga. I was able to transform myself from an animal warrior to a spiritual warrior. This allows your ego to soften and become like water. Your life, your heart will open up and so will your mind."

Never bend your head. Always hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye.
—Helen Keller

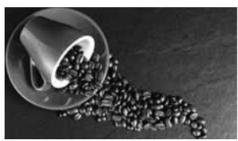
DRINK COFFEE TO CUT DIGESTIVE DISORDERS

Drinking coffee may help reduce the risk of certain digestive disorders, including gallstone disease and pancreatitis, a new study has suggested.

The study from the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC) also highlighted other beneficial effects that coffee consumption may have on the process of digestion, including supporting gut microflora and promoting gut motility.

"Data indicates benefits against common digestive complaints such as constipation as well as a potential reduction in the risk of more serious conditions like chronic liver diseases," said study author Carlo La Vecchia from the University of Milan in Italy.

While the mechanism by which coffee may protect against gallstone disease is not yet known, it has been observed that the risk for the condition declines with increasing daily consumption of coffee, the researchers said.



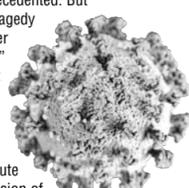
LACK OF VENTILATION UPS AIR TRANSMIT RISK

Researchers have found that the lack of adequate ventilation increases the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19.

In a study, published in the City and Environment Interaction journal, experts from the University of Surrey (UK) said that preventing airborne transmission should be the next front of the battle against the virus.

"These past months, living through the COVID-19 crisis, has been truly unprecedented. But we must turn this global tragedy into an opportunity to better prepare for similar threats," said study author Prashant Kumar, Professor at the University of Surrey.

The study highlights improving building ventilation as a possible route to tackling indoor transmission of COVID-19. "We discuss the need to acknowledge the airborne spread inside built spaces under eased movement restrictions and the potential steps to control it," the study authors wrote.



YOUNGSTERS MORE LIKELY TO BE LONELY

Loneliness may decrease as you age. The study carried out by Exeter, Manchester and Brunel universities, found that a young man living in an individualistic society — such as the UK or the US — is more likely to report feeling lonely than an older woman in a collectivist society — such as China or Brazil.

"Contrary to what people may expect, loneliness is not a predicament unique to older people. In fact, youngsters report greater feelings of loneliness," said study researcher Manuela Barreto from the University of Exeter in the UK.

Since loneliness stems from the sense that one's social connections are not as good as desired, this might be due to the different expectations younger and older people hold. "There is an awareness that admitting to feeling 'lonely' can be especially stigmatising for men," said study author Pamela Qualter from the University of Manchester.



10% DIABETIC-COVID CASES DIE WITHIN 7 DAYS

One in 10 COVID-19 patients with diabetes die within seven days of hospitalisation, a new study has claimed.

The findings, published in the journal 'Diabetologia', show that two-third (65 per cent) of COVID-19 patients with diabetes are men and the average age of the patient is 70 years.

According to the researchers from France, the presence of diabetic complications and increasing age raises the risk of death, while increased Body Mass Index (BMI) is associated with both heightened risk of needing mechanical ventilation and with higher risk of death. However, worse blood sugar control doesn't seem to impact a patient's outcome.

Across all the patients in this study, by Day 7 one in five (20.3 per cent) had been intubated and were placed on a ventilator in intensive care, and one in 10 (10.3 per cent) had died.



ANAESTHETIC TRIGGERS ALCOHOL USE DISORDER

Early exposure to anaesthetics in life may make adolescents more susceptible to developing alcohol use disorder (AUD), warn researchers.

Anaesthetics are commonly used drugs in the healthcare field and are often administered to children to induce unconsciousness and immobility during surgeries.

Researchers discovered that anaesthetic exposure during adolescence may be an environmental risk factor that leads to an increased susceptibility to developing AUD later in life.

Although not all adolescents who drink alcohol develop AUDs, the research team said it's important to identify risk factors that contribute to an increased susceptibility to alcohol abuse.



NO FANS, NO PROBLEM

Thuram's brace helps M'gladbach spoil Union outing in front of cut-out supporters



Moenchengladbach players celebrate in front of the cardboards with photos of Moenchengladbach fans displayed on the stands at the end of the Bundesliga match AP

George Floyd, 46, died in Minneapolis during an arrest by a police officer who pinned him to the ground for several minutes by kneeling on his neck. Just after the break in Gladbach, Union's Swedish striker Sebastian Andersson pulled one back after being left unmarked. Alassane Plea then grabbed a goal of his own for Gladbach, having set up Thuram's first, when he fired home off his left foot to make

Five subs 'awful' idea: Gasperini

AFF ■ BERGAMO



Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini on Sunday slammed as 'awful' the new rule which now allows teams to make five substitutions in a match instead of three. "Five subs? Terrible. The game is distorted," Gasperini told *Gazzetta Dello Sport*. "We become basketball. There may be ten new players on the pitch at the end." FIFA has made the temporary change to ease the physical strain on players, who are returning to a congested period of games after a lengthy break due to the coronavirus pandemic. But it could favour the bigger clubs, such as Juventus, who have deeper squads and better players ready to come off the bench. "Who's the genius who claims that injuries can be avoided?" continued the former Inter Milan coach. "On that basis? Better to change players from one game to another. "How can you be allowed to change your engine halfway through the Grand Prix. It takes away from the show." Serie A returns on June 20 with Gasperini's side in fourth, and battling for the final

Champions League berth in Italy. "I don't like football without fans either, but it's the only way to start again," he continued. "During the first day of the Bundesliga I zapped, I could not follow. Borussia-Bayern, on the other hand, was a good game. "I saw many technical errors even from important players — in an empty stadium it is more difficult to stay focused." Sampdoria coach Claudio Ranieri, however, hailed five substitutions "a great thing" as his side battle relegation. "The heat and matches close together carry a risk for players," said the former Leicester City manager. "When there are three games a week the stress will be considerable."

Mahi always emotional about cricket: Sakshi

IANS ■ CHENNAI

The common perception might be that Mahendra Singh Dhoni does not show a lot of emotion on the field and is *Captain Cool*. But on Sunday, the iconic former India captain's wife Sakshi said that Dhoni is always emotional about the game as it is his love. While talking about Dhoni getting emotional after leading Chennai Super Kings to their third Indian Premier League title in 2018, Sakshi said during an *Instagram Live* chat on CSK's official handle: "Mahi (Dhoni's pet name) is always emotional about cricket. It's his love." Rajasthan Royals (RR) along with CSK were making a comeback to the IPL after a two-year ban. Sakshi also revealed how the avid gamer in Dhoni helps the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman relax. "Video games are a stress buster for him. He has a thinking brain which doesn't rest. So video games help him and he is



now too much into *Call Of Duty* and *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds* (PUBG)." Sakshi also joked that only she can pick up a fight with ice-cool Dhoni who last turned out for India during their loss to New Zealand in the 2019 World Cup semi-final. "Nobody picks up a fight with him. I am the only one," she smiled. Sakshi also revealed that Dhoni has always kept his door open during tours and players could walk in any time they wanted. "Mahi has always kept his door open. It has been like that since 2010 (when we got married). People come...we chat sometimes till 3-4 in the morning. When they come to talk to

Don't know where these come from: Sakshi on MS retirement rumours

CHENNAI: Mahendra Singh Dhoni's wife Sakshi on Sunday said the iconic former India captain has had virtually no presence on social media during the Covid-19 induced lockdown and therefore the sudden trends about him hanging up his boots baffles her. A hashtag, namely *#DhoniRetires*, recently started trending on social media but soon, it became apparent that it was just another false rumour. "He has had zero presence on social media during this

lockdown, I don't know where these things come from. I just don't know," Sakshi said. Sakshi had previously rubbished rumours of the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman's retirement from international cricket following the *Twitter* trends. "Its only rumours! I understand Lockdown has made people mentally unstable! *#DhoniRetires*.. Get a life! (sic)," Sakshi had written on *Twitter*. However, just a few minutes after posting the tweet, she deleted it. "Mahi about cricket, I go away," Sakshi also said CSK has always been a family to them. "It is nice to be part of the family. They take the sport as sport and there are no hard feelings."

Marcelo can't wait to start playing matches

MADRID: Real Madrid left-back Marcelo said that the players 'can't wait' to get back to playing regular football. "We had never gone so long without being able to train out on the pitch and our desire to play football has been growing ever since we stopped. Now we're close to getting going again and we can't wait," Marcelo told Real Madrid's official website. "It's been different to what we're used to. We have to take the positives from it and now we're used to the routine; it's not like it used to be but everything's good. We're all healthy, the training sessions have been fantastic in recovering our rhythm. "Having not touched a ball for so long, when you go back out on the pitch you've lost your touch a bit, but now we just can't wait to start playing games," he added.

Icardi signs PSG deal

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain have signed Argentina international Mauro Icardi from Inter Milan on a four-year deal after taking up the option to buy the on-loan forward, the two clubs announced on Sunday. Icardi joined PSG this season and impressed with 20 goals in 31 games, before the Ligue 1 campaign was stopped and his club crowned champions because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Paris Saint-Germain are delighted to announce the signing of Mauro Icardi on a permanent deal, following the striker's loan from Inter Milan during the 2019-2020 season," the French club said in a statement. Icardi, who has eight caps for Argentina, but also holds an Italian passport, has signed a four-year deal until June 30, 2024. Given the current economic situation the French champions succeeded in reducing the fee "to under" 60 million euros (\$66 million), as opposed to the 70 million euros initially requested, according to the French and Italian sports press. Inter Milan thanked Icardi "for the six seasons he spent with us and wish him the best for his future professional career."

SL cricketers to resume training

COLOMBO: A group of 13 Sri Lankan cricketers, comprising mainly bowlers, will resume training on Monday following the coronavirus hiatus, the country's cricket board said on Sunday. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said in a statement that a "selected squad of 13 members will undergo a 12-day Residential Training Camp at the Colombo Cricket Club." "The players taking part in the camp represents a general squad chosen from across all formats, and primarily consist of bowlers, as they need more time for 'conditioning' before going into active competition," the statement said. The coaching and support staff overseeing the training of the players will consist of a four-member unit. All the players will strictly adhere to the health regulations imposed by the Government. The SLC said it has "taken all required measures in consultation with the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Health to



ensure the safety of every individual involved in this exercise, and has formulated a set of procedures to adhere, during the camp period and before."

The governing body said "members taking part in the camp, will not be allowed to leave the hotel premises or the practice venue to attend personal matters during the training period". The South African Government has also allowed non-contact sports, including cricket, to return to play, a decision hailed by Cricket South Africa (CSA) acting CEO Jacques Faul as a "big boost". He said the Covid Steering Committee will meet on Monday to draw up a protocol covering the return to training and playing. "At this stage these regulations apply only to professional cricket and our next step will be to draw up a protocol covering the return to training and playing and submit it to SRSA for approval. "Both our national teams and our franchises will in due time be given the green light to return to training." Faul, however, said no one will be forced to resume training.

WFI to nominate Vinesh for Khel Ratna

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World Championship Bronze medalist Vinesh Phogat is set to be nominated for Khel Ratna for the second year in a row while Rio Olympic Bronze winner Sakshi Malik wants to be in contention for the Arjuna award, although she is already a recipient of country's highest sporting honour. Vinesh, who is the lone woman wrestler to have qualified for the now-postponed Tokyo Olympics, had missed out on the honour last year with fellow grappler Bajrang Punia getting the prestigious award. She has been consistent in the last three years, winning Asian Games Gold in Jakarta. She qualified for the Tokyo Games by winning a Bronze at the World Championship in Nur Sultan in 2019. Early this year, she won a Bronze at the Asian



Championship, held in New Delhi. "We will send Vinesh's application on Monday for Khel Ratna. She will be a strong contender. But we have not yet decided on Arjuna award application because we have received many applications. The WFI President will have a look and decide whose application is to be forwarded to the

ministry," WFI Assistant Secretary Vinod Tomar said. "We still have time till June 3. But most likely the names will be sent tomorrow (Monday)," he added. A WFI source said Sakshi, who has been struggling badly of late, has sent her application for the Arjuna. She had got Khel Ratna in 2016 along with gymnast Dipa Karmakar and shooter Jitu Rai. Recently she lost twice to young grappler Sonam Malik, who stopped the elite athlete from making the cut even for the Asian Olympic Qualifiers. It will be interesting to see if WFI sends her name since 2019 World Championship Silver medalist Deepak Punia (86kg) and very-talented Rahul Aware (61kg, non-olympic category) have also sent their applications for the Arjuna. "She had no achievement before the Rio Games, so her name was not sent for Arjuna. Since she won a Bronze in Rio,

she (directly) got the Khel Ratna that time. Now she wants the Arjuna award as well," the source said. If WFI goes by performance, it will not send Sakshi's name because better performers like Deepak Punia and Rahul Aware stand a better chance to get the award as they will compete with brilliant athletes from other disciplines. Also sending his application to WFI for the Arjuna is Sandeep Tomar, who was a strong candidate in the 57kg before the rise of Ravi Dahiya, the 2019 World Championship Bronze medalist. While application have to be filled by the athletes, it is the national federation which has to recommend names for the sports awards to the ministry. The athletes can still send their applications if their form is endorsed by their state union or a former national awardee — Arjuna, Khel Ratna, Dhyanchand or or Dronacharya.



प्रिय भाईयों और बहनों,

नमस्कार, अन्य राज्यों में काम करने गये मेरे छत्तीसगढ़ी भाई, बहनों के राज्य में लौटने का क्रम जारी है। हमने इस संकट की घड़ी में अपने राज्य में लौटने के इच्छुक लोगों के लिए सभी आवश्यक साधन उपलब्ध कराये हैं और यह क्रम लगातार जारी है। अभी तक राज्य में 56 ट्रेनों के माध्यम से 76 हजार 772 श्रमिकों और अन्य व्यक्तियों को राज्य वापस लाया जा चुका है। बस, ट्रेन और अन्य माध्यमों से अब तक कुल 2 लाख 44 हजार 686 श्रमिक राज्य में वापस आ चुके हैं।

राज्य में लौटे इन सभी श्रमिकों और राज्य के अन्य निवासियों की सुरक्षा के लिए हमने सभी को नियमानुसार 14 दिन के अनिवार्य क्वारंटाईन में रखने की व्यवस्था की है। इसके लिए हमने 19 हजार 216 क्वारंटाईन सेंटर बनाये हैं, जिनमें 7 लाख 6 हजार 416 लोग रह सकते हैं। यह प्रयास किया गया है कि राज्य की हर ग्राम पंचायत या उसके आसपास क्वारंटाईन सेंटर हो, ताकि ग्रामवासी अपने ग्राम के पास ही रह सकें। राज्य सरकार ने अपनी ओर से इन क्वारंटाईन सेंटर में हर संभव सुविधायें उपलब्ध करायी हैं। कोरोना महामारी के इस दौर में इतनी बड़ी संख्या में क्वारंटाईन सेंटर बनाना और उनमें आवश्यक सभी सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराना कोई आसान कार्य नहीं है। मैं इन क्वारंटाईन सेंटर में तैनात सभी विभागों के अधिकारियों और कर्मचारियों का आभारी हूँ। आप सभी, संकट के इस समय में बहुत अच्छा और प्रेरणादायी कार्य कर रहे हैं। क्वारंटाईन सेंटर में रह रहे सभी श्रमिक भाई-बहन भी स्थिति की गंभीरता को समझते हुए पूरा सहयोग कर रहे हैं। कुछ स्थानों पर क्वारंटाईन सेंटर में कतिपय व्यवस्था संबंधी शिकायतें आयीं, जिसे हमने जानकारी मिलते ही तत्काल दूर करने का प्रयास किया है।

क्वारंटाईन सेंटर से 14 दिन का क्वारंटाईन पूरा करके श्रमिकों का वापस गांव लौटने का क्रम भी प्रारंभ हो गया है। कुछ जगह से ऐसी सूचना आयी है, कि गांव के लोग इन्हें वापस गांव में प्रवेश देते समय मन में संशय रख रहे हैं। संशय या संदेह की कोई बात नहीं है। ये आपके भाई-बहन हैं, स्वस्थ हैं और 14 दिन का क्वारंटाईन पूरा करके आए हैं। आप इस बात को समझें कि अब इनसे गांव में संक्रमण का कोई खतरा नहीं है। मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि आप इस बात को समझेंगे।

अन्य राज्यों से लौट रहे श्रमिक भाई-बहनों के कारण राज्य में संक्रमण में वृद्धि हुई है, लेकिन मुझे विश्वास है कि यह वृद्धि कुछ समय के लिये है। इसके बाद आप सबके सहयोग से हम फिर से कोरोना संक्रमण को सीमित करने में सफल हो जाएंगे। आप सबसे सहयोग की अपील है।

आपका

 (भूपेश बघेल)
 मुख्यमंत्री, छत्तीसगढ़

कोरोना हारेगा, छत्तीसगढ़ जीतेगा