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HYSTERIA IN A TIME OF VIRUS

MONEY 9
MARKETS MARCH HIGHER FOR 3RD DAY

SPORT 12
SERIE A RESUMES ON JUNE 20

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MOST OF US
LACK SELF
LOVE: KIRTI
TO VIVACITY

More lockdown but fewer curbs likely

Modi, Shah discuss CMs' views: Social distancing must but need to push up economic activities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two days before lockdown 4.0 ends, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday discussed about the views of Chief Ministers on further

opening up several sectors of economy with strict social distancing norms if the lockdown were to be continued beyond May 31.

For the past three days, the Home Minister was collecting inputs and suggestions from all Chief Ministers. Highly placed officials say the Centre may give more power to the States to decide on opening up the economic activities and defining containment zones.

Many Chief Ministers have reportedly preferred the continuation of the lockdown, but there is a near consensus on opening up many sectors as well as malls and public transports, including metro services.

While all Chief Ministers urged the Home Minister to speed up economic activities and gradual return of public life, they also expressed their apprehension about being



Migrants shift to a shelter home in a village before leaving for their native places in special buses, arranged by the Rajasthan Government in Jaipur on Friday. PTI

flooded with surge of patients when the country relaxes the strict lockdown norms.

As per sources, two special Covid-19 panels set up by the Centre have submitted their recommendations for the exit strategy. The panels have sug-

gested that the Centre should do away with all lockdown curbs except keeping schools,

colleges, movie halls and religious places closed till situation improves.

The panel has also recommended not to reopen inter-State travel and said that the efforts should be directed towards strengthening containment measures in the worst-hit districts.

The worst-hit 13 districts are: Municipalities of Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi/New Delhi, Ahmadabad, Thane, Pune, Hyderabad, Kolkata/Howrah, Indore, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Chengalpattu (Tamil Nadu) and Thiruvallur (Tamil Nadu).

These 13 districts are having 70 per cent of the positive cases in India. The Centre and the States of these 13 cities have

already decided a plan on the geographical definition of containment zones.

The Home Minister also apprised the Prime Minister of the outcome of the talks between the Cabinet Secretary and 13 Municipal Commissioners and District Magistrates from the sensitive cities.

The Central Government is expected to announce its decision on the lockdown within the next two days. Prime Minister may speak up on this on May 31 scheduled 'Mann Ki Baat', said officials.

At present, the current lockdown rules prohibits opening up of hotels, malls, public transports in containment zones.

Modi-US Prez didn't discuss China, India contradicts Trump

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday denied that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump recently held a telephonic talk over the issue of Ladakh and China. This assertion came hours after Trump said he had spoken to Modi and "he is not in a good mood on what is going on in China."

Contradicting the US President's claim, sources said, "There has been no recent contact between Modi and US President Trump. The last conversation between them was on 4 April, 2020, on the subject of Hydroxychloroquine."

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday held a telephonic conversation with his US counterpart Mark T Esper at the latter's request. The two Ministers briefed each other on the respective experience of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic and vowed to continue the excellent bilateral cooperation in this regard, the Defence Ministry said.

The two leaders reviewed progress on various bilateral defence cooperation arrangements and expressed their commitment to further pro-

Rajnath Singh holds telephonic conversation with his US counterpart



note defence partnership. To this end, Singh invited Esper to visit India. Singh also accepted Esper's condolence over lives lost in eastern India during Cyclone Amphan recently, and briefed him on India's relief efforts.

The two Ministers also exchanged views on regional developments of shared security interest.

Trump made the remarks about talking to Modi on Thursday while reiterating his offer to mediate between India and China on what he called a "big conflict" going on between the two nations. He was apparently referring to the tension on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh with four stand-offs now on between the armies of India and China.

MARKETS
SENSEX 32,434.16 (+233.51)
NIFTY 8,584.36 (+94.29)
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Yearly GDP growth rate 11-yr low; 3.1% in Jan-Mar quarter

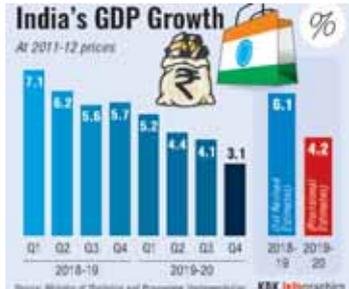
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus-led disruption of Indian economy slowed down the GDP to 3.1 per cent in January-March and to an 11-year low of 4.2 per cent for the full fiscal 2019-20 amid a drop in consumption and investment.

The slowdown is also result of overall economic deceleration even before the Government imposed a lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19 infections from March 25, 2020.

The GDP is expected to continue on the downward journey and gain speed in the next few quarters.

The GDP growth stood at 5.7 per cent in the corresponding quarter of 2018-19, according to data released by



National Statistical Office (NSO) on Friday. The Indian economy grew at 4.2 per cent during 2019-20 as against 6.1 per cent in 2018-19.

Delhi wants lockdown 5.0 as Capital sees 82 deaths on Friday

AAP Govt suggests Centre to keep all public places shut

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As lockdown 4.0 ends on Sunday, the Delhi Government recommended to the Union Home Ministry for lockdown 5.0 as the number of Covid cases in the national Capital rose by 1,106 with total tally touching 17,387 and 82 people dying on Friday.

The Delhi Government believes that places where large gatherings take place, like cinema halls, should remain closed. "Schools and colleges should also remain closed," said Health Minister Satyender Jain.

The Delhi Government wants to speed up all economic activities and for this the Government had allowed



Medics in protective suits carry the body of a Covid-19 casualty for cremation at Nigam Badi Ghat in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

DTC to resume operations keeping social distancing, bus station hygiene, sanitisation of buses, autos and cabs in mind.

While the decision on metro is pending but the City Government wants DMRC to start its operations. During discussion with Union Home

Minister Amit Shah, Delhi Chief Minister is reported to have requested for the resumption of Metro services.

The Delhi Government has put a request before Centre for Delhi Metro. The Central Government will take the call," a Government official said.

CAPSULE

QUAKE HITS ROHTAK, TREMORS FELT IN DELHI
New Delhi: A medium intensity earthquake of 4.5 magnitude hit Rohtak in Haryana on Friday. Tremors of which were felt in the national capital, the National Centre for Seismology said.

LOCUST SWARMS POSE THREAT, SAYS DGCA
New Delhi: Aviation regulator DGCA issued guidelines for stakeholders like pilots on how to deal with locust swarms, saying they pose a threat to aircraft in the critical landing and takeoff phase of a flight.

RAIN BRINGS MERCURY DOWN IN DELHI
New Delhi: Light to moderate rain lashed the national capital on Friday, bringing the mercury several notches below normal. Strong winds swept across the city and a few areas reported hailstorm. The Saffajung observatory recorded 3.5 mm rainfall and a maximum of 37 degrees Celsius.

India surpasses China in coronavirus cases, deaths

Delhi, Haryana, K'taka, and U'khand report biggest single-day spike, Mumbai reports highest with 2,682 new cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday overtook China in terms of coronavirus-related fatalities and raced towards 5,000 death count even as the number of fresh cases saw third straight day of spikes with Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh registering huge numbers.

India has reported a total of 1,73,140 coronavirus cases and 4,975 deaths till Friday after it reported 7,783 infections and a massive 264 death count from across the country on Friday. China which had reported the first Covid-19 case in December last year has registered over 82,995 cases and around 4,634 deaths.

Data shows 10,652 people have been treated and discharged so far. The recovery rate stands at 42.89 per cent.

According to the Ministry's website, more than 70 per cent of the deaths are due to comorbidities.

On Friday, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, and Uttarakhand reported biggest single day spike as Covid-19 continued to spread viciously across the country.

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	62,228	2,098	26,997
Tamil Nadu	20,246	157	11,313
Delhi	17,387	398	7,846
Gujarat	15,944	980	8,611
Rajasthan	8,365	184	4,855
Madhya Pradesh	7,645	334	3,927
Uttar Pradesh	7,445	201	4,410
West Bengal	4,813	302	1,775
Andhra Pradesh	3,330	60	2,234
Bihar	3,275	15	1,050

Maharashtra continue to remain headache for the health authorities, as it contributed another day of big spike recording 2,682 positive cases on Friday, with Mumbai alone contributing a total of 35,458 cases to the States tally.

Coronavirus has infected total 62,228 people in the financial capital of the country. The fatalities in the State have shot up to 2,098.

Tamil Nadu, after slipping to the third position on Thursday, again disturbingly surged ahead on Friday to acquire second slot among the worst hit States.

It witnessed high number

of coronavirus cases at 874 taking the total count to 20,246 cases on Friday.

At least 9 people have died due to coronavirus infection in the State taking the death toll to 157.

Delhi recorded its biggest spike in Covid-19 tally in second consecutive day at 1,106 fresh cases while the number of

active coronavirus patients stood at 17,387. It witnessed 82 deaths bringing the total fatalities to 357 in the State.

The national Capital had recorded over 1,000 cases in a day for the first time on Thursday since the outbreak.

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Bejan Daruwala dies of lung infection

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Renowned astrologer Bejan Daruwala died at a private hospital here on Friday evening, his family said. He was 90. While speculation was rife that Daruwala was admitted to Apollo Hospital here a few days ago after he

tested positive for coronavirus, his son Nataraj denied it, saying his father was being treated only from pneumonia.

According to his website, Ganesha Speaks, he had predicted that Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Morarji Desai, Narendra Modi will Prime Minister.

Bats die of brain haemorrhage in searing heat in UP, Bihar

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Deaths of large number bats caused by brain haemorrhage, caused by excessive heat in the last few days in Delhi, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have sparked fears as bats are suspected to be linked to the origin of coronavirus in Wuhan in China.

The forest department officials said that bats are dying due to rise in temperature and non-availability of water as the heat has dried up the lakes and ponds in several parts of the country.



Bareilly said bats died due to brain haemorrhage, caused by excessive heat in Gorakhpur's Belghat area early this week.

IVRI Director RK Singh said there were no traces of coronavirus or rabies in the dead bats. "The bats have a high immunity level and are

not affected by any pathogen - virus or bacteria -- though they can be carriers of the virus," he said. Chief Conservator of Forest, Delhi Government, Ishwar Singh told The Pioneer that severe heat wave could be the reason behind death of bats but due to coronavirus pandemic. "The carcass of these bats will be sent for postmortem to know the exact reasons of the death, he said.

The Animal Husbandry Department of the NDMC has picked up the bat remains from the Motilal Nehru Marg area in Delhi to know the exact reasons of the death.

Priest, son found dead near temple in UP's Sambhal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In yet another sensational incident in Uttar Pradesh, a priest and his son were found dead outside a temple in Rasoolpur Sarai village under the limits of Nakhasa police station in Sambhal district on Friday.

The local residents suspected that the two were murdered, but the local police claimed that investigation pointed that both the priest and the son committed suicide due

to depression and illness. They sent the bodies for post-mortem and were waiting for report before heading further with the investigation.

Reports said that some local residents reached the temple in Rasoolpur Sarai village for darshan on Friday morning when they found the priest missing.

As they went nearby to look for him, they were shocked to see both the priest and with his son both were lying dead.

Delhi's exit points jammed as NCR cities seal borders after Covid spike

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM/NEW DELHI

All exit points of Delhi on Friday saw traffic snarls after all adjoining NCR cities, latest being Gurugram, sealed their borders with Delhi following a spike in the coronavirus cases in the national Capital.

Commuters were caught unawares on Delhi-Gurugram border on Friday morning as the Haryana Government on Thursday night decided to seal its border with Delhi.



Traffic jam on Delhi-Gurugram road on Friday. PTI

8 am. Movement of vehicles involved in supply of essential services was allowed after the

border was sealed. Those with passes issued by the Government were also allowed to move.

216 Covid-19 patients found on Friday

COUNT JUMPS TO 716 IN U'KHAND

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In the biggest single day jump yet, 216 new patients of novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) were detected by the state health department in Uttarakhand on Friday.

With this jump, the number of Covid-19 patients in Uttarakhand has leapt to 716. On May 23, the health department had reported 19 patients which was highest number in a single day till Friday. Five patients who were positive for the disease have so far died in the state and 102 have recovered from the disease.

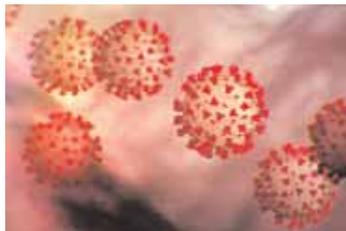
On the day, 84 patients were reported from Nainital district while 73 patients surfaced in provisional state capital Dehradun. In Almora dis-

trict 21 new patients were reported while eight cases each surfaced in Bageshwar and Tehri districts.

Five patients each were reported from Pauri, Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts. In Rudrapur district two patients were reported while one patient of Covid-19 surfaced in Udham Singh Nagar district.

On a positive note, 23 patients were discharged from different hospitals of the State after their recovery. In Udham Singh Nagar district six patients were discharged while three were discharged from Dehradun. Similarly one patient was discharged from Nainital district after his recovery.

In Nainital district 82 patients reported on the day had recently arrived from Gurugram and Delhi. In Dehradun, 55 cases are those who were tracked at border check-post before their quar-



antine. What is causing concern is the fact that travel history of 11 positive patients reported on the day is not known.

Nainital district now has 209 active cases and holds the dubious distinction of being at top of the table of active cases in the state.

Dehradun with 120 active cases is at second spot while Tehri district with 70 active

active cases. Rudrapur district is at bottom of table with five active patients of Covid-19.

The additional secretary, state health department, Yugal Kishore Pant said reports of 1080 samples were found negative for the disease on Friday. He added that reports of 4758 samples are still awaited by the department. On Friday, a total of 1439 samples were collected for COVID-19 testing. The authorities have so far taken swab samples of 26951 suspected patients for COVID-19 test.

Out of the total samples taken, 2.82 per cent cases have been found positive for the disease. On Friday, the rate of recovery from the COVID-19 in the state slid further down to 14.24 per cent.

The doubling rate of the disease now stands at 3.87 days for the state which means that the Covid-19 patients are getting double in less than four days.

SCPCR writes to CM suggesting various guidelines

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The chairperson of State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) Usha Negi has sent a letter to Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat in which she provided some suggestions and guidelines on various issues during the lockdown including complaints of parents against several private schools, school management and Education department.

In her letter, she suggested that the government should collaborate with social workers to arrange online classes in an open area for the poor students who cannot afford smart phones, computers or internet.

According to her, the school management should also provide online psychological counselling to children in order to make their mind stable and calm during current crisis. Negi also sug-

gested that all the schools should create a separate fund for situations like natural disasters or calamities so that finance would not be a problem during such crisis in future and the management would be able to pay its staff and manage the school fees of students.

In one of the suggestion for the education department, Negi recommended that to motivate children to help and contribute to their State during hard times, they should be encouraged to donate as minimum as one rupee in CM Relief Fund so that they are motivated to become responsible citizens of the country.

The collected amount can be used for the education of poor children besides other educational purposes, added Negi. Apart from this, she has suggested several other guidelines to CM and requested him to consider the suggestions immediately.

CABINET DECISIONS

A day's salary of U'khand employees to be deducted monthly for 1 year

Chief Minister's integrated horticulture scheme to help farmers

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

To fund its anti Covid-19 operations, the Uttarakhand Government has decided to deduct a day's salary of its employees every month for the Chief Minister's relief fund.

The deductions would be made every month till the end of the financial year 2020-21 and would be applicable to all State Government employees and the employees of state corporations and bodies. However, pensioners would remain exempted from this deduction.

The decision of salary deduction was taken in the meeting of the State Cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat here at the secretariat on Friday. Cabinet Minister and Government spokesman, Madan Kaushik said that to make any cuts in the allowances of the employees as was anticipated. He said that the deduction of five days per month till the end of this financial year would be made in the remuneration of all the position holders. He clarified that the deduction of 30 per cent would be made in the basic salary of all MLAs. The minister however added that if the Congress MLAs don't want any cut in their salary then they should give a written intimation about this.

In a decision aimed at providing relief to the workers who were quarantined, the state government decided that the employers would have to provide salary of 28 days to them and sanction leave for the period of quarantine. For the shops and business establishments employing more than 10 employees, the owner would have to make arrangement for sanitiser and adopt necessary safety measures. In an effort to

provide impetus to horticulture, the cabinet gave its consent to the Chief Minister's integrated horticulture scheme on the day.

Under the project, 50 per cent grant would be provided by the state government to the farmers not covered under centrally sponsored Horticulture mission. Similarly the cost of cold storage of capacity 30 metric tonnes (Cost Rs 15 Lakh), the state government would provide a grant of 50 per cent.

On the day, the state cabinet also approved changes in the fruit, seeds, potato and ginger cultivation not covered under the horticulture mission, 50 per cent grant would be provided to the farmers.

For purchase of AC van costing about Rs 26 lakh and construction of cold storage of capacity 30 metric tonnes (Cost Rs 15 Lakh), the state government would provide a grant of 50 per cent.

On the day, the state cabinet also approved changes in the fruit, seeds, potato and ginger cultivation not covered under the horticulture mission, 50 per cent grant would be provided to the farmers.

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held. The cabinet also approved the proposal to elect the DM to nominate the District Panchayat president, block Pramukhs and village Pradhans - where these posts are still vacant - from among the elected Panchayat representatives.

Employees unhappy with salary cut for one year

PNS/Dehradun

The decision to deduct the salary of the employees for a period of one year has not gone down well among the employees and their association. After the decision to freeze their dearness allowance (DA), the salary deduction of one day has reduced the employees' wage that they were earning every day. The officiating general secretary of the Rajya Karmchari Sanayukt Parishad, Arun Pandey said that the government should have sought the advice of the employee associations and they would have suggested other effective ways to reduce expenditure. Pandey said that the government decision would adversely affect the employees who are present at the forefront of the war on the Covid-19.

Piling up of samples

U'khand Govt ropes in pvt players to increase testing capacity

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Perturbed by piling up of swab samples of suspected patients at the existing testing facilities, the Uttarakhand Govt has decided to rope in the private hospitals and laboratories to increase its testing capacity. The State Govt would bear the cost of the samples tested by these private labs. Senior Cabinet minister and government spokesperson, Madan Kaushik said on Friday that initially the State Govt would follow the neighbouring Uttar Pradesh (UP) in roping in these labs for the samples tested by them.

He said that the State Govt would invite tenders from these labs for quoting the price of one test and based on them, the lowest price would be offered to all these labs. Kaushik clarified that the private labs should have been approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). He accepted that increase in backlog of



the samples at the existing testing facilities prompted the government to take this decision.

As per the report of the state health department released at 2 pm on Friday, results of 4758 swab samples are awaited from different labs of the state. The huge backlog was causing delay in testing of the samples of the suspected patients.

"The rate of sample testing in Uttarakhand is 2278 samples per ten lakh of population which is better than neighbouring Uttar Pradesh (1139) and Kerala (2011). The nation-

al rate of 2586 samples per ten lakh of population and Uttarakhand needs to test more samples to come equal to national average," he said. At present the swab samples for Covid-19 are tested at Government Medical College Haldwani, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Rishikesh, Government Doon Medical College (GDMC), Dehradun and Government Medical College, Srinagar. A private laboratory (Ahuja Lab) in Dehradun has also been approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to conduct tests.

Tigress found dead in Corbett, leopard found dead in Terai west

Big cats believed to have died due to wounds sustained in fight with other big cats

PNS ■ HALDWANI

A tigress and a leopard were found dead in different parts of Kumaon on Friday. According to officials, both the big cats are believed to have died due to injuries sustained in fight with other big cats.

According to departmental officials, during routine patrol on Thursday evening, the Forest department personnel spotted an injured tiger near

the Jhirna water source in Jhirna range of Corbett national park. The department team started monitoring the injured big cat. On Friday, when the personnel went to check the condition of the big cat they found the tigress dead near a water source. The body of the tigress was sent to Ramnagar for post mortem examination. The sub divisional officer Kunda Singh Khatri informed that it appeared as if the tigress had been injured in a fight with another big cat. All the body parts of the tigress were found intact.

The body of tigress estimated to be about seven years old was sent to the Corbett national park veterinary hospital in Ramnagar where the post mortem was conducted.



In another case, a leopard cub was found dead in the Ramnagar range of the Terai west forest division. Ramnagar ranger Harendra Rawat informed that department personnel received information

on Friday morning about the body of a leopard cub being spotted in Udaipuri area. The ranger reached the site, took possession of the body and informed senior officers. According to the sub division-



officer Shishpal Singh Rawat, the leopard cub is estimated to have been nine to 10 months old and is believed to have died as a result of a fight with another leopard. There were deep claw marks on the dead

cub's head. The exact cause of the leopard's death will be known after the post mortem report is received, he added. After the post mortem, the carcass of the cub was destroyed by the department personnel.

MCD rejects allegations of disinfectant being diluted excessively

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Some locals have expressed their concern stating that the disinfectant solution of one percentage sodium hypochlorite is currently being used after excessive dilution in water. According to them, excessive dilution will not be effective on the virus present on the surface of any area. They also stated that some councilors are not sanitising their areas. Rejecting all the allegations, chief municipal health officer Dr Kailash Joshi said that the corporation monitors all sanitisation work and disinfectant is not being diluted unnecessarily but even if it is diluted, the solution works effectively even with slightly less percentage of sodium hypochlorite.

Corporation monitors all sanitisation work and disinfectant is not being diluted unnecessarily but even if it is diluted, the solution works effectively even with slightly less percentage of sodium hypochlorite. Dr Kailash Joshi said that the corporation monitors all sanitisation work and disinfectant is not being diluted unnecessarily but even if it is diluted, the solution works effectively even with slightly less percentage of sodium hypochlorite. On the complaints of locals about the delay in sanitisation in their areas, Joshi said that the councilors and supervisors are making

responsibility was given to the councilors so that they can disinfect their wards as per the requirement. The corporation has provided them with enough disinfectant and equipment to sanitise their wards, stated Pandey. Though, he added, constant use of disinfectants in open areas does not have any effect on novel coronavirus as per World Health Organisation (WHO). However, MCD is still monitoring the sanitation work including spraying of disinfectants in the wards, added Pandey. "Daily we receive the pictures with the time stamp of sanitisation of the wards from the supervisors of various areas of the city," informed Pandey. The officials from the corporation also informed that MCD also sterilises market areas on every Sunday besides sanitising containment zones and quarantine centres.

Mayor directs measures to prevent dengue in Doon

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Since dengue is likely to increase in the rainy season, Dehradun mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' instructed officials to begin a proper cleaning of drains in the city. Last year, there were cases of dengue fever in Dehradun

besides the cleaning of drains in the city as soon as possible. He also instructed the officials to commence a sanitisation drive in the containment zones of the city to minimise the risk of Covid-19 infection in those areas. Recently, 'Gama' had directed councilors of all the wards to keep an eye on people under home quarantine in their respective wards. On the question of the resources provided by MCD to carry out this work, the mayor said that he asked councilors to provide their support to district administration in the current crisis and the councilors are supporting through their work with their own available resources. He added that he has instructed councilors to report to the police immediately if they find any quarantined person violating the rules and regulations set by administration.

to minimise the risk of the disease this year, the mayor chaired a meeting with municipal commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey and chief municipal health officer Dr Kailash Joshi on Friday. In the meeting, he directed officials to commence the work of filling the open pits

More rain forecast, max temp set to drop further

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

With various parts of the state experiencing light to moderate rain, not only are the people experiencing some relief from the heat but the forests too are benefiting from the change in weather. According to the forest department, there was no active forest fire point in the state on Friday evening. Meanwhile, similar weather is forecast for Saturday with the possibility of hail/lightning/intense shower at isolated places in the state. According to the State meteorological centre, the state is likely to experience partly to generally cloudy sky on Saturday with light to moderate rainfall/thunderstorm very likely to occur at many places. Further, gusty wind ranging from 30 to 40 kilometres per hour are also likely to occur at isolated places in the state on the weekend. Additionally, hail/lightning/intense shower are also likely to occur at isolated places in the mountainous regions of the state on Saturday. In Dehradun, the meteorological centre has forecast partly to generally cloudy sky with the possibility of rain/thunderstorm likely to occur. The maximum and

minimum temperatures are likely to be about 30 degrees Celsius and 20 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun. Meanwhile, the maximum and minimum temperatures recorded at various places on Friday were 31.4 degrees Celsius and 21.6 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 34 degrees Celsius and 23.8 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 19.8 degrees Celsius and 10.3 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 21.2 degrees Celsius and 12 degrees Celsius respectively in New Tehri. On Friday evening, the meteorological centre reported that the maximum temperature had fallen by four to six degrees Celsius in the plains and four to nine degrees Celsius in the mountains during the past 24 hours. The maximum temperature is likely to decrease further by two to three degrees Celsius during the next two days.

The change in weather has come as a boon for burning forest fires. According to the forest department, there were no active forest fire points in the state on Friday evening. During the forest fire season this year, there have been 109 incidents affecting 134.93 hectare area so far.



Clouds gather in the skies above Nainital lake in Nainital on Saturday. Pioneer photo

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

1 in ten diabetic Covid-19 patients dies within 7 days of hospitalisation

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Underlying ailments are already known to have expedited the Covid-19 death. However, now the researchers have found that in ten Covid-19 patients suffering with diabetes dies within 7 days of hospital admission, and one in five is intubated and mechanically ventilated.

Age, though, is the biggest determining risk factor for death among those with either form of diabetes who get Covid-19, said the researchers as they found that two-thirds (65 per cent) of Covid-19 patients with diabetes admitted to hospital are men, and the average age of all patients is 70 years.

Under-40s have a very low risk compared with those over 40, and especially compared with those over 60 years in their study published in Diabetologia (the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes [EASD]).

The findings hold importance for India which is known as a high-prevalence country. There are around 50 million people with diabetes in India whose number is likely to touch 87 million by 2030, because of various reasons, sedentary lifestyle being the major one.

The CBI had registered the Agusta Westland chopper scam under IPC Sections relating to criminal conspiracy and cheating besides relevant provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act against former Air Chief Marshal SP Tyagi and others. The CBI had registered a separate FIR against Moser Baer India Ltd. and its Directors, unknown public servants and unknown private persons under IPC Sections relating to criminal conspiracy, forgery and cheating and Prevention of Corruption Act in a bank fraud case.

VVIP CHOPPER SCAM

ED attaches ₹385 cr assets of Agusta middleman Rajiv

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday issued separate Provisional Attachment Orders attaching assets worth USD 50.90 million (equivalent to ₹385.44 crore) of accused Rajiv Saxena under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in Agusta Westland chopper scam and Moser Baer Bank fraud case.



revealed that accused Rajiv Saxena is a Hawala operator and accommodation entry provider who runs the accommodation entry business in Dubai through numerous companies known as Matrix Group. Saxena and his wife Shivani Saxena (also an accused in Agusta Westland case).

The accounts of Moser Baer India Ltd. were classified as a Non-Performing Asset in the year 2014. Investigation in the case has revealed that the proceeds of crime generated by Deepak Puri out of bank fraud were received and kept by Rajiv Saxena till 2018 through accounts maintained for Deepak Puri and also equity has been transferred from an undisclosed entity based in Bahamas. From the analysis of digital evidences and accounts of Puri family maintained by Saxena, it was revealed that the amount of USD 16.33 million is proceeds of crime in the case of Saxena belonging to Deepak Puri and is parked in the accounts of companies of Matrix Group, the agency said.

Likewise, proceeds of crime belonging to Ratal Puri, nephew of Congress leader Kamal Nath, and transferred to Rajiv Saxena from an undisclosed foreign entity have also been attached.

The attached assets include a villa in upscale Palm Jumeirah, Dubai worth 20 million AED and balances in five Swiss bank accounts amounting to USD 45.55 million of Moser Baer.

Saxena was deported to India from UAE on January 31 last year for his involvement in the multi-crore VVIP chopper scam and was arrested under PMLA.

Investigations under PMLA were initiated by ED on the basis of separate FIRs registered by CBI in connection with the Agusta Westland Chopper Scam and Moser Baer Bank Fraud cases.

Major Gawani bags 'United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the year Award'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Army's Major Suman Gawani, who served as a peacekeeper with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in 2019, has been selected for the prestigious 'United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the year Award'.

She will receive the award from the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres during an online ceremony organised at the UN Headquarters, New York on Friday on the occasion of International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, the Army said here on Friday. She will be receiving this award along with a Brazilian Naval Officer Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araujo.

FAO warns of several successive locusts invasions in Rajasthan

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has warned that several successive locusts invasions are expected until July in Rajasthan with eastward surges across northern India as far as Bihar and Odisha followed by westward movements and a return to Rajasthan on the changing winds associated with the monsoon. In its latest update, the FAO said locust swarms have moved into northern India but there are less chances of migration past to reach southern parts of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

More trouble in officing for Tablighi Jamaat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In more trouble for Tablighi Jamaat, the CBI has registered a Preliminary Enquiry against the Islamist outfit's organisers and other unknown persons on a complaint alleging that the organisation's Trust indulged in dubious cash transactions by using illegal means and non-disclosure of receipt of foreign funds to the competent authority under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

In March, the police evacuated more than 5,000 people staying at the Tablighi Jamaat headquarters here at the Nizamuddin for a religious congregation.

On its part, the CBI will seek to unearth the larger context behind the alleged funding of the Tablighi Jamaat's Trust and gather evidence to substantiate the allegations in the complaint, sources said.

DGCA warns pilots of locusts, issues operation circular

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The aviation regulator DGCA on Friday issued guidelines for stakeholders like pilots and engineers on how to deal with locust swarms, saying they pose a threat to aircraft in the critical landing and takeoff phase of a flight.

Govt is consistently shrinking savings, income of common man: Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday alleged that the economy is 'sinking' but the Government is consistently 'shrinking' the savings and income of the common man by reducing the deposits bank deposit and fixed savings rate of public sector banks.

The party also questioned the Supreme Court's silence over the remarks made by the Solicitor General (SG) a day earlier and alleged that the Government was autocratic in its functioning.

BJP to hold Physical Press Conferences in all States to mark first anniv of second run of Modi Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an indication of gradual opening of lockdown on political activities which had turned 'digital' over a period, BJP would conduct Physical Press Conferences in all State units while observing the article 357 under the second run of the Modi Government at the Centre.

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TN crosses 20K mark, 874 more afflicted

62 test +ve in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

With 874 persons testing positive on Friday, the total number of persons afflicted with coronavirus in Tamil Nadu reached 20,246. The only consolation for the authorities is the number of patients discharged from various hospitals in the state Friday saw 765 persons getting cured and discharged from hospitals and this made the total number of active cases in the State as 8,776.

Nine persons were declared dead on Friday and the fatalities reached 154 all over the State. The efforts by the Government to contain the pandemic continued without

any hold back as 71 laboratories were working round the clock to test the samples. According to the medical bulletin issued by the Tamil Nadu Government, 11, 334 persons were tested on Friday which took the total number of persons tested till date to 4,66,550. Chennai continued to be the epicentre of covid-19 in Tamil Nadu with 13,662 persons testing positive till date. There are 6,533 active cases in the district which is closely followed by Chengalpattu (545). There are districts like Namakkal, Nilgiris and Perambalur which do not have even a single coronavirus patient. Dharmapuri, which succeeded in containing the pandemic reported three cases on Friday. 62 persons tested positive

for coronavirus in Kerala on Friday, according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Speaking to reporters at Thiruvananthapuram, the chief minister said that the hike in coronavirus cases was mainly due to expatriates and especially in Kashmir valley. The Government, which is tied up with containment efforts to check the further spread of deadly virus, is already under pressure from the State Government to allow annual pilgrimages to the cave shrine for a limited period of at least two weeks. The final decision in this regard is expected to be taken during next week by the State Government. The Corona Amarnath Shrine Board after holding threeday discussions with members of the board and taking in to account the fea-

Uncertainty over Amarnath yatra as cases rise in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

While the Jammu & Kashmir Government is still contemplating whether to allow pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave shrine for a shorter duration in the second week of July this year, the total number of coronavirus cases are spiraling up without showing any signs of coming down, especially in Kashmir valley.

The Government, which is tied up with containment efforts to check the further spread of deadly virus, is already under pressure from the State Government to allow annual pilgrimages to the cave shrine for a limited period of at least two weeks.

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128 new cases in State, 36 from Jammu and 92 from Kashmir

back from the Union Home Ministry.

Earlier, Shri Amarnath Shrine board authorities had decided to suspend the yatra this year but later recalled their decision claiming the final decision would be taken after taking a fresh review of the prevailing circumstances.

Due to heightened security concerns, the authorities in Jammu & Kashmir cannot take a unilateral decision as it has to ensure safety and security of the pilgrims during the yatra period.

Secondly, till the time lockdown guidelines are relaxed and smooth movement of pilgrims is permitted the pil-

grimage cannot take place even for a limited period of time. A senior government functionary said, "we are waiting for the centre to take a final call on the issue of holding annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave shrine".

"Once we receive a green signal, our yatra logistics, clearing yatra track, setting up temporary shelter points, arranging refreshment, registration of pilgrims as per the guidelines can be initiated".

On the other hand, another famous shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi is also awaiting final nod from the union govt to restart yatra for local pilgrims. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi yatra was suspended on March 18, 2020 ahead of the nation wide lockdown from March 23.

Meanwhile, on Friday, one more patient died due to Covid-19 in Srinagar while 128 new cases were detected in

Jammu and Kashmir, taking the total tally to 2164 cases. Out of these, the total number of active cases are 1261, 332 in Jammu division and 929 in Kashmir division.

According to the media bulletin, out of 128 new positive cases, 36 were reported from Jammu division and 92 from Kashmir division.

All the 36 cases from Jammu were returnees. Highest number of 14 cases were reported from the border district of Poonch while seven cases were reported from Jammu, and six each from Kathua and Baramulla districts.

In Kashmir valley, the highest number of 27 cases were reported from Srinagar, followed by 19 cases from Kulgam, and 18 from Kupwara. According to media bulletin, 76 percent active cases in the valley are localised in the four districts of Srinagar, Kulgam, Anantnag and Kupwara.

No respite from domestic returnees in Karnataka

IANS ■ BENGALURU

There is no respite from domestic returnees with respect to Covid-19 in Karnataka. As many as 92 per cent of the 178 cases in the past 19 hours were returnees, mostly from Maharashtra, raising the State's tally to 2,711, an official said on Friday.

"New cases reported from the past 19 hours are 178, said a health official. Among the 164 domestic returnees, 156 or 95 per cent returned from Maharashtra, India's largest COVID suffering state.

Presently, Karnataka saw a major spike in cases in Udipi, Yadgir, Bengaluru Urban, Kalaburagi and Raichur.

Raichur suffered 62 infections and Yadgir, 60, both constituting 69 per cent of the cases in the past 19 hours.

A 35-year-old man from Bengaluru is suffering from Influenza Like Illness (ILI).

A 68-year-old woman from Davangere is also suffering from the same condition.

The more patient, a 32-year-old man from Chikkaballapura, is also suffering from ILI.

A 68-year-old man from the same place is suffering from Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI).

Meanwhile, 35 patients were discharged in the past 19 hours, 30 from Hassan, three from Uttara Kannada and one each from Chikkamagaluru and Mandya.

Of the total deaths, 1,793 are active, 869 discharges and 47 deaths.

Religious places, offices to open from June 1 in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Amid eyebrows raising in the medical fraternity and the opposition circles, the Bengal Government has decided to safeguard "Jaan" and operationalise "Jahan" even as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday declared that the State will be fully functional from the first week of June with the opening of both religious places and public offices.

"While temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras will open from June 1, the public and private sector will become fully functional from June 8," she said adding not more than

10 persons will be allowed entry in religious places.

Public and private sector offices too will begin work with full staff strength, while allowing public transport to ferry passengers to their full capacity. Buses which were allowed to carry only 20 people earlier will now be able to ferry passengers to its full sitting strength, she said remarking, "no standing person will be allowed".

Tea gardens and jute mills too will start functioning with full capacity from June 8, she said. When asked if sudden opening of the system will neutralize the good effects of the 68-day lockdown a fuming

Chief Minister said if the Railways could send in "Corona Expresses" (read trains bringing infected migrant workers) packed with people then where was there a harm in opening the State. "We have reports that the Railways is sending trains, heaving with migrant workers. In one seat, three-four persons are travelling. We have to look at it. I thought then what is the harm in opening up religious places. From June 1, religious sites and places can open up in Bengal."

She however said that "no mass congregation or no big festival would be allowed to be organized" in the State till further orders.

"Already Bengal has received 5-6 lakh migrant workers many of who already bring infected migrant workers packed with people thousand of them in trains... many of these people are carrying corona infection... so much so that the people have started running away when a train is entering the Howrah station... look at the Corona Express is coming," she said.

She said that but for the irresponsible attitude of the Railways which too have a "social responsibility towards the citizens of the country," Bengal Government had been successfully controlled the proliferation of the virus.

"We were successful in controlling the spread of corona virus in the last two months, but now it is increasing as a lot of people are coming from outside. The Railways is sending migrants in crowded compartments. In the name of Shramik Special trains they are running 'corona express' trains," she said.

Chief Minister said that but for the irresponsible attitude of the Railways which too have a "social responsibility towards the citizens of the country," Bengal Government had been successfully controlled the proliferation of the virus.

entire good effects of the lockdown would be compromised if we open up now."

Another senior virologist predicted "a massive increase in the number of cases in the coming weeks and Bengal will find it difficult to bury its dead people if the decision is not changed right away," CPI(M)'s Md Salim said, "it seems unlikely that the lockdown with the Modi Government in haphazard implementation of plans. While on one hand the sudden imposition of the lockdown brought great miseries to the poor people of the country now its sudden lifting will finish the advantages of the lockdown."

Senior doctors wondered whether social distancing norms could be followed. In case of a full relaxation of lockdown norms and said "the

Masood relative involved in foiled Pulwama like attack

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Investigating teams of Jammu & Kashmir police on Friday have identified owner of the Santro car which was likely to be used by the suicide bomber to target a security convoy or any other vital installation in Kashmir valley.

The car was believed to have been fabricated by a local expert, identified as Mohd Ismail alias Fauji Bhai of Jaish-e-Mohammad yatra outfit. He is believed to be a close relative of Jaish-e-Mohammad Chief, Maulana Masood Azhar. His name had also figured during investigations in the Pulwama terror attack. Police is currently working on the vital leads to track down the footprints of active Over Ground workers who may have provided logistics support to the IED borne Fauji Bhai while fabricating the vehicle borne IED.

Though, no formal statement was issued by the Jammu and Kashmir police but officers privy to ongoing investigations revealed the owner of the explosives-laden car which was intercepted in Rajpora area of Pulwama on Thursday, has been identified as Hidayatullah Malik.

JMB terrorist Abdul arrested in Bengal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Special Task Force of Kolkata Police had a major success on Friday when it arrested Jambhwal militant, alias Boro Karim. He was hiding near Suti town of Murshidabad district bordering Bangladesh, the STF which carried out a joint operation with Murshidabad Police said.

Karim was allegedly involved in a 2018 blast at Bodh Gaya in Bihar sources said without ruling out his involvement in the Khargagarh blast killing two JMB militants had occurred on October 2, 2014.

The Bodh Gaya blast had taken place near the Mahabodi Temple on January 19, 2018, hours after Buddhist spiritual leader Dalai Lama had left the area.

"He had provided shelter to JMB leaders from Bangladesh, who were directly involved in the Bodh Gaya blast. He was arrested this morning from Suti police station area of Murshidabad district," a senior officer said adding a number of documents and other things have been recovered from him.

"He is among the top three JMB operatives wanted in India. We have been looking for him for quite some time. He will be produced before a local court today and we will seek his police custody," an official said adding, the terrorist had earlier given the cops a slip but this time they could manage to arrest him.

NC rejects J&K delimitation commission, won't take part

Jammu: A day after Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had nominated the Associate Members of Delimitation Commission for Jammu & Kashmir, one of the leading mainstream political party in Kashmir valley, National Conference on Friday rejected the entire process saying that the party's three members of Parliament will not participate in it.

MoS PMSO, Dr Jitendra Singh and members of Parliament, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Mohammad Akbar Lone, Hasnain Masoodi and Jugal Kishore Sharma were nominated as associate members of Thursday by the Lok Sabha. The NC, spokesman said: "With reference to the recently announced Delimitation Commission announced by the Government of India, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference today rejects this process and its three members of Parliament will not participate in the said commission."

The party added: "This delimitation commission is a product of the J&K Re-organisation Act 2019, which the JKNC is challenging in and outside the Supreme Court. Participating

in this delimitation Commission will be tantamount to accepting the events of 5th August 2019, which the NC is unwilling to do."

According to the Constitution of J&K, the constituencies of J&K were to be delimited in 2026 with the rest of the country. The constituencies in the State were last delimited in the '90s. Thereafter, an amendment was made in the constitution of J&K unanimously passed in the State Assembly in which all the regional parties, Congress and BJP voted for this amendment to go with the delimitation with rest of the country in 2026. Therefore, the Constitution of the delimitation commission is unwarranted," the statement added.

The commission has been constituted to delimit the constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019.

According to section 60 of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir shall be increased from 107 to 114. PNS

Land acquisition to be made easier in UP

Lucknow: Continuing his efforts to promote industrialisation in the state, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued directions to amend the revenue code which will make it easier to acquire land in the state.

The amended code will make it possible to lease agricultural land for industrial units and industrial parks. The Land Acquisition Act of 2013 will also be amended to simplify the procedure for acquiring land within a distance of 1 km on either side of an express way. This will also provide for additional means of revenue generation for the industrial development authorities. According to a government spokesperson, the state government will also develop an electronic city near the Jewar International Airport for which a large land parcel will be acquired.

"At a meeting between the Chief Minister and senior officials, it was decided to auction the lands of closed public sector units. A legal verification of the land will have to be carried out for the purpose," he said. If a revenue village comes under an industrial development authority, it has been decided that the public land in these gram sabhas will be vested with the respective authority.

Under the Industrial Development Zone Act, allotment of a plot will be called off, if a unit is not set up there after stipulated period of time.

Meanwhile, it has also been decided that land of closed units under the Industrial Development Department and plots allotted to closed units of other departments, such as sugar mills and Central government undertakings, will be acquired for the land bank. IANS

Veerendrakumar, RS member & Mathrubhumi MD passes away

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

MP Veerendrakumar, member of Rajya Sabha and leader of Lok Tantrik Janata Dal breathed his last late Thursday night. He was a prominent politician who never compromised on his stance against the Sangh Parivar and the kind of politics practiced by the BJP, was given a State funeral at the sprawling Pullyyamala Estate compound, his ancestral home in Wynadu district.

Veeran, as he was known, was 84 and is survived by his wife and four children. He was also the chairman of the managing committee of Mathrubhumi, a popular Malayalam daily and owned the satellite news channel by the same time.

The Rajya Sabha member, though shared power in the State in company of the Congress and the CPI(M), stood for socialism, secularism and liberalism in synch with the kind of education he received from abroad. Son of a planner by name Padmaprabha Gowder, Veeran is described as Raja by the people of Wynadu district. He was twice member of the Lok Sabha and was a minister of state for company affairs in the government headed by Deve Gowda.

FAMOUS PALKHI TRADITION Maha Govt to fly Or take palkhis by bus to Pandharpur

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having cancelled the traditional annual Palkhis (palanquin) processions from Alandi and Dehu in Pune district to Pandharpur owing to the Covid-19, the Maharashtra Government on Friday decided to take the holy 'Padukas' (foot prints) notably of Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram from Warkari sect directly to the temple town in Solapur district in western Maharashtra.

At a meeting held between Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and the organising committee in Pune on Friday, it was decided that there would be palanquin processions from Alandi and Dehu Pune district to the Vithoba-Rukhmani temple in Pandharpur in view of the continued spread of coronavirus in many parts of the state.

In the past, palanquin processions would begin from Alandi and Dehu and go through Pune, Sangli, Satara & Solapur districts. The whole pilgrimage would take 21 days. Numerous palkhis join the main Tukaram and Dnyaneshwar palkhis along the way.

Devoites from from all over Maharashtra and nearby areas would set out for Pandharpur, wearing holi beads and sing the glories of Vithoba and songs like "Gyanba

Tukaram", commemorating the saints. Upon reaching Pandharpur on the auspicious Ashadi Ekadashi day, devotees would take a holy dip in the sacred Chandrabhaga river of Bihma river before offering prayers at the Vithoba-Rukhomi Temple.

In consultations with the deputy Chief Minister, the organisers decided to discontinue the "Palkhis" (palanquin processions) which would in the past see more than at least four lakh Warkaris, the people who would under annual pilgrimage (war) from Alandi and Dehu to the temple town of Pandharpur in Solapur district.

During the meeting, Pawar assured the organisers that the State Government would ensure the "palkhis" would be taken to Pandharpur on the day of Dhami either by Helicopter or via State-run MSRTC buses.

This is for the first time in the past 800-year-old tradition of Palkhis, palanquin processions will not be taken by foot from the twin temple towns of Alandi and Dehu to Pandharpur.

As part of the decision taken by the State Government, palkhis of Sant Dnyaneshwar, Sant Tukaram, Sant Nirvnutan, Sant Sopankas, Sant Muktabai and Sant Namdeo will be taken directly by either road or air on the dashmi day.

Maha sees record 116 deaths, 2,682 more cases

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra, which is the worst coronavirus-affected State in the country, notched another dubious feat on Friday, as a record 116 people died of pandemic and 2,682 others tested positive, taking the total number of deaths to 2,098 and infected cases jumped to 62,228 in the State.

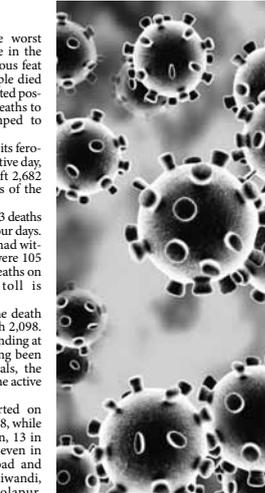
The coronavirus displayed its ferocious face on the fourth consecutive day, as it claimed 116 deaths and led 2,682 others infected in various parts of the State.

There have been a total of 403 deaths in Maharashtra during the last four days. On May 26 (Tuesday) the state had witnessed 97 deaths, while there were 105 deaths on Wednesday and 85 deaths on Thursday. Friday's death toll is 116.

With the latest fatalities, the death toll crossed 2,000 mark in the State. With the total infected cases standing at 62,228 and 8,381 patients having been discharged from various hospitals, the state health authorities pegged the active cases at 33,124.

Of the total deaths reported on Friday, Mumbai accounted for 38, while there were 17 deaths in Jalgaon, 13 in Pune, nine in Navi Mumbai, seven in Dhule, five each in Aurangabad and Malegaon, three each in Bhiwandi, Mira-Bhayandar, Nashik, Solapur, Kolhapur, two each in Raigad and Amravati.

Of the dead, 77 were men while 39 were women. Forty eight of them were aged over 60 years, 55 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 13 were aged



below 40 years.

"Seventy five out of 116 patients (65%) had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes hypertension, heart disease, etc," a State health bulletin said.

Out of the total deaths reported today, 46 deaths occurred in the last two days. Currently, 53,467 people are in home quarantine and 35,967 people are in institutional quarantine.

Meanwhile, considering that the monsoon is around the corner, prevalence of other epidemic diseases other than Covid-19 will also possibly increase. On this background, the health department has started its preparation.

For Malaria, insecticide spraying has been planned in sensitive districts and swachhta surveillance is going on in the state for water quality.

Considering the increasing number of Covid-19 patients, the bed capacity is being increased as per the requirement in the three-tier system of Covid-19 health facilities.

Balancing act

India was quick to brush off US mediation on Ladakh. Besides, we can't afford to rub China the wrong way in the pandemic era



India finds itself in a peculiar situation, caught between the US and China over border tensions in Ladakh. While its strategic proximity to the first is a source of deep discontent for a hegemonic Asian power, the maverick support from US President Donald Trump, who offered to mediate in the crisis, has meant double trouble. Trump has made many mediation efforts on India's behalf at international fora before but the timing of this one in a post-pandemic world is different. More than India, it is a message to China. The US, which has made no bones about China fudging the scale and

potency of the Wuhan contagion and is in a punishing mood, threatening to boycott it economically, is building an international coalition of opinion against the Middle Kingdom. It is, therefore, drawing India to be a part of this anti-China narrative, knowing full well that we could end up being among the top worst-hit nations and would have much to be suspicious about our eastern neighbour. In that sense, the US is feeding off India's weakened position, courtesy its plunging economy and a soaring public health crisis, as much as China is. The heightened tension at Ladakh is China's way of reminding India that it could light up the Himalayan border easily if we fell into the US trap of building a global campaign against it or block trade and investment here. In fact, given that we cannot end our import dependence on China overnight considering its manufacturing edge over ours, particularly when the pandemic has paralysed our economy, we just have to engage with China one on one. India, therefore, has rightly distanced itself, maintaining that it would solve issues with its neighbours through dialogue and diplomatic mechanisms rather than external intervention. China, too, which is used to speaking in a forked tongue, has already indicated diplomacy as a way around the impasse. India is well familiar with this blow-hot-blow-cold intimidatory tactic though the escalation this time is in sync with Chinese depredations in the region against neighbours. Clearly, Xi Jinping wants to justify the need for his muscular leadership by positing the world as an enemy out to finish China as he faces a fall in GDP about 25 per cent unemployment, a plunging economy and the suppressed rage of a people, who will never know the damage the virus has done to them.

So what should India do? As Doklam has taught us, standing down is not always the way. Indian troops are now favourably placed in many positions and border infrastructure has been fairly ramped up over the last decade. Improved road corridors mean that we can now service requirements and replenish supplies even better. This is what has been exasperating the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which realises that its edge in the region is gradually being blunted and thinks that India might have ambitions in the Aksai Chin. So India should remain firm on legitimate positions. At the same time, it must step up diplomacy and keep at it rather than diverting itself to scaled up military conflicts as China is still a powerful neighbour. In fact, diplomacy, though requiring high-level intervention, may just work as the tussle this time is over areas that are not really disputed since 1962 and quite distant from the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Of course, this doesn't mean that China won't attempt transgressions and territorial intimidation to amass us during crises. At the same time, if China rakes up the long Himalayan boundaries, we should pose a counter-weight by tying up with Southeast Asian nations and build pressure against Chinese expansionism in the South China Sea. We should discuss shared threats in the Indian Ocean region with Vietnam, Philippines, Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia. Diplomatically, we could circle China by galvanising the threat perception from it in the region and strengthening a security alliance. One can do this with increased diplomatic engagement without appearing too aggressive and risking a Chinese hitback. In fact, we must be prepared for more hostilities as India builds self-sufficiencies. India has stalled it from ambushing our economy by amending its foreign direct investment (FDI) rules to mandate Government approval for all investments from "border" countries and prevent hostile takeovers. We have already cancelled orders for Chinese test kits as they were faulty and have switched to South Korea and other nations. We are supporting a global impartial probe into the Wuhan contagion and though "vocal for local" may not have any scale now, China will not sit easy with the discomfort over 5G trials and a future shrinkage of its market in India.

Hell before healing

The dismal conditions at quarantine centres across the country are more killing than the disease itself



The word "quarantine centre" has become the colonial equivalent of "kaala paani" or confinement in the dreaded prison on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where our freedom fighters were condemned to die in pitiable conditions. Now we are condemning COVID-19 patients as untouchables and leaving them to their fate if the horror stories of conditions at isolation zones are anything to go by. According to the Government's guidelines, each quarantine centre must have rooms/dormitories separated from one another with water, food, telephone, laundry and sanitation services. But the reality is so different that the Allahabad High Court actually took suo motu cognisance of the unhygienic and inhuman conditions at various quarantine centres in Uttar Pradesh after an engineer succumbed to the infection at one but not before apprising his wife of his plight. More lives could have been saved had the conditions enabled recovery than worsening the health of patients. This is not an isolated case. There are reports coming in from across the country of unhygienic conditions, soiled sheets, a few dirty toilets for scores of people, no social distancing, no privacy, shortage of food leading to people fighting over it, flies, mosquitoes, snakes, staff behaving in a rude manner, treating people like untouchables and throwing food packets at them, lack of medicines for those who have diseases like diabetes and heart ailments and disinterested doctors ignoring their duty. No wonder then that there have been reports of people trying to flee quarantine centres, not reporting their conditions and committing suicide. Even doctors have been up in arms about the sorry state of affairs. With the Government exiting the lockdown in a graded manner and the country seeing a surge in cases coupled with increasing testing, the pressure on these centres is bound to increase. How then will it deal with the situation?

The Government should increasingly consider home quarantining people as the public healthcare infrastructure is obviously overwhelmed. Plus, it can also think of roping in the private sector healthcare providers or hotels, which can be turned into quarantine centres for those who can afford to pay. There can be different budgets to suit different pockets. This will free up Government facilities and money for the millions who cannot afford to pay. Desperate times call for desperate measures and it is time we began looking for out-of-the-box solutions to deal with this unprecedented situation. Corporates can be asked to foot the bills of the centres and make the expense part of their CSR. The Government should have created the infrastructure during the lockdown period. The fact that it could not reflects poorly on it.

Hysteria in a time of virus

The Corona pandemic has been killing far fewer people compared to road accidents and other causes. It has indeed brought out the best and the worst in humanity



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Watching the public's and the Union and State Governments' response to the COVID-19 pandemic in India, I was reminded of Charles Dickens' famous sentence in *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so wondrously mixed up, that the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."

There are parts of the sentence that are generally relevant to the times we live in India but not to the specific context we are talking about. Some parts do apply. For example, it is "the best of times" in terms of the courage, compassion and generosity shown by a number of people to help migrant workers, rendered unemployed by the lockdown. One of them is Pappan Singh Gehlot, a mushroom farmer in Delhi's Tigar village, who has bought air tickets worth ₹68,000 to enable his migrant workers to return to their village in Bihar. He has also given each of them a cash advance of ₹3,000 so that they do not face any hardship on return, besides getting their medical certificates. Another example is that of Akshay Kothawale, a 30-year-old auto driver in Pune, who is spending the ₹200,000 he had saved, to help in sending to feed migrant workers and those in distress in the streets. With the help of his friends who have chipped in, he is feeding 400 people every day besides ferrying senior citizens and pregnant women to clinics.

Another shining example is that of the alumni association of the Bengaluru-based National Law School raising funds to charter an Air Asia Boeing A-320 aircraft to send 169 migrant workers and five children home from Mumbai to Ranchi in Jharkhand. According to Sheyl Trehan, one of those involved in the



venture, it was carried out in cooperation with Priya Sharma of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of IIT, Mumbai.

There are many other examples of individuals and NGOs going out of their way to help migrant labourers and urban poor. They, however, constitute a small slice of the population. The overwhelming majority could not care less or are hostile to them. The indifference is manifest even in the case of the havoc wrought by the super-cyclone Amphan, which has devastated huge tracts in West Bengal and parts of Odisha. West Bengal bore the brunt of it. There were not more than 86 deaths thanks to the State Government's excellent work in evacuating people. The physical damage has been crippling. The Sunderbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a wildlife sanctuary, has virtually been destroyed. Hundreds and thousands of people have been rendered homeless. Crops over thousands of square kilometres have been lost. According to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, over 5,000 trees have been uprooted in the city—the figure may have been as high as 10,000 if the adjacent areas are included. Hundreds of lamp posts have been destroyed. Yet, having satisfied their voyeuristic instincts

in front of television sets, the overwhelming majority outside West Bengal and Odisha is now obsessed with COVID-19 and the threat the pandemic poses to them.

And this despite the fact that COVID-19, the first case of which was reported in India on January 30, 2020, has been killing far fewer people compared to road accidents and other causes. Thus, according to the latest figures, there have been over 166,000 cases, 71,196 cures and 4,706 deaths. This means, on a rough average, over 36 deaths per day since January 30. In sharp contrast, there are on an average 1,214 traffic accidents and 377 deaths from such mishaps, every day. There were 5.45 crore cases of, and 28 lakh cases of deaths from cardiovascular diseases in India in 2016.

It is this hysteria worked up over the COVID-19 pandemic which is one of the main reasons making this "the worst of times" in terms of the cruelty arising therefrom, and also the hypocrisy laid bare by the mismatch between official expressions of concern for migrant workers and their inhuman treatment on the ground. It is not just the fiasco of the efforts to take them home by special trains earmarked exclusively for them. It is also the widely

manifested attitude of not being sympathetic to the terrible suffering of migrant workers on highways, roads, airports, railway stations and inter-State borders—and regarding them as untouchables to be consigned to the peripheries of their villages or neighbourhood by locals fearing them spreading infection. And this despite wide dissemination through media of the fact that COVID-19 infects one only through close personal contact and home quarantine is good enough. Even single women and children are not spared!

The basic reason is fear and, in its fundamental sub-statum, that of death. This is understandable. There is neither cure nor as yet a vaccine for COVID-19. Exaggerated fear, in the teeth of the availability of information, which shows its lack of basis, is however, irrational and unwarranted. Like all fears, it should have been contained by an application of will. This has not happened. Instead, the majority of people in this country has been enveloped by a wild terror that has led to the better of their humane instincts and rationality.

This leads to two other segments of Dickens' observation, "It was the age of foolishness," and "it was the spring of hope, it was the

winter of despair." It is the age of wisdom in the sense that the people are beginning to realise that what many had taken for granted—that humans are the masters of the universe—is not true and that rationality is a fragile attribute. It is the age of foolishness in that the majority cannot still apply reason in a time of crisis. The hope lies in the shining conduct of a minority and the compassion and courage shown by even people from the most privileged sections, the despair from the selfishness and worse of the majority and the attitude of the Union and most of the State Governments to the plight of migrant workers.

It is a remarkable commentary on the state of affairs that the Supreme Court, on Thursday, had to forbid the railways and the State Governments from extracting train or bus fares from stranded migrant waiting to return home. The railways had to provide them with food and water during train journeys, while the States from which they were boarding would have to take care of their meals and water during bus journeys. One only wishes the order came earlier.

(The writer is Consultant Editor, The Pioneer, and an author)

SOUNDBITE

The Government's silence about the border situation with China is fuelling massive speculation and uncertainty at a time of crisis. It must come clean and tell India exactly what's happening.

Congress leader
—Rahul Gandhi

This pandemic has reminded us that not everyone has the luxury to stay at home, and we have to be mindful and try helping in whatever way possible.

Actor
—Huma S Qureshi

Have a big conflict... India and China. Two countries with 1.4 billion people (each) and very powerful militaries. India is not happy and probably China is not happy.

US President
—Donald Trump

At this stage, we cannot say that there is community spread of COVID-19 in Kerala. But, we are on the brink of community spread as cases have gone up.

Kerala CM
—Pinarayi Vijayan

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reforms in PDS

Sir—This refers to the article, "Pandemic and PDS" (May 28) by Santosh Biswal and Utam Chakraborty. It needs to be clarified that the exercise of State-wise coverage within the overall national coverage of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) was done by the Planning Commission using 68th round of NSSO Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (2011-12). The estimation took into account the monthly per capita expenditure of States and the inter-State price differentials to arrive at the consumption cut-offs for rural and urban areas for each State/UT. This was thereafter used to arrive at the percentage of persons falling below that cut-off level of expenditure separately for rural and urban areas. These percentages were then applied on the 2011 population Census to arrive at the number of persons in each State/UT both in rural and urban areas. This yielded the eligible population in the rural and urban areas in each State/UT.

Private hospitals must share the burden

This refers to the editorial, "The cost of care" (May 29). The Supreme Court has rightly questioned private hospitals for not giving free COVID treatment to affected patients. It is a fact that the growing number of cases has crippled Government hospitals. There is a need for private hospitals to coordinate with the Government to tide over the crisis. The Bench, headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde, has asked the Government to identify a list of hospitals where COVID patients can be treated free of cost. At least the private hospitals can waive consultation, laboratory and ward charges for patients. The cost of medicines can be borne by them, too. In Government hospitals, too, at least 25 per cent of the cost of treatment and medicines should be borne by the patients. Then people will be careful enough to stay away from infected people. Since the Government has been bearing the treatment cost, some people are not following



the guidelines. In many places, COVID warriors have also been attacked. Also, it is unfair to expect private hospitals to attend only to COVID patients. Those suffering from other diseases should not be neglected. As things stand now, other patients have been badly neglected with some fatalities as well.

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

"One nation, one ration card" is already enabled in 17 States/UTs. So far, 146 LMT foodgrains have been delivered to NFSA beneficiaries during April and May 2020 under regular NFSA and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY). Further, distribution is also under progress. Also, the Atma Nirbar Bharat Abhiyan is being implemented to reach out to all such people who may not have NFSA or State ration cards, including migrants/stranded migrants but are in need for temporary ration. A proper review of the above initiative on a factual basis should have been done before naming some States as "doubly disadvantaged." This is a lack of proper understanding of facts and ongoing reforms, which often leads to unsubstantiated criticism of the PDS of having an imaginary in-built inequity. The Government always welcomes further improvement in the system and is open to any constructive criticism as it helps in improvement of the system for the benefit of the poor. Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Build cyber resilience

As cyber attacks soar, a data recovery plan must be fully integrated within the business and align with its cloud strategy



RIPU **BAJWA**

During these extraordinary times, when the world is fighting against the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, other threats like the danger of catastrophic cyber attacks have fast mushroomed alongside. As business leaders come face to face with rising cases across the world and in India, the need to be prepared with better data security solutions arises. The World Economic Forum's *Global Risks Report, 2020* ranks cyber attacks as the second risk of greatest concern to businesses in the coming decade. As the tools of the Darknet become more sophisticated and accessible, cyber attacks are becoming increasingly borderless — taking advantage of jurisdictional constraints of regional authorities.

According to an industry research by Frost & Sullivan, 46 per cent of Indian organisations that are in the process of digital transformation have encountered a security incident in 2019. In fact, as per another industry report released recently, India witnessed a two to three-fold increase in the number of cyber attack incidents during the ongoing lockdown that began on March 25.

As it is, cybercrime constitutes a serious problem for India even outside of crisis periods. India was among the top five most targeted countries in the world by cyber criminals in recent years, reflecting the significant amount of work still outstanding in strengthening the nation's cyber defences. Though it is a positive development that more than 550 million Indians have connected to the Internet in recent years, fuelled by rural growth, this comes with its own set of problems. The rapid proliferation of Internet users and of the Internet of Things (IoT) has also left the country's public and private sectors vulnerable. We are seeing more and more large-scale data loss and the rise of ransomware attacks — so business resilience planning is key to survival.

Why medium-sized businesses must act now: Reacting in real time to a cyber attack is already too late. Managing the risk requires agility, meticulous alignment across the business and testing to maintain awareness. It is all about being proactive rather than reactive. Cyber resilience is more important than ever as medium-sized businesses assess their risk of being attacked, whether at the hands of criminals or as collateral damage in cyber warfare. Any data loss can put the nails in the coffin for unprepared businesses. While today's business leaders may hope to evade the hit-list, it is a matter of "when" not "if" an attack happens.

Defending against catastrophic data loss: Defending a medium-sized business from the worst-case scenario and mission-critical data loss requires cyber security expertise and a holistic approach to resilience. Awareness needs to be built across the business — this is not just a technical problem. Synergy between technology and business processes is where true resilience is attained. Learning on cyber experts when it comes to planning and implementation will help businesses identify key applications, recovery times and objectives.

Every arm of the business needs to understand where its most sensitive data and services are parked and the level of risk around them. To understand the level of risk, an agile approach is needed because risk changes along with the business landscape. For this reason, regular scans and analysis of the internal landscape are essential to understand these changes and the impact.

Protecting a huge portfolio of assets is not easy, especially as it expands. But every business must understand what its DNA is — that's the critical 10-15 per cent of data that must be protected at all costs. This is the lifeblood of an organisation and, in the event of a cyber-attack, is the difference between its life and death. It is business-critical and must be decided upon with a holistic view. For some organisations, this can often lead to analysis paralysis — the desire to save it all. In the same way that we would only carry our most essential belongings from a burning home, businesses must decide upon their most prized data so that it can be protected and used to recover the business in the aftermath.

There is a cure: The good news is this process can be simplified by data protection and cyber-security services that enable organisations to establish policy-driven automated workflows to move business-critical data into an isolated environment and lock it down in less than five steps. This is called a cyber-vault, the ultimate protection for a business' DNA.

In the event of an attack, this data will help businesses to recover. When responding to cyber incidents and working to bring critical systems and data back online, accuracy and simplicity matter. A cyber recovery plan must be fully integrated within the business and align with its cloud strategy.

Businesses are increasingly aware of the dangers of a cyber attack but they need to truly invest in cyber resilience in order to shore up the gaps in the ever-changing work environment. And cyber security expertise is vital. The clock is ticking, it's not a matter of "if" but "when" and businesses need to be prepared.

(The writer is Director and General Manager, Data Protection Solutions, Dell Technologies)

WE CAN'T ALLOW SOME PLATFORMS TO HAND-PICK THE SPEECH THAT AMERICANS MAY ACCESS. THIS WILL BE A BIG DAY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AND FAIRNESS.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THE PRESIDENT IS TRAMPLING THE FIRST AMENDMENT BY THREATENING THE FUNDAMENTAL FREE SPEECH RIGHTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.

—PRESIDENT OF NETCHOICE STEVE DELBIANCO

The perfect blend

Blended finance combines public sector and philanthropic monies as catalytic capital to raise multiples of private sector monies, which help scale up the flow of funding to sustainable projects



SOURAJIT **AIYER** SANDEEP **BHATTACHARYA**

As sustainability becomes mainstream, it is becoming a well-acknowledged fact that the planet just does not possess the resources required for us to maintain our current consumption patterns and emulate the aspirational lifestyles of the West. The estimated growth in global population to 10 billion in the not too distant future is an added headwind. This situation has meant that driving efficiencies in resource usage is fast coming into public discourse to reduce the carbon footprint. This is translating into necessary assets that would need funding. Such examples abound, like fuel-efficient cars, migration of public transport to e-vehicles, high-speed rail in place of airlines, urban Mass Rapid Transit trains substituting fuel-run vehicles, micro grids for far-flung communities instead of diesel generators and so on.

While these assets, which are typically part of large-scale transformational projects, are funded either by the Government or by concessional loans from development financial institutions, public capital is not going to fulfil the need for the trillions of dollars of investment the planet requires to scale up projects that would usher in the desired sustainability goals.

However, the biggest challenge to bringing private sector capital to the fact that most projects do not offer commercially-viable returns, owing to high upfront costs, long payback, remote location of some projects, nascent technologies and in certain cases, political uncertainties, weak institutional frameworks and so on.

This is where blended finance has come up as a solution in this context. It combines public sector and philanthropic monies as catalytic capital to raise multiples of private sector monies, which help scale up the flow of funding to sustainable projects, while yielding substantial economic benefits to all stakeholders.

The blended finance structure addresses the project's perceived risks, thereby helping increase the size and number of funding opportunities. It comprises funding, which may or may not be concessional, supported with one or more elements like guarantees, political risk insurance, performance insurance, outcome-based funding, interest subvention, concessional or off-market local currency hedging, project preparation grants and so on.

This combination can and must be decided upon with a holistic view. For some organisations, this can often lead to analysis paralysis — the desire to save it all. In the same way that we would only carry our most essential belongings from a burning home, businesses must decide upon their most prized data so that it can be protected and used to recover the business in the aftermath.

There is a cure: The good news is this process can be simplified by data protection and cyber-security services that enable organisations to establish policy-driven automated workflows to move business-critical data into an isolated environment and lock it down in less than five steps. This is called a cyber-vault, the ultimate protection for a business' DNA.

(The writer is Director and General Manager, Data Protection Solutions, Dell Technologies)

“ IN THE END, COMPULSIONS LIKE CLIMATE CHANGE, GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, SUBSTITUTING THE IMPORT COST OF FOSSIL FUELS AND DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH 'GREEN SECTORS' WILL NECESSITATE AN URGENT SCALE-UP IN SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS. TO ACHIEVE THIS, INNOVATIVE MECHANISMS TO RAISE DEDICATED GREEN CAPITAL WILL HOLD THE KEY, ESPECIALLY AS INDIAN BANKS CANNOT ALWAYS FUND THE LONG MATURITIES THAT SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS ENTAIL. WHILE BLENDED FINANCE CANNOT SOLVE ALL THE ISSUES, IT CAN CERTAINLY ADDRESS SOME OF THE BARRIERS



the role of the Solar Energy Corporation of India in terms of evaluation, disbursement and monitoring.

Another example is that of CKERS Finance and Rockefeller Foundation. In 2018, their partnership involves an investment by Rockefeller in the Delhi-based sustainable energy Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) to build a \$50 million asset financing portfolio for scaling up India's decentralised renewable energy segment (DRE).

The Rockefeller investment would help CKERS provide funding access at reasonable rates and terms to build the sustainable energy portfolio about 10 per cent of which would be in mini-grids. While the national grid has reached almost all places in India, the quality of supply remains erratic and thus DRE solutions like micro and mini-grid hold value.

Then there is the US-India Clean Energy Finance (USICEF) programme, which supports distributed solar power projects through grants specifically for early-stage project preparation support. Managed by the Climate Policy Initiative, it is a partnership between India's renewable energy ministry, the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and others. Developers apply to theUSICEF, which maintains an empanelled list of service providers (legal and professional services consultancies among others) and engages them with the grant.

The project preparation support makes these developers investment-ready to raise funding from OPIC and other like-minded firms. The average grant is only about \$0.1 million or so but this is a significant challenge for the developers given the small scale and the limitations they face in resources and talent acquisition.

This programme, with a total \$3.5 million grant committed so far, has supported several rooftop solar, small ground-mounted and solar home system projects across more than a dozen Indian States. Last is the "pay for success" outcome funder model. Gramen Impact Investment, a Mumbai-based impact NBFC, launched social impact bonds addressing women's livelihood and

empowerment, youths' skill-development and clean energy. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending by organisations in India has risen exponentially in recent years, mostly towards health and education. However, India's Human Development Index score, which includes mostly health and education indicators, has hardly improved.

While CSR is only one component of India's social sector spending, this does give some indication that actual achievement of outcomes is perhaps found wanting at times. The outcome funder model attempts to close this gap. The predefined outcome metrics are independently verified by third-party evaluators for on-ground achievement, only upon which the outcome funder (a philanthropy or CSR fund) would meet the enterprise's interest and/or principle obligations — thus "pay for success".

This ensures that the philanthropic resources are leveraged in a manner that will help achieve outcomes far more than what direct spending could possibly do. Other blended models abound globally, each of which can potentially be replicated in India. The US-India Catalytic Solar Finance Facility used catalytic, first-loss capital to create risk-mitigation facilities. The Grid Solar Fund, which funds off-grid solar companies, raised \$10 million in political risk insurance from OPIC to attract investments from the private sector.

Climate Investor One Fund raised blended capital at about 1.7 times multiple with a tiered-structure, which bifurcates capital into first-loss, subordinated equity and debt with credit guarantee. Long enough to get the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere back down to a safe level, certainly, which would be at least a matter of decades. But even without knowing the answers to these questions, we clearly need to speed up research and testing of the various potential techniques for geo-engineering now.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work')

blended capital only at about 0.8 times multiple.

Models apart, another merit of blended finance is that it can cover areas traditionally unserved by conventional funding, like US' Prime Coalition, which invests in early-stage clean energy technologies, the Africa Clean Energy Facility, which focuses on project preparation and expects to raise a multiple of about 20 times its grants and IFC-GEF's China Utility Energy Efficiency Programme, which helped local banks lend for energy efficiency.

Blended finance can also mobilise commercial bank participation as seen in Dutch bank FMO's Guarantoo that grants partial credit guarantees to local banks, Indonesia's Sarulla geothermal project that used a political risk guarantee from Japan's JICA and a guarantee letter from the Indonesian Government to bring in commercial bank funding, German KfW and ResponsAbility's Global Climate Partnership Fund that refinances green lending schemes of local banks, and Africa Development Bank's Facility for Energy Inclusion that combines commercial capital for small-scale energy access projects.

In the end, compulsions like climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, substituting the import cost of fossil fuels and driving economic growth through "green sectors" will necessitate an urgent scale-up in sustainability projects. To achieve this, innovative mechanisms to raise dedicated green capital will hold the key, especially as Indian banks cannot always fund the long maturities that sustainability projects entail. While blended finance cannot solve all the issues, it can certainly address some of the barriers. The models discussed in this article have already shown demonstrable value which makes them worth emulating. Most of them can be potentially replicated and scaled up further to fund India's multitude sustainability challenges. Emerging markets with similar challenges to India should also take note.

(Aiyer is Consultant, South Asia Fast Track Sustainability Communications and Bhattacharya is India Projects Manager, Climate Bonds Initiative)

Climate change lessons from the Corona crisis

We clearly need to speed up research and testing of the various potential techniques for geo-engineering now



GWYNNE **DYER**

Human beings respond well to a familiar crisis, especially if it is also imminent. They don't do nearly as well when the threat is unfamiliar and still apparently quite distant. Consider our response to the current Coronavirus threat. Countries in East Asia with recent experience of similar viruses like SARS and so on immediately responded with "test, track and isolate" drills, plus instant lockdowns if the virus had already

gained a foothold in the population. Other countries, just as rich and well-educated, had the same information but they waited several months before taking emergency measures that upset the comfortable routine of their lives. So the US, UK and France all ended up with death rates per million more than 50 times higher than China, Korea and Japan.

The same applies to global heating, except that in this case we are all Americans. None of us has prior experience of a genuine climate crisis and although we have known enough about what's going to happen to justify urgent action for 30 years now, we have done nothing decisive about it. We have lots of "clean" technology but total demand for energy has grown so fast that we are still getting a steady 80 per cent of our energy from fossil fuels. Realistically, this is not going to change much. We are who we are,

shaped by millions of years of evolution and our ancestors didn't do long-term planning; they had to concentrate on acute short-term problems. A truly serious response to the climate threat will, therefore, come only when it is starting to hurt. Unfortunately, by then it will probably be too late.

The Earth system — the biosphere, atmosphere, the oceans, the rocks, all the components that govern the climate — plays by its own rules. It will absorb new inputs like warming for a long time while changing as little as possible. It is a "homeostatic" system. We are still benefiting from this feature now: A full degree Celsius of warming already and not much to show for it except hotter summers, shorter winters and bigger storms. But when the pressure on the climate system gets too great — reaches a tipping point — it is liable to charge off in

unpredictable directions at high speed. "Non-linear change," they call it and we won't like it a bit. Hundreds of millions, maybe billions, will start to die. Then we will be ready to make great changes to save ourselves but it will be too late. Human systems will be collapsing under the impact of famines, wars and endless waves of refugees. And besides, once the climate hits non-linear change, it is almost impossible to bring it back. We're stuck with whatever it ends up, whether that new state will support a large human civilisation or not.

How far ahead is this calamity? We probably have at least a decade or two. Will we end all our greenhouse gas emissions in that time? Probably not. Cutting our emissions isn't enough. We have to stop all of our emissions before we push the climate system over the edge and we don't even know precisely where the edge

is. Every bit of emissions we can cut now gives us a little more time before we reach the edge, but the global population will still be going up and people in the poorer countries will still be increasing their energy use. (It's their turn and you can't deny them that.) So, the crisis almost certainly will arrive and then we will finally be willing to make radical changes. What we will desperately need at that point is more time. That's why we will need geo-engineering. This is not a cure; it is a way of temporarily counteracting the warming caused by our emissions of greenhouse gases by reflecting a small part of the incoming sunlight in one way or another. In fact, you could say that it is "positive" geo-engineering, as opposed to the large-scale "negative" geo-engineering we have been doing for the last two centuries by dumping huge amounts of warming gases into the atmosphere.

When we are finally ready to act decisively on global warming, we will need a window of time to make the changes that are required to preserve this global civilisation and the biosphere it now dominates. Only geo-engineering can create that window. We don't need to start geo-engineering now. It would be wonderful if we never have to do it but that would take a miracle. We cannot know how long we would have to go on doing it, either. Long enough to get the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere back down to a safe level, certainly, which would be at least a matter of decades. But even without knowing the answers to these questions, we clearly need to speed up research and testing of the various potential techniques for geo-engineering now.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work')



FOREIGN EYE



LOW SPIRITS ON THE HIGH STREET
 Shops shutting, jobs lost, massive commercial landlords wiped out. The future of our community hubs looks bleak. Building a replacement will require more public intervention and tax breaks for firms which employ and procure supplies locally. It won't be easy but it is an opportunity.
(The Guardian editorial)

WESTERN COUNTRIES WARNED

Hong Kong internal matter, don't interfere: China

Beijing: China has lodged diplomatic protests with the US, the UK, Canada and Australia for 'interfering' in its internal matters by criticising its new security law for Hong Kong...

work, the four allies said in the statement, referring to the arrangement under which Hong Kong, a former British colony, was handed back to China in 1997.

impose sanctions on Hong Kong, Zhao reminded Washington about its extensive trade and commercial interest in the city and said China would retaliate with counter-measures.

Protest in Hong Kong

Hong Kong: Dozens of people protested in a mall in Hong Kong on Friday following a vote by China's ceremonial parliament to approve legislation that could severely restrict opposition political activity and civil society in the Asian financial center.

China says it will prohibit separatist activities and actions that might threaten the Communist Party's monopoly on political power in mainland China.

UK to extend visa rights for HK unless China 'steps back'

London: The UK government has said that it is open to extending the visa rights of British National Overseas (BNO) passport holders in Hong Kong to offer them a path to the country's citizenship unless China 'steps back' from a new security law in the former British territory.

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Asia, and speak out for those who we know so well back in the region. We should also build partnerships that can defend the rule of law worldwide," he said.

Trump calls Minneapolis protesters 'thugs', vows action

Washington: President Donald Trump on Friday threatened to take action to bring the city of Minneapolis "under control," calling violent protesters outraged by the death of a black man in police custody "thugs" and saying that "when the looting starts, the shooting starts."



A protester carries a US flag upside, a sign of distress, next to a burning building in Minneapolis on Thursday

order challenging the site's liability protections. Trump, who has often remained silent in the aftermath of police-involved killings and has a long history of defending police, has been uncharacteristically vocal this time, saying earlier Thursday that he felt "very, very badly" about Floyd's death and calling video capturing his struggle "a very shocking sight."

aggressive as violence boiled over in Minneapolis on Thursday night. "These THUGS are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen," he wrote shortly before 1 am.

Minneapolis police station torched

AP ■ MINNEAPOLIS: Cheering protesters torched a Minneapolis police station that the department abandoned as three days of violent protests spread to nearby St Paul and angry demonstrations flared across the US over the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man who pleaded for air as a white police officer knelt on his neck.

7 shot at Louisville protest over fatal police shooting

Louisville (US): At least seven people were shot in Louisville as protesters turned out to demand justice for Breonna Taylor, a black woman fatally shot by police in her home in March.

Malaysia's Mahathir ousted from party amid power struggle

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has been ousted from his ethnic Malay political party in the latest twist of a power struggle with his successor, but he has vowed to challenge the move.

been accused of massive corruption. Mahathir, a two-time prime minister, resigned in protest. Mahathir has said he still has the majority support of lawmakers and has called for a no-confidence vote against Muhyiddin.

But the letter was signed by a lower official who Mahathir's group and others said had no power to remove them. "All eyes are on Mahathir's next move," said Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs.

Twitter again flags Trump's tweet, says it violated rules about 'glorifying violence'

Washington: A defiant Twitter on Friday flagged a fresh tweet from Donald Trump, saying it violated its rules about "glorifying violence," hours after the US president signed an executive order aimed at stripping social media giants like Twitter and Facebook of legal immunity for the content they posted by third-party users.

looting starts, the shooting starts" in reference to the ongoing unrest in Minneapolis following the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed African American man who pleaded for air as a white police officer knelt on his neck.

These thugs are dishonoring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen," he wrote shortly before 1 am.

Trump feeling 'absolutely great' after taking HCQ: WH

PTI ■ WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Friday said he was feeling "absolutely great" after taking a two-week dose of antimalarial drug hydroxychloroquine and will take it again if he thinks he is exposed to the coronavirus, a top White House official said.

treat and prevent malaria. It is approved by the US Food and Drug Administration to treat malaria, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, childhood arthritis, and other autoimmune diseases.

er" drug in the fight against the coronavirus. "I went to him just before noon on Thursday and I asked him that. And he said, 'he's feeling perfect, he is feeling absolutely great' after taking it again if he thought that he was exposed," White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnaney said on Saturday.

South Africa has virus testing backlog of nearly 100,000

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG: "We understand this tragedy will certainly test you," the ministry said in a message to her colleagues, adding that the government is committed to providing proper protective gear.

But the letter was signed by a lower official who Mahathir's group and others said had no power to remove them. "All eyes are on Mahathir's next move," said Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs.

Minorities in Pak's KPK allowed to worship at religious places

Peshawar: Minority communities like Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province were allowed on Friday to hold prayers and worship at their religious sites by following social distancing and other measures enforced to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Several provincial governments banned gathering of more than five people for worship in religious places to stop the spread of the coronavirus, which has infected over 64,000 people and killed 1,346 in the country so far.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the situation is "alarming." Mark Lowcock told a UN briefing on Thursday that the United Nations received \$3.2 billion last year for Yemen because of the conflict and COVID-19, saying programs are already being cut and the situation is "alarming."

UN urges \$2.4 billion to help Yemen cope with war and virus

United Nations: The U.N. Humanitarian chief urgently appealed for \$2.4 billion to help millions of people in Yemen cope with the conflict and COVID-19, saying programs are already being cut and the situation is "alarming."

It's not clear how many people are infected with the virus, but the situation is "alarming." Mark Lowcock told a UN briefing on Thursday that the United Nations received \$3.2 billion last year for Yemen because of the conflict and COVID-19, saying programs are already being cut and the situation is "alarming."

France reports highest single-day rise in virus cases

Paris: France has reported more than 5,000 new daily coronavirus infections in its biggest such one-day rise in more than three weeks - and the first major increase since France started gradually reopening May 11.

Debate over \$600 in jobless aid to intensify as claims rise

Washington: A debate in Congress over whether to extend \$600 a week in federal jobless benefits to the unemployed looks sure to intensify with the number of people receiving the aid now topping 30 million - one in five workers.

around the globe. Kathmandu: Nepal on Friday registered its highest single-day surge in coronavirus cases with 170 new infections, taking the COVID-19 tally in the country to over 1,200, the health ministry said.

Markets march higher for third day

POST WEEKLY GAINS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks finished in the green for the third session on the trot on Friday as investors scooped up FMCG, finance and banking stocks despite negative overseas cues and rising COVID-19 cases. Investors wagers on India further relaxing lockdown norms next week, though they were also cautious ahead of release of Q4 GDP data, analysts said.

After a gap-down opening, the 30-share BSE Sensex picked up pace in late-afternoon trading to finish at 32,424.10, up 223.51 points or 0.69 per cent.

On similar lines, the NSE Nifty advanced 90.20 points or 0.95 per cent to close at 9,580.30. During the holiday-shortened week, the Sensex rallied 1,751.51 points or 5.71 per cent, while the Nifty surged 541.05 points or 5.98 per cent.

ONGC was the top gainer in the Sensex pack on Friday, jumping 5.32 per cent, followed by Bajaj Auto, ITC, Sun Pharma, Nestle India, L&T, Hero MotoCorp and Maruti. On the other hand, Infosys, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, TCS and Titan were among the laggards shedding up to 2.25 per cent. Besides stock-specific action, heavy foreign fund inflows led buying confidence to domestic investors, analysts said. On a net basis, foreign portfolio investors bought equities worth ₹2,33,38,14,4 crore on Thursday, provisional exchange data showed.

₹ settles 14 paise higher at 75.62 against US \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 14 paise to provisionally close at 75.62 against the US dollar on Friday as foreign fund inflows and weak American currency boosted investor confidence.

Forex traders said investors are awaiting the country's gross domestic product data for the January-March quarter, due later in the day, for further cues.

The rupee opened at 75.71 at the interbank forex market, gained further ground, and finally settled at 75.62, up 14 paise over its last close.

It had settled at 75.76 against the US dollar on Thursday.

LABOUR MINISTRY DATA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation for industrial workers eased to 5.45 per cent in April 2020 from 8.33 per cent in the same month a year ago, mainly due to lower prices of certain food items and petrol, officials said.

"Year-on-year inflation based on all items stood at 5.45 per cent for April 2020 as compared to 5.50 per cent for the previous month and 8.33 per cent during the corresponding month of the previous year," a Labour Ministry statement said. Food inflation stood at 6.56 per cent in April 2020 against 6.67 per cent of the previous month (March 2020) and 4.92 per cent during the corresponding month (April 2019) a year ago, it said.

Lauding the efforts of the Labour Bureau which collects and analyses Consumer Price Index-Industrial Workers (CPI-IW), Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said the cost

of living index' data collection and release by the bureau in these difficult times during the lockdown is commendable and would go a long way to help in policy making in the country.

The CPI-IW is used to work out hike in dearness allowance and dearness relief for over 1 crore central Government employees and pensioners.

The All-India CPI-IW for April 2020 increased by 3

points and stood at 329. On 1-month percentage change, it increased by (+) 0.92 per cent, compared to (+) 0.97 per cent rise between corresponding months of previous year.

The maximum upward pressure on current index came from food group contributing (+) 2.43 percentage points to the total change.

At item level, rice, wheat, wheat atta, arhar dal, moong dal, mustard oil, fish, fresh, goat

meat, poultry (chicken), brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, french bean, green coriander leaves, lady's finger, palak, potato, radish, tomato, banana, lemon, mango (ripe), sugar, cooking gas, etc are responsible for the increase in index. However, it said that this increase was checked by garlic, onion, parwal, petrol, flowers/flower garlands, etc, putting downward pressure on the index.

At centre level, Doodh, Doodh Tinsuka recorded the

maximum increase of 14 points followed by Salem (12 points) and Surat (10 points). On the contrary, Chhindwara, Vadodra, Bhillai, Yamanagar and Jamshedpur recorded a decrease of 1 point each. Rest of 12 centres' indices remained stationary. The indices of 23 centres are above all India index and 44 centres' indices are below national average. The index of Rourkela centre remained at par with all-India index.

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8 core sector output drops by record 38.1 pc in April

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The output of eight core infrastructure industries plunged by a record 38.1 per cent in April as the nationwide lockdown to contain coronavirus pandemic caused a substantial loss of production across sectors.

The production of coal, natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity contracted in double digits in the month, according to official data released on Friday. The eight core sectors had expanded by 5.2 per cent in April 2019 while in March 2020 the sectors had contracted by 9 per cent.

"In view of nationwide lockdown during April 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, various industries - coal, cement, steel, natural gas, refinery, crude oil etc experienced substantial loss of production," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

Production of coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity contracted by 15.5

per cent, 6.4 per cent, 19.9 per cent, 24.2 per cent, 15.5 per cent, 83.9 per cent, 86 per cent, 22.8 per cent, respectively. During 2019-20, core industries recorded 0.6 per cent growth against 4.4 per cent in 2018-19.

The record contraction in the growth rate of eight core sectors contributed to a broad-based contraction across eight core sectors, it had a differential impact on the extent to which activity was curtailed in the various constituents.

While data on automobile production has not been explicitly released for April 2020, the output is likely to have been close to zero as most plants were shut for a large part of the month during the lockdown," Nayyar said. Based on the available trends, he anticipates a contraction of 75-80 per cent in industrial output in April 2020.

GST Council to meet next month

Fin Min not for raising rates on non-essential items

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry is not in favour of increasing goods and services tax rates on non-essential items in the next month's meeting of the GST Council, despite depressed revenue collections due to the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19.

If goods and services tax rates are increased on non-essential items, sources said it will further bring down the demand and impede the overall economic recovery. Post the lockdown, demand has been induced and economic activity has to improve on all fronts.

UK plans new 5G club of 10 democracies, including India: Report

PTI ■ LONDON

The British Government has approached the US with the prospect of creating a 5G club of 10 democracies, including India, amid growing security concerns related to Chinese telecom giant Huawei, according to a UK news report.

A so-called "D10" club of democratic partners, including G7 countries - UK, US, Italy, Germany, France, Japan and Canada - plus Australia, South Korea and India will aim to create alternative suppliers of 5G equipment and other technologies to avoid relying on China, 'The Times' reported.

The move to speed up such a club comes as the UK launched an inquiry into Huawei's involvement in the country's mobile network upgrade in the wake of US sanctions against the company.

EPCEs Sudden sealing of State borders making difficult to operate in Capital

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seeking a stable policy for operations of units amid COVID-19, a representative body of special economic zones on Friday flagged that sudden sealing of borders in the National Capital Region is making it difficult for businesses to operate factories.

"We request that either a nationwide stable policy may be issued, applicable in all the states for the running of businesses or don't put any operative guidelines and compliances for trade and industry and not to pressurise payment of salaries to workers without any business," Export Promotion Council for Special Economic Zones and Export Oriented Units (EPCEs) said.

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

TENDER NOTICE Date: 30.05.2020

Sealed tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) is invited for following job from all bidders

Sl. No.	Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Due Date of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
01C/RR/20-21	"Road Restoration works in Mehrauli Area Nagar, New Delhi"	14,00,00,00,00	28.05.20	19.05.2020
SVI/RAN/059	"Dis: Sablet, New Delhi H1047 (Road under PWID, SDMC & Flood Control)"	2,80,00,00,00	15.05.20	16.00.00 HRS

For details of the tender documents, visit the website www.bsesdelhi.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Through this publication it is notified to all general public that, my clients Sh. Harshah Bherwal S/o Late Sh. Ramnath Bherwal and Smt. Narayani Dand W/o Sh. Harshah Bherwal, R/o 03/24-B, Harsh Nagar, Laxmi Park, New Delhi-110032, and, withdraw and annul their previous public notice contained in a Viral WhatsApp Message on 02nd Oct on 2012 regarding disinheritance/obscuring their son, Sh. Sonu Bherwal, from all movable or immovable properties and now their son has equal rights like his brother in all their properties movable or immovable and other assets with immediate effect.

KAMAL SAXENA (Advocate)
Ch. No. 42/2 Western Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

FIN MIN OFFICIAL No decision taken on setting up bad bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Friday said there is no decision taken on the proposal of setting up a Government sponsored bad bank to help ease pressure on lenders with regard to non-performing assets which are likely to witness a surge due to the COVID-19 crisis. Even the Finance Ministry 2017 had proposed this idea, suggesting the creation of a bad bank called Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency to help tide over the problem of stressed assets.

Appeal from Ministry of Railways to Passengers

New Delhi: Indian Railways has been running Shramik special Trains on a daily basis throughout the country to ensure that migrants can travel back to their homes.

It has been observed that some people who are availing this service have pre-existing medical conditions which aggravates the risk they face during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A few unfortunate cases of deaths related to pre-existing medical conditions while travelling have happened.

ORIENTAL RAYGUARD BETUL HIGHWAY LIMITED

Regd. Off.: G-01, Commercial Block, Axis 5th, Nehru Place, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110028

For details of the tender documents, visit the website www.orientalrayguardbetul.com

(AUDITED HALF YEARLY FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31ST MARCH 2020)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Half Year Ended 31.03.2020 (Audited)	Half Year Ended 31.03.2019 (Audited)	31.03.2020 (Audited)	31.03.2019 (Audited)
1	Total Income from operations (net)	19,87,89,69	19,84,71,71	31,08,29,19	26,73,99,30
2	Less: Provision for period finance tax and exceptional items	12,82,68,58	12,84,71,71	1,813,45	1,813,45
3	Net Profit/loss for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	7,05,21,11	7,00,00,00	19,27,84,74	14,90,53,85
4	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (including prior period items)	7,05,21,11	7,00,00,00	19,27,84,74	14,90,53,85
5	Paid up Equity Share Capital	1,813,45	1,813,45	1,813,45	1,813,45
6	Reserves (including Revaluation Reserve)	5,23,87,66	5,18,66,55	17,46,39,29	13,09,19,40
7	Headed up Debt Capital	41,03,22	9,28,26	41,03,22	9,28,26
8	Debt Equity Ratio	2.36:1	2.43:1	2.36:1	2.43:1
9	Equities per Share (₹) (P/100: each)	1.81	1.81	1.81	1.81
10	Dividend	50.96	57.46	123.54	118.60
11	Dividend Payout Ratio	2.80	3.25	6.70	6.31
12	Dividend Retention Reserve	50.96	57.46	123.54	118.60
13	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	1.30:1	1.41:1	1.44:1	1.42:1
14	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	1.97:1	1.11:1	2.31:1	2.09:1

Notes:
a) The above is an extract of the audited financial results filed with the Stock Exchange of India (SEBI) and Other Disclosure Requirements Regulations, 2015. The full form of the audited financial results are available on the website of the Stock Exchange of India and the listed website of the company.
b) The above financial results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at their meeting on May 20, 2020.
c) Ratios have been computed as follows:
i) Debt Equity Ratio = Paid up Debt Capital/Equity, where:
- Equity represents issued, subscribed and paid up share capital and other equity
- Paid up Debt Capital represents long term and short term borrowings excluding deferred payment liabilities and finance lease obligations
ii) Dividend Payout Ratio = Dividend/Net Profit, where:
- Dividend = Dividend declared before financial close, tax and depreciation (finance cost) - net profit requirement of paid up debt capital during the period/year
- Net profit = Net profit after tax
iii) Debt Service Coverage Ratio = Earnings before finance costs, tax and depreciation (finance cost) - net profit requirement of paid up debt capital during the period/year
iv) Interest Service Coverage Ratio = Earnings before finance costs, tax and depreciation (finance cost) - net profit requirement of paid up debt capital during the period/year
v) Dividend Retention Reserve = Dividend - Dividend paid
vi) For and on behalf of Board of Directors of Oriental Rayguard Betul Highway Limited
Nitin Singh, Director
Date: 29.05.2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED WOMAN

General public is hereby informed that this woman namely Raj Shri W/o Amit Kumar R/o H.No. B-13-A, Amar Colony, Nangloi, Delhi Age: 22 years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'2", Face: Round, wearing green colour suit-salwar and lady chappie in feet, has been missing/kidnapped since 28.01.2020 from the area of P.S. Nangloi, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 57-A dated 28.01.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Nangloi, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped woman may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: clc@cbi.gov.in
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Fax: 24368639
Tel: 24368638/24368641

SHO: P.S. Nangloi, Delhi
Ph: 011-25947225
25949470

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one unknown male, name and address unknown. Age: about 32 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: wheatish, Face: long, Build: medium wearing white and black shirt blue colour jeans and bare footed was found unconscious condition at in front of House No. 1165 Churiwalan, Jama Masjid Delhi on 21.05.2020.

In this regard a DD No. 04A, dt. 23.05.2020 U/s 174 CrPc has been lodged at PS Jama Masjid, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this deceased may kindly inform to the following. S.H.O., P.S. Jama Masjid, Delhi. Ph: 011-23269777, 23261625

DP/128/CO/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one lady namely Bilma Devi W/o Desh Ratan, R/o H.No. 223, Gali No.3, A Block Oppost PNB Bank Mukundpur Part-I, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 19.05.2020 at about 12:00 PM from his house she is mentally ill. In this regard a case vide DD No. 26-A dated 20.05.2020 has been registered at PS. Bhalaswa Dairy, Delhi. The description of missing/kidnapped lady is as under: -

Name: Bilma Devi, Husband's Name: Desh Ratan, Age: 56 yrs., Height: 5'5", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Build: Fat, Wearing: Blue Suit and Blue Pajama on foot Red Slippers. ID Mark: Walk Slowly because Fracture in right leg knee. If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform to the undersigned.

SHO, Bhalaswa Dairy, Delhi Ph: 011-27811933
P.S., Bhalaswa Dairy, Delhi Ph: 011-27811933
27811934

DP/238/ON/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Gauri D/o Late Sh. Ram Chandra, R/o H.No. 14-A, Gali No. 12, Vijay Colony, Bawana, Delhi, Age: 15 yrs., Height: 5 ft., Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Build: Medium, ID Mark: Mole on Left Eyelid, Wearing: Blue Colour Kurta-Pajama and Sky-Blue Colour Sandal in Feet, has been missing / kidnapped since 19.04.2020 from the area of PS. Bawana. In this regard a case FIR No. 259/2020 dated 21.04.2020 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at PS. Bawana, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone having any information about this missing / kidnapped girl please inform undersigned. Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>; Email: clc@cbi.gov.in; Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641; Fax: 011-24368639

SHO, Bawana, Delhi Ph: 011-27752534, 7065036321

DP/235/ON/2020

SHORT CIRCUITS



HRITHIK ROSHAN

So proud of you Pashmina. You are a special soul and an extraordinary talent. Your brightness and warmth lights up every room you walk into. Sometimes I wonder where you get that magic, but most times I thank god for you. We are lucky to have you and I'm sure the world is going to feel the same way very soon.



PANKAJ TRIPATHI

I am an actor. Our main aim is to help cinema and our performance reach out to maximum. Of course, the experience on big screen is different, people watch it together, in a community. On a small screen, you watch it alone. It's not like that theatres won't open. We have seen big things before and (theatres) have come out of it too.



KIRTI KULHARI

I am not really a birthday person. This lockdown has given me time to introspect and understand a lot of things and one thing that I have been contemplating on since quite sometime is self love and the lack of it in most of us. I hope this time makes some change in the way we look at ourselves and the way we love ourselves.



ADAH SHARMA

I hope we all come out of this as more grateful, kinder people who are conscious about the environment. Once we begin shooting, all of us will be responsible and take the necessary precautions ensuring safety of oneself and the people around us. From reading watermelons to slicing scripts, this lockdown has been quite productive.

WILL SMITH

Playing Genie in *Aladdin* was terrifying. Robin Williams did absolutely brilliant, memorable and nostalgic job in his film. So when I am looking at a role and especially something that has historic and nostalgic value, I ask myself, 'is there any meat left on the bone?'



IMMERSIVE 45 MINUTES

'I AM A BIT EXTRA'

Girl meets boy. The two fall in love...rewind. Girl meets boy and they set animals free at a pet market. The unusual, the quirky, the socially awkward and the ones who don't fit in were some of the characters that MEGHA RAMASWAMY found missing in the Indian film landscape. With *What Are The Odds?*, the director tried to plug in the gap and the audience responded wholeheartedly. Within a week of its debut on Netflix, it climbed to number 5 and then number 2 while spawning fan clubs across the country. In conversation with the director, who earlier made documentaries like *Newborns*, *Bunny* and *The Last Music Shop*, it is evident that she takes up projects that she completely identifies with. While discussing the film with SAIMI SATTAR, she pauses frequently, searching for the right word and wants to understand a nuance better before answering a question. Excerpts:

Q The film is trending on Netflix. Did you believe something like this was possible? Not at all. The response has been amazing and the film has its own fan clubs and all that now. (Laughs, which even over the phone line sounds overwhelmed). But I don't belong to this world, so it is very new and exciting for me.

Q Were you planning an OTT release or a theatrical one and shifted because of the pandemic?

I am the writer and director and the producer had not masked the fact from me that it would not be the most comfortable theatrical release. I was told that I would have to make peace with big theatre release in Taipei, China, Taiwan, Los Angeles film festivals. It was important to get a worldwide release and Netflix has an outreach of 180-190 countries.

Q OTT has given a platform for different kinds of stories being told...

Of course, a culture of serious audience has come about because of these platforms. For example, a series like *Wire* or *Mad Men* happened because these platforms were available. It really nurtures your tastes as an audience. It makes them creative (pauses) and opinionated. The reaction is immediate, personal and relies on word of mouth. It isn't a rehearsed audience which says "see this" or "do that". It is very passionate and creates its own bright guys. That's the relevance of OTT, as of now. Earlier, we had to rely on the review of a critic and wonder if we should buy a ticket? But now it is as simple as turning on the TV.

Q Are we making an impact globally through films as we see younger directors finding the rounds of international festivals now?

Of course, there are younger directors like Rima Das. There is this burst of creativity. We aren't making films just with a Third World narrative based in villages to get to the festivals. There is Rhythm Jahnuve, Kabir Mehta and Kabir Singh Choudhury who are just killing it with their originality. They are ground breakers. I love their edgy content. It is no longer that only Satyajit Ray can go to Venice.

Moreover, while earlier we heavily relied on bigger festivals but now smaller ones are also picking up in terms of audience. Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles



(IFFLA) is such great festival where the programmers are championing South Asian and Indian cinema.

Q So what you are saying is that we've broken stereotypes...

There are no stereotypes that are working. It is a rude term. We do not have the smugness or the right to call anything stereotype. All types of writing is based on people's experiences and as a culture we should be respectful towards that. It might be a stereotype for us but may be not for them. We need to be harsh on these terms in this changing world. This is a 90s term but it doesn't matter any more.

Q Most coming of age films about adolescents talk about falling in love but this film is different.

The protagonist has this great sense of discomfort and, at the same time, compensating confidence. And it is possible to be both at the same time. Here, I had to make sure my house is clean and everything is in its original place. Ravi (Dubey) and I were the art directors and the lightmen for each other. We were the ones styling ourselves, doing hair and makeup. Everything was upto us. We were figuring out what content to shoot, how to go about it, what would look nice. And if we were to do it the usual way, there would be a unit of 75 to 100 people managing everything for us. Here, we were down to three people — Ravi, my friend, who was helping us with the camera and I.

Q How different was it to shoot the song, *Toxic*, at home during the lockdown as compared to the usual outdoor shoots?

Of course, it was really different to shoot at home. Usually during shoots, people are doing everything for you, you just have to focus on one thing that is acting. Here, I had to make sure my house is clean and everything is in its original place. Ravi (Dubey) and I were the art directors and the lightmen for each other. We were the ones styling ourselves, doing hair and makeup. Everything was upto us. We were figuring out what content to shoot, how to go about it, what would look nice. And if we were to do it the usual way, there would be a unit of 75 to 100 people managing everything for us. Here, we were down to three people — Ravi, my friend, who was helping us with the camera and I.

Q What appealed you the most about your role in the song? Frankly, when I heard the song, I instantly fell in love with it. I thought it was one of a kind. It's dark and simultaneously

people can wear a yellow coat and strut about like she does as she wants to be noticed. The kids watching this film are relating to this. This narrative is allowing the character to have a gamut of emotions.

Q Did the idea of the film come from your own growing up years?

I did. I felt very alienated as a kid. I didn't know how to behave in a certain way. I am a single child and I am socially awkward. I try to overcompensate by saying something... (gives a nervous laugh) absolutely stupid. This made me bit extra. I always wondered why there were no films about children like us. In films, 14-15-year-olds were falling in love and having romances. Romance *kuch nahi hota* when you are



14-15. It was like a series of embarrassing incidents one after the other where I was falling in one gutter hole after another. I felt that this teenage angst, rebellion stupidity and inventiveness had to be honoured. The beauty of the character is that she can be clumsy, vulnerable, a great companion, sensible and volatile — at the same time. All that makes her what she is. It is not a typical girl meets boy story... I didn't want to make that film. This starts off as a regular girl meets boy story and all that trope and we built on it. We've embraced the film as it is, a beautiful story of it all. People finally understand that it is okay to be absurd. There is so much space for imagination and the world needs it to keep sane, little hopeful and happy.

Q The film employs magic realism. How does that help the storytelling?

It is not just this film. I've done it in other films too. Just that this one has been seen by a wider audience. I've made hybrid documentaries that still follow the rules of magic realism. On a bigger scale, I will always be doing this. There was everything — films about ghouls, crime — but not about young women. They are undermined and treated disrespectfully. It is almost like lets give them something dumb and populist. With *What Are The Odds*, we've proved them wrong.

Q How did you select the cast?

Very organically. I follow a lot of independent musicians. I saw Yashaavini playing a guitar, ukulele, is called, at some point. She was singing and the rest of the crew too agreed that we had our lead. She had done a side role. What is the technical term for it? I don't know the word. Supporting role, it is called. I don't know since I don't come from this world. I feel girls like Yashaavini should be leading films because the youth needs relatable women. They don't need only girls who look as if they've just stepped out of the salon. She is relatable, clumsy, angry, wears her heart and brain on her sleeve. She is also vivacious and just fits the role.

Karanvir brings the calm to the storm till the time he also becomes like her in the film. He does a very non head boy thing even though he comes across as an uptight guy. But the duo get each other. It is their little rebellion. It is strangely predictive of the times too. (Chuckles) They are freeing animals in the pet market. And if you remember, the virus began with a wet market.

Q Did children being stuck at home during the lockdown power its success?

That's a very ruthlessly exploitative thing to say about a ruthless theme in the

world and I would rather keep away from the question because I don't want people to think that it is working for us. What about those kids who do not have a TV and can't watch the film? If I am talking about children being happy about the break, then you're talking about a particular kind of children. But what about kids being beaten up at home?

Q How did Abhay Deol come on board?

We were introduced by a friend as he was looking to produce something. And we had this character, Val. The more we interacted with him, the more we thought he should be our Val. When he agreed to produce it, we asked if he would also act in the film. He said, "That's not necessary. Cast who you want." And we chimed, "We want to cast you." It is so gracious of him as he's there for 15 minutes. The ensemble cast also had geniuses like Sulbha Arya, a legend, who gave us so much love, understanding and blessings.

Q Your banner is called Missfit films... It is M-I-S-S-F-I-T. Miss fit. It is to honour young women who feel misplaced and we would like to hold space for them as they navigate through films. And we love to deal with narratives around younger people in particular. We hear all of them. Straight, queer, gay — everyone.

Q OTT changed the way films are being viewed...

It has domesticated entertainment. It no longer entails a trip to multiplex. There are theatrical films and OTT films and there is room for both. A cinema watching culture needs to thrive with both. *Roma* was released directly on Netflix by one of the greatest directors in the world. Some of the best directors are doing shows for OTT. It is not the smaller platform any more.

Q What were your learning experiences from your past films, *Newborns*, *Bunny* and *The Last Music Store*?

I was living in a very small world where I was very content but the gates have opened to write and direct series with the success of *What Are The Odds?* It gives me the privilege of affording enough support to other people in this system. So now I can run my company and hire young writers. Being independent means doing everything yourself.

Q The absence of censorship on OTT has been criticised due to explicit content. Do you agree?

There shouldn't be censorship. All kinds of content make a culture. For example, films by Carlos Reygadas have a lot of nudity but what would arthouse cinema be without his contribution? Censoring anything shows that there is something which is not right in country.

Q What is Cause Effect?

It is a little outfit under Missfit. We try and do pro bono, campaign driven work with NGOs and raise funds. It is a community driven initiative where we ask people for money. I've done a campaign with Dr. Kailash Satyarthi for it too.

Q Future plans?

Up next is *Reshma Aur Shera*, few series and a book adaptation. I am working with Jeetu Mohandas about which I am very excited.

CONVERSATION 30 MINUTES

In the name of love

Actor SARGUN MEHTA tells AYUSHI SHARMA that there are a zillion reasons for people to feel there's not enough fondness in a relationship but if you both want to be together, you will find a way

filled with love. It's about a relationship that has gone bad but we still wanted to give it a happy ending. We were like no matter what, your relationship does deserve a second chance or any amount of chances that you think are right. Ravi and I were going to share screen space after almost 10 years. It's not that we didn't get any offers but there was nothing worth it. This song just felt right.

Q It deals with the downfalls of a relationship and its upheavals. Did you relate to it?

I did relate to the song but not from the perspective of the relationship that Ravi and I share. This is not exactly what we are as a couple, which is why we were undecided initially. We wanted to discuss if we want to show this side of our relationship or not. At times dur-



ing the shoot, Ravi got angry that this is not us. We tried to cut away from it emotionally as much as possible because we didn't want to get too absorbed in the story. But every relationship goes through this. It can go bad, you get possessive or there can be more distance or proximity between two people.

There are zillion reasons that people can feel there is not enough love in a relationship. But if both of you want to fix the problem and want to be together, you will find a way.

Q How was it shooting with your partner with whom your journey has been smooth?

Yes, the journey has been very smooth. I think this was the first time I didn't see Ravi only as an actor or as a co-actor. I saw him as a director too. On the first day, I had my take on everything or tried to figure out what we wanted to do. But later, I realised that too many people spoil the broth. So he took charge. Everything was in his head, he directed all of it. I didn't want to mess with it so I completely surrendered to him as an actor. I thought this is the right way to do it. I saw him as a director for the very first time and I absolutely loved him. I have always said that he's a great actor but I didn't know he was such a great director too.

Q From small screen to Punjabi films and now album songs, how challenging was this switch?

I don't know if it was challenging. I remember there was a time when I had an offer to move to another medium but I felt that I wasn't ready for it. When I saw my first Punjabi film, I decided that this is what I wanted to do. Like this is home and I would be able to make my place here. It just felt

like it was a calling. When you just sit down and think about what you really want in life, mysteriously the universe really works to get that for you. Whatever I demanded — the kind of projects I wanted to do, how I wanted to make my debut or with which actor — everything just fell into place. I don't think that I literally lifted a finger for all this to come together. I have seen a number of rejections as well. There were so many people telling me that I won't be able to make it. But I had faith in myself and the universe.

Q Do you think the Punjabi film industry competes with other new age regional cinema?

It definitely does. Not only does it compete, I think in a lot of places it's even better. We are an evolving industry and when you are growing, you try to make a space for yourself. You try to make really good content and you are okay with doing a lot of experiments. That's where Punjabi cinema is, it's experimenting with content. I really think we are making some great films.



CAUSE 45 MINUTES

CANVAS OF A LOCKDOWN

Documentary filmmaker BHARAT BALA tells SAIMI SATTAR that the reason behind making *Uthenge Hum* was to ensure that posterity does not forget what the nation and its people went through during the lockdown

SCENE 1: CONNAUGHT PLACE, NEW DELHI

The iconic Delhi locale is a bloc with shoppers, diners and people who come in to savour the beauty of its colonnaded colonial architecture. On any given day *chaat-walas*, handicraft vendors and ice-cream carts jostle for space. But a sweep of the camera and we witness the silence of the centre of India's capital.

SCENE 2: PANDIT DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA JUNCTION, UTTAR PRADESH

The station, a gateway to East India, contains the largest railway marshalling yard in Asia. However, we see one of the busiest stations in the country without a soul in sight.

SCENE 3: GATEWAY OF INDIA, MUMBAI

On any given day, the most famous monument of the commercial capital is a place where neither the photographer nor the tourist gets a moment to enjoy the view in peace. But now, it stands silent just like the docks around it.

When the lockdown was announced on March 24, documentary filmmaker Bharat Bala realised that it was an important time in the history of the country and felt that it was his responsibility to capture it. "I knew that it is the most unprecedented thing unfolding in front of our eyes. It is in one way historical and in another, disturbing." People in the West, both America and Europe have filmed the time extensively. Bala says, "In the next five years, we would be flush with interesting documentaries from those places while India would have nothing."

He felt that the content from TV news was transitory in nature and there was "nothing emotional, deep or like a canvas which tells the story of what a lockdown is like. Where are these 1.3 million people?" he asks. So the creator of some of the really iconic works like AR Rahman's *Vande Mataram* got down to work. Over a period of 55 days, a team of 117 people filmed extensively for 100 hours across 16 states to preserve the time for posterity.

Even under normal circumstances when permissions are hard to come by, during lockdown this must have been some feat. Anticipating the question, Bala himself pipes up and says, "How did we do it? It was a



nightmare, almost impossible." Getting permissions from the Police was difficult but essential as filming on the streets is not allowed without it. "Somehow when the intent is there, things do happen and they did happen," chimes in Bala, upbeat at the thought of what he has accomplished.

A central core team sat in Mumbai while crews spread across the country. Footage started pouring in from early morning to late in the night as the core team was sitting at a studio in Mumbai and giving directions to the crews in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Kashmir, Assam and more. "It was a mammoth exercise. A cameraperson in Assam would send a WhatsApp video and then I would set the frame and check the lens. Doing it remotely was bizarre. Sometimes they would send footage and I would say, 'This is great but what about this?' And they would go there and shoot again."

Bala credits his robust research team which knew exactly what was required for the film. "They were constantly updating what we were getting and, at the same time, specifying what we wanted from each place. In that sense we had to be instinctive in planning. It was crazy," says the filmmaker over the phone.



Bala wanted to get a large picture from a variety of places. So the teams sent out to places like the Mumbai's CST Station, which is like the Grand Central of New York, and could not even spot pigeons. Some of the busiest airports were stark, with not a soul in sight. "Highways, airports, schools, colleges, streets and bazaars everything has been docu-

mented for posterity so that we should not forget this time. We also saw the Ganges clean and pristine in Haridwar and Rishikesh which was captured in a cinematic way," he says. Bala believes that it would be a record for all of us of what the nation and its people went through. "Otherwise you just look down your window and see *apna gali mohalla*

khali hai (our streets and locality are empty) but then you see the entire country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and realise that everything has stopped. Even Tsunamis, cyclones or other disasters couldn't do that. Not even wars, as only the border areas were severely affected. Given the size of our country, with our federal structure, it was not easy

to bring everything to a standstill." The idea behind the four-minute film, called *Uthenge Hum*, is to convey that no matter what happens we will rebound. "That is the resilience of the poorest mother of India. She might have lost her husband at night but the next day she would get up and feed her children," says he about the film which he feels is an honest effort.

The voice over by actor and the-atre person, Seema Biswas, in the film represents the migrant woman. "When she says *Uthenge Hum* it seems like a mother, who has her feet on the ground, is saying the words." And we all hope so too... that we bounce back resilient, more compassionate and better versions of ourselves from these difficult times.

CELEB TALK 30 MINUTES

As the pandemic unfolds, people around the world have found themselves in isolation to help contain the outbreak. While women continue to hold up more than half of the sky, the increase in workload and the surge in domestic violence has made women more vulnerable even inside their homes. It is high time we break the stigma around reporting abuse.

Against this background, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and the South Asia Foundation (Madanjeet Singh Foundation) have joined hands to support director and actor Nandita Das in the production and launch of a short film — *Listen to Her*.

The film focuses on two important issues that many women are grappling with — an unprecedented increase in their workload and at times, being locked down with their abusers. It aims to inspire women to speak up and for us to add our voice to end the silence around these issues. The film also creates public awareness of helpline numbers so survivors can seek immediate assistance.

In India, the National Commission for Women has recorded more than a two-fold increase in the number of cases of gender-based violence during the lockdown period. But we find ways to help the migrant population, daily wagers, health workers on the frontline, we also need to find ways to support women who are battling within their homes. Society simply cannot thrive if half the population lives in fear of being abused, physically as well as mentally.

The battle within homes

Actor, director and social advocate NANDITA DAS's short film *Listen to Her* aims to inspire women to speak up around issues like domestic violence, which has surged during the lockdown



impacting each other. The film is adding its voice to encourage women to speak and for us to listen. Creatively speaking, it was a challenge to shoot during the lockdown. But was worth the experiment," says Nandita. "There will be a before and after COVID-19, and

this should apply to gender equality too. There must be a redefinition of masculinities, where men share responsibilities with women in dignity, respect and non-violence. UNESCO, together with its sister UN Agencies, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Women, felt it was impor-



tant to support Nandita in making this film possible," shares Eric Falt, director and representative, UNESCO, New Delhi. Argentina Matavel, representative, UNFPA India says, "COVID-19 has forced us to re-visit some very important conversations about gender, be it violence, equal participation at home or simply pre-defined roles for men and women. Today it is the pandemic, tomorrow it may be something else. Gender equality is no longer a contested matter, it is both complex and simple. It is a societal transformation that will be a reality when each individual looks at the other with fresh eyes, as if looking into a mirror, and then, treats them with dignity and respect, recognising that their own humanity is only complete with the full existence of the other."

The film poignantly depicts the ironic realities of what it means for women to 'stay home, stay safe' amid the pandemic. "On one hand, women and girls are compelled to heavy lift the increased caregiving responsibilities, juggling with many different pieces of life and work. On the other, many of them encounter a surge in domestic violence reported not only in India but across the world. The complex interplay of gender within the larger socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Dr Yasmin Ali Haque, representative, UNICEF India. Nishtha Satyam, Deputy representative, UN Women India, shares, "The pandemic has challenged all we knew about the dynamics of economics and power, both inside the home and outside. While many of us have had the privilege of home, a safe space, many women have long dreaded the four walls of home, a private chamber that reminds them of the horror and terror of physical, emotional and psychological abuse. Across the world, the dread now lies exposed along with the inescapability of it."

Daringly different

Actor JYOTHIKA says that there are several layers to her character in her recently released film, *PonMagal Vandhal*, which deals with a pertinent social message

♦Tell us something about your next film *PonMagal Vandhal*. It is a thriller with a difference. You can also call it a contemporary courtroom drama. I am very close to the subject which has been tackled in the film by director, J J Frederick, who has also written it. The film has a very pertinent social message with which each one of us can relate to instantly. It is a film which will make every woman proud.

♦You have shared screen with five different actors who are also directors. How was the experience? I have been lucky that I got an opportunity to work with five actors who are also good directors, including K Parthiepan, Thiagarajan, Pandiarajan, Pratap Potthan and K Bhagyaraj. It was Frederick's vision and idea to cast five different actors who are also directors. It is a learning experience for me, I learnt how they prepared their dialogues and delivered them clearly with precision and clarity.

♦You play a lawyer in the film. To put it in a context, at home, are you a lawyer or a judge? At home, I am never a lawyer because I am always a judge. If you compare me with my earlier films, you will realise that I have really come out of my shell. I am now under the blue sky. Today, I can do any kind of role. I am blessed that I am being approached by many directors with subjects that are daringly different.

♦How difficult was it to act with directors like Parthiepan and K Bhagyaraj? It was a big challenge to deliver my dialogues in front of Parthiepan because they were lengthy and the film is basically a courtroom drama. But thankfully, I was prepared as I was given the script three months ago. It is to the credit of director Frederick that he filmed four single shots each of five minutes. You would not believe that he, who is in his 20s, has not only written the subject well but also made his debut with this film. In the first narration itself, I was hooked to the subject and said yes to it. It has



a lot of layers, thrills, twists and a smashing climax.

♦What are the factors that influence your decision while choosing a role? I always see what the screenplay of a film offers and want characters that are not only intelligent but also dignified to the core. I want to play real life characters, which the audience can easily identify with. I would agree to do a film only if I am sure that people will talk about my role and the film even after 20 years. If you play a cop's role, you can easily pad up your scene with action but when you set out to play a lawyer, you cannot resort to action and have to deliver your lines with perfection. Considering the fact that I have never gone to a court till date, I should thank the director for having done all his home work with perfection.

♦The film is being released on an OTT platform, Amazon Prime Video. What do you think are the pros and cons of this platform? I'd say, there are only pros and no cons. Especially, in the last few months after the Coronavirus scare, the number of people watching films and series on OTT platform has shot up considerably. Though, all said and done, I will not deny that

had the situation been different, it would have been a joy to see its release in theatres and the reaction of the audience. OTT release is a big celebration as filmmakers will be able to reach as many as 200 countries. However, it is not a permanent solution, it will only help for the time being. If we wait to release *PonMagal Vandhal* in theatres, there is a long queue. It will take at least a year for the hero-oriented films to release, the heroine-oriented ones will get their chance only after two years.

♦Why do you prefer to work only in your home productions? After 36 *Vayathinile*, I have mostly acted in my home productions because it allows me to be in my comfort zone. It is important now as I have to strike a balance between my career, home and kids. Also, when you do not know how the audience is going to respond to your film, it is better to invest in your own film.

♦You seem to opt to act under new directors... Working with newcomers is good as they do not follow the typical pattern. They belong to a new genre and their working process is very different from mine. If I work only with the same directors, I may end up becoming stagnant as an actor. The character of Venba that I play in *PonMagal Vandhal* is the most challenging that I have ever played in my career, perhaps because of the direction.

♦Are you open to act in web series in the near future? I am not sure. Nothing in my life, including acting in films, had been planned till today. I feel good cinema should live. If I don't get good offers in films, who knows, I may take up acting in web series too. ♦How keen are you on entering politics? Like my sister Nagma, I don't want to take up politics because I believe that you can do far greater work for the masses even if you are not in politics. Every actor has a social responsibility and should not just depend on the government.

India series venue depend on circumstances: CA



Adelaide Oval will host India vs Australia's Day-Night Test during 2020-2021 Border-Gavaskar trophy

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Cricket Australia has not ruled out the possibility of the Covid-19 pandemic forcing a change in the schedule for India's tour of the country with the board still keeping the door open for hosting four Tests in "as little as one venue".

Cricket Australia (CA) on Thursday announced that India will play the Tests at Brisbane (December 3-7), Adelaide (December 11-15), Melbourne (December 26-30) and Sydney

(January 3-7) respectively. However, CA chief executive Kevin Roberts said the schedule could change depending on the travel restrictions due to the health crisis.

"That (schedule) assumes that state borders are open to domestic travel. It may be that circumstances dictate that when the time comes maybe we can only use one or two venues, we really don't know any of that yet," he told reporters on Friday.

"There is a lot of variables based on whether we have four venues in four states or as lit-

tle as one venue in one state. There's endless scenarios and possibilities..."

Soon after the schedule announcement, Western Australia Cricket Association (WACA) chief Christina Matthews had lashed out at CA for choosing Brisbane over Perth as one of the venues for the high-profile Test series.

Roberts said that the Gabba didn't get a Test during India's tour of Australia two years ago and to strike a balance, Perth was overlooked this time around.

'Very high risk' of T20 WC being postponed

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Cricket Australia on Friday conceded that there is "very high risk" of this year's T20 World Cup being postponed and the body is bracing up for huge revenue loss because of that.

Speaking to reporters, CA chief executive Kevin Roberts admitted that the fate of T20 World Cup, to be hosted by Australia in October-November this year, is uncertain because of the global travel restrictions in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We have been hopeful all along that it could be staged in October-November but you would have to say there's a very high risk about the prospect of

that happening," Roberts said.

He said CA is staring at a revenue loss of around AS 80 million.

Even if the tournament goes ahead as per plan, it is likely to be held in empty stadiums because of the social distancing norms and CA is well aware of it.

"The likelihood of significant crowds is very slim — ordinarily that would deliver well over AS 50m revenue to CA."

The T20 World Cup is a big question and that's a factor of decision and that's a factor of decision and that's a factor of decision.

"And it's likely that our bio-security measures that we need to put in place to deliver the season will cost in the order of AS 10m," he said.

Serie A resumes on June 20

AFP ■ ROME

Italy's Serie A was given the green light on Thursday to resume on June 20 after a three-month absence as one of the countries hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic begins to ease restrictions.

Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora said that the Government's Technical and Scientific Committee (CTS) had agreed to the health protocol proposed by Italian football chiefs.

Italy has started to return to normal life again, it is only right that football should do the same," said Spadafora.

"The federation assured me that it had a Plan B and a Plan C."

In light of these considerations, the championship can resume on June 20.

Italian football federation (FIGC) president Gabriele Gravina told the minister during the video conference that he had a "very useful meeting" with Spadafora.

"From the start, I said that football could restart once all the security conditions had been met."

No top-flight matches in Italy have been played since Sassuolo beat Brescia 3-



Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo trains during team's training session

0 on March 9.

Italian football now faces a scheduling nightmare, for matches which will take place behind closed doors.

"I'm happy and satisfied," said Gravina.

"The restart of football represents a message of hope for the whole country."

Lega Serie A will now meet to examine the different calendar hypotheses for the remaining Serie A and Italian Cup matches, amounting to 127 in total.

Most teams have 12

league games left to play, but there were four postponed fixtures.

Spadafora suggested that the Italian Cup could be concluded the week before the return to Serie A action.

The semi-final return leg matches between Inter Milan and Napoli and AC Milan and Juventus, could be played on June 13-14 with the final on June 17.

"I also hope to be able to send a positive signal to the whole country by taking advantage of the week from June 13 to 20 to conclude the Italian Cup," he added.

Laxman lauds Rohit's ability to handle pressure



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's batting great VVS Laxman says the ability to remain calm under pressure is the reason behind Rohit Sharma's success as a captain in the Indian Premier League.

The 33-year-old led Mumbai Indians to four titles, one ahead of Chennai Super Kings' Mahendra Singh Dhoni, making him currently the most successful skipper in the history of IPL.

The 45-year-old Laxman recalled how Rohit evolved both as a batsman and skipper since playing his first IPL with Deccan Chargers. "He became a leader in the Deccan Chargers team.

When he came in the first year, he was a youngster who just played the T20 World Cup, made his international debut for India," Laxman told *Star Sports Show Cricket Connected*.

"I think the way he was batting in the middle order, under pressure because the team didn't do well in the inaugural IPL edition in 2008... Rohit was a standout performer for us."

Rohit is placed third in the list of most run-getters in IPL history, having scored 4898 runs in 188 matches at an average of 31.60 with a highest score of 109 not out.

"In each and every match, with each and every success, his confidence level was just growing, he was getting into the core group, helping the youngsters, voicing his opinion and those were early signs," Laxman said.

"But for me, most importantly was handling the pressure because not once in those tough situations when he was batting did it show, and he has evolved and blossomed. That's why he's one of the most successful captains in IPL history."



Kompany turns down offer to assist Pep

AFP ■ BRUSSELS

Vincenzo Kompany has turned down an offer from Manchester City to become Pep Guardiola's assistant coach, according to various Belgian media reports on Friday.

The former City captain is under contract as player-manager of Anderlecht until 2022, having left the Etihad Stadium last year following a trophy-laden 11-year spell in England.

Kompany, who has never concealed his desire to one day be City manager, said he wanted to stay at Anderlecht.

City boss Guardiola has been looking for a new assistant since Mikel Arteta left Manchester to become Arsenal manager last December.

Police want Liverpool title clincher at neutral venue

AFP ■ LONDON

British Police want at least six Premier League matches and any Liverpool title clincher to be played at neutral venues when the season resumes in a bid to avoid supporters gathering outside stadiums.

Premier League chiefs have set June 17 as the date for the top flight to restart following the coronavirus delay.

They hope to play the majority of the matches behind closed doors on a home and away basis at clubs' usual stadiums.

However, police are concerned about the issue of hardcore fans potentially flouting social distancing rules by congregating wherever their team plays.



With Liverpool two wins away from clinching their first English title for 30 years and other relegation and European qualification issues to be decided in the remaining 12 fixtures, there is potential for police resources to be stretched if matches draw crowds outside grounds.

Police bosses have spoken to the Premier League about games they consider especially tricky and the matches they requested to take place at neutral grounds are Manchester City vs Liverpool, Manchester City vs Newcastle, Manchester United vs Sheffield United, Newcastle vs Liverpool and Everton vs Liverpool.

"Our discussions with the Premier League throughout this process have been positive, with

FA Cup final on Aug 1

LONDON: The FA Cup final is set to take place on August 1 after the English Football Association announced provisional dates to finish the competition on Friday.



After the Premier League revealed they plan to resume the season on June 17, the FA Cup has now returned to an English fixture list.

A shared focus on the priority of public health," said Deputy Chief Constable Mark Roberts of South Yorkshire Police.

"As such we have reached a consensus that balances the needs of football, while also minimising the demand on policing."

The majority of remaining matches will be played at home and away as scheduled, with a small number of fixtures taking place at neutral venues, which, contrary to some reports, have yet to be agreed."

The FA Cup was halted before the quarter-finals because of the pandemic, but tournament organisers hope to complete it alongside the Premier League.

The four matches in the last eight will be played over the weekend of June 27 and 28, with no decision reached yet on whether these will be played on a home-and-away basis as normal or at neutral venues.

Leicester take on Chelsea, Newcastle face holders Manchester City, Sheffield United play Arsenal and Norwich meet Manchester United.

The semi-finals will be played on July 11 and 12, with the intention being for those matches and the final to be played at Wembley as usual.

All the ties will be behind closed doors. AFP

Eng name 55-man training group

LONDON: World Cup-winning skipper Eoin Morgan, and the pace duo of James Anderson and Jofra Archer are among 55 England players who have been asked to resume outdoor training to prepare for cricket behind closed doors.



players have been asked to return to training, "as England Men prepare for practice for behind-closed-doors cricket, subject to UK Government clearance."

The Board said it continues to work closely with its county partners to provide a safe and efficient return to practice for players. Other big names who have been asked to resume training include Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow, Stuart Broad, Jos Buttler, Adil Rashid, Tom Curran, David Willey, and Sam Billings among others.

The ECB said squads for

specific formats will be announced in due course.

The pool of players will give selectors strong options when it comes to selecting squads across formats further down the line, as we move closer to our aim of playing international cricket this summer," ECB Performance Director Mo Mbat said in a statement.

"We will need to continue to work closely with our medical team and government to ensure that our return to training and play activities are in line with best-practice guidelines," he added.

La Liga 2020-21 to begin from Sept 12



AFP ■ MADRID

La Liga president Javier Tebas said on Friday that the league is hoping the 2020/21 season can start on September 12.

The current campaign is still suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, although La Liga is targeting a return on June

11 with the Seville derby between Real Betis and Sevilla.

There are still 11 rounds of matches in the Spanish top flight to be played this term.

"The important thing will be to know the end date of the 2019-20 season," Tebas told *Marca*. "The next one will start on September 12."

"God willing, we will restart on June 11. We are waiting for Madrid and Barcelona to move on phase two (easing of lockdown rules)."

The Spanish Government last week gave La Liga the green light to resume from June 8. Tebas also said that television viewers would be able to choose whether to watch matches, which will all be played behind closed doors, with virtual sound effects added.

Fans could return for 20-21 season

LONDON: Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said on Friday that fans could be allowed to attend top-flight matches in the 2020-21 season on a "phased basis".

"No one knows when matches will move away from the behind-closed-doors model and it is right to have contingency plans in place, but there is optimism at the Premier League and at clubs that we will see fans back



Curtailed sport seasons will not restart: French PM

AFP ■ PARIS

French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe reiterated his Government's opposition to resuming professional sport seasons in the country.

"I don't think the time has come," Philippe said.

"Hope will come soon, and that the start of next season can take place under normal conditions."

"It is not for me to pronounce on decisions of leagues and federations."

Philippe made the announcement as the outlined relaxations to coronavirus lockdown rules in France. These did not include allowing sports leagues to restart.

Ligue 1 clubs hope to be back on the pitch in June and start the 2020-21 season in August.

While their league season seems to have been ended, Top 14 rugby hopes still to complete its playoffs at some point.

"The championships were interrupted for two and a half months for excellent reasons," said Philippe who did, however, raise the possibility of professional teams resuming training on 2 June under a "strict" medical protocol.

The decision to halt the football league is being challenged in France's administrative supreme court by at least three clubs, led by Lyon.

World Jr Badminton C'ship rescheduled

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Badminton World Junior Championships 2020, which were scheduled to be held in Auckland, New Zealand in September this year, has been rescheduled to January next year because of a disruption in the international calendar owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) confirmed that the World Junior Championships will now be held from January 18 to 24 next year.

The prestigious event will be preceded by the World Junior Mixed Team Championships with the BWF scheduling it from January 11 to 16.

Dahoud out for rest of season



DORTMUND: Borussia Dortmund midfielder Mahmoud Dahoud has been ruled out for the rest of the season with a knee injury, the Bundesliga club announced on Friday.

The 24-year-old was replaced by Axel Witsel in the 85th minute of Dortmund's 1-0 defeat by title rivals and league leaders Bayern Munich on Tuesday.

Dahoud has made 14 appearances for Lucien Favre's men in all competitions this season.

The Syrian-born player joins Erling Braut Haaland, captain Marco Reus, Nico Schulz and Dan-Axel Zagadou on the sidelines ahead of Sunday's trip to bottom club Paderborn. AFP

UEFA considers 'all options' for CL format

AFP ■ NYON

UEFA is studying "all the options" for the format of this season's interrupted Champions League amid reports on Friday that European football's governing body is considering moving the final from its scheduled venue in Istanbul.

The Turkish city was due to host the final this Saturday at the Ataturk Olympic Stadium, but the tournament was suspended in mid-March at the last-16 stage because of the coronavirus pandemic.

UEFA still hopes to conclude the competition by the end of August, but



national associations," a UEFA spokesman said.

"No decision has been taken yet but there should be at the Executive Committee meeting on June 17."

According to a UEFA document, August 29 could be chosen as the new date for the final.

The *New York Times* reported on Friday that the final would be moved from Turkey but that Istanbul could be chosen as host of a future final, when it is safe for fans to travel from abroad in large numbers.

Changes could also be made to the format of the Europa League, the final of which was due to be played in the Polish city of Gdansk this week.

the options regarding the calendar and the format of the competition in the working group involving the clubs, leagues and

the format likely and games set to be played behind closed doors.

"We are looking at all