

OPINION 6
FORCE
MAJEURE

WORLD 9
3.3 MN AMERICANS
SEEK JOBLESS AID

SPORT 12
WIMBLEDON FATE TO BE
DECIDED NEXT WEEK

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**KISHAN
KANHAYA IS
SPECIAL: ANIL
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Centre provides ₹1.7L cr succour to poor

Focus on migrant/farm labourers; ₹50L insurance for health-sanitation workers; fund to prevent lay-off



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addresses a Press conference to announce Gareeb Kalyan Yojana to help the poor in the view of the coronavirus lockdown at National Media Centre in New Delhi on Thursday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday unveiled a ₹1.7 lakh crore relief package for the weaker section of the society to deal with the impact of the three-week nationwide lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak. However, there was nothing for the corporate sector that has taken a big hit due to the pandemic.

The economic package to help migrant workers, labourers, poor and agricultural workers, and others will come into effect immediately. "It has been made to reach out to the most vulnerable sections of the society who are in need of immediate help because of the economic disruption," said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur was present, besides Atanu Chakraborty, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs and Debashish Panda, Secretary, Department of Financial Services.

Sitharaman also announced direct cash transfers for a large

number of affected people, the package says that 8.3 crore including senior citizens, widows, farmers and daily-wage labourers.

As per the package, health and sanitation workers will be insured for ₹50 lakh per person. This will cover nearly 20 lakh persons.

"Safai karmacharis, ward boys, nurses, paramedics, technicians, doctors and specialists, and others health would be covered by a special insurance scheme. Any health professional who while treating Covid-19 patients meets with some accident, then he/she would be compensated with an amount of ₹50 lakh under the scheme," stated the Government Press release.

The package says that under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana 80 crore poor people will get 5 kg per person rice/wheat each month for the next 3 months in addition to 5kg of rice/wheat that they already get. Besides, 1kg of pulse according to regional preference for each household.

In a big relief to the rural women,

BPL Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries will be given free cylinders for the next three months. During this period, a maximum of three gas cylinders will be provided.

The move comes two days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a 21-day nationwide lockdown.

Most of the financial benefits will be routed through the DBT scheme into the Jan Dhan account of the beneficiaries. In case, they don't have such accounts, the Government will make alternative arrangement to provide them financial relief.

Sitharaman announced that daily wages under the MNRREGA have been increased to ₹202 a day from ₹182. This will

benefit nearly 5 crore families, Sitharaman said.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, farmers will get ₹2,000 in April. This is expected to cover 8.7 crore families.

The total amount distributed is estimated to be ₹16,000 crore.

In addition, a total of 20.40 crore PM JAN Dhan Yojana women account-holders will be given ex-gratia of ₹500 per month for next three months.

"This will help them run their household during this difficult period. For this purpose, the Government of India will spend ₹31,000 crore," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

As corona testing ratio too low, assessment has long way to go

With billion plus population, only 25,000 samples tested so far

ARCHANA JYOTI/RAGHUNATHA ■ NEW DELHI

With just around 25,000 samples tested from

around 24,000 individuals so far, India with a billion plus population has to go a long way in assessing the true extent of coronavirus spread.

The test size is being considered as one of the lowest in the world on population yardstick. Various reports as well as the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been insisting on "test, test and test" asserting lockdown is not complete solution to combat the virus which

has infected over 700 people and killed 15 so far in India.

Compare India with the US, which has four times less population, on testing parameters. While only around 24,000 individuals have been tested in India, the number stands around 60,000 for the USA. WHO head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has been maintaining at various forum.

Continued on page 2

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India has over 1-yr foodgrain reserve



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has enough foodgrain reserves to feed the poor amid the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus.

According to official data, the Government currently has 58.49 million tonnes (MT) of foodgrains in the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns. Out of which, rice constitutes 30.97 million tonne and wheat 27.52 million tonne.

The foodgrain stock is much higher than the required norms of maintaining a reserve of about 21 million tonne as on April 1. The Government will supply over next three months additional 2 kg subsidised foodgrains under the PDS, taking the total monthly quota to 7 kg per person.

Sources said 58.49 million tonnes of grains can enable the distribution of a full year's ration in advance to all ration card holders and beneficiaries of other welfare schemes. "Also, there is a stock of around 3 million metric tonnes of pulses, 1.1 million metric tonnes of oil seed and 4 million tonnes of sugar," the sources said. Further, wheat procurement is about to start soon. The Consumer Affairs Ministry allowed FCI to sell food stocks to private markets under the Open Market Sale Scheme.

Continued on page 2

देशव्यापी लॉकडाउन से उत्पन्न परिस्थितियों से निपटने के लिए

केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण योजना के तहत लिए गए महत्वपूर्ण निर्णय

यदि स्वयं एवं परिवार को बचाना है तो लॉक डाउन के दौरान घर से बाहर नहीं आना है

देशव्यापी लॉकडाउन से उत्पन्न परिस्थितियों से निपटने और देश के गरीबों, मजदूरों, किसानों, बुजुर्गों, महिलाओं, दिव्यांगों, विधवाओं, संगठित व असंगठित क्षेत्र को रहत पहुंचाने हेतु लिए गए निर्णय व ₹1.7 लाख करोड़ के आर्थिक पैकेज की घोषणा का हम स्वागत करते हैं।

मैं उत्तराखण्ड की जनता की ओर से आदरणीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी का हृदय से आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ।

- त्रिवेन्द्र सिंह रावत
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड

अधिक जानकारी के लिए उत्तराखण्ड राज्य निराश्रय कक्ष 104, 0135-2609500 पर सम्पर्क करें।

सूचना एवं लोक सम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड द्वारा जनहित में जारी

देशव्यापी लॉकडाउन से उत्पन्न परिस्थितियों से निपटने और देश के गरीबों, मजदूरों, किसानों, बुजुर्गों, महिलाओं, दिव्यांगों, विधवाओं, संगठित व असंगठित क्षेत्र को रहत पहुंचाने हेतु लिए गए निर्णय व ₹1.7 लाख करोड़ के आर्थिक पैकेज की घोषणा का हम स्वागत करते हैं।

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केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा 1 लाख 75 हजार करोड़ रुपये की सहायता की घोषणा

- अस्पतालों में जो सफाई कर्मचारी, वार्ड बॉय, नर्स, पैरामेडिकल स्टाफ, टेक्निशियन, डॉक्टर व स्पेशलिस्ट आदि के लिए बीमा योजना शुरू की है, जिसके तहत सरकार इनका 50 लाख का बीमा करेगी है।
- प्रत्येक किसान के खाते में अप्रैल, 2020 के पहले सप्ताह तक ₹2000 रुपये जमा किये जायेंगे। जिससे 8 करोड़ 70 लाख किसानों को इसका लाभ मिलेगा।
- महिला जनपन खाताधारकों को ₹500 प्रतिमाह की राशि अगले 3 महीने तक दी जायेगी। इसका लाभ 20 करोड़ 40 लाख महिलाओं को मिलेगा।
- प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण योजना के तहत 8 करोड़ महिला लाभार्थियों को 3 महीने तक गैस सिलिंडर मुफ्त दिया जायेगा।
- जिन प्राइवेट कम्पनियों में 100 से कम कामिक हैं और जिनका वेतन 15000 से कम है उनका अगले 3 महीनों का पी.एफ. सरकार द्वारा उनके पी.एफ. खाते में डाला जायेगा।
- बुजुर्गों, दिव्यांगों एवं विधवाओं को 3 महीने तक ₹1000 अतिरिक्त मिलेगा। यह दो किस्तों में दिया जायेगा। 3 करोड़ लोगों को इसका लाभ मिलेगा।
- हर व्यक्ति को 5 किलो चावल और गेहूँ 3 महीने तक अतिरिक्त दिया जायेगा। गेहूँ, चावल के साथ 1 किलो दाल भी दी जायेगी। इस योजना के तहत 80 करोड़ लोगों को लाभ मिलेगा। यह सुनिश्चित किया जायेगा कि कोई भी व्यक्ति बिना भोजन के न रहे।
- मनरेगा के मजदूरों की दिशाई ₹182 से बढ़कर ₹202 कर दी गयी है। 13 करोड़ 62 लाख परिवारों को होगा फायदा।
- कामिक अपने पी.एफ. फंड में से 75 फीसदी या अपने तीन महीने के वेतन के बराबर जो कम हो, निकाल सकता है। 4 करोड़ परिवारों को होगा फायदा।
- महिलाओं द्वारा संचालित 63 लाख स्वयं सहायता समूह 6 करोड़ 85 लाख परिवारों को सहायता कर रहे हैं। ऐसे समूह बिना कामकाज दिखाये उनके 10 लाख की जगह 20 लाख एडवांस ले सकते हैं। ताकि वे और सहायता कर सकें।

District Admin, MCH provide food, rations to daily wagers, destitute

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The State administration has taken measures to ensure adequate supply of essential commodities and check overpricing, hoarding the black marketing of such items in the districts. Necessary directions have been issued to all district magistrates regarding this. In addition to working on these aspects, the Haridwar district administration and the Municipal Corporation of Haridwar (MCH) have taken important steps to assist the daily wagers, poor and destitute citizens. The MCH has shared an account number for those wanting to donate money to assist in such efforts. The corporation is also regularly distributing food packets and ration to the poor and needy people in Haridwar. On Thursday, the municipal commissioner Narendra Bhandari also distributed food packets to the needy.

Assistant municipal commissioner Uttam Singh Negi informed this correspondent that many people want to contribute to the efforts but are unable to do so due to the lockdown.

"With their own hands, they have publicized the Nagar Nigam account number and started getting positive response within a couple of hours," he said.



The district administration has asked the food and civil supplies department to prepare 5000 ration packets. District information officer Archana Singh said that the figures of the districts administration, 36,659 daily labourers are registered, out of which 12,601 are construction workers.

As corona testing ratio...

From Page 1

that "all countries should be able to test all suspected cases, they cannot fight this pandemic blindfolded."

On Thursday, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) directed hospitals, including the private ones, to collect the nasal and throat swab samples of the suspected cases of COVID-19 in one VTM tube and transport it to the nearest testing laboratory in cold chain.

Till now, only people in contact with the infected or those with travel history to high-risk countries, or health workers managing patients with severe respiratory disease and developing Covid-19 symptoms, are eligible for test.

To ensure availability of testing kits, the Government through the ICMR has sought prices quotes for a supply of 10 lakh antibody kits (serological test) for diagnosis of COVID-19. It will also procure 7 lakh RNA extraction kits, for a method which is currently used for the testing of the virus in the country.

Since, the clearance of the company manufacturing test kits will take its own time, experts say that India is already too late in ramping up its efforts to contain the deadly disease.

Meanwhile, on the suggestions of the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), the ICMR has given nod to labs at Virology Department of the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Delhi, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Delhi, KEM, Mumbai, NICEED, Kolkata and Nimbans in Bangalore to validate the testing kits.

The DCGI had pointed out that the country's only lab, NIV-Pune that has been assigned for validation of test kits, may not be able to do job with cent per cent accuracy because of the load to test the kits hence, more labs should be asked to do the task.

The agency has invited kit manufacturers to quote prices. It has also asked them about supply timeline and capacity available for COVID-19 testing kits that are approved by ICMR or international authorities like USFDA and EUA. The supply locations for the test kits are Dibrugarh, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bhopal and Delhi.

In addition to over a 100 Government laboratories that have been approved for the COVID-19 testing.



Two men being made to do squats as punishment for coming outdoors without valid reason in Dehradun during the State-wide lockdown on Thursday.

India has over 1-yr..

From Page 1

Besides, the Government has asked fast moving consumers good firms to ramp up supplies to meet domestic demand.

"FCI godowns has sufficient reserves to meet the demand and officials are keeping a close watch on distribution of foodgrains," Union Food and Consumer Affairs

Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said in a tweet.

State-run Food Corporation of India (FCI), the Government's nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains under the Public Distribution System, is keeping a close watch on supply of subsidised grains to the ration-card holders, he added.

Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), the Government is supplying 5 kg of foodgrains per month to over 80 crore people at a highly subsidised price. Wheat is supplied at Rs 2/kg and rice at

Anganwadi workers refuse to support Govt

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

At a time when personnel of various departments and volunteers are uniting and contributing their bit to tackle the situation resulting from the lockdown to stall the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) the Anganwadi workers have said that they will not assist the Governmental efforts unless their pending demands are met. The state president of Anganwadi Workers Association, Rekha Negi said that they will not support the decision of the State Government to deliver ration supplies to the locals at home with the help of Anganwadi workers unless the government agrees to their demands.

The Anganwadi workers had protested for about two months against the Government and in support of their demands which included raise in allowance, travel allowance, provision of health insurance. They had defied their protest after they were reportedly assisted by the

State administration to consider their demands by March 10 after making a committee where all the issues could be raised by Anganwadi workers. Reportedly, the State Women Empowerment and Child Development Minister Rekha Arya recently said that if the need arises, the Anganwadi workers will also be deployed for the supplies of ration to the people at home. However, Negi rejected the plan saying that the government pays too less to expect such a risky job amid the threat of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). According to her, the government did not care about their demands during their protest of two months and hunger strike but now they are considering securing their services during the situation resulting from spread of novel coronavirus.

"The Government does not even pay us half of what it pays to the government employees who are being asked to do such jobs during novel coronavirus threat in the State," said Negi.

CM seeks updates on lockdown from DMs



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat is consistently monitoring the lockdown situation across the State. On Thursday, the Chief Minister talked on the phone to the district magistrates and enquiring about the situation, directed them to strictly enforce the lockdown. Rawat also said that while strictly enforcing the lockdown, the availability of essential services and goods must also be ensured. The citizens should be assured that there is no shortage of any

essential commodity. The general public should be motivated to remain at home and maintain social distancing too, said Rawat.

At the Chief Minister's residence, Rawat was updated about the situation in Dehradun by the district magistrate Ashish Kumar Srivastava and the deputy inspector general/senior superintendent of police Anurup Mohan Joshi. He directed the officers to monitor the situation with full alertness and to take every necessary step to deal with the situation.

No need to panic, enough food supply in Dehradun: DM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Dehradun District Magistrate (DM) Ashish Kumar Srivastava has appealed the people not to panic and shop unnecessarily due to the State-wide lockdown.

According to him, some people are buying the items in more quantities than needed which is creating panic among others. This in turn appears as an opportunity for some shopkeepers to take advantage of such situations. For the last few days, the market price of vegetables, fruits and other ration items have been consistently rising in the city. According to a Raipur resident Anu Chaudhary, the prices of vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes and some fruits have hiked from ₹10 to ₹15 in just two days. The vendors always say buy now when you can or you might not get the items tomorrow. We have to buy at whatever rates they sell because we really cannot run to multiple shops to cross check the prices during the time window of 7 AM to 10 AM. The government should at least ensure the selling of products at appropriate rates. Talking about this, Dehradun DM Srivastava said



that there is sufficient supply of essential food and other items in the district but people are buying more than they need due to panic and rumours. He said the required action is being taken against the hoarders and shopkeepers who sell the products for more than the maximum retail price (MRP). Further, the city magistrate Anuraadha Pal said, the shopkeepers have been asked to

play a rate list for the customers and those who do not follow it will face action. However, the problem of hiked price is being faced mostly in small shops in colonies, therefore, the district administration will deploy some volunteers in the colonies to check out the appropriate sale of grocery items in such shops but in the meantime, the people also need to be vigilant while shopping, said Pal.

Essential goods shops, firms to remain open 24x7: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In order to ensure smooth supply of essential items and discourage large gathering during ongoing lockdown period, the Delhi Government on Thursday said shops and factories associated with essential services can operate 24x7. No additional licence is required.

In a joint Press meet with Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajaj, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, "We have decided to allow all essential items or are part of the supply chain for such items to function 24x7 to prevent overcrowding during the day.

This will require no additional permits and licences. E-commerce companies in Delhi can home deliver essential commodities and employees' identity cards to be considered valid," he said.

Addressing people via video streaming, Kejriwal said areas SDMs and ACPs must ensure opening of shops and factories supplying such as vegetables, general, ration, medicines in their areas.

"ACPs have been tasked with ensuring that all the grocery shops and other utility stores remain open. Today we discussed delivery of essential services," he said.

Modi to G-20: Human, not economy, focus

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged the powerful G-20 to put human beings rather than economic targets at the centre of the vision for global prosperity and cooperation.

In his address at a video conference of the G-20 leaders, Modi also pitched for developing a new crisis management protocol and procedures to deal with global health crisis besides significantly boosting the capability of organisations like the WHO.

Detailed report on P8

The Pioneer's Kushan Mitra drove around a desolate and deserted Delhi.

3-ply face masks can't be priced over ₹16/piece

Besides capping MRP till June 30, Govt allows distilleries and sugar mills to make hand sanitisers

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In its efforts to make face masks and hand sanitisers available to the masses, the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs on Thursday capped the price of 3-ply face masks made of melt blown non-woven fabric at ₹16 per piece till June 30 and also allowed distilleries and sugar mills to manufacture hand sanitisers in bulk.

Licences have also been issued to 45 distilleries in an order to maintain demand and supply balance of sanitisers due to skyrocketing demand amid coronavirus.

Consumer Affairs Secretary Pawan Agarwal on Thursday said the retail price of 2-ply and 3-ply surgical face masks remain the same. The rates will remain in force up to June 30. The Consumer Affairs Ministry had notified MRP



for 2 ply and 3 ply "surgical" face masks at ₹5 and ₹10 per piece respectively on March 22. But for 3 ply melt blown face

masks, it had said MRP would be at the rate that prevailed as on February 12.

"We had a meeting with face mask manufacturers. They were facing some challenges because of lack of clarity on MRP front. So, we have decided to fix the MRP of 3 ply melt blown face masks at ₹16 per piece," Agarwal added.

On allowing distilleries and sugar mills to manufacture

hand sanitisers in bulk, Agarwal said the department had received 100 applications, of which we have given licence to 45 distilleries so far apart from 364 other manufacturers.

"These companies will manufacture hand sanitisers in bulk. More than 55 distilleries are likely to be given permission in one or two days and many more are being motivated to produce hand sanitisers," he said.

CAPSULE

MARKET CLOCKS BEST 3-DAY RALLY IN YEARS
Mumbai: Equity benchmarks surged for the third straight session on Thursday, logging their best three-day gains in years.

PAK FORCIBLY MOVING +VE PATIENTS TO POK
Mirpur: Amid strong protests by locals, the Pakistan Army has started to move Covid-19 positive patients from Punjab province to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and Gilgit Baltistan — the two most marginalised areas.

National Capital silenced

The Pioneer's Kushan Mitra drove around a desolate and deserted Delhi.

As someone who has called this city home for over two past three decades, this was unusual. Even on the days when much of the city shuts down, Republic Day or Independence Day, the city is still loud, abuzz and full of life. On a Thursday afternoon in late-March with such fine weather, Connaught Place would be full of people, young couples strolling some moments, shoppers hunting for deals at Palika Bazaar, office workers out for a drink with colleagues at the countless bars and restaurants. Instead, the giant flagpole is bare, the streets deserted other than the police-

men running the checkpoints and Palika Bazaar's entrances are locked. This is not Delhi as anyone has ever known it in living memory, even those who remember the 1965 and 1971 wars will say that while blackouts and curfews were common, this is unnatural.

The destitute and the homeless face a challenge like never before, with few people on the streets to give alms and restaurants and shops shut, they can't even acquire the limited rations that they used to earlier. While various State Governments and the Centre have promised that people will not be hungry, when you ask for essential workers as notified by the government. Migrants from Uttar and Pradesh and Bihar who are still trying to find a way home now that their daily-wage jobs have evaporated thanks to this gift from China, stand helpless around the bus station, although it must be noted that the air in this area, usually thick with

diesel fumes is strangely clean. Among those left behind by India's economic growth of the past few decades, there is confusion and helplessness, but they are beginning to understand the gravity of the situation, but they know that they are, as the saying goes, caught between a rock and a hard place.

At popular destinations for local outings such as India Gate and Red Fort, the emptiness looks like the set of an apocalyptic movie rather than sites in an Indian city. There are some private vehicles around, but those are few and far between, mostly carrying officials and mediapersons.

But we face an enemy whom we cannot see, whom we do not know how to defeat, indeed nobody in the world knows how to defeat.

Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal announced that there were 36 cases for SAR-CoV-2, the so-called 'Wuhan Virus' in the capital, but he also highlighted the risks that healthcare work-



ers face with one virus-infected patient who returned from Saudi Arabia infecting a Mohalla Clinic doctor who subsequently passed it onto his family. The dangers are ever present. Those in the know are pinning some hope on various theories, particularly the 'tem-

perature' theory, but we do not know what will happen next. This is just the third day of the 21-day lockdown, the fifth day of staying at home since Sunday for many of us. This will not be an easy time for anyone. And Delhi might never feel the same again.

Lockdown window extended in city

Citizens allowed to shop for essentials between 7 AM and 1 PM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

On Friday, the essential items market will remain open from 7 AM to 1 PM in the state. Fruit, vegetables and milk will be available throughout the day. While four-wheelers will remain totally prohibited, only one person will be allowed on two-wheelers during the six-hour window provided in the state-wide lockdown. This decision was taken to prevent citizens from crowding while shopping for essential items during the 7 AM to 10 AM window allowed so far. Stating this, the Chief Minister Triwendra Singh Rawat also said that if needed, 500-bed pre-fabricated hospitals dedicated to treatment of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) can be made in Dehradun and Haldwani. The district magistrates concerned should identify five acre land for this purpose. Further, officials should

ensure that flour mills keep on operating. Immediate assistance should be provided to registered and other labourers in addition to the needy citizens. The Chief Minister issued these directions while presiding over a video conference on Thursday evening to review the situation and preparations in the state to tackle the threat of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) threat.

Addressing the officials, the CM said that if needed pre-fabricated hospitals with 500 bed capacity can be made in Dehradun and Haldwani for treating COVID-19 patients. He directed the district magistrates concerned to select five acre land for this purpose. Assistants should also be provided to the chief medical officers (CMOs) and other officials whose phone numbers are being made public. Pharmaceutical units should continue operations with necessary precautions.

Those people who are coming from outside should be made to undergo home quarantine. The suspect COVID-19 patients whose reports are yet to be received should be made to undergo home quarantine strictly. Regular checking



should also be done to ensure this. The district magistrates should cross-check this. Rawat said that while small flour mills should be allowed to operate, bulk supply should not be stopped either. Rate list should be displayed mandatorily in shops.

Expressing satisfaction at the situation so far, the CM said that such execution of tasks with mutual coordination should be continued in the

future too. Even petty negligence should not be allowed to take place, he stressed. Rawat said that while small flour mills should be allowed to operate, bulk supply should not be stopped either. Rate list should be displayed mandatorily in shops.

Health and family welfare secretary Nitesh Jha informed that currently Uttarakhand is in phase one of the COVID-19 pandemic. The positive cases

found in the state have come from outside with community spread not having taken place yet. The state will succeed in stalling the spread of COVID-19 if social distancing is effectively observed, he added. Chief secretary Upal Kumar Singh, director general of police Anil Kumar Raturi, secretaries Amit Singh Negi, R Meenakshi Sundaram and other officials concerned were present in the meeting.

Ayurveda, homoeopathic staff to get trained on COVID-19 treatment

Would remain temporarily attached to CMOs concerned; No new case of disease on Thursday

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In view of shortage of staff in the medical health and family welfare department, the Uttarakhand Government is planning to temporarily attach the Ayurvedic and Homoeopathic medical officers and paramedical staff to the medical health and family welfare department. During this period these officers and employees would report to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the districts concerned. The health department would also provide a short training to these personnel so as to make them prepared to combat COVID-19 and second the allopathic doctors.

In a letter directed to the chief secretary of Uttarakhand, the secretary health, Nitesh Jha has said that the health

department of Uttarakhand faces shortage of staff and in the wake of the situation created due to the spread of COVID-19, the department of medical health and family welfare needs augmentation in its staff.



Meanwhile no new case of the disease was reported by the health department on Thursday. The director general (DG) state health services, Dr Amita Upreti informed that reports of swab samples of 30 suspected patients was received by the department on Thursday and all them were found negative. The department collected 40 samples of the suspected patients from different hospitals of the state on Thursday. So far 323 swab samples have been sent for COVID-19 test and reports 273 were found to be negative and five positive. The reports of 45 samples are awaited.

In view of increasing number of suspected patients of the disease the administration of Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) hospital here

has decided to set up a 50 bed isolation ward for the suspected patients of COVID-19. The beds in this special ward would be kept at a distance so that the chance of infection of disease is obliterated. On Thursday, the Principal of GDMC, Dr Ashutosh Sayana inspected the old building of the hospital where the new isolation facility would be set up. The hospital administration is also planning to convert other wards of the hospital into isolation facility. It is pertinent to mention here that the GDMC hospital has been converted into COVID-19 treatment centre. The hospital is having only the flu OPD and other OPDs are closed. Four COVID-19 patients are presently admitted in the Corona ward of the hospital and many other suspected patients are admitted here.

More food and health care products at FPS now

Packed wheat flour, pulses, sanitary napkins, tea, oil and sanitisers would now be available in these shops

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In view of the threat posed by the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), the Uttarakhand Government has decided to provide many household substances and edible items from the network of its fair price shops (FPS). There are 9200 FPS in the State. In an order the commissioner food and civil supplies, Sushil Kumar has said that the FPS dealers would be allowed to sell things of daily requirement such as soap, toothpaste, edible oil, packed wheat flour, pulses, iodised salt, match boxes, candles and tea. Apart from it things like ORS, tablet, condoms, sanitary napkin, sanitiser and masks would also be available at these shops.

As of now eight listed items such as wheat, rice, sugar, pulses, oil, kerosene and soft coke are provided at the FPS at subsidised rates.

In his order to the all the district magistrates, the commissioner has said that the State administration was not of Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) should be appointed for the purpose and a committee should be constituted in every district. The District Supplies Officer (DSO) should be the member secretary of the committee. Sushil Kumar said that home delivery should be provided to the senior citizens, handicapped and ill persons.

Poor on verge of starvation due to lockdown- Qazi

Threatens to sit on fast unto death if one month's ration not provided in two days

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Congress MLA from Manglaur constituency of Haridwar, Qazi Nizamuddin has threatened to sit on fast unto death outside the residence of Chief Minister Triwendra Singh Rawat if the State Government does not provide one month's ration at the fair price shops free of cost within 48 hours. He alleged that the State administration was not prepared for the lockdown of 21 days declared by the Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi to combat the menace of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Talking to The Pioneer, the Congress leader said that the lockdown has brought the poor and daily wage earners on the verge of starvation. "In my constituency more than 50 percent population is on the poor. These poor fellows have not made any preparation for the lockdown. They don't have enough food to feed their families. Similar situation prevails in all parts of the state. I had talked to the district magistrate of Haridwar and told him that the wheat flour is not available here. I request the state government to provide one month's ration free of cost to every ration card holder of the state," he said. The Congress MLA added many ration cards are not updated so they are not online. He said that the state government to set aside the issue of online ration cards and provide ration to every ration card holder. Qazi warned that law and order problem could get created for administration in coming days if the poor are not provided food. "If the state government fails to provide ration, I would stop taking food and water and adopt Gandhian method of protest which is Satyagrah," he warned.



खुद बचें और सबको बचायें

आइये, हम सब मिलकर COVID-19 को हरायें

सावधानी बरतें, अफवाहों पर ध्यान ना दें।

अपील

मेरे प्यारे प्रदेशवासियों

जैसा कि आपको विदित है, कोरोना के खिलाफ सम्पूर्ण देश में माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी के द्वारा लॉकडाउन घोषित किया जा चुका है। मैं आप सभी से निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि COVID-19 से निपटने के लिए उत्तराखण्ड सरकार पूर्ण रूप से तैयार है तथा इस चुनौती से निपटने हेतु जनसामान्य का सहयोग अति आवश्यक है। सरकार के द्वारा इससे बचने हेतु निरंतर अभियान चलाये जा रहे हैं तथा जनसामान्य से अपेक्षा है कि वह आम प्रचार/अफवाहों से बचें एवं आपसे अनुरोध है कि निम्न निर्देशों का पालन करें:-

- राज्य में पर्याप्त मात्रा में खाद्यान्न एवं आवश्यक वस्तुएं उपलब्ध हैं। इसलिए किसी भी रूप में आपको घबराने की आवश्यकता नहीं है।
- आपकी दैनिक आवश्यकताओं को ध्यान में रखते हुए प्रतिदिन प्रातः 7:00 बजे से 13:00 बजे तक समस्त आवश्यक वस्तुओं से सम्बन्धित प्रतिष्ठानों को खोला जा रहा है अतः आपसे अपेक्षा है कि अनावश्यक रूप से हॉर्डिंग न करें। जिससे सभी को अपनी आवश्यकतानुसार आवश्यक वस्तुएं सुलभ हो सकें एवं उक्त बीमारी से बचने हेतु आवश्यक सामाजिक दूरी का पालन भी सुनिश्चित किया जा सके।
- समस्त राशन की दुकानों पर नियंत्रित मूल्य की वस्तुओं यथा गेहूँ, चावल, घी, दाल एवं मिट्टी तेल के अतिरिक्त शासनादेशानुसार निर्धारित दैनिक आवश्यकता की अन्य वस्तुएं यथा पेयजल आटा, खाद्य तेल, दाल (सरकारी आपूर्ति से भिन्न प्रकार की) आयोडाइज्ड नमक, चायपत्ती, मसाला, साबुन, टूथपेस्ट, माचिस, मोमबत्ती, सेनेटाइजर, मास्क आदि की उपलब्धता आवश्यक रूप से बनाने एवं आवश्यकतानुसार होम डिलीवरी हेतु जिलाधिकारियों को निर्देशित किया जा चुका है।
- आपकी आवश्यकताओं को ध्यान में रखते हुए राष्ट्रीय खाद्य सुरक्षा योजना एवं राज्य खाद्य योजना से आकांक्षित समस्त परिवारों को माह अप्रैल, 2020 में तीन महीने माह अप्रैल, मई एवं जून, 2020 का खाद्यान्न वितरित किया जायेगा।
- समस्त थोक विक्रेताओं/कमीशन एजेंट्स एवं फुटकर विक्रेताओं से अनुरोध है कि दैनिक आवश्यकताओं की वस्तुओं को इस संकट की घड़ी में अनिवार्य रूप से उचित मात्रा एवं मूल्य पर ही आवश्यक वस्तुओं का विक्रय करें।
- आवश्यक वस्तुओं से सम्बन्धित व्यवसायों यथा फुटकर विक्रेताओं, आढतियों, थोक विक्रेताओं, पत्थर मिल, राइस मिल, पेट्रोलियम प्रोडक्ट्स, एलपीजी, परिवहन कार्य में लगे लोगो, मजदूरों एवं दुकान कार्य में लगे लोगों के कार्यों पर कोई रोक नहीं है। उन्हें स्वास्थ्य विभाग द्वारा जारी गाइडलाइन का अनुपालन किया जाना आवश्यक है।
- यदि आपको आवश्यक वस्तुओं की आपूर्ति के सम्बन्ध में कोई कठिनाई उत्पन्न होती है तो आप खाद्य विभाग के हेल्पलाइन नं० 1800-180-4188 या आपदा कन्ट्रोल रूम के हेल्पलाइन नं० 1070 पर अपनी समस्या दर्ज करा सकते हैं।

उपरोक्त निर्देशों के क्रम में पुनः आप सभी से मेरा अनुरोध है कि सरकार द्वारा जारी गाइडलाइन का अनुपालन करते हुए अफवाहों से बचें और अपनी दैनिक आवश्यकताओं की वस्तुओं को आवश्यकतानुसार ही क्रय करें तथा सरकार द्वारा दी गयी जानकारी पर ही विश्वास करें।

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1st death in J&K, panic sets in

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU
A 65-year-old religious teacher, who was earlier tested positive for novel coronavirus on Thursday died at Chest Disease hospital in Srinagar triggering panic among the local residents who remained in close touch with him before he was admitted in the hospital on March 21. Four close contacts of this patient had already tested positive on Wednesday.

Large number of other contacts on Thursday reported across different hospitals in Kashmir valley and offered voluntary testing to confirm whether they have contracted the virus or not.

Meanwhile, two more positive cases were reported in Srinagar on Thursday.

The district magistrate, Srinagar also ordered the closure of all places of worship, including mosques and gurd-

waras, to prevent the further spread of coronavirus disease in the district.
Spokesman of the Jammu & Kashmir Government, Rohit Kansal tweeted, "Siblings (7 years old and 8 months old) grandchildren of a confirmed case from Srinagar with travel history to Saudi Arabia who had tested positive on 24th tested positive". Total number of active positive cases now 11, he added.

At present 12 people are being treated including nine in the Valley and three in Jammu region. One in Territory after testing positive for COVID-19.

Thirteen patients are admitted at a Leh hospital.

According to official sources, the deceased patient had been proselytizing in Uttar Pradesh and Jammu recently after being part of a religious congregation attended also by people from Indonesia and Malaysia. He

arrived in Srinagar on March 16 via Indigo flight from Jammu and first reported the symptoms between March 18-19, he was admitted in the hospital on March 21.
The J&K Government has

50 contacts of Kashmir's first victim quarantined

Srinagar: Authorities in Jammu & Kashmir were vigorously tracking the travel history of Union Territory's first COVID-19 victim as nearly 50 of those who came into contact with the victim have already been shifted to quarantine facilities.

Four of these quarantined persons have already tested positive for the virus.

Health officials said the deceased patient had a che-

quered travel trajectory and it was logical to assume that he had come into contact with a much higher number of persons than have been traced so far. "He was in Delhi where he is reported to have come into contact with Indonesia, Malaysian and Italian citizens. He has visited Samba and Jammu towns before he came back to the valley.

"He had attended a religious congregation in Sopore

and met dozens of people in Srinagar city", health officials said.
The fact that he had been evading isolation and treatment as per the standard operating procedure (SOP) for such patients, was also worrisome. "The fact is that he was symptomatically a full blown case before he was isolated and admitted is very worrisome", said a doctor. IANS

No Friday prayers in Kashmir mosques

IANS ■ SRINAGAR
Kashmir's Grand Mufti Nasrullah Khan said that there should be no Friday prayers in any mosque or shrine across the Valley on Friday in the wake of the coronavirus threat.

Talking to IANS, the Grand Mufti said on Friday people should not hold congregational prayers in Mosques and shrines across Kashmir.
"The situation is very grave," he said, "I appeal to people including Imams and Khatibs and managing bodies of all Masjids and shrines across Kashmir not to hold Friday congregational prayers."

He said that only three people including the muftis of mosques should offer five times prayers, rest of the people should stay at home.
Meanwhile, DC Srinagar Shahid Choudhary tweeted: "Closure of all religious places in #Srinagar is under way. With active cooperation of Management committees, Reversed shrines of #Nagshahid Saheb show the way. #StayAtHome"

"Dastgeer Saheb, Gurudwara Saheb Chhatti Padshahi and others. Mosques follow. Thankful to officials on ground and all management committees. #StayAtHome"

Goa converts 5 tourist resorts into quarantine facilities

IANS ■ PANAJI
The North Goa district administration there on Thursday took over five tourist resorts, including one private facility, to create quarantine facilities for Covid-19 epidemic.

On Wednesday, three persons had tested positive for coronavirus.

The resorts, taken over by the administration, included Goa Tourism Development Corporation-operated facilities at Mayem, Mapusa, Calangute and Old Goa, and a private resort Acron Seaway at the popular beach village of Candolim.

These facilities would be handed over to the Deputy Collectors, said a directive issued by the North Goa District Magistrate R. Menaka on Thursday.
"There is need to prepare quarantine facilities in the North Goa district in view of the prevailing health emergency due to spread of Covid-19," the order said and added, the properties were being temporarily taken over by the administration under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

Goa has isolation wards at four centres.

Tamil Nadu positive cases rise to 28

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Even as the number of persons tested positive for coronavirus touched 28 by Thursday evening and two persons succumbing to the pandemic (one each in Madurai and Kanyakumari) the activities of religious preachers from other countries is causing worries to security officials in Tamil Nadu. The cause of death of person in Kanyakumari district is yet to be ascertained and the health Minister's office is tight lipped about the incident.

The 28 persons who have been admitted to hospitals in Chennai, Madurai, Salem and Erode include four Indonesian and two Thailand citizens. These six persons are in the State for religious preaching. They have been indoctrinating the faithful about Tablighi Jamaat (Society for Spreading Faith), an organization urging Muslims to

return to practicing their religion as it existed during the lifetime of Prophet Mohammed, according to State Police officials.
The Indonesians reached Salem in the first week of March from New Delhi by Kerala Express and since then they have been proselytizing the districts of Salem, Madurai and Erode. The person who died on Wednesday, an office bearer of a local mosque management committee, had accompanied the Indonesians during their engagements in Madurai.

TG Vinay, Madurai district collector, told reporters that the health department officials are tracking the persons who had met the Indonesians and had been attending to their religious gatherings and social gatherings to collect samples from them for testing.

The secret visits undertaken by the foreign preachers belonging to TJ have taken security agencies by surprise.

The secret visits undertaken by the foreign preachers belonging to TJ have taken security agencies by surprise

The organization was in the news recently when they held an 'international mass religious gathering in the last week of February 2020 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where more than 700 COVID-19 cases have been reported. There is total secrecy associated with the TJ gathering.

know what kind of sermonizing is happening during these religious classes. It could be anything ranging from interpretation of Quran to encouraging the Muslims to fight the 'CAA', said a senior intelligence official.

The official who spoke on condition of anonymity, disclosed that monitoring of congregations in temples across the State was not at all a problem.

"But mosques and churches are a different class as we can never infiltrate into the religious gatherings inside these places. The concerned Government agency is yet to make any probe into the activities of these proselytizers," he said.

The statement regarding the number of Corona Virus patients admitted to various hospitals in the State were disclosed by Dr C Vijaya Baskar, Tamil Nadu Minister for Health.

Palaniswamy who held a day long meeting in the secretariat on Thursday with ministers, senior bureaucrats and district collectors later made a passionate plea to the people of the State to cooperate with the administration in its war on Corona.

"I am addressing you not as the chief minister of Tamil Nadu but as a member of your family. Do not get panic as the total lockdown has been declared for your own safety and security. The State administration is doing all it can do to make your stay in indoors places a comfortable life. Maintenance of social distancing is the only option to prevent the spread of Corona, said the chief minister taking into account the Prime Minister's address to the nation on Wednesday evening.

The chief minister said all arrangements have been made to provide free ration and essential items to people in the lower strata of the society.

Didi hits street to teach physical distancing

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee worked frantically taking personal tours of Kolkata to spread social-distancing awareness, Bengal registered yet another corona infection case with a middle-aged person from Nayabad area of the State capital testing positive for the dreaded virus, Health Department sources said.

Though the man has no travel history to Corona-affected countries he recently joined a wedding party at Egra town in East Midnapore where people returning from such countries had assembled, sources said adding the administration had not added any information about the people who joined the said party. The entire family of the affected person has been home-quarantined.

The man is in a critical condition, the doctors said. The Thursday's case takes the

total number of corona infections in Bengal to 10. The State has witnessed one Corona related death with the victim succumbing to the disease last week.

Meanwhile the Chief Minister has written to her counterparts of 18 Bengal states expressing concern about the stranded migrant workers from Bengal.

"The Chief Minister has requested the other Chief Ministers to ensure adequate food and medical facilities for the migrant workers from Bengal who are stranded there... because the State administration cannot reach out to them due to the ongoing lockdown," a senior government official said adding Bengal Chief Secretary had been asked to send the details of the stranded persons to their counterparts of those eighteen States.

Banerjee who had been working frantically to prevent

Corona invasion in Bengal on Thursday personally visited the prominent markets of Kolkata to educate the buyers and sellers about social distancing.

Alighting from her vehicle the Chief Minister was seen asking people to stand at least a metre apart from each other even as she personally drew chalk circles for the buyers to stand within those circles. She visited Posta, Jaan Bazaar, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road and Gariahat.

Market where she advised the people on social distancing and wearing masks. Elsewhere the State Government on Thursday decided to open the School of Tropical Medicine as yet another facility for testing Corona infections. According to sources STM has been provided with about a thousand kits from Pune Institute of Virology and is likely to be functional immediately.

One more death in Maha, total +ve cases rise to 125

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The coronavirus claimed one more life in Maharashtra today taking the total number of deaths in the State to five, even as the total number of patients testing positive for the pandemic rose to 125 in the State on Thursday.

On a day when the Maharashtra announced that it had permitted owners of shops vending essential commodities to keep their establishments open for all 24 hours in a day, the state health authorities confirmed that a 65-year-old woman died at Navi Mumbai's General Hospital on Tuesday night.

"After undergoing treatment at two private hospitals, a 65-year-old patient was admitted to the General Hospital at a critical condition on the afternoon of March 24 (Tuesday). She died on the same night. The laboratory reports confirmed yesterday that she died because of Coronavirus," a medical bulletin put out by the Public Health Department of the Maharashtra Government under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) said.

"We are trying to ascertain if the deceased had either history of international travel or had she contracted Coronavirus through some contacts," the bulletin added.

With the latest death, the total number of Covid-19 deaths in the state has risen to five. The coronavirus had claimed first life in the state on March 17, when a 63-year-old disease-infected had died at the Kasurba Hospital. Subsequently, another 63-year-old male patient, who had been admitted to private hospital in Mumbai died on March 19. On Sunday night, Filipino died at a private hospital late on Sunday night. Later on Monday evening, a 65-year-old COVID-19 patient died at Kasurba Hospital in Mumbai.

According to the medical bulletin, three more patients - one patient each from Mumbai,

Sindhudurg and Nagpur - tested positive for Covid-19. "The infected patient from Sindhudurg had travelled along with another Covid-19 positive patient in railway compartment. The infected person from Nagpur had travelled to Delhi, but it is not confirmed yet that he had history of international travel.

There was confusion in the total number of patients who tested positive for Coronavirus. In the morning, State Health Minister Rajesh Tope tweeted: "The current count of COVID19 patients in the state of Maharashtra is 124. Yesterday evening, each in Mumbai & Thane such 2 patients have been identified as positive. 15 people from these have been recovered and are discharged from the respective hospitals".

Later in the evening, the Public Health Department of the Maharashtra Government reported that there were three Covid-19 positive cases in the state on Thursday. However, the Public Health Department of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in its medical bulletin issued in the evening said that there were 15 positive cases during the day. Of the 15 cases, there were six

Don't compel us to deploy Army: Ajit Pawar on lockdown violations

Mumbai: Taking a stern view of the coronavirus pandemic on the roads despite a state and nationwide lockdown, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Thursday hinted that he would not hesitate to deploy the Army to control the crowding menace.

"In the USA, to enforce the lockdown, they have taken the help of US Army. Don't compel us to do the same. This will be your responsibility," Pawar warned.
Pawar's statements came after reports of people hitching hikes in milk vans, a policeman seriously injured

BJP MLA asks cops to shoot down lockdown violators

IANS ■ LUCKNOW

BJP MLA from Ghaziabad, Nand Kishore Gurjar, has asked the State police to "break their legs who violate the lockdown orders".

"Such anti-socials should be treated like anti-nationals. If they are not following government orders, they are terrorists," he said.

Meanwhile, the BMC reported that as many as 10 Covid-19 patients had recovered and were discharged from the hospital.

Meanwhile, in an effort to reduce inconvenience caused to the citizens who venture out to make purchase of essential commodities, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced that the Government had permitted the owners of the shops selling essential commodities to keep their establishments open for all 24 hours in a day.

"Owing to lockdown, people are contributing to crowds outside shops selling essential commodities which was not advised from the point of view of their health. That's why we have asked the shopkeepers to keep their establishments open for 24 hours in a day," Uddhav said.

Her death from Covid-19 could only be confirmed through medical examinations on Thursday morning. According to an official statement, the patient died at a designated hospital, here. "The funeral rites were performed with all the precautionary measures as per the Centre's guidelines for Covid-19 suspects," the official said.

Confirming the second death, Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar tweeted, "I regret to inform that Covid-19 test result has come out as positive for the woman, who had succumbed on Tuesday. The Government stands com-

mitted to curb the spread of coronavirus in the state." Karnataka's first Covid-19 death, a 76-year-old Kalaburagi man, was also India's first such death.

Among the positive cases confirmed on Thursday all were men. A Mysuru resident, 35, with no travel or positive case contact history emerged as a designated hospital, here. "The 36th case was a 65-year-old man from the Uttara Kannada district who travelled to Dubai and returned to India via Mumbai on March 18. He took a train to Uttara Kannada. Sudhakar urged people to stay at home and be safe. IANS

UP Govt to trace returnees from coronavirus-hit places

Lucknow: With the help of village heads, the Yogi Adityanath Government in UP is tracking people who must have slipped into the state from coronavirus-affected areas, like Dubai, Maharashtra, Delhi and Kerala. They could be potential coronavirus carriers, said an official.

The Chief Minister's Office is getting reports from the village heads to collect information on anyone who might have come from outside the state in the past two weeks.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Avinash Awasthi told reporters here on Thursday, over 10,000 village heads have been contacted through the Chief Minister Helpline 1076 to

garner information regarding people who must have arrived from outside the state in the past two weeks.

The incident 1076 is available to any UP resident who might want to file a health-related complaint.

Awasthi said all MLAs, MLCs, Ministers would give money from their funds for the medical facilities in the state.

The Chief Minister has instructed formation of district control room in each district as well as carrying out a cleanliness drive in the state during the lockdown.

Meanwhile, Principal Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad said 38 coronavirus cases had been reported in UP.

The returnees from other states have been advised to stay at home for 15 days. If a person shows any symptoms of Covid-19 during the home isolation, he/she can call the helpline number 18001805145, issued by the Department of Health.

Giving details of medical facilities, he said Over 6,000 isolation beds had been set up and emergency health services were operational in the state. A three-tier arrangement is being made for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. The community health centres are being turned into Covid-19 hospitals in districts. IANS

to emerge as the 54th case. Likewise, a 45-year-old man from Bengaluru, a contact of 25th case, is the 55th coronavirus positive case in Karnataka.

The three new patients have been admitted to designated hospitals even as the health department has initiated their contact search.

The State health department has requested the passengers who travelled with 36th positive case to contact it. "Positive case No. 36 travelled in S3 coach, lower berth in the Mangalore Express from Mumbai, which departed on March 17 and arrived in Batkal Karnataka's 52nd positive case. "He was with quality assurance section of a pharmaceutical company and has been in contact with many healthcare professionals," said the statement.

Similarly, a 64-year-old man from Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, with travel history to France returned to India on March 1. He also visited Himachal Pradesh, Puttaparthi and arrived here on March 21

Man kills brother for stepping out during lockdown

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The incident took place at Kandivli's Samata Nagar locality in north Mumbai. In the first of its bizarre crime committed during the 21-day lockdown period, a 21-year-old youngster was killed by his elder brother here on Thursday, after his younger brother stepped out of home ignoring his repeated requests to stay indoors in view of the spread of coronavirus.

The incident took place at Kandivli's Samata Nagar locality in north Mumbai. Identifying the deceased youngster as Durgesh Laxmi Thakur, the police said that they had arrested one Rajesh Laxmi Thakur (29) on charges of killing his younger brother.

"Durgesh used to work in a private company in Pune but came to Mumbai to stay with his brother during the shutdown," a senior police officer at the Samata Nagar police station said. According to the police, Rajesh had been advising and warning Durgesh repeatedly against stepping out of home. However, Durgesh was not paying heed to his elder brother's advice. When Durgesh returned home from outside this evoked Rajesh's ire and he confronted him. This led to a fierce verbal duel between them. At one stage, an enraged Rajesh allegedly hit Durgesh with a sharp object. An injured Durgesh was rushed to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead on admission. Rajesh, who owned a local saloon in Kandivli (East) stays with his wife near Gaoandvi Road at Santa Nagar. Meanwhile, Rajesh was booked under section 302 of IPC. He was immediately produced before in a local magistrate court, where he was remanded in police custody.

PAPER WITH PASSION

Humanitarian crisis

Labourers don't have bank accounts and are out of the welfare arc. As they migrate, the flu could swamp rural India



State borders now present a picture of reverse human migration as thousands of daily wage earners, casual labourers and vendors, who do not have a bank account or even money to save, trudge back to their home States despite a lockdown. With no buses, trucks or trains, they have decided to surrender to destiny and return to their villages on foot. For even without a day's work, they would not be able to get food for their families or rent the hovel they live in at slum clusters. Food shortages and uncontrolled hoarding have meant that they have not been able to get basic rations over the last two days, leading to widespread panic. It is a hard choice between starvation and the flu. In the absence of soup kitchens or shelters, the vast numbers of India's unorganised labour market won't even be able to avail the economic relief measures announced by the Government. And they are going back home, thinking they will live off the land with whatever subsistence farming can give them. There will be a roof over their heads where they do not have to pay rent. There's no agricultural activity either, signalling a low output of food crops that may foster another problem on the nation later. This is a humanitarian crisis like no other. Let us not forget migrant returnees may have already unwittingly carried Coronavirus into India's vast rural swathes, which are unaware, unprepared and under-equipped to deal with the criticality of a health emergency of this scale. And considering they are travelling in clusters, all of them could be potentially infected by the time they reach from carriers among them. Then the whole purpose of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 21-day lockdown, to break the transmission cycle of the virus, would get defeated. Worst, rural India could be swamped. Assuming these "non-banked" people even avail of the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojana and get 5 kg per person rice/wheat each month for the next three months in addition to 5 kg of rice/wheat that they already get, they would rather use these benefits at their village than be homeless and helpless in cities. This unprecedented flight of migrant workers out of our cities, be it Rajasthan or Telangana, poses a new challenge in our fight against the virus. Containing and settling them at shelters in a specified location pose the biggest challenge. Frankly, India has not had time to prepare for the human dimension of the virus or the lockdown. The WHO did lead it up the garden path, not pressing the panic buttons early on. There was a denial about the inevitability of community explosion, given the density of our population and the failure of Indians to take to social distancing, isolation and quarantining protocols seriously. Now experts are saying the lockdown would have been effective had it been enforced a week or two before and that we are still two steps behind the virus.

According to reports, over 2,000 daily wage workers in Ahmedabad took to their feet and other means of transport for their homes back in Rajasthan. Thousands of wagers are walking long distances, even to the extent of 100 and 300 km, and often on empty stomachs to reach their villages. According to the Economic Survey of 2018-19, over 90 per cent of our total workforce is "informal." The worrying part is that the NITI Aayog estimates show that India's informal sector employees are approximately 85 per cent of all workers. The Economic Survey of 2016-2017 had indicated an annual flow of close to nine million migrants among States between 2011 and 2016. Internationally, too, migrants are posing newer challenges to managing the epidemic. Borders throughout the Middle East tend to be porous with political refugees, economic migrants and others often travelling along informal routes. It is very difficult under such circumstances to monitor who is entering and leaving what country. Also, these people cannot access public healthcare. This has caused much of the spread in nations around Iran, too. Now imagine that with our States. We are quite precariously perched but trying to flatten the curve would mean not just lockdowns or an economic package but aggressive testing, isolation and surveillance. Where are these facilities in rural India? If we are to ride this out and look ahead, there can be no two ways about rearranging a nation's health priorities. As the PM said, *Jaan hai to Jahaan hai*. Delhi's Central vista makeover, at ₹20,000 crore, can wait!

Data crunch

Video-streaming services find themselves restricting data consumption across the world



As almost half of humanity finds itself under lockdown, some of the few companies that might be benefitting belong to the video-streaming services, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime globally, and others like Hotstar, Voot and MX Player in India. However, they also have had to face unique challenges, thanks to the Chinese contagion. Production of movies and television shows has come to a screeching halt, forcing players like Netflix to establish a \$100 million fund to ensure that production crews, many of whom do not have permanent jobs, have access to some funds at least. But the bigger problem is the pressure that such streaming services have put on mobile networks. With more people staying home and watching movies and television shows online, there has been a surge in video consumption.

As a result, both telecom operators and Governments across the world have requested that these popular services reduce the quality of the service. With high-definition streaming using upwards of two megabits per second and Ultra High Definition 4K streaming using up to 10 megabits per second, mobile firms, who are the main networks in India, are finding themselves under huge amounts of strain. Many streaming services have already announced that they would be suspending High Definition and Ultra-High Definition streaming on cellular networks with immediate effect. People consuming data on WiFi or broadband networks can still enjoy preferred quality streaming. During a time of a national emergency, which we are facing right now, mobile networks must be kept free. Heavy data consumption is clogging up the networks. While the amount of mobile data available and its prices have been a big boon for the Indian economy over the past two years, the fact is that reducing streaming quality to standard definition will make little or no difference on mobile phones and at the same time keep the networks free for emergencies. This is a responsible act by both the telecom operators and the streaming service providers. However, this thankfully does not apply to fibre and copper networks but the reach of those in Indian households is extremely limited in the first place. This, of course, highlights how India and the world need to strengthen their data networks and make them faster so that more people can use it. It also highlights how different companies get affected when a crisis of this nature emerges and how they are working around it. Hopefully, things will return to normal soon and people will go back to office and the days of "Netflix and Chill" will return but for now, "Netflix and stay at home."

Sir — Foreign media has been inundating the world with reports of the "success of China" in combating the proliferation of COVID-19 in Wuhan. *Prima facie*, such reports appear to be legitimate. They are commensurate with the claims made by the Chinese Government. As of Tuesday, China reported 3,277 deaths with 81,171 positive cases.

While the Modi Government deserves wholehearted support in tackling COVID, a few correctives should be in place. Wholehearted and not unthinking support is the need of the hour

AJOY KUMAR

We live in strange and unnerving times. India and the world are currently in the midst of a raging battle against a common enemy — Coronavirus. The total number of cases in India at the time of writing stood at 686 and the number of deaths at 13. Both these numbers, unfortunately, are expected to rise over the weeks that will follow. Numbers across the world are staggering. The death toll in Italy and Spain have reached in the thousands, eclipsing that of China's.

The most worrisome aspect of the virus is not the fatality associated with it — though for the elderly and those without adequate medical care this figure is frighteningly high — but its speed of transmission. The virus took about 67 days to reach the first wave and in the next 15 days, it infected the next two lakh people across the world. The modern world has rarely witnessed an enemy about whom we know so little and which moves relentlessly and ruthlessly. Though this does not require saying, yet we cannot bear the virus unless we pull in the same direction. This is not the time to squabble as there will possibly never be a more unifying enemy in our lifetime.

In the light of this very different world that you and I have woken up to, it is important to support and recognize the efforts of the Indian Government, healthcare professionals and workers, the media, policemen and all other individuals who have put themselves in the line of fire. The Prime Minister has our full support in tackling the virus. While his decision to impose a nationwide lockdown may seem to be a bit too harsh, we must keep in mind that the Government has our best interests at heart. The Finance Minister has also been announcing several relief measures for the poor and the marginalised. I cannot commend this move enough. With the economy, especially small businesses, in shock, I hope this is the first step in dealing with this unprecedented crisis.

During this time, we must also be grateful to the country's federal structure, several Chief Ministers, most notably Arvind Kejriwal and Pinarayi Vijayan, who have truly shown their leadership capabilities at an hour when this quality is necessary and found wanting at times. While I endorse and support the Prime Minister's decision to take the unique beast of COVID-19, as an Indian, would also like to put forward a few suggestions and perspectives that I believe, can aid our fight against this dreadful disease and, hopefully, see us emerge victorious at the end of this long battle. I hope that the many trolls, who often attack any piece of gratitude by looking at the writer rather than the content, see this article in that spirit. Stranger things are happening in times of Corona.

The need for a down-up approach: While the lockdown is necessary to contain the virus, it is important to ensure that the cure has (i) the desired effect, ie, it prevents

Force majeure



people from congregating together in large groups and (ii) does not provide greater pain to the very sections of society it seeks to protect than the disease itself. The Prime Minister's speech while commendable in many ways was found significantly wanting on this count.

By giving just a few hours' time for the 21-day lockdown to kick in and that, too, without adequate disclosures/detailing regarding the provision for essential services, the Prime Minister caused widespread panic across the country. There were massive crowds that assembled around grocery stores and chemists, fearing the worst. The impact of this crowding will only be seen later but it was distinctly avoidable.

The Prime Minister, for example, could have taken a note from the Delhi Government, which had itself called for a lockdown two days prior to his announcement. The Delhi Government has been more stringent than the Union Government pertaining to certain measures. The only difference has been the approach followed by both. The former has rather seen more down-up than top-down in its tactics. This system has been successfully implemented by various firms as well, where employees and workers at the ground level have been able to provide accurate feedback on what measures work while deal-

ing with the customers.

In the case of Governments, the customer is the vast population of this great country. Therefore, as is becoming more obvious day by day, a top-down approach does not work. Instead, we need a clear line of communication between the Prime Minister and the public. This includes taking a press conference where the media, which has been and will be crucial in highlighting the shortcomings of the Government's measures, can highlight questions that the public, too, have been raising. Such press conferences can be done effectively through social media platforms like Facebook live events with limited access to accredited journalists. However, to limit this only to the Prime Minister would be a big mistake. Chief Ministers, too, need to follow a similar approach. This is why Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal must be applauded for being proactive in this regard.

Similarly, there are widespread reports of police officers in a number of States disrupting the supply of essential services by lashing their *lathis* on workers, trying to reach their place of work, or transporting essential services. E-tailers allege that up to 15,000 litres of milk and 10,000 kg of vegetables were dumped due to police action. This must be stopped at the earliest. Certain Police Commissioners have held dis-

cussions with e-commerce service providers and come to the conclusion that they would pass instructions to their officers. However, this step must be taken a little further. Officers must hold Facebook live discussions where citizens can highlight areas where they are facing discomfort or harassment. I do not blame the policemen entirely on this count as till now, they have only been given broad guidelines to ensure no movements on the roads. The requirement at this stage is one of nuance, which cannot come from a top-down approach towards governance.

An active bureaucracy: Another step which I think can help is to involve the bureaucracy. I have held many discussions with bureaucrats, and they feel they can contribute in alleviating the issues faced by the public while also maintaining social distancing and following all lockdown norms. One clear area where this can help is with respect to daily-wage and migrant workers. As a result of the lockdown, daily-wage and migrant workers have been left to fend for themselves. The sudden decision to stop all trains and buses from inter-State travel has left lakhs and lakhs of workers in the middle of nowhere or without a roof over their heads. There are numerous stories of workers and children walking hundreds of kilometres

to reach their villages.

While a large number of readers will have the luxury of dealing with the panic and pain caused due to the outbreak of Coronavirus with their families by their side, this essential support system is not within the reach for these migrant workers. On this count, I plead that the Government takes steps while acting within the lockdown protocol, to ensure that these workers can be transported to their home States in buses with strict social distancing norms and sanitation practices in place. The bureaucracy can help implement these steps. It is in times like these that the bureaucracy can and must come to the fore, even if they do so in regulated numbers. By allowing a large number of them to sit at home, we are being deprived of this valuable resource.

Of course, it is easier to speak than it is to write and easier to write than to practise, but I want every Indian I want the country to come out of this crisis as a shining example to the world. While I support the Modi Government wholeheartedly in its efforts to tackle the virus, wholeheartedly does not mean unthinkingly. In order to beat the Coronavirus, wholehearted and not unthinking support is the need of the hour.

(The writer is a former IPS officer, a former MP and currently a member of the AAP)

SOUNDBITE

BCDI should not wait forever to start the women's IPL. The board must make it happen by next year on a smaller scale before gradually developing it.

Indian cricketer
—Mithal Raj

It is important that we start a people's movement against COVID-19, just like we did under the leadership of the Prime Minister to make the country open defecation free.

Megastar
—Amिताभ Bachchan

There is a strong chance the new Coronavirus could return in seasonal cycles. The emphasis is the need to develop a vaccine, test it quickly and get it ready by the next cycle.

Top US scientist
—Anthony Fauci

Muti's continued detention during lockdown is cruel. There was never any justification to retain everyone in the first place and none at all to keep them detained during a lockdown.

NC leader
—Omar Abdullah

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lockdown imperative

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Total lockdown" (March 26). This decision taken by the Centre for the nation is a commendable. But the challenge now is to convince people to not only stay indoors but remain calm. People should be advised not to resort to hoarding that creates further hurdles for the Government. Restrictions on the public and the availability of essential services should be honoured by civil enforcement agencies while also keeping in mind genuine requirements.

Varun Dambal
Bengaluru

Misreading Kashmir

His refers to the editorial, "Back to the people" (March 25). The Kashmir Valley has been subjected to violation of citizen rights for close to eight months now. There has been a blanket hold on the press and newspapers. Internet services still stand suspended. The cavalier promulgation of Section 144 and its unending nature is a poor reflection on governance. Only a Government that is equipped to manage even transient socio-political aberrations would be transferred into a freeze mode as this. We have brought on damage to the region's economy and worse, our national fabric.

It has now dawned on the Government that the absence of the Abdullahs from the scene is not so inconsequential to the new narrative it has designed for the Kashmiri palimpsest. Without elected leaders, there can be no engagement with the people, who have been erased and forgotten for so long. Either it runs an inanimate State with mounting disillusionment or gathers its wits and attempts to infuse the real meaning of integration of the State with the pulse of the nation, with or without Article 370

and any other legacies. There was hardly any justification for the continued incarceration of the Abdullahs under the Public Safety Act. Now, the Government must release other leaders, too, especially former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti.

R Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

Beef up tracking system

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Total lockdown" (March 26). The decision taken by the Government to shut down the country for three weeks is historic but not enough. The next task is to trace every traveller who entered the country after a specific date and subject them to a diagnostic test. This is a gigantic exercise and this is why the private sector must be roped in.

Shambhavi
Via email

Myths vs facts

Sir — Foreign media has been inundating the world with reports of the "success of China" in combating the proliferation of COVID-19 in Wuhan. *Prima facie*, such reports appear to be legitimate. They are commensurate with the claims made by the Chinese Government. As of Tuesday, China reported 3,277 deaths with 81,171 positive cases.

According to the Government, new cases were reported for the past five days in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak.

However, a recent report by the *Epoch Times* would cast doubts on the aforementioned data. The report reveals the alarming disappearance of around 21 million cell phone

accounts in China over the past three months. This number is grossly inconsistent with the statistics released by Beijing. Even public health experts and citizens have cast doubts if the numbers are as good as officials have reported. The zero-transmission rate, too, is being doubted even as the leaders have prioritised restarting the economy over deci-

sively containing the virus.

This development makes the role of independent agencies as well as of the media crucial in finding out the truth. Curiosity might kill the cat but the other option entails reading tampered tea leaves in order to find out what really happened in China.

Gaurav Agarwal
Guwahati

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Manisha
Via email

FIRST COLUMN

COD a boon for everyone

The Govt will be able to improve efficiency and citizens will be saved from the unnecessary hassle of visiting various offices



DINESH TYAGI

Recently, students of a college in Delhi University, while being acquainted with the "Digital India" initiative of the Narendra Modi Government, were asked how many of them had gone to a Government office for availing services. About 90 per cent of them raised their hands. When they were asked how many of them would like to go back to the Government office for availing its services, the response was a big, resounding "No" from almost all of them. Asked to give a reason for this response, many of them cited long queues, uncooperative staff, being made to run from one counter to the other, rudeness, tardiness and the lackadaisical attitude of Government servants, as some of the factors that would prevent them from going back. And this was not just restricted to departments run by State administrations, it also included offices run by the Central Government.

The writing on the wall is clear. Given a choice, no one, particularly the new generation, wants to visit Government offices to get the simplest of work done. The experience of visiting a Government office, even if it is equipped with computers and air conditioners and other modern amenities, has not been very good for common citizens, particularly the younger generation, which is short on time and patience and has gotten used to getting what they want at the click of the mouse or a tap on a touchscreen. Apart from this, the inconvenience of travelling from their place of residence or work to the Government department, the time required to be spent on getting the job done, procedural ambiguity and availability of alternatives for such service delivery, play a major role in putting people off Government offices.

Today, there are various products being purchased through endless e-commerce platforms and services being availed through technological platforms where citizens need not visit the brick and mortar shops/offices. In view of these emerging technological advancements, the expectations of citizens have enhanced significantly and they are willing to pay for services delivered to them at their doorstep and the convenience of making payment at the time of delivery of services, which is called Cash on Delivery (COD).

In fact, it was Flipkart, which after its launch in 2007, revolutionised e-commerce through its COD payment model. Thanks to the COD model, Flipkart's products reached far-flung areas of the country. People, who did not have the facility of online banking or credit cards, were the ones who propelled the COD model.

A Nielsen Global Connected Commerce Survey report says that about 83 per cent of shoppers in India favour using cash for all their online purchases. Customers also hesitate to input card information because of different online frauds and hacking. It says that the larger part of the payment made by buyers for online stores like Flipkart, Amazon and so on, was COD, where 72 per cent were from significant urban communities and 90 per cent from small towns.

The online retail sector is booming and COD is a major contributor to this. Despite the fact that e-wallets and internet banking services are on the rise, the COD payment model is still preferred by a large section of society. Payment choices like internet banking, credit and debit cards and e-wallets cater to just 30 per cent of online purchases as compared to COD. One sector, which could further boost the COD payment model, is the delivery of Government services. Citizens generally require birth certificates, domicile/residence certificates, caste certificates, income certificates, ration card, election card, school/college certificate, marriage certificate, land records, land registration documents, various permissions/licenses for doing business and organising social functions/events and so on. Filing Government challans or taxes, getting various licences are some other services that could be delivered at home.

Citizens should be able to avail services through online processes where they can attach various documents as required by the Government and the Government/institutions concerned should send the certificate/licenses/documents to their residence/office after finishing the verification and other due processes. Citizens are willing to pay the courier charges and "fee" as prescribed by the Government.

Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services is one business model which can do wonders for both the Government as well as the people. While the Government will be able to cut costs in terms of office set-ups and improve efficiency, citizens will be saved from the unnecessary hassles of visiting Government offices.

The COD payment model from delivery of G2C services would have multiple advantages in terms of reduced carbon emissions as people won't have to drive to the service centres. There will be massive time saving and fewer man-days lost as well. It will cut graft and the system of trusts as officers/staff will process the applications on a "first come, first serve" basis and reduce undue favouritism. The COD payment model for G2C services will redefine the process and character of Government services and bring out the "service" part in the true sense. COD for G2C services will be a game-changer for enhancing transparency in Government service delivery.

(The writer is CEO, Common Service Centre, SPV)

I WOULD JUST LOVE TO HAVE THE COUNTRY OPENED UP AGAIN AND RARING TO GO BACK TO NORMAL BY EARLY.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

POINT COUNTERPOINT



WE URGE BUSINESSES TO LISTEN TO PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS ON SOCIAL DISTANCING. WE'LL RETURN TO WORK WHEN WE SAFELY AND RESPONSIBLY CAN.

—NEIL BRADLEY
US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S CHIEF POLICY OFFICER

What can we do for India?

Citizens are very conscious of the fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution. However, are we equally aware of our duties towards our nation, especially during a crisis?



CHITTARVU RAGHU

The Prime Minister had appealed for a "Janta Curfew" on March 22 in a bid to prevent the deadly Coronavirus from spreading into the community on a larger scale. At that time, Narendra Modi's appeal got an overwhelming response from all citizens and we stood together to do his bidding. Unfortunately post the Janata Curfew, people are not taking the 21-day lockdown contemplated by Modi seriously and are coming out of the homes.

For instance, in Hyderabad's Hi-Tech City, where most of the highly-educated software professionals reside and software companies are located, there was a major traffic jam on March 25 and the streets were filled with people. Similar violations of the curfew are being reported from other parts of the country, like Delhi, Noida, Chandigarh and so on. This is despite repeated warnings by the Government about the need for social distancing to stem the spread of the Coronavirus.

We have witnessed the impact of the virus in Italy and the US due to the lack of social distancing, despite constant reminders by the Governments there on the importance of doing so. Citizens of India, and the world at large, are very conscious of the fundamental rights as guaranteed under the respective Constitutions of their countries. However, are we equally conscious of our duties towards our countries? As the citizens of India, we are obligated to abide by the fundamental rights contemplated under Article 51A of our Constitution. Article 51A was incorporated into the Constitution by the 42nd Amendment in 1976 and came into effect from January 3, 1977. The Article contemplates fundamental duties that citizens of the country are obligated to follow. These include abiding by the laws and the directions issued by the State and the Government in the public. These are all constitutional obligations cast upon the citizens to help in the promotion of the spirit of patriotism and for upholding the unity of the country.

Pursuant to the same, we performed our fundamental duty when we responded to the call for the "Janata Curfew" Post the March 22 curfew, we still continue to have obligations towards the nation's security and the health of its people. We should not only enjoy the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution but we are also obligated to adhere to the fundamental duties.

The Government has got every right to give appropriate directions in such times of calamities and we are obliged to follow the same. In case we do not discharge our obligations in relation to our fundamental duties/obligations as contemplated under Article 51A, the State would be entitled to register cases against us under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), more particularly Section 269 and 270 of the IPC. Section 269 says that "Whoever unlawfully or negligently does any act, which is and which he knows or has a reason to believe to be, likely to spread the infection of any disease dangerous to life shall be punished with imprisonment up to six months."

Section 270 of the IPC also implies that "Whoever maliciously does any act, which is and which he knows or has reason to believe to be, likely to spread the infection of any disease dangerous to life, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term, which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both."

The Government may also invoke the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897, in case of a spread of dangerous epidemic diseases. The

“ IT IS TIME FOR US TO REALISE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND FOLLOW THE SOCIAL DISTANCING AND LOCKDOWN INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO THE LETTER. IF WE EXPECT OUR GOVERNMENT TO RESPECT OUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS THEN WE HAVE TO PERFORM OUR FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES, TOO. IT IS NOT A ONE-WAY STREET. IT IS MANDATED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR COUNTRY ”



Central Government may take measures as warranted and any violation of the same constitutes an offence under Section 188 of the IPC, which stipulates that any disobedience of an order promulgated by a public servant is an offence and shall be punished with imprisonment for a month.

In case State Governments are unable to channelise financial resources, in the light of the present calamity which obviously has an enormous adverse effect on the country's economy, the Central Government may invoke Article 360 of the Constitution and impose financial emergency. The cost of the COVID-19 lockdown in India has been pegged at \$9 lakh crore or four per cent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to a report by British brokerage Barclays. A report by Nomura had said that as over 75 per cent of the Indian economy will be shut down during the 21-day period, the lockdown will lead to a direct output loss of approximately 4.5 per cent.

At present, almost 80 per cent of the major financial centres of the country have been locked down, including commercial cities such as Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Kolkata and so on. The US dollar is at an all-time high against the Indian currency i.e., equal to ₹75.62.

Most of our economy is dependent on small businesses and also the daily-wage earners. In the light of the total lockdown of the country, the State has to take care of the daily-wage workers who are deprived of their livelihood during this period as it would be impossible for them to survive without it.

In fact, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a series of financial relief and welfare measures on Thursday for the farmers, the poor, widows, daily-wage and migrant workers as

the country prepares for a long lockdown. The Government announced a ₹1.7 lakh crore Prime Minister Gharib Kalyan Yojana. Sitharaman announced that the relief package would include direct benefit cash transfers, free Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to families living Below the Poverty Line (BPL), grains and pulses for the poor while the middle class would be able to withdraw funds from their Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) account. The Government will pay EPF contribution, both of the employer and employee, for three months for all those establishments with less than 100 employees out of which 90 per cent earn less than ₹15,000 per month. It also announced collateral-free loan doubled to ₹20 lakh to 63 lakh women self-help groups that will help seven crore households.

The Government also announced insurance of ₹50 lakh for medical professionals who are on the Coronavirus frontline. As of now, the Government is fulfilling its responsibilities towards the citizens.

However, Article 360 says that if the President is satisfied that the situation has arisen whereby the financial stability or credit of India in any part thereof is threatened, he/she may declare a financial emergency.

During this period, the executive authority of the Union is empowered to give directions to the States to follow the same. Any such direction may also include a provision requiring the reduction of salaries and allowances of all or any class or person serving a State or the Union Government.

A provision requiring all Money Bills and other Financial Bills to be reserved for the consideration of the President after they are passed by the Legislature of the State is also there. A proclamation issued under Article 360

shall remain in force for two months unless before the expiry of the period it is approved by both the Houses of the Parliament. Once approved, it remains in force until revoked by the President. Till now no such financial emergency has been imposed under Article 360 and the Government is doing all it can to mitigate the financial woes of the people that have been brought upon them by the lockdown. However, this may not be the case in the long run as the Coronavirus cases across the country are rising exponentially on a daily basis.

State Governments across the country are preparing quarantine centres in preparation of the expected onslaught of the virus if we are unable to contain the contagion. In these circumstances it may become necessary for the Central Government to take the appropriate decision to invoke Article 360 of the Constitution or else the State Governments may face a severe financial crunch.

The Modi Government has taken the lockdown decision in the nick of time although it could have done it a bit earlier. And all the citizens are obligated to heed the advice and warnings given by the State and Central Governments in this regard by confining themselves to their homes and only come out in case there is an emergency and for buying essential items.

It is time for us to realise the seriousness of the pandemic and follow the social distancing and lockdown instructions given by the Government to the letter. If we expect our Government to respect our fundamental rights then we have to perform our fundamental duties, too. It is not a one-way street. It is mandated by the Constitution.

(The writer is an Advocate in the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana High Courts)

COVID-19 will hit the farm sector

If sowing is delayed in the Zaid season or farmers miss this window because of late delivery of seeds, or no seeds at all, we are possibly looking at a famine-like situation emerging and also extreme feed shortages coupled with food price inflations later this year



INDRA SHEKHAR SINGH

Humanity is besieged by the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) at the moment. However, more than the virus, its manifestation has gained notoriety in the world. As economies plummet, fear reigns our minds, streets and homes. Sneezing and coughing have become a reprehensible act in these times. The Indian Government, like others around the world, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) are trying very

hard to contain this global pandemic. But the threat surrounds us. A major world power like China has fallen prey to this disease. Iran, Italy and now the US are being ravaged by it and it is only a matter of weeks, if not days, before it hits the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations and India, with its full might. As of now we have 694 confirmed cases and 14 deaths in the country but this number is going up daily. As a safety measure, the Union Government has announced a 21-day lockdown across the country. It is a commendable step to curb the spread of the virus.

But ahead of the curve, black markets were already trading new commodities — masks, soaps, disinfectants and so on. People continue to hoard supplies. Very soon black markets will load up on essential medicines, foods and so on and as the desperation level and death toll rise, the agrarian sector and seeds will be

devoured by the Coronavirus mayhem, too.

Farming is the backbone of our economy and most of our agriculture today depends on quality seeds and the organised seed sector. Our food production is also dependent on availability of human resources or farm labour and free movement of agricultural products — including seeds, fertilisers and so on. Both are restricted at this time. The US has shut its borders followed by the European Union (EU) and the world has cancelled visas and restricted the movement of people.

Even when the lockdown in India is lifted, the current environment of fear can only herald decreased availability of farm hands in the near future. There will be a rise in farm wages for this season and we may see the cost of production of foods rising. The threat is even greater in the poultry sector, as prices of chicken in Delhi have



nosedived. People are falsely conjuring an avian flu with COVID-19 and this is leading to greater losses in the poultry sector. Even before the 21-day curfew began, the workers were reluctant to work on poultry farms due to the rumours.

The global seed sector is deeply dependent on a global supply chain of production regions and no one country is a seed sovereign by itself. The freezing of ports and seeds shipments will derail agricultural productivity later this year. Small and

medium seed traders and small seed companies may also be at risk, as they don't store vast stocks of seeds. They rely on the international and domestic shipments before each season. A disruption will be detrimental to their business.

World over, March and April are a very important time for planting spring crops such as maize, sunflower, soybean, canola, spring wheat and barley, open field vegetables and so on, north of the Equator and autumn crops to the south. In India too, we will see the sowing of Zaid season crop soon. If sowing is delayed in the Zaid season or farmers miss this window because of late delivery or seeds or no seeds at all, we are possibly looking at a famine-like situation emerging and also extreme feed shortages coupled with food price inflations later this year.

The International Seed Federation (ISF) has sought to assuage fears citing the European

Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR) statement: "There is currently no evidence that food, including seed, is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus of Coronavirus in the environment." However, this is only likely to occur during a short period after contamination. Due to the relatively low stability of Coronavirus in the environment, what this means is that there is no evidence yet and seeds may not be a gateway.

These are tough times and call for courage and truth. We need to make informed and scientific evidence-based decisions so that COVID-19 doesn't evolve into another monster which threatens not just our health but also our agriculture. The Indian Government and other Governments

of the world should not impose any restrictions on agrarian products, including seeds. Seed companies and exporters should take responsibility for the health and safety of workers involved in the shipments. Port authorities have strenuous measures in place due to the massive wave of screening shipments and people and they should be aided in this. The virus spreads from person to person, so the latest WHO directives should be broadcast and people and workers need to be made aware of them. Shipments of seeds anyways have a very low risk of spreading viruses and hence should not be stopped or delayed. The world must come together in this time of crisis. We need to be more conscious and alert as this pandemic affects each one of us. We have to fight not only the Coronavirus but fear itself.

(The writer is Director, Policy and Outreach, National Seed Association of India)

G20 nations to inject \$5 tn into global economy

Modi pitches for new crisis management protocol

Let us put human beings rather than economic targets at centre of our vision for global prosperity, cooperation: PM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As the world reels under the coronavirus pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged the powerful G-20 grouping to put human beings rather than economic targets at the centre of the vision for global prosperity and cooperation.

In his address at a video conference of the G-20 leaders, Modi also pitched for developing a new crisis management protocol and procedures to deal with global health crisis besides significantly boosting capability of organisations like the WHO. Government sources said.



He also said G-20 should work together to reduce economic hardships, particularly of the poor nations in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left more than 21,000 people and infected more than 470,000 globally.

Let us put human beings rather than economic targets at the centre of our vision for global prosperity and cooperation, Modi was quoted as saying by the sources.

He said empowering the WHO was necessary for development of effective vaccines to deal with global pandemics.

Let us put human beings rather than economic targets at the centre of our vision for global prosperity and cooperation, Modi was quoted as saying by the sources.

He also stressed on developing a new crisis management protocol, which is affordable and human healthcare system that can be deployed globally to deal with healthcare crisis.

'United' response to virus crisis

AFP ■ RIVADH

G20 nations pledged a "united front" on Thursday in the fight against coronavirus, saying they were injecting USD 5 trillion into the global economy to counter the pandemic amid forecasts of a deep recession.

US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin joined the emergency video conference chaired by Saudi Arabia's King Salman, who called for coordinated action while facing pressure to end an oil price war between Riyadh and Moscow that has roiled energy markets.

The talk of global criticism that the G20 has been slow to address the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left more than 21,000 dead worldwide according to official data, and triggered financial shock waves across the world as billions of people are locked down.

"We are strongly committed to presenting a united front against this common threat,"

the leaders said in a joint statement after the summit. "We are injecting over USD 5 trillion into the global economy, as part of targeted fiscal policy, economic measures, and guarantee schemes to counteract the social, economic and financial impacts of the pandemic."

As concerns mount for poorer countries without access to capital markets or adequate health facilities, G20 leaders also pledged to work with bodies such as the International Monetary Fund to deploy a "robust" financial package to support developing nations.

It is our responsibility to extend a helping hand to poorer countries and (the) least developed countries to enable them to build their capacities and improve their infrastructure to overcome this crisis and its repercussions,"

the leaders said in a joint statement after the summit. "We are injecting over USD 5 trillion into the global economy, as part of targeted fiscal policy, economic measures, and guarantee schemes to counteract the social, economic and financial impacts of the pandemic."

into a recession. On Wednesday, the financial ratings agency Moody's estimated the G20's overall gross domestic product would contract by 0.5 per cent this year, with the US economy shrinking by 2.2 per cent and the eurozone by 2.2 per cent.

This week, French President Emmanuel Macron and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping pushed for an emergency G20 summit to limit the impact of the pandemic.

The lack of immediate action stood in contrast to the 2008 financial crisis, when the group quickly swung into action to mobilise assistance for vulnerable countries.

Talk of global coordination has yet to resonate under Trump's isolationist presidency. On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo took aim at China, saying G20 summit of the Group of Seven agreed with him that Beijing was waging a "disinformation" campaign about the pandemic.

Xi calls for all-out global war against corona, moots tariff cuts

PTI ■ BEIJING

Battling the coronavirus at home, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday called for an all-out global war against the pandemic and proposed tariff cuts and removal of trade barriers to prevent the global economy slipping into recession.

Speaking at the unprecedented virtual G20 Summit on COVID-19, Xi said the world needs to be resolute in fighting an all-out global war against coronavirus which has created an unprecedented health crisis.

"This is a virus that respects no borders. The outbreak we are battling is our common enemy. All must work together to build a strongest global network of control and treatment that we have never seen," Xi said through videoconference.

Xi's statement came amid growing international criticism of China's reported failure to be fully transparent in reporting the COVID-19 outbreak in the central Chinese city of Wuhan last year.

Xi said the community of nations must move swiftly to stem the spread of the virus and China will be more than ready to share its good practices, conduct joint research and development of drugs and vaccines, and provide assistance where it can to countries hit by the pandemic.

He said China has set up its online COVID-19 knowledge centre to help other countries. About the pandemic's impact on global economy, Xi asked G20 members to cut tariffs, remove barriers and facilitate the unfettered flow of trade.

Xi said that on all G20 members to take collective actions, send a strong signal and restore confidence for global economic recovery.

Around the Globe

- Iran reports 157 new virus deaths, imposes intercity ban
Students can return to India after travel ban is lifted: Embassy
China seeks opening of border with Pak to supply medical equipment
Indian doctors want UK PM to scrap 'unfair' surcharge as health service battles COVID19
WHO 'very much' sided with China on coronavirus, says US President Donald Trump
China reports 67 new imported coronavirus cases
Moscow announces deaths of two patients with coronavirus
Coronavirus deaths in France jump to over 1,300
Home Secretary Priti Patel looks at UK border closures again to India: Report
Germany ramps up coronavirus tests to 500,000 a week
Virus-stricken cruise ship told to leave Australian waters
Nepal to reopen key border points with China to allow supply of essential goods
London hospitals cope with coronavirus 'tsunami' of coronavirus cases
Need a war-time plan to win the war against COVID-19: Gutierrez at G20 virtual summit

VIRUS TOLL OVER 21,000

AFP ■ MADRID

As world leaders hold online talks on Thursday on the coronavirus pandemic that has forced three billion people into lockdown and claimed more than 21,000 lives.

With the disease tearing around the globe at a terrifying pace, warnings are multiplying over its economic consequences, and experts say it could cause more damage than the Great Depression.

Amid squabbling between the leaders of China and the US over who is to blame, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for the world to act together to halt the menace.

"COVID-19 is threatening the whole of humanity," he said. "Global action and solidarity are needed to limit the damage, and experts say it could cause more damage than the Great Depression."

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said richer nations need to offer support to low and middle income countries. The devastating effect on poorer nations was laid bare on Thursday when the Philippines announced that nine frontline doctors had died after contracting COVID-19.

Three large Manila hospitals said this week they had reached capacity and would no longer accept new coronavirus cases. Hundreds of medical staff are undergoing 14-day self-quarantines after suspected exposure, the hospitals said.

The death toll from the virus, which emerged in China late last year, continued to grow, with the US becoming the sixth country to hit four figures. Almost 1,050 people are now known to have died in the United States, with nearly 70,000 confirmed infections, a tally by Johns Hopkins University showed.

whole," ratings agency Moody's said.

Unemployment rates are expected to soar — as much as 30 per cent in the US — according to James Bullard, president of the St Louis Federal Reserve.

Leaders of the G20 major economies will hold a virtual huddle later Thursday in the shadow of such dire predictions. "As the world confronts the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges to healthcare systems and the global economy, we convene this extraordinary G20 summit to unite efforts towards a global response," tweeted the king of Saudi Arabia. Saudi currently holds the rotating G20 presidency.

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Infections near 5L as health systems buckle

AFP ■ MADRID

The number of coronavirus infections clocked in on half-million worldwide Thursday, with both Italy and the US on track to surpass China, and a record-shattering 3.3 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week.

Health care systems in Europe and North America are buckling under the strain, with Spain's death toll climbing to more than 4,000.

In the US, an unprecedented \$2.2 trillion economic rescue package to help businesses, hospitals and ordinary Americans make it through the crisis cleared the Senate and is set to pass in the House on Friday.

At least 2.8 billion people, or more than one-third of the Earth's population, are under severe travel restrictions.

But the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said richer nations need to offer support to low and middle income countries. The devastating effect on poorer nations was laid bare on Thursday when the Philippines announced that nine frontline doctors had died after contracting COVID-19.

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people and infected over 480,000, thrown millions out of work and ravaged the world economy.

"The time to act was actually more than a month ago or two months ago," he said Wednesday. "We squandered the first window of opportunity... This is a second opportunity, which we should not squander and do everything to suppress and control this virus."

In the United States, where deaths passed 1,050 and at least 70,000 people were infected, the damage from the widespread economic shutdown was made plain when the number of people applying for unemployment benefits last week was more than four times the old record, set in 1982.

A political battle, meanwhile, raged between those demanding urgent action for a long siege against the pandemic, like New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and President Donald Trump.

Trump has expressed hope churches could return to normal by Easter on April 12, and grumbled that "our country was hit by the worst disaster apparently concerning that the outbreak's devastating effects on financial markets and employment will harm his reelection chances. Democrats

say Trump is putting the economy ahead of the health and safety of Americans.

He said let's get back to work next Friday," said Joe Biden, the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination. "That'd be wonderful. But it can't be arbitrary."

In Brazil, the country's government said on Thursday that President Jair Bolsonaro over his call to reopen schools and businesses, dismissing his argument that the "cure" of widespread shutdowns is worse than the disease. As of Thursday, the country had more than 2,500 cases and 59 deaths.

New York has emerged as a virus hotspot. The city's mammoth convention center is being turned into a hospital. The state recorded more than 350 deaths on Thursday.

Spain has become the country in Europe where the outbreak is spreading the fastest.

On Thursday, the Health Ministry reported reported 1,600 new infections and 655 deaths, bringing the total cases to over 56,000 and more than 4,000 fatalities — second only to Italy's death toll of about 7,500.



SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY

General public is hereby informed that this boy namely Manish S/O Pramod Gupta R/o Jhuggi N-18-A633, G.K. Block, Wazirpur, Delhi Age: 13 years, Height: 3'6". Face: Oval, Complexion: Fair, Build: Thin, wearing chocolate colour pant, cream colour shirt and black colour shoes in feet, has been missing since 07.11.2013 from the area of P.S. Jahangir Puri, Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 464/13 dated 09.11.2013 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Jahangir Puri, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing boy may kindly inform to the following:-

E-mail: clic@cbl.gov.in Website: http://cbl.nic.in Fax: 24368639, Tel.: 24368638/24368641

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL

General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Ruby D/o Irish R/o H.No. 312, L-1, Gali No. 1, Sangam Vihar, New Delhi Age: 16 years, Complexion: Fair, Height: 5'3", Build: Thin, Face: Long, wearing suit and salwar, has been missing/kidnapped since 14.03.2020 at about 10:30 A.M. from the area of P.S. Neb Sarai, New Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 108/20 dated 15.03.2020 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Neb Sarai, New Delhi.

Any person having information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following:-

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PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Mukesh S/O Rajender R/o C-141, Astal Colony, Bawana, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence FIR No. 210/18 u/s 279/337/482 IPC & 33/58 Excise Act. Act. P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Mukesh cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Mukesh absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said Mukesh accused of FIR No. 210/18 u/s 279/337/482 IPC & 33/58 Excise Act. Act. P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 15.05.2020.

By Order: Sh. Vaibhav Mehta Metropolitan Magistrate-02 (North), Court No. 114, 1st Floor, Rohini Courts, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Sanvra S/O Laxman R/o VPO Solia, Teh. Sarvar, Distt. Ajmer, Rajasthan has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 199/19 u/s 454/380/411/34 IPC P.S. Kiri Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Sanvra cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Sanvra has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said Sanvra accused of FIR No. 199/19 u/s 454/380/411/34 IPC P.S. Kiri Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 05.05.2020.

By Order: Sh. Jagminder Singh, Metropolitan Magistrate (West Distt.), Room No. 146, 1st Floor, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor, Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced, Date of the Notice/Outstanding as on Date of Notice, NPA Date

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

In drastic move, Italy shuts most factories to halt virus

Rome: Italy has become the first western developed nation to idle most of its industry to halt the spread of the coronavirus, a potential cautionary tale for other governments, such as the Trump administration, that are resisting such drastic measures. After more than two weeks of a nationwide lockdown, the Italian government decided to expand the mandatory closure of non-essential commercial activities to heavy industry in the eurozone's third-largest economy, a major exporter of machinery, textiles and other goods.

3.3 MN AMERICANS SEEK JOBLESS AID

Nearly 5 times earlier high

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Nearly 3.3 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week — more than quadruple the previous record set in 1982 — amid a widespread economic shutdown caused by the coronavirus.

The surge in weekly applications was a stunning reflection of the damage the viral outbreak is inflicting on the economy. Filings for unemployment aid generally reflect the pace of layoffs. Layoffs are sure to accelerate as the US economy sinks into a recession.

Revenue has collapsed at restaurants, hotels, movie theaters, gyms, and airlines.

Auto sales are plummeting, and car makers have close factories. Most such employers face loan payments and other fixed costs, so they're cutting jobs to save money.

As job losses mount, some economists say the nation's unemployment rate could approach 13 per cent by May. By comparison, the highest jobless rate during the Great Recession, which ended in 2009, was 10 per cent. The economic deterioration has been swift. As recently as February, the unemployment rate was at a 50-year low of 3.5 per cent.

And the economy was growing steadily in 2019. Yet by the April-June quarter of the year, some economists think the economy will shrink at its steepest annual pace ever — a contraction that could reach 30 per cent.

In its report on Thursday, the Labor Department said 3.283 million people applied for unemployment benefits last week, up from 282,000 during the previous week.

Yet many people who have lost jobs in recent weeks have been unable to file for unemployment aid because state websites and phone systems have been overwhelmed by the crush of applicants and have frozen up.

That logjam suggests that Thursday's report actually underestimates the magnitude of job cuts last week. So does the fact that workers who are not on company payrolls — gig workers, free-lancers, the self-employed — aren't currently eligible for unemployment benefits even though in many cases they're no longer able to earn money.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Trump's push to open economy could come at cost of lives

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The contrast could hardly be more stark. Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York has said that if all of his sweeping, expensive measures to stem the coronavirus saved one life, it would be worth it. President Donald Trump has another view: The costs of shutting down the economy outweigh the benefits, fretting that Americans could lose 35,000 people a year die from the common flu.

Though it may seem crass, the federal government actually has long made a calculation when imposing regulations, "weighing Americans' lives" when it places a price tag on a human life. It has been used to consider whether to require seat belts, airbags or environmental regulations, but it has never been applied in a broad

public health context.

The question is now an urgent one given that Trump in recent days has latched on to the notion that the cure for the pandemic should not be worse than the disease and argued that "more people are going to die if we allow this to continue" if the economy remains closed. He has targeted a return to a semblance of normalcy for the economy by Easter Sunday, April 12.

Critics say he's presenting the nation with a false choice at a moment when deaths and infections from the virus are surging.

"We're not going to accept a premise that human life is disposable," said Cuomo, whose state has seen far more infections and deaths from COVID-19 than any other state. "And we're not going to put a dollar figure on human life."

Taking aspirin may not reduce dementia risk

Sydney: Taking a low-dose aspirin once a day does not reduce the risk of thinking and memory problems caused by mild cognitive impairment or probable Alzheimer's disease, nor does it slow the rate of cognitive decline, say researchers.

Aspirin has anti-inflammatory properties and also thins the blood. For years, doctors have been prescribing low-dose aspirin for some people to reduce their risk of heart disease and stroke. However, there are also possible risks to taking aspirin, including bleeding in the brain, so guidance from a doctor is important.

Because aspirin can be beneficial to the heart, researchers have hypothesised, and smaller previous studies have suggested, that it might also help protect the brain, possibly reducing the risk of dementia by reducing inflammation, minimising small clots or by preventing the narrowing of blood vessels within the brain.

US grants Iraq shortest sanctions waiver yet for Iran gas

AFP ■ BAGHDAD

The United States on Thursday granted Iraq a 30-day waiver to keep importing Iranian gas despite American sanctions, two US officials told AFP, the shortest extension yet.

The US slapped tough sanctions on the Iranian energy sector in late 2018 and has granted Iraq a series of waivers, including for 45, 90 or 120 days. Baghdad relies on gas and electricity imports from its neighbour Tehran to supply about a third of its power grid, but is crippled by years of conflict and poor maintenance.

"This is the final extension," one source at the Iraqi president's office told AFP.

The source said Washington had been frustrated that Iran was meddling in the Government formation

process in Iraq. Adnan Zurfi, who has had close ties with US officials since the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, was nominated on March 17 and has a month to pull together his cabinet. "The US did not want to put Zurfi in a difficult position by not renewing the waiver," a second senior Iraqi official told AFP, confirming the 30-day extension.

The official said Baghdad had prepared a checklist at the beginning of the last 45-day waiver period of ways the country could decrease its reliance on Iranian oil. "But we haven't been able to accomplish any of them because of the circumstances," he said.

Iran has been hit by a cocktail of crises in recent weeks, including the government formation stalemate, collapsing oil prices and the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Market clocks best 3-day rally in years

As stimulus calms investor jitters amid lockdown

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks surged for the third straight session on Thursday, logging their best three-day gain in years, after the Government finally unveiled stimulus measures for coronavirus lockdown-hit segments lifted sentiments.

The BSE gauge Sensex surged 1,410.99 points or 4.94 per cent to settle at 29,946.77, while the NSE benchmark Nifty shot up 323.60 points or 3.89 per cent to 8,641.45.

After the worst-ever crash on Monday, the Sensex has recovered by 3,965.53 points or 15.26 per cent over the last three sessions. The NSE Nifty has regained 1,031.20 points or 13.55 per cent in three days.

On the Sensex chart, IndusInd Bank was the top gainer, rallying up to 46 per cent to settle at 29,946.77, while the NSE benchmark Nifty shot up 323.60 points or 3.89 per cent to 8,641.45.

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All sectoral indices ended with gains with BSE telecom, capital goods, banking, finance, realty and FMCG indices surging up to 10 per cent.

The broad markets also regained momentum with the Nifty Midcap and Smallcap indices rising 3 per cent each, in an effort to cushion the economic blow of the 21-day lockdown in wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Finance minister Sitharaman announced a slew of measures worth Rs 1.70 lakh crore to help citizens survive the crisis.

Paras Bhoira, President of Equity Research, Ashika Stock Broking said, "Domestic markets zoomed for the second day on the trod driven by optimism on USD 2 trillion package to US economy and also in anticipation of an economic package for the Indian economy."

"Finance Minister indeed announced Rs 1,75,000 crore package for the poor and needy, however measures addressed to corporate or SMEs are still missing. Perhaps this will be followed by monetary stimulus by RBI along with forbearance on loan repayments."

The Rs 1.70 lakh crore economic package involves free food grains and cooking gas to poor for the next three months, one-time dotes to women and poor senior citizens, higher wages to workers and measures

to boost liquidity of employees. The scheme will be implemented with immediate effect.

"This is a package for locking down impacted segments," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, adding that the Government is prioritising, according to traders, volatility remained during the day as March derivatives contracts expired.

The Indian Rupee surged by another 78 paise to close at 75.16 against the US dollar on Thursday after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced various welfare measures to tide through the coronavirus crisis.

In a positive news for India's fiscal health, the crude oil prices continued to trade below USD 30 a barrel amid steep fall in demand due to COVID-19 led lockdowns in major parts of the world.

More than dozen PSBs announce COVID-19 emergency credit line

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

More than a dozen public sector banks have announced COVID-19 Emergency Credit Line to deal with the hardships faced by various sectors of the economy.

Though public sector banks (PSBs) were quick to respond with steps to deal with the hardships faced by various sectors of the economy, private sector banks such as ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank are yet to come out

with any relief measures for their customers.

As many as 15 PSBs out of the total 29 have announced schemes to mitigate hardships faced by various segments. Taking the lead, the country's largest lender SBI last week announced an emergency credit line to meet any liquidity mismatch for its borrowers.

The additional liquidity facility COVID-19 Emergency Credit Line (CECL) will provide funds up to Rs 200 crore and will be available till June 30, SBI said in a circular issued on Thursday.

Following the suit, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, Union Bank of India and Bank of India.

Besides, Indian Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, Syndicate Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, UCO Bank and Andhra Bank have also introduced relief schemes till date for meeting liquidity requirements under COVID-19 emergency.

E-commerce companies temporarily stop taking orders for non-essential items

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce companies E-paytm Mall, Amazon and Flipkart have temporarily stopped taking orders for non-essential items due to restrictions imposed during the nationwide lockdown to stop the spread of coronavirus.

The companies had on Wednesday complained about their delivery staff being punished by local police despite government orders to exempt them from lockdown restrictions.

"Paytm Mall has decided to help users by essential products including household staples, healthcare, hygiene, personal safety products on its platform. The company would temporarily not take any new orders for products that fall in the non-essential categories including fashion, mobile, and accessories, white goods and electronics among others," Paytm Mall said in a statement.

The agency welcomed the Rs 1.70-lakh crore package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman earlier in the day but said more measures like loan forbearances for small businesses and households are necessary.

Yes Bank board okays fund raising of ₹5,000 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Starved private sector lender Yes Bank on Thursday approved a proposal to raise Rs 5,000 crore by way of share sale, including qualified institutions and rights issue. The board meeting held on Thursday cleared this proposal. This fund raising will be over and above Rs 10,000 crore cleared on February 7. The board at its meeting has approved subject to receipt of requisite approvals, raising of funds for an additional amount aggregating up to Rs 5,000 crores Yes Bank in a regulatory filing.

The fund may be raised in one or more tranches by "way of issuance of securities but not limited to through a qualified institutions placement/public

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PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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The fund may be raised in one or more tranches by "way of issuance of securities but not limited to through a qualified institutions placement/public

issue, rights issue, global deposit receipts, American deposit receipts, foreign currency convertible bonds or any other permissible mode," it said.

So, in aggregate that fund raising cannot exceed Rs 15,000 crore, it added. Facing the collapse of the fourth largest private lender, the Reserve Bank sacked Yes Bank management and placed it under an administrator in the evening of 5 March with a 30-day moratorium.

On March 14, the government notified the rescue plan drafted by the RBI under which State Bank of India would pick up around 49 per cent equity in Yes Bank. Private lenders joined SBI to shield the banking sector from a widespread crisis by injecting Rs 10,000 crore into the bank with SBI alone infusing Rs 6,050 crore.

ESAF Small Finance Bank gets Sebi's go-ahead for ₹76 cr IPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ESAF Small Finance Bank has received capital markets regulator Sebi's go-ahead to float a Rs 76 crore initial public offering. The company had filed draft papers with Sebi in January and obtained its "observations" on March 20, as per the latest information available with the markets watchdog. Sebi's observations are necessary for any company to launch public issues, including initial public offer (IPO), follow-on public offer (FPO) and rights issue.

The IPO of ESAF Small Finance Bank comprises a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 800 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) aggregating up to Rs 176.2 crore, according to the draft prospectus filed with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

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Asia markets mixed as US lawmakers debate stimulus

Hong Kong: Asian markets mostly rose or clawed back early losses on Thursday as investors breathed a sigh of relief that US senators have finally passed a gargantuan stimulus package for the world's top economy after being delayed by wrangling over details.

Unprecedented USD 2-trillion plan — described by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell as a "wartime level of investment" — helped spur a surge across global equities as panicked traders worried about the impact of virus sweeping the planet. But another advance on Wall Street was blunted Wednesday as it emerged that four Republican senators have balked at the generous provisions agreed to in the bipartisan deal with the White House.

However, the bill eventually cleared the Senate by an overwhelming majority and will now head to the House of Representatives before going to President Donald Trump for his signature. Monster deal dashed rift between Republicans, Democrats and White House includes cash payments to American taxpayers and several hundred billion dollars in grants and loans to small businesses and core industries. It also buttresses hospitals desperately in need of medical equipment and expands unemployment benefits.

SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY

General public is hereby informed that one boy **Name:** Tushar Aswal, S/o Suresh Aswal, R/o H.No. 30-1, Imart Block, Ganga Rama Vatika, Tikar Nagar, New Delhi, Age: 16 years 11 Months, Height: 5'9", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Build: Medium, Wearing: Blue Jeans, Blue, Shirt, Green Jacket and White Colour Shoes in feet has been missing since 15.03.2020 from his home, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 139/20 dated 16.03.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Tikar Nagar, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this boy but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this boy kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S. Tikar Nagar, Delhi
Ph. 011-25409290
25407800
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/06/RD/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one person **Name:** Ashok Kumar Gupta, S/o: Duni Chand, R/o: H.No. G-41, Budh Vihar, Ph-1, Delhi, Age: 39 Years, Height: 5'8", Face: Round, Complexion: White Fair, Build: Medium, Wearing: Blue Colour Jeans & Grey Colour Pant & Black Colour Sweater has been missing since 16.03.2020 from the area of P.S. Vihar, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 29A, Dated 16.03.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about this missing person please inform the undersigned.

SHO
P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi
Ph: 011-27521294-95

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SECTION 82 Cr.Pc.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused person **Manish Sethi, S/o Bhushan Sethi R/o A-91, Abchal Nagar, Chander Vihar, Nangloi, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 904/18 us 379/411/482 IPC, P.S. Pashim Vihar East, Delhi it has been returned to warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused person **Manish Sethi**, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Manish Sethi**, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Manish Sethi, FIR No. 904/18 us 379/411/482 IPC, P.S. Pashim Vihar East, Delhi**, is required to appear before the court on or before 27.04.2020.

By order
Sh. Puneet Nagpal
MM-07, Room No. 289, 2nd Floor
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF PERSON ACCUSED

See Section 82 Cr. PC

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused person **Manish Sethi, S/o Bhushan Sethi R/o A-91, Abchal Nagar, Chander Vihar, Nangloi, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence FIR No. 524/16 dated 07.11.2016 us 420/34 IPC at P.S. Krishna Nagar, Delhi, and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said Vinod Sharma cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Vinod Sharma has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation us 82 Cr.Pc is hereby made that the said Vinod Sharma accused of FIR No. 524/16 dated 07.11.2016 us 420/34 IPC is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 20.05.2020.

By Order
Ms. Aakansha Vyas
Metropolitan Magistrate
Karkardooma Court, Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd., 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

The following borrower(s) have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the secured creditor and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset / Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Rajat Sharma, Monika Sharma, B-18, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Complex, Delhi, Saidujiab A/c No:- NHND00001261503	Flat No B-501, 5th Floor Nines City Tower B, Village Khirki Daula, Sector 76, Gurgaon-122001	11-Feb-2020 Rs. 13625473.99/-	05/11/2019
2.	Lalit Sani, Dinesh Sani, House No 5A, Near Railway Road, Opposite Justice, Gopal Trust Hospital, Gurgaon	Flat No. Valencia- 101 1st Floor, Oasis Grand Stand, Plot No-GH-01, T5 D1, Sector-22D, Yamuna Express Way Gautam Buddha Nagar	11-Feb-2020 Rs. 3212386/-	05/11/2019
3.	Parveen Kumar, Mrs. Sonam, Sarjeev Kumar, B/6 Vikas Vihar Colony Nagar Karkota South West Delhi, Delhi, A/c No:- NHND00001260070	Flat No 12A-02 Floor 13, Tower C, Uspicid Sector, Surajpur Plot No. Hra-12/A, Oasis Venetia Heights Greater Noida	11-Feb-2020 Rs. 31619922/-	06/10/2019
4.	Jeeshu Kumar, Monu, House No 20/20, Street No 3, Ghansi Nagar, Gurgaon, Gurgaon A/c No:- NHND00001267607	Flat No C-1907, 19th Floor, Oasis Venetia Heights Plot No. Hra-12/A, Oasis Venetia Heights Greater Noida	11-Feb-2020 Rs. 2980782/-	05/11/2019
5.	Harkesh, Manju Singh, 45/22, Sheela Bose Lane, Chitrli Dumdum Rabbar Colony, North 24, Parganar, Calcutta, A/c No:- NHXB40000085903	Khewat No 1290 Min, Khatori No 2039 Min, Khatori No 2764, 2768, 2767 Mouja Bahadurgarh, Surat Nagar Line Far Bahadurgarh	11-Feb-2020 Rs. 1526014/-	07/08/2019
6.	Sanjay Kumar, Kanchar Patel, 26/28 Block 28 Tikar Pur, Preet Vihar East Delhi New Delhi Preet Vihar East Delhi, Delhi, A/c No:- NHGZ00001273584	Flat No- 1112, 11 Floor, Oasis Grand Stand, Plot No. Gh 01, T5 01 B, Sec-22 D, Yamuna Express Way Noida	11-Feb-2020 Rs. 1275999/-	11/09/2019
7.	Dharam Pal Singh Rathor, Shikha Rathor, B-58, Preet Vihar, Delhi, Delhi, A/c No:- LBEE000011076	H. No. C-498, Yojna Vihar Delhi	11-Feb-2020 Rs. 816132.87/-	09/09/2019
8.	Rampal, Amit, Lalgarh 145, Palwal, Palwal, A/c No:- LHDWJ00001296958	409, Kaldas Colony Khewat Khata No 145075602 M, Kila No 26 (40-10) Kila No 1 Palwal, 1, Palwal -121105 Haryana	11-Feb-2020 Rs. 10037127/-	06/12/2019

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower(s) and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: 27-03-2020
Place: Delhi/NCR
Authorized Officer
For ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd.

Trend Slazer

Kishen Kanhaiya is special to me: Anil

Actor **ANIL KAPOOR** said that his 1990 release *Kishen Kanhaiya* has a special place in his heart.

The actor reminisced about the **Rakesh Roshan** directorial as it completed 30 years. The actor said that he is glad to see "the love and appreciation that the film has received."

Anil said, "Madhuri Dixit and I have worked together in a lot of films and each has a set of memories which can never be forgotten. *Kishen Kanhaiya* was and continues to be my favourites. My double role gave me an opportunity to explore two very different personalities — one strong and the other soft."

The film will air on Zee Bollywood tomorrow.



'Samisha Shetty Kundra completes 40 days today. The first milestone for a mother and her child, as per Hinduism. It only makes me realise that there are so many other things we should be grateful for even if some things don't go as planned. For next 20 days, I'm going to document one thing that I'm grateful for every day.'



—**Shilpa Shetty Kundra**

Actor HRITHIK ROSHAN

has stressed that the safety of the most fundamental caretakers of the city and society must be ensured. He has taken an extra step by procuring masks for Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).



Hrithik tweeted, "In such times, we must do what we can to ensure the safety of the most fundamental caretakers of our city and society. I have procured N95 and FFP3 masks for our BMC workers and other caretakers."

He paid his gratitude to minister Aadiya Thackeray for giving him the opportunity to support the Maharashtra government.

Miley suffers anxiety in isolation

Hollywood singer **MILEY CYRUS** said she suffered a panic attack as she self-isolated in her mansion amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 27-year-old revealed how the time she spent locked away in her home triggered a number of issues.

"I was sitting outside my house one night and I was looking at the stars. And it was the one place where I felt really safe. I was thinking about how fortunate and lucky I am that I live in a space where I can still go out and take a walk. But not everyone has that space," she said.

"And so I started having this fear, anxiety and panic, and I actually started giving myself really cold feet," she added.



LIFE MIMATES FILMS

With binge-watch becoming the ideal quarantine activity, pandemic films are the new favourite genre across the world, says **CHAHAK MITTAL**



'CONTAGION FEELS PRECISE AS IT NOT ONLY GIVES AN ILLUMINATING GLIMPSE INTO WHAT HAPPENED — BUT WHAT MIGHT.'
—**STEVEN ANDREW SODERBERGH (DIRECTOR)**

There's no trespassing in this city or the planet. I'm sorry! Earth is closed today." Till a month back, this was just a dialogue by Tony Stark aka Robert Downey Jr in *Avengers: Infinity Wars*. But now, it is a lived reality. The shopping complexes, cafes and bars, cinema halls, theatres, museums, public centres, offices, and schools and colleges have downed their shutters and there is not a single soul on the streets amid the ongoing global pandemic of Coronavirus or COVID-19.

'Netflix and chill' was the buzzword for hanging out alone or with friends earlier but now, it's the favourite 'quarantine' activity. And while people juggle with deciding on what to watch online, data shows that streaming and downloads of films, which show global crises or pandemics akin to the present one, have seen a sharp rise. One such is *Contagion* (2011), which gives the viewer a feeling of *déjà vu* as the film revolves around a family man (played by Matt Damon) who tries to navigate a partial societal collapse after a deadly virus spreads across the globe.

As per the data released by various sources, the film is becoming one of the most popular pandemic genre movies of 2020. According to iTunes, it is the third most popular film on the channel currently as well as the only film in the top 10 that didn't come out in 2019 as every film that's listed in the top 20 was released in 2019, except for this one. The film might have not garnered as much attention when it was first released due to its "unrealistic" and some "highly fictional" assumptions as claimed by many critics. There were sequences where a vaccine was developed really quickly and the film depicted that the virus reached humans through contact with animals.

However, today, it has returned to make the audience realise how it predicted the Coronavirus outbreak of 2020

long back in 2011. As per the data released on March 8 by The Verge and TorrentFreak, which collaborated to study the rise of number of downloads of *Contagion* between January 1 and March 4, thousands of people around the world were found to be illegally downloading the pandemic film. The results were analysed by checking the IP addresses that shared the film and studying torrent tracker data. The study also said that before January 24, *Contagion* was torrented about 200 times per day around the world. On January 25, the number rose to 1,500. As per the US, after the virus started spreading there, the downloads were around 18,000 every day.

According to MUSO, a piracy analytics firm, *Contagion* downloads, from 546 on January 7, rose to over 30,000 by January 30. Such a high number of piracy visits of the film have proven what heights people reach up to when they are not able to stream any film that they want to watch.

As per the data by Google trends of the last 90 days, "Where can I watch *Contagion*?" became the ninth most searched query whereas "Contagion full movie download," or "Contagion Netflix" became the 19th, 20th, and 21st queries respectively. The film is now available on Amazon Prime Video and Google Play only in some countries.

Not just the surge, the film is also becoming a medium of learning about the situation for students.

Rebecca Katz, director of the Centre for Global Health Science and Security at Georgetown University, recently revealed that she made her students watch the film's ending to "educate them about the interconnectedness between animals, the environment and the humans."

Film writer Scott Z Burns recently told a magazine, that while the disease in the film was more deadly than the COVID-19, Scott was more interested in using the virus to explore how the pre-existing conditions in society make us susceptible to fear as well as the virus. He said, "The similarities between *Contagion* and the Coronavirus are immaterial, accidental, and really not that important. What is more important is the societal response and the spread of fear and its knock-on effects, which are proving to be accurate" and that's why the film is gaining popularity among netizens across the world.

Director Steven A n d r e w Soderbergh also pointed out that *Contagion* feels 'precise' as it "not only gives an illuminating glimpse into what happened — but what might."

W e l l , another film that has taken the inter-Other Hollywood films which are again making it big because of the pandemic scare are *Pandemic: How to Prevent an Outbreak* (American documentary series, a Netflix Original, 2020), *Pandemic* (2016), *Outbreak* (1995), *Carriers* (2009), the series, *Containment* (2011), *I Am Legend* (2007), and *The Andromeda Strain* (1971). As the virus claims more and more lives, the films show how the average person must maintain social distancing, try hard not to touch his or her face, and only stay indoors. Nothing else can be done until a solution is found, which wouldn't happen overnight. Netflix Original film *Bird Box* (2018), which is a fictional and a metaphorical take on how a global pandemic can take over humanity, also depicted how people in order to survive must stay put in their homes to not let the plague reach them.



Tiring effect

Here's why having old tyres on your car could be a risk

Tyres are of vital importance since they are the only part of the vehicle that makes contact with the road. Yet motorists often neglect their condition and age, and the results can be catastrophic. In its most recently available information, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that 738 people died in 2017 from tyre-related crashes.

As a tyre ages, small cracks in the rubber begin to develop over time, appearing on the surface and inside the tyre. This cracking can eventually cause the steel belts in the tread to separate from the rest of the tyre. Tread separation can also happen to defective, underinflated and poorly maintained tyres. Hot climates will also accelerate the ageing process.

Here's what you need to know to determine tyre age and what issues old tyres can pose:

HOW LONG DO TYRES LAST?

Carmakers and tyre manufacturers differ in their recommendations on when to replace a tyre. Many automakers,

including Ford, Nissan, Mazda and Mercedes-Benz, tell owners to replace tyres six years after their production date regardless of tread life. Brands such as Continental and Michelin say a tyre can last up to 10 years, provided you get annual tyre inspections after the fifth year.

The NHTSA has no specific guidelines on tyre age and defers to the recommendations of carmakers and tyre manufacturers.

DETERMINING THE AGE OF A TYRE

You'll need to locate the transportation number printed on the sidewall of the tyre. The first two numbers represent the week in which the tyre was made. The second two represent the year. A tyre with a

DOT code of 1018, for example, was made in the 10th week of 2018.

Tyres made before 2000 end in a three-digit code that is trickier to decode, but essentially if you see a DOT number ending in three digits, the tyre was made in the last century and should be immediately replaced.

If you see a partial DOT number on the outer sidewall, look for the full number on the inner side. Some tyre manufacturers opt to brand the number on the inside to reduce the chance of injury to the tyre mold technician.

AVOID USED TYRES

New tyres can be expensive, which is why used tyres are attractive to people who are strapped for cash. You'll often find used tyres for sale in classified ads or at tyre-and-wheel shops that offer them as a low-cost alternative.

Corona doesn't spread via tears

The problem with used tyres is that, while you can check their age, you have no idea how well they were maintained or what conditions they were used in. It is safer to avoid them entirely.

MAKE SURE YOU'RE GETTING FRESH TYRES

There are instances when people have purchased what they thought were new tyres at retail stores only to find out that they were manufactured years earlier. A tyre from the prior year is common, but anything older is likely to have a shorter life span. You have the right to request newer ones. Check the date before you drive away to save yourself the hassle.

Make a tyre inspection part of your routine when people have purchased what they thought were new tyres at retail stores only to find out that they were manufactured years earlier. A tyre from the prior year is common, but anything older is likely to have a shorter life span. You have the right to request newer ones. Check the date before you drive away to save yourself the hassle.

LEARN TO LET GO OF OLD TYRES

If your tyres have plenty of tread left but are approaching the six-year mark, it's time to get them inspected for signs of ageing. And if the tyre shop recommends a set of tyres, spend the money and don't put it off.

GETTING RID OF AN UNUSED SPARE OR TYRES WITH PLenty OF TREAD MAY SEEM COUNTERINTUITIVE, BUT IF THEY ARE TOO OLD, IT IS THE SMARTEST THING YOU CAN DO.



Contrary to some reports, researchers now claim that the novel Coronavirus does not spread via tears and it is unlikely that infected patients are shedding virus through eye fluid.

While researchers are certain that Coronavirus spreads through mucus and droplets expelled by coughing or sneezing, it is unclear if the virus is spread through other bodily fluids, such as tears, said the study published in the journal, *Ophthalmology*.

There is one important caveat, though. None of the patients in the study had Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye. However, health officials believe pink eye develops in just one per cent to three per cent of people with Coronavirus.

For the findings, researchers at National University Hospital in Singapore collected tear samples from 17 patients with COVID-19 from the time they showed symptoms until they recovered about 20 days later. Neither viral culture nor reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) detected the virus in their tears throughout the two-week course of the disease, the researchers said.

The study researcher Ivan Seah also took samples from the back of the nose and throat during the same time period. The findings showed that when a sick person coughs or talks, virus particles can spray from their mouth or nose into another person's face.

You're most likely to inhale these droplets through your mouth or nose, but they can also enter through your eyes, according to the research.

The study also revealed that you can also become infected by touching something that has the virus on it — like a table or doorknob — and then touching your eyes.

While the patients' tears were clear of virus, their noses and throats were teeming with COVID-19, the researchers said. The authors wrote that the findings, coupled with the low incidence of pink eye among infected patients, suggest that the risk of virus transmission through tears is low.

The researchers hope their work helps to guide more research into preventing virus transmission through more significant routes, such as droplets and fecal-oral spread. —JANS



PANDEMIC PANTRY

The virus has sent a nation of restaurant-goers back to the kitchen

Last Tuesday night in Tennessee, bluegrass musicians David and Virginia Blood were busy making sandwiches. In Pittsburgh, real estate agent Michelle Bushee was stirring a pot of homemade black-bean chili in her kitchen instead of shepherding curious buyers through potential dream homes. Marty Prudenti, whose nights are usually spent working backstage at New York City's Lincoln Center, was in his Long Island backyard grilling burgers for his twins. And in Texas, Babette Maxwell — who would otherwise have been running at least one of her three teenage sons to sports practices or school events — was Googling recipes to engineer homemade versions of her boys' favorite Taco Bell items.

Throughout the globe, lives have been radically upended by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is worry and washing of hands. But one bright spot is emerging from self-quarantine and mandatory working from home: In this nation that so often dines out or gobbles processed food on the run,

people are suddenly cooking a whole lot more.

Before the coronavirus emerged, Kim Bierly often worked late at her office and then met her husband for a quick dinner at one of the restaurants in their central Pennsylvania neighbourhood. If they didn't eat out they'd reach into the refrigerator and choose something packaged to heat up.

"I've always enjoyed cooking," Bierly says. "But it was being saved for weekends. And by the time you get to the weekend you had all the other things you need to do. So it would be something quick or something prepared."

Now working from home, she's pulling out old recipes — the kinds of things she remembers her mother making, like stuffed pork chops or a bubbling pot of chicken and noodles. "I think we need comfort right now," she says, "and food is comfort." Unavoidably, these home-cooked dishes come with a side of stress. We're trying to protect ourselves from germs at the grocery store, and may wonder whether supermarket shelves will become emptier in the coming weeks. But those worries are encouraging people to get creative by trying new ingredients and sharing advice on how to use unfamiliar vegetables or cuts of meat bought out of necessity.

What can you do with the canned foods that have been idling since last year at the back of your kitchen cab-



inets? Facebook groups like Pandemic Pantry have sprouted up as gathering places for strangers to share advice.

Michael Volpatt, owner of the gourmet Big Bottom Market in Sonoma County, California, tackled the subject of canned goods on a recent installment of the impromptu cooking show he began hosting from his kitchen on March 14. Scrolling through Facebook while gathering ingredients to make himself dinner that night, Volpatt noticed the Facebook "Live" button on his phone screen. With his store closed, he realised it was a way to connect with friends and customers, and not be alone while preparing his meal. "Hey everybody," his first broadcast began. "I've never done Facebook Live before. But I figured since I'm kind of staying at home and going to do some cooking later on, you're going to join me."

A growing audience now watches and comments nightly as he prepares everything from his mother's marinara sauce to pot pies made with his Big Bottom Market biscuit mix, which appeared on Oprah's Favorite Things list in 2016. "It's heartwarming," Volpatt says, "and it takes a lot of the awkwardness of this whole experience away."

Returning to old recipes and learning new ones can be both a necessary distraction and a relief during this strange time. "Cooking brings back good memories," Bierly says, "like standing there at the pot on my stove, cooking the spaghetti and thinking of when my mother used to do that."

Food Network president Courtney White says her channel has seen a double-digit ratings increase in the past week, as viewers watch marathons of comfort food-focused shows like Guy Fieri's "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives." FoodNetwork.com has also had a double-digit increase in visitors and page views, White says. And many of the channel's chefs have been broadcasting informally from their home kitchens via social media, while viewers pepper them with questions in real-time.

Alone at our stoves, we're realising how good it can feel to make dinner from scratch by using just a few ingredients consciously and carefully. Families are also getting their kids involved.

"Now, more than ever, we hope you'll find moments of peace when gathering around the dinner table," the co-founders of the retail chain Savory Spice wrote in a website post to their customers over the weekend. "We hope you'll find moments of joy when preparing food with your little ones. We hope the simplicity of a home cooked meal is a quiet reprieve from the chaos outside." —AP



What's for dinner?

While you are cooking food at home, the menu combination should be easy to prepare and satisfying

Just about now, you might be tired of cooking and eating what's in your refrigerator. We are all used to asking what's for dinner? What are we in the mood for? pizza, sushi, Mexican? And then going to a restaurant to get it.

Now, with the Coronavirus forcing many of us to stay home more, it's time to look at mealtime and cooking at home a little differently. Instead of asking, "What I am in the mood for?" I am looking more closely in my pantry and my refrigerator and letting my ingredients dictate what I make.

For example, a few months ago, I was lured to purchase a big bag of mixed unsalted nuts because they were labeled "Omega-3 Nut Mix." I thought I would eat a handful of "anti-oxidants" a day for my health but they have gone largely uneaten. So, this week, I mixed up my favourite sweet and savory spices with both brown and white sugar and made my baked Sugar and Spice Canded Nuts. Sure, the sugar adds a few more calories but now they are a delicious and welcome nibble instead of sitting unused in the pantry.

Likewise, I had a head of broccoli in the refrigerator that I needed to cook. I couldn't bear the thought of steamed broccoli so I decided to roast it simply with olive oil and kosher salt at 400 degrees Fahrenheit until the tips were deeply caramelised. Broccoli is additive roasted this way as is cauliflower, and any leftovers are delicious the next day with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar and good olive oil.

If you have a pork tenderloin and a package of bacon in your fridge or freezer, you can make a simple two-ingredient main dish. A Bacon-wrapped pork tenderloin dresses up your pork preparation with few ingredients and only a little more effort. If the bacon is room temperature, it will stick to itself as you overlap each piece and wrap the tenderloin. I do this with beef tenderloin as well. The smoky flavour and fat of the centre-cut bacon both protects and bastes the lean meat as it roasts. I grill mine indirectly but you can roast it in a 350 degree Fahrenheit oven set on a rack in a sheet pan. When the bacon-wrapped tenderloin is done, sprinkle it with your finishing salt and carve into thick slices to enjoy the benefit of the bacon crust.

Finally, while you are cooking dinner at home, think about each meal in simple terms: a main (usually an animal protein, or a bean or hearty vegetable dish), a green or other non-starchy vegetable, and a starch. That menu combination is easy enough to prepare and still very satisfying. During this time of uncertainty, ease and comfort are equally important. If you are making a stew or a pot of gumbo that has vegetables and protein in it, all you need to do is a starch like rice or fresh, hot cornbread.

And enjoy the cooking. A friend of mine at Traeger Wood Fired Grills sent an email this week and reminded me that "good food equals good mood." Pass it along! —AP

R E C I P E S

SHEKUBURA

WHAT YOU NEED

For the dough:

- Wheat flour: 1 kg
- Unsalted butter (cut into large chunks): 400 gm
- Egg yolks: 5
- Sour cream: 250 gm
- Sugar: 1 tsp
- Salt: ¼ tsp
- Vanilla powder (optional): ½ tsp
- Dry yeast: ½ tsp
- Lukewarm milk: ½ cup

For the filling:

- Skinned hazelnuts: 500 gm
- Pound walnuts: 200 gm
- Granulated sugar: 700 gm
- Ground cardamom mixed with frangipico: 2 tsp both

METHOD

● Put the flour and the butter in a large mixing bowl. Using your hands, rub them together until you obtain fine crumbs. In a small bowl, using a spoon, mix the eggs yolks, sour cream, salt and vanilla powder.

● In another small bowl, put the yeast, one tablespoon flour and one tablespoon sugar. Fill it with ¼ cup of lukewarm milk. Let it stand for about two minutes. Then add the egg-sour cream mixture and yeast mixture to the flour-butter mixture.

● Using your hands, mix the ingredients until fully incorporated and a rough and inconsistent dough is obtained. Transfer the dough to your work surface. Put the remaining ¼ cup of lukewarm milk in a separate

bowl. Constantly wetting your hands with milk, knead the dough for a few minutes to make it smooth.

● Shape the dough into a ball. Put it back in the bowl, cover with plastic wrap and leave aside to rest for about 30 minutes.

● To prepare the filling, if you are using already skinned nuts, grind them finely in a food processor. In a mixing bowl, combining the ground nuts with sugar. Add the ground cardamom, frangipico and vanilla powder (optional). Mix until fully incorporated.

● To skin hazelnuts and walnuts at home: Place raw hazelnuts in a large frying pan and roast over medium heat stirring frequently until the skin cracks and begins to flake off after 10 minutes.

● Working with small batches of



nuts at a time, place them on a kitchen cloth and rub with it to remove the skins. Most of the skins will come off although some will still cling to the nut (especially on walnuts).

● To skin almonds at home: Put the almonds in a pot and pour boiling water over them to barely

cover their tops. Let the almonds sit in the water for about two minutes (do not keep them there for too long, or they will lose their crispness and will be too soft). Drain off the water, pat them dry and slip the skin off by squeezing the almonds between your thumbs and fingers.

SHORGOGHAL

WHAT YOU NEED

For the dough:

- Active dry yeast: 2¼ tsp
- Warm water: 1 cup
- All-purpose flour: 6 cups
- Salt: 2 tsp
- Milk (at room temperature): 1 cup
- Egg (at room temperature): 1
- Clarified butter: 7 ounces

For the spice filling:

- Fennel seeds: 2 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 2 tsp
- Turmeric: ½ tsp
- Salt: 1 tsp
- Ground black pepper: ¼ tsp

For the butter spread:

- Clarified butter (ghee): 0.5 litre

For the top:

- Egg yolks: 2

- Nigella sativa seeds (can substitute poppy seeds): 1 tsp

METHOD

● In a small bowl, dissolve the yeast in warm water and let it stand until frothy for 10 minutes. Sift the flour into a large mixing bowl. Add the salt and mix well. Add the yeast mixture, milk, egg, and butter and mix the ingredients with your hands.

● Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic for 10 minutes. If the dough is still sticky, add more flour and knead. Put the dough back into the large mixing bowl, cover with a kitchen towel or plastic wrap and let rise for one and a half hours in a warm spot, until it doubles in bulk.

● To prepare the spice filling, toast the fennel and cumin



seeds (or anise seeds) on a hot skillet for about two minutes, until their aroma rises (toasting will intensify their aroma and flavour). Grind the spices in a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. In a medium mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients for the filling except the butter. Stir to mix. Gradually add the butter. Gradually add the butter and rub with your fingers until you obtain fine crumbs. Set aside.

● Melt the butter and set aside to cool and keep two large baking sheets ready.

You will need a large work surface divided into two sections: one to roll out the dough and another to assemble the layers. Sprinkle some flour onto one half of the work surface on which you will roll out the dough. Generously oil the other half of the workplace (or sprinkle with flour, too).

● To prepare the dough layers, shape the risen dough into a log and divide into nine equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball. Work with one ball at a time and cover the rest with a kitchen

towel.

● Using a thin, long rolling pin, roll out one ball into a 20-inch circle that is about 1/16-inch thick. When you roll the dough, from time to time sprinkle it with flour and spread all over the circle to prevent it from sticking to the rolling pin and for easier rolling. Wrap the rolled-out circle around the rolling pin and unwrap on another side of the work area.

● Drizzle five to seven tablespoons of the butter spread onto the circle and spread over with your hand. Roll out the second dough ball and place on top of the first layer. You can roll it out into a smaller circle. Now, with your hands, hold the edges of the second layer and very gently stretch in all directions (first one side, then the other) to fit the bottom circle, then stretch them together until a large

rectangle is obtained. Continue rolling up the remaining dough balls in the same fashion, placing them on top of each other, brushing with butter (except the final layer, which should not be buttered) and stretching with your hands. Again, roll the subsequent balls smaller than the first one — you will stretch them after you have placed them on the previous buttered layer.

● Each stretched layer should be almost see-through. Take care not to tear the layers when you stretch them.

● Once all the layers are ready, gently pull the sides of the layered rectangle to stretch as far as it can go. The thinner and wider the layers, the flakier it will be.

BLUEBERRY OATMEAL COOKIES

WHAT YOU NEED

- All-purpose flour: 1½ cup
- Baking powder: ½ tsp
- Salt: ½ tsp
- Unsalted butter: 1 cup
- Light brown sugar: 1 cup
- Eggs: 2
- Vanilla essence: 2 tsp
- Oats: 3 cup
- Blueberries: 1 cup

METHOD

● Preheat oven to 350 degrees C. Adjust the oven racks to the middle position and line baking sheet with parchment paper.

● Whisk the baking powder and salt in a small bowl. Set aside.

● Cream together the butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy. For about three minutes.

● Beat the eggs, one at a



time, and then mix in the vanilla.

● Stir the mixture with a rubber spatula. Then stir the oats and blueberries.

● Using two heaping tablespoons per cookie, roll the dough into balls and place them onto a cookie sheet, spacing them at least two inches apart.

● Bake until the cookie edges are just turning golden brown about 20 minutes.

● Cool the cookies on the baking sheet and then transfer to a wire rack. Store cookies in an airtight container.

Courtesy: Del Monte.

Courtesy: Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB).

Courtesy: Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB).

Rohit still hopeful on IPL 2020

INANS ■ MUMBAI

Star Indian opener and Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma felt that the time he spent with Ricky Ponting at the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise was "magic."

Ponting was captain of MI in 2013, when they were yet to win an IPL title. He resigned from the post and handed it over to Rohit but stayed on as part of the coaching staff. His contribution is often seen instrumental in helping MI win their maiden IPL title that year and he would return to the franchise as a head coach, before moving to Delhi Capitals.

"Ricky Ponting to me was magic," said Rohit on Thursday in an interaction with former England captain Kevin Pietersen on Instagram.

"The way he handled the team when he was captain during the first half and then he gave the captaincy to me midway. That takes a lot of guts and after that to be as involved as he was as a support staff member. He was supporting all the younger players in the team and he was guiding me in captaincy," said Rohit.

Rohit said that he feels MI have made a few good purchases at the auction this year and hopes that the season starts whenever things settle. "We have got a few good additions to the squad like Chris Lynn, Trent Boult, Nathan Coulter-Nile.

"Boult is a good buy on a pitch like Wankhede with the swinging ball, I was looking forward to that. Alongwith (Jasprit) Bumrah he would have made a good combination. Still looking forward, fingers crossed. At some stage if things settle down, it should happen," said Rohit.

Rohit also said that current Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene is someone who gives a lot of clarity to his players. "Mahela is very calm, very composed. He only tells you to do things he sees as right



Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma bats during team's practice session @mipaltan/Twitter

or not to do them if they are wrong. His messages are very clear," said Rohit.

The 2020 season of the IPL was scheduled to start on March 29 with defending champions MI facing Chennai Super Kings at the Wankhede Stadium in what was a repeat of the 2019 final. However the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic forced the organisers to push the tentative starting date to April 15, which itself is now clouded in uncertainty due to the three-week lockdown.

"ITCHING TO PLAY"

Indian limited overs vice-captain is holed up in his apartment like everybody else these days due to three-week lockdown but said that he is making do with running up and down the stairs of his building to stay fit. "It's very hard actually (to stay fit)," said Rohit. "I live in a building which has about 54 floors and we had to stop all the indoor and outdoor activities. So just been running up and down the stairs. Not 54 floors but about two or three floors up and down and doing some conditioning exercises here and there."

Rohit had been recovering — from a calf injury which he sustained during the fifth T20 between India and New Zealand — at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru before it was shut down due to the spread of the pandemic.

He however said that he is completely fit now, although he is yet to do an official fitness test because the NCA is not working. He said that he has been itching to play the game again after spending two months on the sidelines and was looking forward to the IPL.

"Definitely miss playing the game. I was injured for two months so have been itching to play. When I got the news that everything was going to be postponed I was very sad. I was really looking forward to playing in the IPL," he said.

Stokes continues IPL preparations despite cancellation threat

PTI ■ LONDON

Star England all-rounder Ben Stokes continues to train for the 13th IPL even though he is aware that the T20 league may become yet another sporting event to be cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic.

"At the moment my next competitive cricket is going to be in the IPL," Stokes, who was bought by Rajasthan Royals in the 2018 IPL auction for ₹ 12.5 crore, told the BBC.

"That hasn't changed yet so I have to think I will be playing on April 20."

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had said last week that the county season would not start until at least the end of May, while England's tour of Sri Lanka was also postponed due to the dreaded disease. And given the current circumstances, a cancellation of this year's IPL looks inevitable.

However, Stokes said he needs to keep working on his fitness to be ready if and when the IPL happens.

"I have to get my head round that I am playing even though in the back of my mind I know I am



Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler in action for Rajasthan Royals in IPL 2019

probably not," he said. "I have to build up and get myself physically in a position that if it does happen I am good to go. I cannot take three weeks off and expect the body to be ready for April 20 because it doesn't work like that. It might happen and if it does I don't want to be behind."

"There will be a lot of advice given to us and if it was an option to go we will have to take the sensible one."

"Shortened IPL" England wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler is hoping for at least a cur-

tailed IPL this season, aware that it would be difficult to conduct the "massive tournament" in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

"No news at the moment. We saw, initially, that it was going to be postponed. It's very hard to see this changing in the immediate future, so I don't see that as a possibility at the moment," Buttler said in a *skysports* podcast.

"Obviously, it's such a massive tournament for world cricket, so hopefully some of it can go ahead — perhaps a shortened tournament."

LONDON: Wimbledon could be postponed or even cancelled after All England Club chiefs called an "emergency meeting" for next week to discuss whether to go ahead with this year's tournament.

Wimbledon is set to start in London on June 29, but the continuing spread of the virus

Wimbledon fate to be decided next week

has caused havoc and the grass-court Grand Slam could be the next major event to be delayed.

"The AELTC can confirm that it is continuing a detailed

evaluation of all scenarios for The Championships 2020, including postponement and cancellation, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak," an All England Club statement

said. "An emergency meeting of the AELTC Main Board is scheduled for next week, and in preparation we are communicating closely with the LTA,

and with the ATP, WTA, ITF and the other Grand Slams." Pressure is growing on the All England Club to make a decision and organisers have ruled out playing the tournament

behind closed doors. "The build for The C'hips is due to begin at the end of April," the statement said. "At this time, very short window is available to us to

stage The Championships due to the nature of our surface suggests that postponement is not without significant risk and difficulty. Playing behind closed doors has been formal-

ly ruled out." Given it takes two months to get the Wimbledon site ready for the event, a decision needs to be made soon and All England Club chief executive Richard Lewis expects the call will be made at the emergency summit. **AFF**

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