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NEW DELHI, TUESDAY MAY 5, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



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# WHEN THE SPIRIT MOVES BOOZERS...

## Social distancing goes for a toss as curbs lifted; Day 1 of lockdown 3.0 begins on chaotic note

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The third phase of nationwide lockdown started on a chaotic note after reopening of Government and private offices, shops, markets and liquor vends on Monday. Social distancing norms were flouted across the country with impunity in both rural as well as urban areas across India.

While people were asked to follow the social distancing guidelines to stem the spread of coronavirus, the norms went for a toss as crowds flocked to liquor vends and people jostled with each other in market areas.

According to officials, there was a noticeable increase in road traffic as non-essential stores lifted shutters and offices opened up. Hundreds of people queued up before liquor shops throwing social distancing norms to the wind.

The easing of the lockdown measures came with its own set of challenges for policemen as they struggled to manage the crowds outside liquor shops and in some areas in Delhi, they resorted to lathi charge to bring the situation under control.

As per the Government notification, shops selling liquor have to ensure social distancing and also make sure that no more than five people are



People push each other to get into a queue outside a wine shop after authorities allowed the sale of liquor with certain restrictions, during ongoing Covid-19 nationwide lockdown at Chander Nagar in East Delhi on Monday

PTI

present at one time at the shop.

With the Home Ministry allowing plying of private vehicles in all zones with restrictions, traffic was back on the roads in cities — a departure from the eerie quiet that had descended over them during the 40-day lockdown.

While the restrictions have not been eased in containment areas, movement of pri-

vate vehicles have been allowed in red zones with two passengers besides the driver for cars (earlier it was just one passenger in all zones) and no pillion rider for motorcycles.

Hours after liquor vends re-opened across India, commotion erupted outside many liquor shops across States, including Andhra Pradesh,

Kerala, Chhattisgarh, UP, Karnataka, Maharashtra,

Telangana and Rajasthan giving a harrowing time to the police who struggled to keep them apart.

Officials had painstakingly drawn chalk circles for buyers of booze to stand in but the social distancing efforts were thwarted as people gathered from early morning at 7 am.

Long queues were seen outside liquor outlets in Mumbai and Pune in

Maharashtra, a day after the State Government said shops of non-essential items, including liquor, will be allowed to open in non-containment zones, but to the dismay of the customers, they remained shut.

Administrations of Solapur, Aurangabad, Jalna, Buldhana and Amravati districts have issued instructions that liquor shops will not be allowed to open. Tipplers queued up outside liquor shops in Dahisar, Matunga, Santacruz, Malwani, Kandivali and other places since early hours of Monday, but found the outlets closed.

Standalone liquor shops in West Bengal reopened on Monday in green, orange and red zones, except in containment areas, but the police closed down several of them within an hour as people started jostling with each other in front of the outlets with social distancing going for a toss.

Chaotic scenes outside liquor stores in some parts of UP were witnessed, while elsewhere serpentine queues were seen long before the outlets opened. Principal Secretary, Excise, Sanjay Bhoosreddy along with officials of the department inspected liquor shops in Lucknow. The UP Government has capped liquor purchase per person.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Will cease relaxation in those areas: Kejriwal

### RWAs request Govt to close all liquor shops

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid reports of anxious tipplers failing to maintain the mandatory six feet distance from one another at some liquor shops in their eagerness to end the prolonged dry spell on the first day of easing of certain restrictions under the third phase of the coronavirus-induced lockdown, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said all relaxations in areas where people violate social distancing and other norms will be withdrawn.

In an online media briefing, Kejriwal said it is sad that some Delhiites were not following the guidelines and requested everyone to not take any risk. Extraordinary scenes of men and in a few cases women too, were seen standing in snaking queues for hours or jostling restlessly to lay hands on liquor.

The Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in Delhi

*Continued on Page 2*

People throng a wine shop after authorities allowed sale of liquor with social distancing norms, during the the nationwide lockdown at Jhandelwala in Delhi on Monday

Ranjana Dimri | Pioneer

### Delhi Govt imposes 70% 'special corona fee' on liquor bottle MRP

New Delhi: Liquor in Delhi will cost more from Tuesday as the government has decided to impose a 70 per cent "Special Corona Fee" on maximum retail price, sources said on Monday.

The move will boost the Government revenue, which has been hit hard due to the coronavirus-forced lockdown, but there will be a steep rise in the prices of retail liquor bottle.

### Delhi Govt to give ₹5K assistance to e-rickshaw drivers

New Delhi: The Delhi Government on Monday decided to extend its scheme of one-time ₹5,000 assistance to each e-rickshaw drivers during the Covid-19-induced lockdown to cover e-rickshaw owners. The decision will benefit over 60,000 permit holders vehicles and owners of e-rickshaws registered in Delhi, the Government said.

## TN springs surprise, 18% rise in a day

### Dharavi keeps raising Mumbai's count; India total mounts to 45,000

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The deadly coronavirus headed southward in a vicious way with Tamil Nadu registering a record number of 527 case in a single day on Monday taking the tally of Covid-19 patients in the State to 3,550. The death toll reached 31 with one more person succumbing to the pandemic.

Total countrywide count surges past 45,000 mark with 1,515 deaths. More than one fourth of the total cases in the country have been recorded in just last four days.

Delhi recorded 349 new cases taking count to 4,989 with 63 deaths. Mumbai continued to face grim situation with Dharavi, Asia's biggest slum, witnessing case explosion.

Punjab's cases too tripled in five days to touch to 1,232 cases with 130 new cases on Monday itself. Gujarat reported 376 new cases, taking the total to 5,804.

Tamil Nadu on Monday saw 527 people testing positive, its highest single-day spike. A large number of these cases are said to be linked to the Koyambedu wholesale market in Chennai. This brings the total tally in the State to 3,550 positive cases with 2,107 active cases. Chennai is the worst-hit with 1,724 cases.

On day one of the third round of lockdown, 25 new positive cases, 1 from Jammu division and 24 from Kashmir division, were reported in Jammu & Kashmir on Monday. With this, the total tally of positive cases have gone up to 726.

According to official sources, "an octogenarian, who had recently undergone surgery at a private hospital in Amritsar, tested positive in Ashok Nagar, Satwari area of Jammu". The patient tested positive at a private laboratory and is expected to be tested afresh at a government laboratory on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the number of total corona infected cases in Bengal went up to 1,259, the Chief Secretary said on Monday adding out of these 908 were active cases. Besides, he said the State had witnessed 61 corona deaths which was in addition to the 73 other deaths where comorbidity was present among the corona patients.

Meanwhile, the Union Health Ministry on Sunday said at least 682 patients were cured in the last 24 hours. This has taken the recovery rate in the country to 26.59 per cent. Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Health Minister, who visited Lady Hardinge Medical College to review the status of Covid-19 management said, "The



Medics collect samples from a Covid-19 patient to test the status of his infection at Chaudhary Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

recovery rate of Covid patients has steadily increased which shows that more and more of these patients are getting better and going back to their homes. Till now around 10,000

Covid patients have recovered and have joined their normal life. Majority of patients in other hospitals are also on the road to recovery."

*Continued on Page 2*

### 12 test positive in Gautam Budh Nagar

Noida: Twelve people, including a CISF personnel tested positive for coronavirus in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar on Monday, taking the total number of Covid-19 cases in the district to 179, according to officials.

### Kerala sees no case for 2nd day

Thiruvananthapuram: For the second consecutive day, no new Covid-19 cases were reported in Kerala while 34 people are under currently treatment after 61 were discharged, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said.

## CAPSULE

### CIVIL SERVICES EXAMS DEFERRED, SAYS UPSC

New Delhi: The civil services preliminary exams, scheduled to be held on May 31, has been deferred, the UPSC has said.

### ₹1 CR APPROVED FOR FAMILY OF IB STAFFER

New Delhi: The Delhi Cabinet on Monday approved an ex-gratia of ₹1 crore to the family of IB staffer Ankit Sharma who was killed during communal riots.

### FIRMS KEEPING SALARY HIKE BUDGETS STABLE

New Delhi: Companies across the world have re-evaluated their HR practices, and while 50 per cent organisations across industries are keeping their salary hike budgets unchanged, 36 per cent have opted for a decline, says a survey.

## Bengal has highest Covid death rate: IMCT; Govt, Guv start slanging match

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The lethal combination of virus and muddy politics continued to blemish Bengal's anti-corona battle with a war of letters between the Mamata Banerjee Government on one side and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and the visiting — inter-ministerial Central team (IMCT) on the other.

The Governor and the IMCT accused the State of doing everything to worsen an already grim situation even as the top TMC leadership hit back with vengeance blaming the BJP for using the

Governor's office and IMCT to further its political interests.

Bengal has the highest mortality rate in the country at 12.8 per cent, IMCT leader Apoorva Chandra wrote in his final observations to Bengal Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha on Monday. "This extremely high mortality rate is a clear indication of low testing, weak surveillance and tracking," Chandra said in the letter.

The Governor shot off a five-page missive to Mamata accusing her "to be the fountain head of a police State that ran syndicates."

*Continued on Page 2*

## In 48 hours, 2nd terror attack in Handwara: 3 CRPF men martyred

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In two separate attacks on Paramilitary forces in Kashmir Valley on Monday, at least three Central Paramilitary Reserve Force (CRPF) jawans attained martyrdom and seven others received injuries when a patrolling party was fired upon by "unidentified" terrorists near Wangam in Kralgund area of Handwara in North Kashmir's Kupwara district. A CISF jawan received injuries in a separate grenade attack near Nowgam area of Budgam.

The joint teams of security forces cordoned off the area amid intermittent firing. Additional reinforcements were



rushed to the spot to prevent the terrorists from escaping.

Reports said one body was seen lying on the side of the road near the encounter site but due to the ongoing firing in the area the identity of the deceased was not known.

Reports suggested, CRPF jawans neutralised at least one terrorist while repulsing the

attack. However, official confirmation was still awaited.

This is the second major terror strike on security forces in Handwara in the 48 hours.

A commanding officer of 21 Rashtriya Rifles along with a Major and Sub Inspector of Jammu & Kashmir Police and two jawans were killed in action in Chunjmulla area of Handwara late on Saturday night while evacuating civilians held hostage in a house.

In the last one month, security forces have lost at least 19 men, including elite para commandos, a commanding officer and a Major rank officer and six CRPF personnel in five encounters.

## Stranded migrants run riot, 11 Surat cops hurt

PTI ■ SURAT

Appearing impatient to return to their native places, migrant workers pelted stones at police in Surat district of Gujarat on Monday, leaving nearly a dozen personnel injured, one of them an IPS officer, and also held protests elsewhere during the coronavirus-enforced lockdown.

Several labourers came out on a road in Rajkot demanding that they be sent back to their hometowns, while some migrant workers got their heads tonsured in an area of Surat after being unable to go back home. Police personnel lobbed teargas shells and baton-charged agitated work-



ers from Uttar Pradesh, who pelted stones on them near Varel village on the outskirts of Surat, an official said.

Migrant workers, numbering more than 1,000, were demanding that arrangements be made to send them back to their native places during the coronavirus-enforced lockdown, which has rendered them jobless, he said.

*Continued on Page 2*



# NAM can help promote global solidarity, says Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus crisis has shown the world the limitations of the existing international system and the need for a new template of globalisation, based on fairness, equality and humanity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday at a video-conference of leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The prime minister said humanity is facing its most serious crisis in many decades and that NAM can help promote global solidarity as it has often been the world's moral voice.

"To retain this role, NAM must remain inclusive," he said.

Without giving any direct reference or naming any country, Modi also said: "Even as the world fights Covid-19, some people are busy spreading other deadly viruses. Such as terrorism. Such as fake news, and doctored videos to divide communities and countries."

In fighting the pandemic, Modi said, India showed how democracy, discipline and decisiveness can come together to create a genuine people's movement.

He said humanity is facing a major crisis and NAM can contribute in dealing with it.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit via video conference, to discuss the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and crisis related to it in New Delhi on Monday

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID INDIA HAS SUPPLIED MEDICINES TO AROUND 120 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING 59 MEMBERS OF NAM, IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19 DESPITE DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS

"Humanity faces its most serious crisis in many decades. At this time, NAM can help promote global solidarity. NAM has often been the world's moral voice and to retain this role, NAM must

remain inclusive," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said India has supplied medicines to around 120 countries, including 59 members of NAM, in the wake of Covid-19 despite domestic requirements.

He also said that the world will need a new template of globalisation post the Covid-19 phase.

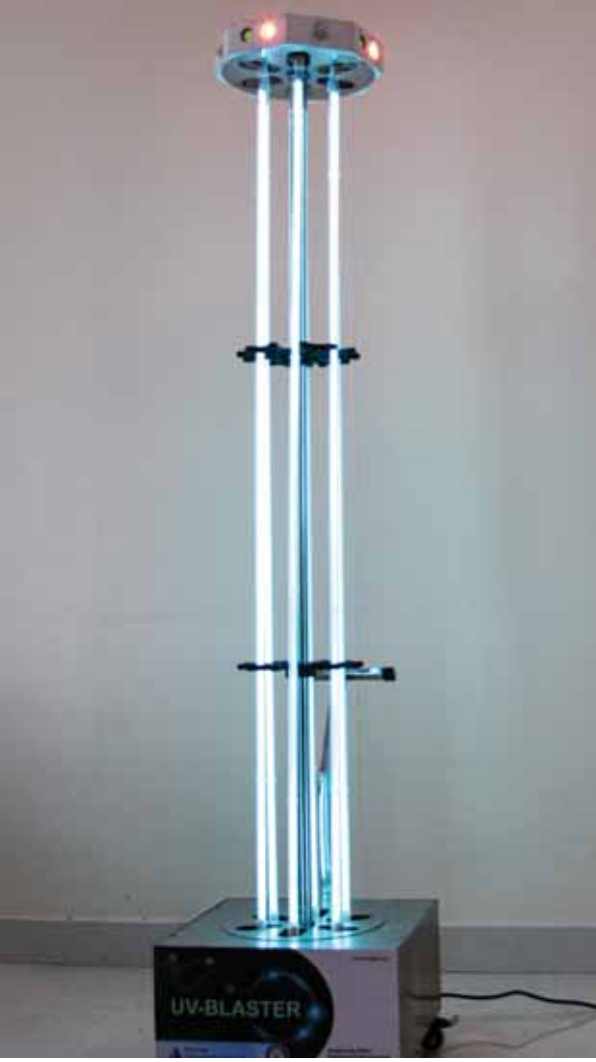
"Covid-19 has shown us the limitations of the existing international system. In the post-Covid world, we need a new template of globalisation, based on fairness, equality, and humanity," the Prime Minister said.

"We need international institutions that are more representative of today's world. We need to promote human welfare, and not focus on economic growth alone. India has long championed such initiatives," he said.

## FOR SANITISING CORONAVIRUS-PRONE AREAS DRDO develops UV disinfection tower

New Delhi: The Defence Research and Development Organisation has developed an ultraviolet (UV) disinfection tower for rapid and chemical-free sanitisation of areas that are highly prone to the coronavirus infection, the Defence Ministry said on Monday.

"For a room of about 12x12 feet dimension, the disinfection time is about 10 minutes," the ministry said, adding a 400-square-foot area can be sanitized within 30 minutes if the device is positioned at different places within the room.



Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed an Ultra Violet (UV) Disinfection Tower for rapid and chemical-free disinfection of high infection-prone areas in New Delhi

The disinfection tower can be used remotely through laptop or mobile phone using a WIFI link, the ministry said. It has six lamps each with 43 watts of UVC power at 254 nanometre wavelength for 360 degree illumination.

The device — named "UV blaster" — is designed and developed by Laser Science & Technology Centre, the Delhi-based premier laboratory of the DRDO, with the help of Gurugram-based New Age Instruments and Materials Private Ltd, the ministry said.

"The UV Blaster is useful for high tech surfaces like electronic equipment, computers and other gadgets in laboratories and offices that are not suitable for disinfection with chemical methods," the ministry noted. The device is also effective for areas with large flow of people such as airports, shopping malls, metros, hotels, factories, offices, etc, the ministry added.

PTI

## Migrants...

From Page 1

Seeking to corner the Central Government, the Congress said its State units will bear the cost of rail travel of needy migrant workers and labourers stranded at their workplaces due to the lockdown imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot demanded that since the workers were already facing economic hardships, the Centre and the Railways bear their expenditure.

Railway Board Chairman VK Yadav said the decision of fare under the SOP was consciously taken to ensure that only those who intend to travel were transported.

Railways in its guidelines said while it would hand over

the tickets to the originating States, the State would "collect the ticket fare" and hand them over to Railways.

For just one train bringing back students from Kota, Jharkhand paid Rs 5.4 lakh to Kota administration. It is yet to pay for the 1,200 migrant workers who boarded the first Shramik Special Train from Lingampalli in Telangana to Hatia in Jharkhand.

Initially, there was some confusion about whether to pay to the States or the Railways.

On May 2, an SOP issued by Rail Ministry makes it clear which says the fares have to be collected from the passengers.

Each passenger in the train that left for Puri from Surat on Saturday, May 2, had to pay Rs 710. Those who travelled to Agra Cantonment from Ahmedabad paid Rs 250 per ticket.

According to Surat District Collector Dhaval

Patel, Odiya community leaders were contacted and asked to make a list with names and contact details of people who wished to travel. The community also collected the travel fare amount from them and gave us the list.

BJP's national spokesperson, Sambit Patra, took to Tweeter saying "Rahul Gandhi ji, I have attached guidelines of MHA which clearly states that 'No tickets to be sold at any station' Railways has subsidised 85 per cent & State govt to pay 15 per cent. The State govt can pay for the tickets (Madhya Pradesh's BJP govt is paying) Ask Cong State govts to follow suit"

The BJP spokesperson further said, "And this is how the Congress ruled State Governments can pay the 15 per cent for the migrant workers (85 per cent being taken care of by the Railways) rather than politicising the otherwise smooth process taken up by the railways."

## After Ramayana, JNU to conduct webinar on Bhagavad Gita

New Delhi: After a webinar on leadership lessons through Ramayana, the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) is now set to conduct a webinar on lessons from Bhagavad-Gita during the COVID-19 crisis.

"We are happy to announce a webinar on 'Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita during the Covid-19 Crisis' by Professor Subhash Kak, Oklahoma State University, USA on Thursday, 7 May 2020," Vice Chancellor of JNU, Jagadesh Kumar Mamidala said.

IANS

## India to bring back citizens stuck abroad...

From page 1

The officials said that the Indian citizens who wish to come back are mostly those who lost all their jobs due to lockdown scenario.

Around two million Indians are working in Middle East countries and majority is from the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Indian Navy ships will be basically used to bring people back from Middle East as the number of passengers is expected to be high. Normally, 6-7 days travel time is needed for ships to reach from Middle East to India.

Majority of the Indians expected to be evacuated from abroad are from Kerala and the State Government has been asked to plan 14 days of quarantine facilities at Kochi sea port and airports

Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Kozhikkode and Kannur.

Mangalore sea port and Chennai seaport are also expected to focus building the quarantine facility.

One ship is expected to carry a maximum of 4,000 persons. Jumbo flights of Indian Air Force can carry maximum of 800 people.

"Government of India will be facilitating the return of Indian nationals stranded abroad on compelling grounds in a phased manner. The travel would be arranged by aircraft and naval ships. The Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) has been prepared in this regard. Indian Embassies and High Commissions are preparing a list of distressed Indian citizens.

This facility would be made available on payment-basis. Non-scheduled commercial flights would be arranged for air travel. The travel would begin in a phased manner from May 7," said the Home Ministry in a statement.

## Will cease relaxation...

From Page 1

have urged the Government to immediately close down all liquor vends and review arrangements. Several Resident Welfare Associations in Delhi have strongly objected to opening of liquor shops in most parts of the city despite entire Delhi being declared as a Red Zone with over 4,459 coronavirus cases.

The Delhi Government on Monday had permitted about 150 Government-run liquor shops have been allowed to open from 9 am to 6.30 pm in accordance with the latest lockdown relaxations given by the MHA.

## Stranded migrants run...

From Page 1

Authorities in Gujarat, one of the states worst hit by coronavirus, have started sending back migrant labourers to their respective home state. At least 10 policemen along with Inspector General (Surat Range), S Pandian Rajkumar, were injured in the stone pelting, he said, adding police have detained 80 people so far. The labourers also damaged some vehicles parked on the Surat-Kadodara road, the official said. They clashed with police and threw stones at them, following which security personnel lobbed teargas shells and used batons to disperse them, he said. "We had asked these migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh to have patience as authorities are still in talks with the UP Government for their journey back home. However, a mob of over 1,000 men suddenly came on roads and started throwing stones on police, injuring around 10 policemen. Even I received minor injuries on my arm," said Rajkumar. "It seems they had planned the attack in advance. We have detained over 80 persons and brought the situation under control," said the IPS officer. In the morning, around 50 labourers from Uttar Pradesh got their heads tonsured here, saying the buses on which they left for their native state two days back after initial nod were forced to halt at Kosamba in the district for want of "valid permission" and sent back to Surat. They said they have been waiting endlessly for the administration to clear their journey back home. A worker demanded that the Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat co-ordinate their movement without delay, and claimed bus fare, which they arranged with much difficulty, has not been returned to them. "Many of us sold off our watches and mobile phones to arrange for the bus fare. Now we are still at the same place, with no permission given to our buses to move. We are stranded here with no help from officials. We demand the governments of the two states to coordinate fast for our return back home," he said.

## Bengal has...

From page 1

"Bengal unfortunately is emerging as a 'police State' with anyone posting on social media, to the distaste of the ruling dispensation, gets a police knock at his door," the Governor said after repeatedly being reminded of his constitutional limitations as a nominated head of the State and not an elected entity by the Chief Minister.

"Expression of political opinions is sought to be controlled by the Government. Political victimisation is on an incremental trajectory. This is equally applicable to journalists, who are stressed as never before," the Governor said in reply to Mamata's letter that invoked among other things the relevant constitutional provisions and the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission.

Pulling further into pieces the TMC leadership's claim that Mamata was person of integrity, Dhankhar wrote the "the bitter truth" saying "People in the State only know too well 'Who in the State is a usurper and extra-Constitutional fountain of power! Who runs Government and syndicates! Who is this ABCD! An open secret! Surely I am not the one, I can assure you that I am reasonably updated about affairs of the State."

As though the scathing attack by the Governor was not enough, the visiting IMCT did its bit by writing a damaging letter to State Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha alleging how low surveillance, suppression of facts on corona incidents and lack of management of the crisis had put Bengal on the top of the corona pyramid, sources said.

The IMCT letter reportedly faulted Bengal for con-

ducting noticeably low number of tests and providing misleading information to the powers that be in Delhi and Kolkata. The team which is likely to submit a report to its Delhi bosses soon after its return to the national Capital also complained how the facts provided by the State Government and the ICMR did not match.

Senior Trinamool MPs Sudip Bandopadhyay, Derek O' Brien and Dinesh Trivedi were quick to respond to the multi-pronged attack launched from all sides. They said it was all the handiwork of the BJP, which through its "fake news factory" was providing false reports to the nation.

While Bandopadhyay chose not to react to Dhankhar's statements saying "what the Governor writes or speaks is not our concern," adding "from tomorrow we will choose to ignore his speeches ... and the best way to do that is to give no reply to what he says."

Regarding the IMCT's visit to Bengal, he said "the team was sent to Bengal as a part of the BJP's political plans to malign the State Government... The Centre sent two teams to Bengal but they could not find anything to suggest that our State was lagging behind in the global war against corona pandemic."

O'Brian was more scathing when he condemned the BJP "fake news industry" and "social media university" for calling Bengal the "epicentre of corona pandemic."

He said, "The BJP's fake news industry and WhatsApp university has called Bengal the Wuhan of India and the epicenter of corona pandemic but their lies have been caught and now they should close down their fake news factory and chose some other job."

## WHEN THE SPIRIT MOVES BOOZERS.. ■

From page 1

"At once one person will be allowed to buy one full bottle, two half bottles, three quarters, two beer bottles and three cans only," the UP Excise Department order said.

Rajasthan also witnessed a similar situation with some people struggling to carry liquor bottles, while a few followed the social distancing norms and stood in circles marked in front of shops and on roads. Pictures showed some people struggling to carry liquor bottles, while a few followed the social distancing norms and stood in circles marked in front of shops and on roads. Policemen were a l s o deployed near the shops to ensure that liquor stores are not crowded.

Select liquor shops in

Bengaluru and other parts of Karnataka pulled up shutters, with tippers thronging them in huge numbers at many places.

There are about 70,000 liquor outlets in the country. Meanwhile, traders' body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on Monday opposed opening of liquor shops across various states amid coronavirus lockdown. The move by States could destroy the advantages accrued from the 40-day lockdown and increase coronavirus cases, CAIT said.

In neighboring Haryana, the shops remained shut as the district excise and taxation department has not received any fresh directive from the S t a t e Government. Like Haryana, Punjab has also not allowed the resumption of sale of alcohol.

## TN springs surprise...

From Page 1

Union Health Ministry also said that the country was transitioning to a "new normal" and preventive measures need to be followed outside containment zones also including compulsory wearing of face masks. "We are transitioning to a new normal. We need to compulsorily wear face masks/coverings in public places. Preventive measures need to be followed outside containment zones as well," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Ministry. He cautioned against any complacency, saying it can lead to coronavirus cases. "There is a fine line that we need to follow. Being complacent can lead to emergence of new COVID-19 cases. Also, emergence of cases in districts where no cases have been reported so far can lead to imposition of fresh restrictions," the official said. "To prevent such a situation and to maintain the benefits of lockdown, we should understand our social responsibility and ensure we behave responsibly as lockdown eases and diligently follow all protocols and guidelines," he added.

### EXTENSION OF PARCEL CARGO EXPRESS TRAINS (PCETs)

In order to ensure the faster supply of essential commodities, Northern Railway, in association with other zonal railways has decided to extend the run of the following Parcel Cargo Express Special trains (PCETs) on the following routes as per the schedule given below :-

Spl. Train No.	Station From	Dept. Time	Station to	Arr. Time	Frequency/ Day	At present running upto	Period of Extension Upto	Composition	
00402	New Delhi	14:30	Guwahati	02:30	Daily	03.05.2020	15.05.2020	5 VPU + 1 SLR	
00401	Guwahati	01:30	New Delhi	13:15	Daily	06.05.2020	18.05.2020		
Stoppages: Tundla, Kanpur Central, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Chhapra, Barauni Jn., Katihar Jn., New Jalpaiguri, New Cooch Behar & New Bongaigaon									
00464	Amritsar	18:40	Howrah	08:30	Daily	03.05.2020	15.05.2020	5 VPU + 1 SLR	
00463	Howrah	17:30	Amritsar	08:30	Daily	06.05.2020	18.05.2020		
Stoppages: Jalandhar City, Ludhiana, Ambala Cantt., Delhi, Moradabad, Lucknow, Varanasi, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Patna, Jhajha, Asansol, Bardhaman, Bandel Jn., Seoraphuli & Serampore									
00403	New Delhi	21:45	Jammu Tawi	08:15	Daily	03.05.2020	15.05.2020	1 VPU + 1 SLR	
00404	Jammu Tawi	18:10	New Delhi	04:40	Daily	04.05.2020	16.05.2020		
Stoppages: Delhi, Panipat, Ambala Cantt., Ludhiana, Jalandhar Cantt. & Pathankot Cantt.									
00454	Kalka	20:00	Ambala Cantt.	21:50	Daily	03.05.2020	15.05.2020	1 VPU + 1 SLR	
00453	Ambala Cantt.	04:00	Kalka	05:50	Daily	04.05.2020	16.05.2020		
Stoppage : Chandigarh									
00434	Dehradun	10:25	New Delhi	19:15	Daily	03.05.2020	15.05.2020	1 VPU + 1 SLR	
00433	New Delhi	15:35	Dehradun	23:55	Daily	04.05.2020	16.05.2020		
Stoppages: Haridwar, Pathri, Saharanpur, Meerut City & Delhi									
Note: The time table and operation status of all the above mentioned trains can be seen on the National Train Enquiry System (NTES).									
Note: (1) Parcel have to be loaded/unloaded within allowed halt/time. (2) No passenger is permitted to travel by these trains. (3) The trains will be escorted by security officials.									



# Kilometre-long queues lead to liquor shops

**SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI**

It seems that people have no fear of the Covid-19 as on Monday morning long queues, more than a kilometre long, were witnessed outside the liquor shops across the national Capital after the Delhi Government gave nod to open them. Following the serpentine queues of people at liquor outlets that opened after 42 days, even Delhi Police personnel were seen struggling to manage the crowd, as people were flouting social distancing norms. The city on Monday also witnessed huge traffic jams, due to long queues at liquor shops, at several locations including South Delhi's Malviya Nagar and West Delhi's Uttam Nagar area.

Police personnel at several locations across the National Capital, including Narela and Govind Puri used mild force to disperse the crowd. Most of the liquor shops across the city including two liquor shops in Karol Bagh area, Geeta Colony, Uttam Nagar, Narela, Mayur Vihar and Krishna Nagar were closed after social distancing was seen violated.

According to a police official, shops were asked to shut in places where social distancing norms were violated.

"At some places, mild force was also used to disperse the crowd. Liquor shops in Karol Bagh, Daryagan and DB Gupta road in central Delhi were shut by the police after crowds, gathered to purchase liquor, did not maintain social distancing norms, said the senior police official.

"While liquor shops in Anand Parbat and Ranjeet Nagar did not open, liquor vends in Paharganj area which opened at around 9 am was closed by 12 noon as people gathered there failed to maintain social distancing norms," said another senior police official from Central



district. Meanwhile, in northeast Delhi, liquor outlets in Jyoti Nagar and Dayalpur were also closed within an hour after it opened, due to overcrowding and violation of social distancing norms.

In East Delhi, two liquor shops were opened in Kotla village, Mayur Vihar and Khichripur in east Delhi between 9 to 10 am. "These two shops were closed within 15 minutes after people did not follow police instructions. No marshal was deployed in these shops," said Jasmeet Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), East district.

Following the over crowding at liquor vends in city, the Delhi Police Special Branch has prepared a report which suggests to extend the timings for sale of wine and liquor to avoid overcrowding.

Since Monday morning, after scores of people had gathered to buy liquor, police personnel were seen trying to manage the crowd outside many outlets where more than five people are not allowed at

a given time. "I don't care about coronavirus, I was desperately waiting for wine and liquor outlets to be opened and for me alcohol is important," said a 75 year-old man, Sukhdev, a resident of Janakpuri who was standing in queue to buy liquor since 8:30 AM at Jankapuri. At Krishna Nagar, people started to gather near liquor shop at 6 AM whereas at Daryaganj people were seen standing in queues at around 8 AM, just before the shops were scheduled to be opened at 9 AM.

According to an official, about 150 government-run liquor shops have been allowed to open from 9 AM to 6:30 PM in accordance with the latest lockdown relaxations given by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

There are around 850 liquor shops in the city including those run by government agencies and private individuals. In an order on Sunday night, the excise department also directed officials to identify liquor shops, which are

being run by private individuals (L-7 licensee) and fulfill conditions laid down by the MHA.

The officials have been asked them to submit a report within three days.

The Government has so far allowed only those liquor shops (L-6 and L-8) to operate which are being run by four state-run agencies responsible for liquor sale in the national capital.

"All liquor shops in malls and markets will remain closed. The government-run shops allowed will operate from 9 am to 6.30 pm. The four agencies will deploy marshals to ensure that not more than 5 people are to be present at one time at the shop," the official said.

According to the order, bonded warehouses have also been allowed to resume operation from 7 AM to 6:30 PM. The Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation, the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation, the Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited and the Delhi Consumers Cooperative

## Move taken without right planning: Cong to AAP

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Congress slammed the Delhi Government for its decision to allow liquor outlets in the National Capital to open, saying that the decision was taken without proper planning and will lead to sharp spike in the corona cases in Delhi in coming weeks.

Congress Delhi unit president Chaudhary Anil Kumar said that the government is trying to boost its revenue without bothering about the health of the people as Delhi has been witnessing a rise in the Covid-19 pandemic graph and it woefully failing to check the fast spread of the killer virus in the city.

"The Kejriwal Government's claim of keeping social distance and the assemblage of not more than five people outside a liquor shop at any given time, was violated with impunity after the liquor shops were opened today as people jostled outside liquor shops to buy booze, which forced the police to

intervene and down the shutters at many places," he said.

Incidentally, the Delhi Government on Sunday decided to open only the standalone liquor shops during lockdown. While alcohol shops are not allowed to open in containment areas.

Kumar further said that the Government should have done proper planning before allowing the liquor shops to open otherwise the move will only lead to sharp spike in the Corona cases in the Capital.

Meanwhile senior Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit distributed sumptuous meals to the needy people. The party has been distributing tasty, nutritious food to the poor people from the Congress Ki Rasoi across Delhi ever since the Covid-19 lockdown.

Kumar said that both the BJP and the Kejriwal Government have been indulging in a war of words to take credit but the truth is that neither any BJP kitchen nor that of the Kejriwal Government was visible throughout Delhi.

Wholesale Store have been given the permission to open liquor shops in public places, except malls and market complexes.

The agencies will have to give an undertaking stating that liquor shops being allowed to open will fulfill all MHA guidelines, according to the excise department.

"The chaos was expected and it is completely a lapse in such COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. There were no marshals seen in my area who were managing the crowd or queues

at the shops. People had gathered here since morning and there was no social distancing. Police also came late and disperse the crowd," said Parminder Sharma, a resident of Uttam Nagar.

"Due to these queues and people thronging on roads to buy liquor, there was traffic jams at several intersections here in Uttam Nagar and Janakpuri area. I fear the way shops were opened today it may not lead to rise in COVID-19 positive cases," Sharma added.

## ₹1 cr OK'd for family of IB officer killed in riots

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

In first Cabinet meeting after Corona lockdown relaxation, the Delhi Government approved various proposals, including ex-gratia amount of Rs 1 crore for the family of Intelligence Bureau officer and financial assistance scheme to non-PSV (Public Sector

Vehicle) badge holders E - rickshaw drivers.

In first, Delhi Minister chaired by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal approved the ex-gratia amount of Rs 1 crore for the family of Ankit Sharma, IB Officer, who lost his life on Feb 26 this year in North East Delhi riots.

In their second decision, cabinet ministers approved one time financial assistance of Rs 50000 to every para-transit vehicle driver holding a PSV Badge in Delhi.

The Cabinet approved to

extend the Scheme to every permit holder of para-transit vehicle in Delhi as well as owners of e-rickshaws registered in Delhi.

According to Delhi government, with this decision, more than 60,000 permit holders of para-transit vehicles and owners of e-rickshaws registered in Delhi, shall be benefited. It is clarified that permit holders of para-transit vehicles who were also holding PSV Badges have already been covered under the existing Scheme.

## DCP hurt in Gokalpuri riot resumes duty

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

Amit Sharma, the senior Indian Police Services (IPS) officer, who was injured during communal clashes between two groups in Northeast Delhi's Gokalpuri in February, resumed duty on Monday amid coronavirus pandemic after recovery.

Sharma, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Shahdara district was injured on February 24 when clashes broke out between two groups over citizenship amendment law.

In his absence, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Dinesh Kumar Gupta was given the charge of Shahdara district. He was applauded and welcomed by his staff at his office on Monday.

DCP Amit Sharma, a 2010-

batch IPS officer, underwent surgery and was treated at Max Hospital in Patparganj after he suffered serious injuries during clashes over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in northeast Delhi. He suffered injuries to his head and hand in violence in Gokulpuri on February 24. The officer's vehicle was also set afire by protesters.

At least 11 police personnel, including Sharma, the DCP, Shahdara and ACP (Gokalpuri) Anuj Kumar were injured while trying to quell the protests. Two CRPF police personnel were also injured while Ratan Lal (42), a head constable attached to the office of the ACP Gokalpuri, died after he sustained injuries during stone pelting at Gokalpuri.

The communal clashes in Northeast Delhi claimed life of at least 53 people while injuring over 250 people.

## G'gram: 24 areas in containment, 16 in buffer zones

**PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM**

A total of 24 areas in the Gurugram district have been placed in the containment zone while 16 are designated as buffer zones after a fresh order was issued by the district Magistrate on Monday.

The administration official said on the recommendations of the Containment Review Committee and District Disaster Management Committee, the Gurugram block has 13 Containment Zones and similar buffer zones.

"A total of 9 Containment Zone fall under the Sohna block while 2 areas in Buffer Zone. The Pataudi Block has 2 Containment Zones and one Buffer Zone," said Amit Khatri, the deputy commissioner of Gurugram.

"In this regard the guidelines were issued by the World Health Organization, In which the house where corona-infected positive cases are found, the entire area falling within the radius of 3 km is declared as a containment zone and the 5-km area adjacent to it as a buffer zone," he added.

A total of 13 Containment

Zones fall under Gurugram which includes, Fazilpur and Jharsa villages.

Meanwhile, Baharampur, Tekri, Ghasola, Badshahpur, Begampur Khatola have been made buffer zones.

Similarly, village Jharsa (Sector-39) has been kept in the Containment Zone and the adjoining village Silokhara, Kanhai, Naharpur Rupa, Islampur, Bindapur, Samaspur, Fatehpur, Adampur, Hayatpur village have been kept in the buffer zone.

Devi Lal Colony has been kept in the Containment Zone and adjoining areas like Sector-9, Ambedkar Nagar, Sector-7, Sector-7 Extension, Jyoti Park, Ferozgandhi Colony, Ravi Nagar and Housing Board have been kept in the buffer zone.

Likewise, Suncity Society in Sector-54 has been placed in the Containment Zone and Sector 55, Sector 53, Sector 56, Aravali Hill, Aravali Hill Ghata has been placed in buffer zone.

The orders said that lane number 6-B Yadav Medicos in Sarhaul village have been kept in the containment zone and adjoining area Kailash Market, Ravi Market, Sarhaul Vegetable market have been kept in the

buffer zone.

Similarly, Tyagiwada has been placed in the Containment Zone and adjoining Sector 65, Sector 67, Sector 69, Sector 68, Sector 49, Sector 72, Sector 64 and Sector 50 has been declared as the buffer zone. Meghdoot Apartment of Sector 10A has been made a Containment Zone while Naharpur Rupa, Hans Enclave, Krishna Nagar, Vikas Nagar, Arjun Nagar and Anjana Colony has been placed in the buffer zone.

Om Nagar has been placed in the Containment Zone and the adjoining areas Shivaji Nagar, Hira Nagar, Shanti Nagar, Laxmi Nagar, Raj Nagar and Rajiv Nagar have been placed in the buffer zone.

In Sector 12, an area like Lotus Hospital, Prem Nagar, Acharya Puri and Rajiv Nagar (West) have been kept in Containment Zones and the adjoining areas are Rajiv Nagar (East), Gurgaon Village, Gopal Nagar, the area along with the bus stand and Shiv Vihar in the buffer zone.

Similarly, Police Station Road, Community Center, Agarwal Sweets Street and Vishal Mega Mart in

## BJP requests Kejriwal to reconsider decision

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

Criticising the Delhi Government's decision to open liquor shops in the Capital that created chaos' like situation in parts of Delhi, Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that with the decision an increase of up to 10 per cent of corona cases is feared.

Bidhuri requested the Delhi government to reconsider its decision. In a letter written to the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday, Bidhuri, referring to the situation that arose after the shops were opened, said that the opening of liquor shops in the capital caused huge crowds which completely broke the

lockdown norms.

"There were reports of police lathi charge to control the situation and open violation of the rules of social distancing," he said.

Bidhuri said that 427 new patients of Corona have been traced in Delhi on Sunday. He has expressed the apprehension that the opening of liquor shops may increase the number of people caught in the pandemic by about 10 percent.

"Both liquor sellers and buyers are at risk of being infected in the wake of cash transactions in the sale and purchase of liquor," he said.

The Leader of Opposition has urged the Chief Minister Kejriwal reconsider its decision to open liquor shops and sell of liquor in view of the serious condition of Corona in Delhi.

## Shut down liquor vends: RWAs

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

Following the long queues with no social distancing norms, the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) across the Capital have urged the Delhi Government to immediately close down all liquor vends and review arrangements.

RWAs strongly objected to the opening of liquor shops in most parts of the city despite entire Delhi being declared as a Red Zone. According to VK Vohra, the Convenor of Delhi RWA Forum, there were long queues early in the morning outside liquor shops.

"There was no social distancing and in some areas it became a law and order problem following which police had to shut some vends," said Arora.

"The Delhi Government should now review the situation and it should open these outlets with proper implementation of order and in phase manner so that social distancing norms are followed," said another member.

An RWA member of Greater Kailash said there should have been a policy by Delhi Government before opening these liquor shops and seeing what had happened on Monday I urge Government to take strong step and open these liquor shops in phase manner.

"It is better that like odd even formula would be brought in by Government, they can think about home delivery of liquor. Even the Government can introduce rationing per person to prevent hoarding or black marketing," he said.

## Cabinet okays ration for May to 38L non-PDS cardholders

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

Delhi Cabinet on Monday approved ration for the month of May 2020 for non-PDS cardholders.

Cabinet has approved ration for the month of May to 38 lakh non-PDS cardholders - who registered for ration e-coupons through an online process.

According to government officials, each individual will be given 4kg wheat and 1 kg rice, and every family will receive the Corona Relief kit that is being given to PDS cardholders.

The Corona relief kit consists of 1 litre of refined oil, 1kg Chhole chana, 1kg sugar, 1kg salt, 200gm Haldi powder, 200gm Dhania powder, 200gms chili powder and 2 bars of soap. The Government of NCT of Delhi is committed to ensuring that no one goes hungry, in the Corona lockdown period.

## Steps taken to keep policemen, their family safe from virus

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

In the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic fight, the Police Welfare Society's (PFWS) President Pratima Shrivastava has undertaken a number of initiatives in order to strengthen the overall Delhi Police response and to keep police personnel and their families safe.

The first initiative was production of stitched cotton standard face masks at its skilled centres situated at Narela, Model Town, Ahata Kidara and

Dwarka. So far 22500 masks have been distributed amongst police personnel and marginalised urban poor for its effective use for multiple times after a wash.

According to official, in an important move, PFWS in collaboration with Tihar Jail Authorities also took up the preparation of 'Hand Cleansers' and Sanitizers with prescribed ingredients specified under the granted license.

"The main objective was to provide pocket sanitizers to the police

personnel apart from their family members at free of cost to have adequate protection against infection. So far nearly 7000 bottles have been prepared and distributed both amongst police personnel and needy persons in the areas of Industrial Area Samay Pur Badli, Shakur Basti and Azad Pur Jhuggis near Kela Godam, Shalimar Bagh," said the official.

"In a further escalation to its commitment the PWFS, in association with Legal Rights Council, NGO focusing upon health awareness apart

from other issues, has undertaken a systematic distribution of Ayurvedic immunity drink including Kadha (decoction) also known as "Kashyam" to Police families of Delhi Police Personnel residing in Police Colonies," the official added.

"The programme was launched on Monday at Welfare Centre in Jagat Puri Police Colony wherein Raj Laxmi Manda, General Secretary LRC, was personally present along with welfare staff of PFWS," the official said.



## Malaria patients' number rises to 37

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

With three fresh cases reported last week, the number of people suffering from malaria in the national Capital has reached to 37 this year. According to officials, this is the highest numbe of malaria cases reported in last three years.

Out of these cases, 16 patients who diagnosed with the disease belong to Delhi while 16 patients traced here were from different states and other five patients did not provide their address. Besides this, at least 46 cases of dengue and 18 cases of Chikungunya also reported this year.

Mosquito-breeding has been reported in at least 636 households and 1183 legal notices have been issued this year, according to data released by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Monday.

The dengue breeding checkers have checked

2952121houses and also issued challans to 50 numbers of office and residential premises till May 4.

Last year only one case of malaria reported in 2019, seven in 2018 and nine in 2017 till the time, according to data released by SDMC on Monday.

A senior SDMC official said that all the preventive steps have been taken to reduce the cases. "The key to prevention of Dengue is ensuring there is no clean stagnant water in homes and around, which does not allow the Aedes mosquitoes to breed, and therefore dengue cannot spread," he said.

The regarding district health officials conduct regular checks for breeding but it is put on hold for now in the wake of Coronavirus disease. "Although regular spraying and fogging are also being done to control mosquito menace," he said.

Dengue mosquito larvae breed in clear, standing water while those of malaria mosquito thrive even in dirty water.



# Now, 2 floors of BSF headquarters sealed

## After staffer found corona +ve

**RAKESH K SINGH ■**  
NEW DELHI

After the CRPF, the BSF has now sealed at least two floors of its headquarters at the CGO Complex here after a Head Constable was tested positive for coronavirus late on Sunday evening.

Direct, secondary and tertiary contact tracing of other personnel with the infected person is being conducted as per protocol and the building is being disinfected, BSF officials said.

"A head constable of BSF working in BSF Force Headquarters Block 10 CGO Complex, has been found COVID-19 positive late night on 3rd May 2020. He last attended office on Friday 1st May 2020. He was working in an office on 2nd floor of BSF Force Headquarters," a spokesperson of the Border Security Force (BSF) said.

All persons came in his contact have been identified and quarantined. They will also be tested for COVID-19. Offices on first and second floors of Force Headquarters have been closed as a precaution, the official said.

Prior to the detection of the case, on Friday (May 1, 2020), as a special precautionary measure BSF Force Headquarters was closed early by 4 PM, he said.



All attending staff vacated offices and the entire office complex was thoroughly sanitized with prescribed solutions of disinfectants. For Saturday and Sunday, the Force Headquarter was closed.

No staff other than the security personnel and the control room members in limited numbers worked at the Force's Headquarters.

The disinfection of the complete BSF Block was done again on Monday in the light of the latest COVID-19 positive case in the paramilitary. "Identification of secondary and tertiary contacts as per protocol is being carried out. All protocols are being followed," an official said, adding those identified will be also put under home quarantine.

Meanwhile, the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has reported 13 personnel as Covid-19 positive till so far.

While nine personnel

infected with corona virus are from the 25th battalion of the border guarding force based at Ghitorni in the national capital, the remaining four are from other locations, officials said.

They said all the infected personnel have been put in hospital isolation.

The 80,000 personnel strong SSB is the designated border guarding force and Lead Intelligence Agency for the 1,751 km long India-Nepal and 699 km of the Indo-Bhutan borders.

The SSB is also engaged in a variety of internal security roles in different theatres including Jammu and Kashmir and Naxal-hit States.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) headquarters, also located in the CGO Complex here, was shut following a positive Covid-19 test report of an Assistant Commandant attached with a senior paramilitary official.

# 112 of 115 aspirational districts fare well in containing infection

**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

With just 610 coronavirus positive cases, 112 of the total 115 aspirational districts have fared well when compared to the national level of infection.

Aspirational districts are those which have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas and have emerged as pockets of under-development, thereby posing a challenge to ensure balanced regional development.

"In the Aspirational Districts Programme piloted by NITI Aayog, as of now there are about 610 cases in 112 aspirational districts which is considered fairly low at less than 2 per cent of the national level of infections," Niti Aayog Chairman and head of an Empowered Group Amitabh Kant said on Monday at a press briefing here on Monday.

Of these, six districts have reported the first case after April 21. Major hotspots are Baramula (62), Nuh (57), Ranchi (55), YSR (55), Kupwara (47) and Jaisalmer (34), he said.

NITI Aayog has taken steps to ensure that these districts are able to contain the spread of the virus and has actively referred the requirements in testing kits, PPE and masks to the respective empowered groups for necessary action in order to address supply constraints, it noted.

"Collaboration has been one of the guiding principles in Aspirational District Programme and these partnerships have enabled the District Administrations in ramping up isolation camps,

setting up control rooms, door-to-door food supplies, distribution of cooked foods, mobilization of Self Help Groups for making home-made masks, sanitizers and re-usable & sterilizable protective gear while simultaneously sustaining their livelihoods during lockdown period. Osmanabad is one such district where a testing Centre has been established by utilizing the CSR corpus," it said.

However, he admitted that the return of migrant labourers en masse from urban hubs of work to their villages is a primary area of concern and efforts are being taken to ensure their care, quarantine and treatment go hand in hand.

Kant talked about 'surakshit dada-dadi & nana-nani abhiyan' programme launched by the Piramal Foundation saying that it aims at an outreach focused on senior citizens in order to sensitise them on preventive measures and requisite behavioral changes and document and address issues related to food, ration, medicines, etc delivery.

Similarly, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in partnership with NITI Aayog and other development partners, have developed a public good message repository with standardized content in local languages on mask wearing, hygiene measures, social distancing, motivation of frontline workers, among others. DMs/DCs of Aspirational Districts have been requested to examine and suitably use the resources on this website (indiafightscovid.com) for strengthening the communication strategy, said a statement from the Niti Aayog

# ICMR deploys IBM Watson AI for frontline testing

**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has deployed tech giant IBM's artificial intelligence-powered Watson virtual assistant on its portal to respond to queries from front-line staff and data entry operators across the country on COVID-19.

The virtual agent has been deployed on protected pages of the ICMR website that can be accessed only by authorised personnel who are

involved with sample collection and testing in hospitals and diagnostic labs, IBM said in a statement on Monday.

The queries could be related to nature and process of data to be captured by test labs, how to record inventory of test kits and reagents, process of reporting to various Government agencies and references to the latest guidance, in addition to responding to queries on COVID-19 in general.

"It is critical to remain

focused on testing, diagnosis and treatment in order to lower the growth curve. This collaboration with IBM will help automate responses from the field and facilitate access to accurate and updated data on COVID-19 diagnostics and reporting," said Professor Balram Bhargava, Director General, ICMR.

"This will help augment our teams' response time and allow them to concentrate on priorities like developing, updating testing and treat-

ment protocols and guidance for COVID-19," he added.

The Watson virtual agent is able to understand and respond to common queries in English and Hindi from approved testing facilities for COVID-19 across India at scale, around the clock in a uniform and timely manner.

The virtual agent is also expected to help in on-boarded new data entry operators and staff of diagnostic centres, as the COVID-19 test network expands across the

country.

"The deployment of IBM's chatbot AI platform is aimed to help ICMR effectively manage the process of capturing data relating to COVID-19," said

Gopalakrishnan Senior Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

IBM last month said it has trained virtual agent "Watson Assistant for Citizens" to answer common queries about COVID-19.

# 92K NGOs join hands with Govt in delivering essential services

**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

As India faces an unprecedented challenge with the Covid-19 global pandemic affecting livelihood, a network of 92,000 NGOs, a record of sorts, has joined hands with the Government in delivering essential services such as cooked and raw foods besides creating awareness about social distancing to crores of vulnerable including homeless, migrants and poor people.

The Government constituted Empowered Committee-6 Chairman Amitabh Kant, CEO NITI Aayog said on Monday that NGOs like Akshaya Patra, Rama Krishna Mission, Tata Trusts, Piramal Foundation, Piramal Swasthya, Bill and Milinda Gates Foundation, Action Aid, International Red Cross Centre (ICRC), Pradhan, Prayas, Helpage India are among numerous NGOs doing a commendable job.

Ditto with SEWA, Sulabh International, Charities Aid Foundation of India, Gaudia Math, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, the Salvation Army, Catholic Bishops' Conference of India and many more NGOs like Mahaveer International and Uttarakhand Manav Seva Samiti.

For instance, Mahaveer International which has 212 centres across the States has been distributing ration kits which include food items like wheatflour, rice, oil and others as well as packed fresh cooked foods to the poorest of the poor at Yamuna Khadar, near DND Flyover and rainywell near Yamuna bridge, ITO since lock-

down crisis. "While reaching out to the beneficiaries we ensure that they follow social distancing norms. We also distribute masks to them," said V N Sharma, Chairman (Finance), Mahaveer International, Delhi.

These NGOs are engaged in assisting and supporting the local administration in setting up community kitchens particularly for migrants and homeless population working in urban areas.

For instance, Akshaya Patra Foundation, has served over two crore meals to vulnerable communities like migrant population, daily-wage labourers, industrial workers and homeless people across India during the COVID-19 related lockdown.

Creating awareness about prevention, hygiene, social distancing, isolation, and combating stigma and supplementing the government efforts to provide shelter to homeless, daily wage workers, and urban poor families are some other areas where these NGOs are pitching in, said Kant.

"A primary area of concern in these times is the mass exodus of migrant labourers from urban hubs of work to their villages. NGOs are coordinating efforts and working closely with the district administrations and state governments so that measures of care, quarantine, and treatment go hand in hand.

"In the next phase, we plan to mobilise Civil Society Organisations/ NGOs for movement against Covid-19 stigmatisation and in protecting the elderly and senior citizens," the official added.

## BJP rejects Cong charge of Govt charging migrant workers' travel



**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday accused the Congress of accusing it of "politicising" the "smooth process" of transportation of migrant workers stranded across States.

BJP said the railways has been providing subsidised tickets bearing 85 percent of the travel costs, while the rest of 15 per cent cost will be borne by States.

BJP's national spokesperson, Sambit Patra, took to Twitter saying, "Rahul Gandhi ji, I have attached guidelines of MHA which clearly states that 'No tickets to be sold at any station' Railways has subsidised 85% & State govt to pay 15% The State govt can pay for the tickets (Madhya Pradesh's BJP govt is paying). Ask Cong state govts to follow suit".

The BJP spokesperson further said, "And this is how the Congress ruled State Governments can pay the 15% for the Migrant workers (85% being taken care of by the Railways) rather than politicising the otherwise smooth process taken up by the railways."

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had criticised government for allegedly charging the workers for ferrying them to their respective native places and Congress president Sonia Gandhi has offered to bear the cost of the tickets through the party's State units.

## SC asks Bombay HC to decide plea opposing burial of Covid victims in 2 weeks

**PTI ■** NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Monday asked the Bombay High Court to decide the plea, preferably within two weeks, opposing the burial of people dying of Covid-19 in a cemetery in Mumbai's Bandra west locality on the ground that it might spread infection in adjoining areas.

A bench comprising Justices R F Nariman and Indira Banerjee passed the order while hearing through video-conferencing an appeal filed against the April 27 interim order of the high court.

The order had refused to grant interim relief on a plea challenging Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) permission to use three cemeteries in the Bandra West to bury bodies of COVID-19 victims.

"The impugned interim order by the single judge of the Bombay High Court dated April 27 has denied ad-interim relief in the writ petition filed," the apex court said in its order.

"Concerning the fact that the writ petitioner and his family members are worried about the spread of COVID-19 thanks to burials taking place in the immediately adjacent burial ground, we feel that this is a matter in which the motion itself should be taken up and disposed of at the earliest, preferably within a period of two weeks from today," the bench said while disposing of the plea.

The plea, filed in the high court by Mumbai-resident Pradeep Gandhi and others who are residing near the Konkani Muslim Kabrastan in suburban Bandra west, had



**A bench comprising Justices RF Nariman and Indira Banerjee passed the order while hearing through video-conferencing an appeal filed against the April 27 interim order of the high court**

claimed that locals were afraid of community spread of the virus, if the burial was not done properly.

Later, a Muslim body had sought intervention in the appeal filed by Ghandy in the top court, and said that the apprehension about alleged spread of infection due to burial of bodies of those infected with COVID-19 was unfounded as there was no risk of the spread of virus.

"It is submitted that the burial of dead bodies is essential to the religion of Islam as well as in other religions such as Christianity.

Such a right forms part of the right to practice one's religion under Article 25 of the Constitution of India," the Muslim body had said in its plea.

In its order passed on Monday, the apex court noted, "Application for impleadment/intervention is disposed of in view of the fact that the special leave petition itself has been disposed of."

# ‘Gilgit, Baltistan intergral part of India, Pak can’t hold polls’

**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

Rejecting the Pakistan Supreme Court's order to hold general elections in Gilgit and Baltistan, New Delhi on Monday reiterated that they are an integral part of India and issued a demarche to register its protest to a senior Pakistani envoy here.

The demarche Monday conveyed "the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of India" by virtue of its fully legal and irrevocable accession.

Moreover, the Government's position is reflected in a unanimous resolution passed in this regard

by Parliament in 1994, the external affairs ministry said here.

Reacting to the Pakistan Supreme Court order passed last week, the ministry also said the Pakistan government or its judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it.

"India completely rejects such actions and continued attempts to bring material changes in Pakistan Occupied area of the Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir," the ministry said.

The court order allowed the Pakistan government to hold elections in September in Gilgit-Baltistan and setting up a caretaker government during the interim period. The order said Gilgit-Baltistan

came within its domain.

The Indian Government, meanwhile, also asked in the demarche that Islamabad must "immediately vacate them" which are under "its illegal occupation."

The strong retort said such actions can neither hide the illegal occupation of parts of Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh by Pakistan nor the grave human rights violations, exploitation and denial of freedom to the people residing in Pakistan occupied territories for the past seven decades.

In a recent order, the Pakistan Supreme Court allowed the amendment to the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order of 2018 to conduct the general elections in the region.

# Army chief says India will give proportionate response to Pak

**PTI ■** NEW DELHI

Pakistan is still following its "myopic" and "limited" agenda of pushing terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir and India will respond appropriately with precision unless the neighbouring country gives up its policy of State-sponsored terrorism, Army Chief Gen MM Naravane said here.

In an exclusive interview to PTI, the chief of the 1.3 million-strong Army said India will give "proportionate response" to all acts of infringement of ceasefire and support to terrorism by Pakistan.

On the Handwara encounter, Gen. Naravane said India is proud of the five security personnel who laid down their lives saving civilians from terrorists at a village in the North Kashmir locality and particularly complimented Col Ashutosh Sharma who led the operation.

"I would like to emphasise that Indian Army will give proportionate response to all acts of infringement of ceasefire and its (Pakistan's) support to terrorism. The onus remains with Pakistan to bring peace in the region," the Chief of Army Staff said.



"Unless Pakistan gives up its policy of State sponsored terrorism, we will continue to respond appropriately and with precision," he added.

Gen Naravane said the recent infiltration attempts by Pakistan along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir showed that Pakistan is not interested in battling the coronavirus pandemic and is still following its "own myopic and limited agenda of pushing terrorists inside India."

"The low priority given to the Pakistani citizens by its own government and the army is apparent by the exponential rise in cases and massive shortages of medical equipment and supplies in Pakistan," he said.

The Army Chief said even during the SAARC video conference, Pakistan's narrow-mindedness was on full display when it used the platform to complain about "non-existent" violations of human rights in Kashmir instead of finding ways to keep its citizens safe from the pandemic.

# New set of pictorial warning on tobacco products

**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday notified new sets of specified health warnings for all tobacco product packs by making an amendment to the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules, 2008. The amended rules will come into effect from September 1, 2020, to be valid for a year from the date of effect.

The Government issued two images—to be displayed by the tobacco products manufactured or imported or packaged on or after September 1 while the other one will be displayed by the product manufactured or imported or packaged after September 1, the statement said.

"The fresh warnings will be valid for a year from the date of effect," added the statement.

"Any person engaged directly or indirectly in the manufacture, production, supply, import or distribution of cigarettes or any tobacco products shall ensure that all tobacco product packages shall have the specified health warnings exactly as prescribed," said the statement.

Any violation of the rules is a punishable offence with imprisonment or fine as prescribed, it noted.

The Government has already asked the States to prohibit spitting tobacco and gutka in the public places warning that it may help spread infectious Coronavirus.

Subsequently many States like Rajasthan, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh has already banned the spitting and those violating the norms will be fined.

As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), smoking may increase the risk of getting a severe case of coronavirus as it damages the lungs and other body parts. "The act of smoking means that fingers (and possibly contaminated cigarettes) are in contact with lips which increases the possibility of transmission of the virus from hand to mouth. Smokers may also already have lung disease or reduced lung capacity which would greatly increase the risk of serious illness," as per the WHO.

# Centre, J&K oppose in SC pleas for 4G network

**PNS ■** NEW DELHI

The Centre and the Jammu and Kashmir administration justified in the Supreme Court on Monday the restriction on 4G service in the UT saying high speed internet might be used for sending information about troop movement, and referred to Saturday's 'tragic' deaths of security personnel in an encounter with terrorists.

The top court, dealing with PILs seeking restoration of 4G service in the UT, said it has to deal with the legal question of ensuring balance in view of health and security concerns raised by the petitioners and the governments.

The submissions of the

Centre and the UT were opposed before a bench, headed by Justice N V Ramana, by senior lawyers Salman Khurshid and Huzefa Ahmadi who were representing parties seeking restoration of 4G, on grounds such as right to access doctors is an inherent under article 21 (Right to Life) of the Constitution and it's deprivation should be judged in view of the coronavirus or Covid-19 pandemic.

They also alleged that the right of children to access schools through the high speed internet service have been hampered.

The bench, which also comprised Justices R Subhash Reddy and B R Gavai, heard arguments of both sides including that of Attorney General K K

Venugopal and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre and the Union Territory respectively, and reserved the verdict.

During the over 2-hour hearing, held via video conferencing, Venugopal said the government's policy decision should not be questioned as the restriction was meant to protect the entire population of the State and not only patients.

"Terrorists are being pushed into the country. Yesterday, there were some tragic incident," Venugopal said, adding that videos of the troop movements can be shared with the enemy by using 4G and there was no denial of the fact that security of the state was considered while taking such a decision.



# Dharavi: 42 +ve, total 632

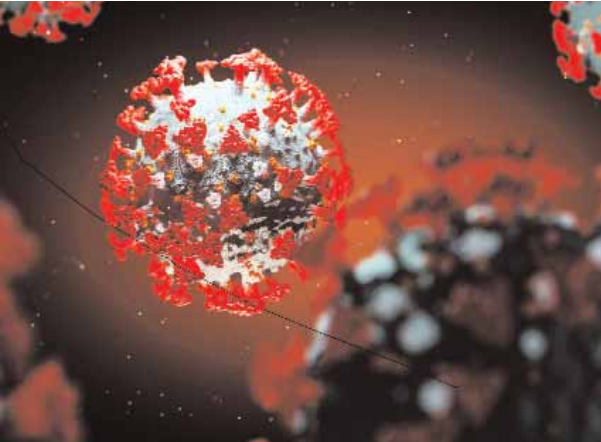
**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

With no let up in the incidence of coronavirus infections, Mumbai's Dharavi locality on Monday recorded 42 new positive cases of Covid-19, taking the total number of infected cases in Asia's biggest slum to 632.

A day after the Cornavirus claimed two lives and left a record day's tally of 94 others infected, the pandemic once again raised its ugly head as 42 others tested positive for the pandemic.

With the fresh cases, the total number of positive cases has risen to 632 in Dharavi.

Like in the previous days, fresh infected cases were reported from most parts of this densely populated slum. A maximum of seven positive cases were recorded in



Matunga Labour camp, from where 11 new cases had been reported on Sunday. Those infected included one month-old male baby.

Three fresh cases each were reported from 90 feet road, 60

feet road and Sant Rohidas Marg.

There have been substantial number infected cases in Dharavi for the past three days. A day after it had witnessed 89 – which thereto the biggest-

ever surge in Coronavirus infections in a single day, Dharavi witnessed an alarming 94 new infected cases on Sunday.

Earlier on April 23, one death and 25 cases had been reported from Dharavi in a single day. Later on May 1, there were 38 new cases.

There have so far been 20 Covid-19 triggered deaths in Dharavi, which is one of the Covid-19 hotspots in Mumbai. Spread over 240 hectare area, Dharavi is home to more than 4 lakh people.

Ever since first few cases of coronavirus were reported in the early first week of April, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is closely monitoring the situation in Dharavi where the health authorities have clamped a total lockdown.

## AP corona tally touches 1,650

**IAN S ■ AMARAVATI**

Andhra Pradesh continues to grapple with the Covid-19 pandemic as the number of cases detected keep fluctuating with each passing day.

The State nodal officer reported that 67 cases were detected from the samples tested during the 24 hours ending 10 a.m. Monday. With 10,292 samples tested during this period, the State reported the largest number of tests conducted in a single day. Of the 67 cases detected, 25 were reported from the Kurnool district which continues to top the chart of covid-hit districts in the State. Kurnool districts' tally stands at 491 compared to 338 in Guntur district, and 278 cases in the Krishna district.

The last 24 hours saw only five of the 13 districts report new cases. Guntur, Krishna, Visakhapatnam, Kadapa, and Chittoor districts reported 19, 12, six, four and one cases respectively.

Of the cumulative tally of 1650 cases, 524 persons have been cured and discharged so far. The death toll has

remained unchanged at 33 since Friday. The number of active cases in the state is currently 1,093.

Incidentally, after witnessing a relative decline in cases over the past three days, the state reported a slight rise in cases on Monday morning. This is being attributed to the significantly large number of tests, 10292 cases, conducted. In fact, AP has the nation's highest ratio of tests conducted per million.

The state conducts 2,345 tests per million population, followed by Tamil Nadu with 1929 and Rajasthan with 1,492 tests per million.

Although the absolute figures, in terms of positive cases continue to grow, and stood at 1,650 on Monday, over the past week the State had shown some apparent progress in the containment of the coronavirus cases.

The last seven days' statistics indicate that even as the state ramped up the number of tests conducted every day to above 5,000, there was a relative decline in the number of positive cases detected.

## Jaipur crosses 1,000 mark as Rajasthan registers 3,009 cases

**IAN S ■ JAIPUR**

The Covid-19 cases in Jaipur crossed the 1,000-mark on Monday as it registered 12 new cases taking its tally to 1,005 while the state overall crossed the 3,000-mark registering a total number of 3,009 cases, said Additional Chief Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh.

A total of 123 Covid-19 cases was reported in Rajasthan in the last 12 hours out of which 73 were from Jodhpur, 19 from Chittaurgarh, 12 from Jaipur, 11 from Pali, three from Kota, two from Rajsamand, and one each from Bikaner, Alwar and Udaipur, Singh said.

Overall, 75 deaths have been reported in the state so far with 44 deaths reported in Jaipur, nine in Jodhpur, six in Kota, two each in Nagaur, Bharatpur and Bhilwara, one each in Ajmer, Alwar, Bikaner Pratapgarh and Chittaurgarh, two in Sikar and one in Tonk.

## Corona could be much ado about nothing: Veteran docs

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

All concerns and apprehensions expressed by medical doctors, health experts and those in the business of drug industry should be termed much ado about nothing, according to two septuagenarian doctors who have more than five decades of experience in the fields of diagnosis and medical research.

Citing an editorial published in 1993 by The Lancet , the weekly peer-reviewed general medical journal which had its origin in 1823, these doctors CV Krishnaswamy and Prof BM Hegde, widely respected in their profession by peers and juniors alike, ask the common man/woman and policy makers not to be carried away by terms

like coronavirus, Covid-19 and pandemic.

The April 17, 1993 issue of The Lancet has an editorial titled “Do Epidemiologists Cause Epidemics?” in which it is mentioned that physicians have a tendency to diagnose what they believe is common. The Lancet, a highly respected medical journal, had warned in 1993 itself that epidemiological data make easy headlines which everyone can understand and is entitled to have an opinion about “coffee causes cancer” and “breast cancer on the rise”.

The Lancet has pointed out in the same editorial about a report stating that an increase in fatal myocardial infarction among young women who used psychotropic drugs. “These researchers pointed out that

the finding was unexpected, that it was the result of a secondary analysis, in a study done for other reasons and that there might be a host of alternative explanations,” said the Lancet editorial, always considered as the last word in the world of medical research.

The recent past saw WHO and other related organisations declaring many such medical issues and epidemic and pandemic, pointed out Dr CV Krishnaswamy. “Don't you remember the chaos and fear caused during the days of swine flu, bird's flu, SAARS, Nipah and the likes. What happened to those days,” asked Dr Krishnaswamy.

The Lancet also reminds about a provincial cancer registry issuing a warning that

cancer rates were increasing in an area that had been under environmental suspicion for some years. “The popular press responded with dramatic headlines. Real estate prices fell, inhabitants reported health problems among friends and neighbours and contemplated moving even though individual respondents showed more resilience in their health beliefs.

On review it was found that a wrong denominator had been used , a mistake that could easily happen because the reporting of population figures did not follow the same administrative boundaries as the cancer registry,” said the Lancet editorial.

Back home in India, Tamil Nadu itself is a ‘victim’ of sensational reporting by the media which had blown out of pro-

portion the ‘reports’ released by certain NGOs that the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR) at Kalpakkam has caused a cancer epidemic in the region. A thorough probe ordered by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) found that there was no abnormality of any kind in and around Kalpakkam.

Dr Krishnaswamy is of the view that an audit about the fatalities that had happened during the coronavirus is a must. “The State has seen 30 perosn succumbing during the period. There were octogenarians and nonagenarians among the victims. Some of those who died had kidney and heart ailments which state that the coronavirus is not the reason for the deaths,” said the doctor.

## Madras High Court stays Govt move to transfer temple funds to CM’s Fund

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

In what could be a major setback for the Tamil Nadu Government, the Madras High Court on Monday stayed the circular issued by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Commissioner transferring an amount of ₹10 crore from the temples in the State to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

A division bench consisting of Justices Vineeth Kothari and Pushpa Sathyanarayana stayed the circular issued by the HR&CE commissioner while hearing a public interest litigation filed by TR Ramesh, president, Temple Worshipers Society, pleading for declaring as null and void the said circular.

**What upset the Temple Worshipers Society was the indifference of the State Government towards the pathetic living conditions of the priests and other staff in temples**

“The court accepted our contention that the HR & CE commissioner has no right to unilaterally issue an order to transfer temple funds for the business of Government. It seems better sense prevailed and the Government lawyer told the court that an order staying the said circular would

be withdrawn. But the judges asked the Government to file the order withdrawing the circular as an affidavit by Friday,” said Ramesh.

What upset the Temple Worshipers Society was the indifference of the State Government towards the pathetic living conditions of the priests and other staff in temples.

“The HR&CE Commissioner is the person who whets the proposal by the Trustees to transfer funds to various activities and he is the official sitting on judgment on such suggestions. The court ordered that the HR&CE commissioner could not be the judge in his own case,” said Ramesh.

## Karnataka reports one more death, total cases mount to 642

**Bengaluru:** A 56-year-old-man from Kalaburagi succumbed to Covid-19 even as 28 new positive cases emerged in Karnataka, including 21 from Davangere alone, in the past 19 hours raising the State's tally to 642, an official said on Monday.

With the new death, Covid-19 toll in Kalaburagi has risen to six.“Positive case 587, 56-year-old resident of Kalaburagia died at designated hospital,” the official said.

The deceased man is the state's 26th Covid death, who was admitted to a hospital on

Wednesday with the known case of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI), cough and fever. His X-ray examinations also diagnosed bilateral patchy Pneumonitis. Kalaburagi is 575 km north of Bengaluru in this southern State. Meanwhile, a spike in Covid cases in Davangere contributed 21 of the 28 new cases which emerged in the past 19 hours.

Except one case with Influenza Like Illness (ILI), rest all from Davangere were contacts of earlier cases, mostly from case 533 and two from

556. Among the Davangere cases, 12 are men and eight women, including three children below 17.Until Sunday 5 p.m., Davangere recorded only 10 cases, out of which two were discharged, seven active and one dead.

With the sudden spike, Davangere is now battling 28 active cases. It is 266 km north-west of the city. The balance seven cases of the 28 new emerged from Mandya and Kalaburagi, 2 each, Chikkaballapura, Haveri and Vijayapura, 1 each. **IAN S**

## 25 fresh cases in J&K, total tally reaches 726

**PNS ■ JAMMU**

On day one of the third round of lockdown, 25 new positive cases of novel Coronavirus, 1 from Jammu division and 24 from Kashmir division, were reported in Jammu & Kashmir on Monday. With this, the total tally of positive cases have gone up to 726.

According to official sources, "an octogenarian, who had recently undergone surgery at a private hospital in Amritsar, tested positive in Ashok Nagar ,Satwari area of Jammu". The patient tested positive at a private laboratory and is expected to be tested afresh at a government laboratory on Tuesday.

According to the daily Media Bulletin,

out of 726 cases, 415 are active positive, 303 have recovered and 08 have died.

Moreover, 16 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals from Kashmir Division. Meanwhile, the Inspector General of Police Jammu Zone, Mukesh Singh Monday visited Samba, Kathua and Lakanpur to take stock of police preparedness and measures to contain the spread of Covid-19.

At Lakanpur, labelled as gateway of Jammu and Kashmir, IGP Jammu inspected the Inter-State Entry Point and complimented SSP Kathua and other officers for ensuring smooth entry and movement of essential goods in the Union Territory after proper screening at the barrier.

### TN to open liquor shops on May 7

**Chennai:** Come May 7, tipplers in Tamil Nadu can have their drink in Tamil Nadu as the State Government has decided to open the liquor shops.

In a statement issued here the government said the Tasmac liquor outlets will be opened from May 7 onwards. The shops will function between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The Tamil Nadu government said in order to control the movement of people in the state border areas with Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh as liquor shops have been opened there, the decision to open the liquor shops in the state has been taken.

However liquor shops located in the containment zones will continue to be closed.

According to the government, social distance of six feet should be



maintained between persons standing in a queue.

For the state government, the sale of liquor is a major source of revenue and this was stopped for the past 40 days due to nationwide lockdown.

On Sunday night the government increased the value added tax on petrol and diesel. **IAN S**

## Quarantined lawyer escapes

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

GMuraleedharan, the GThiruvananthapuram based lawyer who was taken into custody from the residence of his lover at Kollam on May Day for flouting the lockdown rules and was quarantined for possible coronavirus observation escaped from the isolation ward on Sunday night allegedly with the connivance of the police.

Muraleedharan, a CPI(M) leader and secretary of Trivandrum Bar Association fell into police net when residents in Chathanoor of Kollam alerted the district administration about the nocturnal inter district visits made by him to his lover's house. It is reported that Muraleedharan was provided with a two-wheeler by the party leadership and a

trusted CPI(M) worker took him to Thiruvananthapuram through a circuitous route keeping the police and health officials at bay

He was caught from his paramour's residence on May 1 night and was admitted to the quarantine ward to ensure that he was not infected as well as to make sure that he does not infect others. But being a CPI(M) leader, Muraleedharan would have got the silent nod of the police as well as the health department officials to escape from the ward which was otherwise under round-the-clock police guard.

But Muraleedharan's car is still under police custody and this would be an embarrassment to him as well his political masters, said K Kunhikannan, political commentator.

## Maha CM urges Railways not to charge money for migrants’ travel

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Amid an announcement by the interim Congress president Sonia Gandhi that her party would bear the cost for the rail travel of migrant workers and labourers, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has urged the Indian Railways not to charge money towards tickets for travel of migrant labourers from Maharashtra to their respective home States.

Interacting with Revenue Divisional Commissioners, Collectors, bureaucrats at the state secretary and senior police officials through video-conferencing, Uddhav said: “Since we have relaxed lockdown norms to an extent, migrant labourers based in various parts of Maharashtra are going back to their home states for a

few days. These labourers are poor and their financial condition has gone down. We request the Railways to consider their case in a humanitarian manner and not to charge them any money towards tickets for travel to their home states”.

For the past three days, the state authorities have been sending stranded migrants from Maharashtra to their respective homes states by trains. The special trains carrying migrant labourers have already left for various states from Bhiwandi and Nashik. A special cell set up at Mantralaya ( state secretariat) is co-ordinating the transportation arrangements.

“There are a large number of migrant labourers from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar,

**Uddhav also directed the State Government officials to prepare the lists of home State-bound migrant labourers. “ We should have the lists ready before the migrant labourers depart for their home States in the next few days,” CM told the State Governments**

Rajasthan, Punjab, Karnataka, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh who are stranded in different parts of our state. We have provided shelter and made food arrangements for nearly five lakh migrants in various parts of the state. These arrangements, which have been going on for the past 40 days, will continue till these migrant

labours will return to their native places,” Uddhav said.

“These labourers eke their living through daily labour and their lives have been badly crippled because of the Coronavirus crisis. Under the circumstances, these labourers do not have enough money to pay for their railway tickets to back to their native states. At some places, voluntary and social organisations are giving them money to buy tickets. That being the case, it will be good if the Railways do not take money towards tickets for their return journey,” the chief minister said.

“In this regard, we have been co-ordinating well with the senior Railway officials. Even other concerned state governments are also co-ordinating with the Railways. I

request you to complete the paper formalities quickly and send these labourers back to their home state after undertaking their medical tests,” the chief minister told the state government at the meeting held on Sunday through video-conferencing.

Uddhav also directed the State Government officials to prepare the lists of home state-bound migrant labourers. “ We should have the lists ready before the migrant labourers depart for their home States in the next few days,” the Chief Minister told the State Governments.

It may be recalled that on Thursday last the chief minister had set into motion the process of movement of 6.5 lakh migrant workers staying at various labour camps, to their

respective states, by releasing the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and appointing three senior officers to coordinate the efforts.

The Centre's decision to permit the Maharashtra government to send back the migrant workers staying in various parts of the state, to their respective home states followed Uddhav's efforts to mount pressure on the Union government to give a go-ahead to state to send back the migrants to their states.

The chief minister had raised the migrant workers' movement issue with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the meetings that the latter had with various chief ministers in the country in April to review the continued lockdown across the country.

## Pakistan violates ceasefire again

**Jammu:** The Pakistan Army on Monday trained their guns towards Nowshera and Sunderbani sectors of Rajouri district and targeted several civilian pockets in the forward area.

According to field reports, the Pakistan Army was using long range and heavy calibre guns to target the civilian pockets. Several houses in the area suffered damages due to raining mortar shells. Hitting back, Indian army too retaliated strongly and targeted several 'offensive' gun positions of Pakistan army to silence them.

Ministry of Defence spokesman in Jammu, Lt-Col Devender Anand said, “the Pakistan Army first violated ceasefire agreement at around 4.00 p.m in Nowshera sector and within half an hour they also started pounding mortar shells in Sunderbani sector of Rajouri on Monday. Lt-Col Anand said, “the Indian Army retaliated effectively”. **PNS**

## IFSC row: Maha ex-CM says it was set up in 2015 but failed to take off

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Maharashtra's former Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan on Monday gave a new dimension to the controversy over the Centre's decision to shift the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) Authority from Mumbai to Gujarat, by claiming that though this Authority was set up at Gandhinagar way back in March 2015, it had failed to take off as the Ahmedabad-GIFT City did not fulfill primary requirements for being an IFSC.

A day after NCP chief Sharad Pawar dubbed the Centre's decision to establish the IFSC Authority at Gandhinagar instead of Mumbai as “egregious, erroneous and unwarranted” and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reconsider the move, Chavan gave a new spin to the controversy by saying that

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) based at Gujarat's business capital of Ahmedabad "has not taken off" as it did not have any of primary requirements for being an IFSC.

Seeking to substantiate his claim, Chavan tweeted the copy of a press release put out through the Press Information Bureau (PIB) by the Modi government's Finance Ministry on March 1, 2015, announcing that “an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) is set up at Gandhinagar, Gujarat as part of the Special Economic Zone (SEZ). To operationalise the IFSC, a notification under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) shall be issued by the Reserve Bank of India in March 2015, making regulations relating to financial institutions set up in IFSC”. The press note cited by him goes onto list the key features of the

regulations will be any financial institution ( or its branch) set up in the IFSC.

Chavan, who had also served as the Minister of State in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's office in the Ministry of Parliament Affairs and Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, went on put a series of tweets to suggest that the Ahmadbad-GIFT City did not have any pre-requisites to become an IFSC and that was why it had failed to take off.

Chavan's tweets should be seen in the context of the Narendra Modi government's notification on April 27 declaring Gandhinagar in Gujarat as the headquarters of the IFSC Authority, at the Gujarat International Financial-Tech (GIFT) City. The ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders had earlier disapproved the move, by saying that the Prime Minister

should not only think of his home state, but nation as a whole.

The senior Congress leader said that there were some of the primary requirements for setting up an IFSC like full array of international banking services for corporates and individuals, Full array of international capital markets, products and services and a full array of risk management services.

Chavan said that the other prerequisites for an IFSC included: a full array of insurance and reinsurance services, a full array of commodities markets, trading and hedging services, a full array of business support services (Accounting, Legal, IT support) and a range of global, regional and national investment banks.

The former chief minister said that some other primary requirements for setting up an IFSC included a range of global, region-

al and national insurance companies, existence of global, regional, national equity markets and existence of wide, deep and liquid derivatives market. “Does Ahmadbad-GIFT City have any of these attributes? No wonder it has not taken off. #IFSC,” Chavan said in his concluding tweet.

Chavan also slammed former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis for making “misleading statements” about the reason behind shifting the IFSC from Mumbai to Gujarat.

Defending the Centre's decision to shift IFSC from Mumbai to Gujarat, Fadnavis had tweeted on May 2: “I would like to once again draw your attention to the report submitted by a high-level committee to the Manmohan Singh government in February 2007 for IFSC in Mumbai. However, till 2014, the previous governments at either the

Centre or then (Congress-NCP) state government had not taken any action on the report”.

In his response, Chavan tweeted: “What @Dev\_Fadnavis has tweeted was a UPA Expert Group Report on Making Mumbai an International Financial Centre. This group was set up exclusively to make #IFSCinMumbai. Read the report before making misleading statements. In 2015 Modi obstinately chose Ahmadabad over Mumbai”.

It may be recalled that in his letter written to the Prime Minister on Saturday – copy of which was released to the media on Sunday, NCP chief Sharad Pawar had said: “Since IFSC is a unified agency to regulate all financial service centres in the country and Mumbai being the country's economic, financial and commercial capital is the best choice and place to relocate IFSC.



# Reality, not criticism

People and the Opposition have been with the Govt so far. The latter now needs to heed their views on saving the economy



So far, one cannot fault the common citizen or even the Opposition leaders. For they have risen to the occasion and stayed with the Central Government in battling the Coronavirus, be it by observing lockdowns or working out medical protocols. But that does not mean total subservience to “one voice”, the non-questioning of wrong moves or even dismissal of alternative suggestions to get the nation back on track. The viral curve has not flattened despite the lockdown but the economy has surely flattened and we need cooperative federalism to manage this bigger crisis than resort to ego wars or cheap politics. Fortunately, India has a large resource pool of policy experts and even mature politicians of long standing who can help. So it would make infinite common sense to tap into them. Sadly, the Narendra Modi Government, for all its muscular push on shutting down the nation, had not foreseen the reverse migration of labour or planned a bailout package for an economy that’s grunting, groaning and gasping for breath. Kickstarting agriculture is not the only solution. As companies go under, people lose jobs and State Governments stare at bankruptcies with dipping revenues, some as high as 90 per cent, India would lose more lives to the great economic chaos than the virus. In fact, saving the economy is now the twin pillar of the battle as global studies predict that the pandemic is not going away anywhere soon. And now that allied crises are compounding the disease burden, the Government doesn’t seem to have concrete plans to address either migration or an economic stimulus. Worse, the political ceasefire is over and the blame games have begun. What else explains the distasteful remark by the ruling BJP on Congress president Sonia Gandhi’s offer to pay train fare of migrants from party coffers as an attempt to create Italy everywhere? What lies behind the relentless nitpicking of Opposition-ruled States like Bengal and not self-introspecting on self-ruled States like Gujarat? What explains the decision to make destitute and stranded migrants pay for their return journey on trains when they have had no daily wages over the last month and a half? What explains the rationale of passing the burden to States, who themselves are cash-strapped? What about the accountability of expense patterns from the PM Cares fund, which is seeing contributions pouring in from all sections of society? Of course, there are disturbing reports of a segregatory attitude towards different communities while disbursing COVID-19 relief packages, too. The Centre would do well to assuage these anxieties than smell the familiar Opposition conspiracy. Truth be told, each Chief Minister worth his/her salt, is stepping up to protect his/her respective State. Given the undiagnosed trajectory of the disease or the number of fatalities we might end up with, there’s no way to guarantee that politicking over survival would stand the test of human memory in the next round of polls. That would be too foolish indeed. Wisdom demands that regulated and realistic exit protocols be worked out in a consultative format and not as a bureaucratic imposition.

There was a big question mark on the success of the lockdown given the Indian penchant for indiscipline but people voluntarily complied and willed themselves to stay safe. Similarly, the Opposition Chief Ministers have all worked in tandem with the Centre. But in the end, the lockdown can only buy one time, delay the onslaught of the virus so that anticipatory preparations can be made, not only in managing healthcare but also keeping the economy chugging. As testing gets aggressive, it is clear that the virus has seeped through the trellis of India’s dense population and lockdown or no lockdown, the graph is vertical now. Also, with an extended lockdown testing patience and one’s earning ability, violations are difficult to police. There is no point pondering what could have been done. But the focus should be on what can be done now. Beginning with migrants. If Air India could be used to bring back stranded Indians free from around the world, then the same courtesy can be extended to displaced migrants on trains. They, in the end, do not deserve to be treated like the Stateless. The Railways have already contributed ₹150 crore to the PM fund and a part of that could be used to cover the expenses. Let us not forget that without labourers at their bases, no business can start operation no matter which zone it is in. So till we facilitate easy movement by train, either to their villages or to their work hubs, no stimulus package can be utilised on the ground. Let’s not forget that labourers are also revolting as the violence in Surat revealed. Shunned by India’s cities, which they built and serviced with their toil and sweat, they were turfed out overnight, forced to stay in under-serviced camps and looked at with suspicion as carriers of a disease they certainly didn’t import. Couldn’t some bit of non-essential railway infrastructure be slowed down or stalled temporarily to take care of India’s unorganised workforce, believed to be around 10 crore, to keep the economy moving? Some relief could be allocated from the National Disaster Management fund, too. The third promised stimulus is still coming. The non-action now won’t be forgotten but the rhetoric certainly will be.

## All for a drink

Will the chaos outside liquor vends defeat all that was achieved over the last 40 days? Certainly, it could have been managed well



There is no doubt that revenues collected by States across the country have been pummelled by the 40-day shutdown. With commerce shut, Goods and Service Tax (GST) collections have collapsed. Fewer people moving around has meant petroleum taxes are minimal and most States, with the exceptions of Bihar and Gujarat, had huge revenue collections coming in from liquor sales. After losing access to beer, wine and spirits ever since the lockdown came into force, it was not just the public that wanted to enjoy a chilled beer but also various State Governments who were looking for ways to increase revenues. But much like what happened during the lockdown, a well-intentioned move to open the liquor vends has been managed haphazardly. Huge crowds, extending upto one to two kilometres were seen outside major vends. With no social distancing norms being followed, this defeated the very purpose of the last 40 days of lockdown. However, as chaos has been the order of the day in the past few weeks, with conflicting orders, shut borders and more, it seems almost asinine that a bureaucrat or politician would have believed that opening liquor stores would have been a smooth process. Even in normal times, we have seen long queues in front of liquor shops, especially on weekends. Is there a better way to do this? Maybe the Aarogya Setu application, which the Government has been touting over the past few weeks, would have helped manage the crowd, which has been abysmal in Delhi, Mumbai and other major cities across India. Of course, there are huge privacy and data security issues with any application, which must be addressed, but the only way to have assured the sale of liquor smoothly would have been to involve the application, and possibly home delivery in certain cases. This would not have been an easy fix but if the simple objective is to prevent crowding at the vends as well as hoarding, this is what should have been done. State Governments, too, need to answer on whether the additional revenues will be worth the health risk.

That said, the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic has been strange in India. Despite the fact that several malcontent commentators professed that India would see a surge of deaths, the number of deaths attributed to the pandemic has been limited. The lockdown has ensured that India has managed better than many developed countries. There has been no hard and fast science over here, nobody knows what works and what doesn’t. However, one thing is certain across the world, social distancing works. While opening the liquor vends was a smart move, it was handled poorly.

# opinion

## Spewing venom

Zafarul Islam Khan’s attempt to reach out to the Muslim world is an affront to the core values of our secular Constitution. His comments are detestable and must be contested

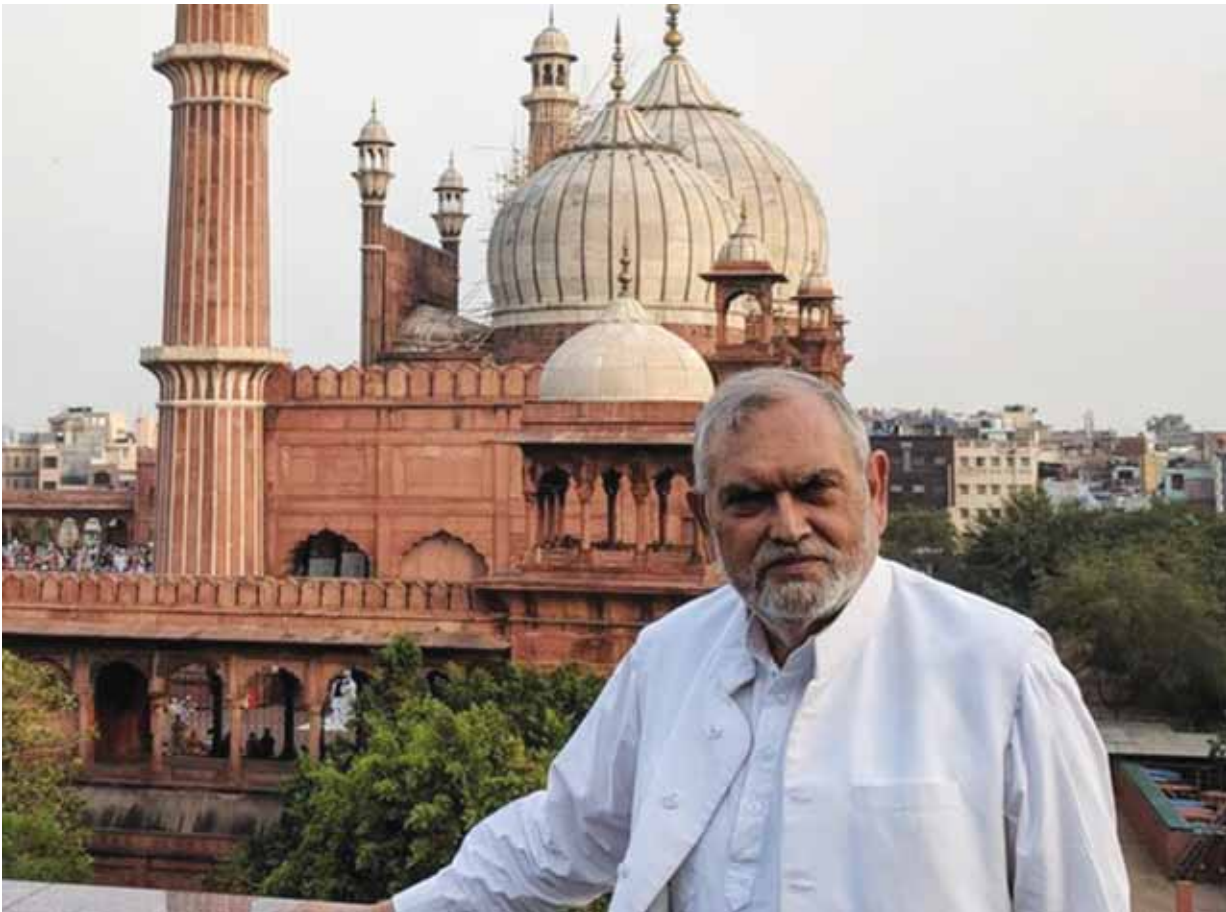


A SURYA PRAKASH

Even as India is grappling with the monstrous Coronavirus and every organ of the State is doing its best to contain the spread of the pandemic, the Chairman of the Delhi Minorities Commission, Zafarul Islam Khan, publicly declared that Muslims are being “persecuted” in the country. He has taken, what one would consider, the most irresponsible step by reaching out to the Muslim world for help. He thanked the Government of Kuwait “for standing with the Indian Muslims.” Khan has since partially retracted his statement but the damage is done because he persists in saying that Muslims are being persecuted in our country.

In his first Facebook post, he had said that Indian Muslims had “opted until now” not to complain to the Arab and Muslim world about the hate campaigns against them. He then warned that “the day they are pushed to that (complain to the Muslim world), bigots will face an avalanche.” Well, Mr Khan, under our Constitution and the laws, you do not have the “option,” which you imagine you have. Our Constitution and our laws strictly forbid citizens from behaving in this manner. While Article 19(1)(a) guarantees freedom of speech and expression, Article 19(2) imposes “reasonable restrictions,” which pertain to the “sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order... and incitement to an offence.” In other words, the State has the right to make laws to ensure that no individual commits these infringements. Hence the provisions in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which deal with these matters.

Despite holding an important public office — there are lakhs of our fellow citizens who are Muslims and who are holding public offices in this country — Khan has sought to run down the nation he belongs to. This writer is of the view that his attempt to reach out to the Muslim world is an affront to the core values of our secular Constitution; it constitutes denigration of the nation he belongs to; and disturbs the sovereignty and integrity of India because he sought the help of other nations for a section of India’s citizenry. It affects public order because his petition to the Muslim world will offend the sens-



es of 85 per cent of the country’s citizens, who are not Muslims and many Muslims themselves, who will feel that this is an act of betrayal. Consequently, this could result in incitement to an offence. Finally, it is certain to disturb friendly relations with the Arab world — a relationship that is very dear to every Indian from the days of former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and former Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation Yasser Arafat.

The Delhi Police has acted promptly in this case. They have filed an FIR against Khan under Sections 124A and 153 A of the IPC, which deal with sedition and promoting enmity among different groups. So now, the law will take its course. But what Khan has done goes well beyond legal niceties and courtroom dramas. It is a warning bell for every citizen, who wishes to preserve the secular, liberal and democratic Constitution that our founding fathers have given us. Will we keep it or lose it, thanks to the follies of Khans of this world?

His original comments are indeed detestable and must, therefore, be contested vehemently. In that statement, Khan also revealed the kind of company he keeps. He had said Zakir Naik, who is spreading communal venom, is a “respected household name.”

Seeking the interference of another country in India’s internal affairs is an act of treachery. This should never be countenanced because, in a democracy, various groups will always have some grouse or another. India’s Constitution has created an elaborate mechanism to address these grievances and to find solutions. Apart from the two Houses of Parliament and the legislative Assemblies in all States, the nation has a strong, robust and independent judiciary that even has the power to strike down Constitutional amendments enacted by Parliament.

The country also boasts of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the National Minorities Commission (NMC) and similar institutions in States as also the Central Information Commission (CIC). To top it all, India has a vibrant media that reflects every aspect of the country’s plurality — one look at the abuses and barbs flung at Prime Minister Narendra Modi by Muslim leaders and their flunkies on television debates and on Twitter, Facebook and other social media outlets will give you an idea of how “persecuted” the Muslims are in our country.

Should they be citizens of the Islamic nations who are being beseeched by Khan and should they try something like

this on the leaders of those nations, they would be heading straight to the gallows. Also, some of the highly provocative and distasteful videos circulated by Muslim youth against Hindus in recent months would surely be additional evidence of the “persecution of Muslims” that Khan is talking about. Or, are we to believe that he has not seen any of this?

Now, onto the Tablighi Jamaat. When all the temples and churches in the country were closed, including the temple of Lord Balaji in Tirupati, why did the Tablighi Jamaat flout Government orders? Why did it hold the conference in Delhi in the second half of March with foreign delegates, which resulted in the rapid spread of the virus in the country? Are the Tablighis above the law? And why have they been spitting and abusing doctors and nurses in different parts of the country? Are they devoid of basic manners?

When all this was reported in the media, Khan declares that India is in the grip of Islamophobia. Did you, Khan, advise the Tablighis to behave? Have you no responsibility in this regard?

Annie Besant and BR Ambedkar had the prescience to anticipate this problem — of Indian Muslims seeking Muslim brotherhood and camaraderie outside the nation

they belong to. In her book, *The Future of Indian Politics*, Annie Besant said in 1922 that “the primary allegiance of the *musalmans* (Muslims) is to Islamic countries, not to our motherland.” She said their attitude was “subversive of civic order and the stability of the State. It makes them bad citizens for their centre of allegiance is outside their nation and ... they cannot be trusted by their fellow citizens.”

Annie Besant sounds prophetic when we read the statement of Zafarul Islam Khan but let us not forget that millions of Muslims, who work in every sphere of life including the armed forces, scientific laboratories, academia, entertainment and the crafts, have made us proud. Several of them have achieved the pinnacle of success like former Presidents Abdul Kalam, Zakir Hussain and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Bharat Ratna Ustad Bismillah Khan. All this has been possible because of the rhythm and harmony created by our Constitution to enable each one of us to chase our dreams in an environment that breeds equality and fraternity. We should not allow a few malcontents like Khan to disturb this.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal.)

## SOUNDBITE

India needs the extreme left and right views in economic spectrum. Similarly, we need non-Hindu and Hindu views. Hence, cannot ban RSS.

**Congress leader**  
—Abhishek Singhvi



I no longer bother about keeping up with appearances. When I was slim and sexy, I had no confidence but today, I am comfortable flaunting my flab.

**Actor**  
—Sameera Reddy



I have little doubt that Beijing misled the world about the scale and risk of the disease before it became a global pandemic. We have very conclusive report on Covid-19’s China origins.

**US President**  
—Donald Trump



Centralisation of power has never worked. Whether it was in the past or now, we have to exercise caution to retain the fundamentals of democracy.

**Congress leader**  
—Sushil Kumar Shinde



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Legend lost

Sir — The death of Chuni Goswami, the captain of the Indian football team that won gold at the 1962 Asian Games, came 41 days after the passing of his former teammate, PK Banerjee. Goswami led Bengal in the Santosh Trophy and Ranji Trophy, playing both football and cricket like Denis Compton. The versatile Goswami was unique in other ways as well. He played for Mohun Bagan from 1954 to 1968 but was actually spotted by BD Chatterjee as an eight-year-old schoolboy; Chatterjee got him into Mohun Bagan’s junior team in 1946. He held the distinction of playing for Bagan throughout his career in spite of offers from its arch-rival, East Bengal, besides reported offers from the famous English football club, Tottenham Hotspur. As a cricketer, Goswami fearlessly took on Roy Gilchrist. But some of the best cricket he played was in 1966 when he and Subrata Guha plotted the historic innings defeat of Garry Sobers’ West Indies. He will be missed.

**Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee**  
Faridabad

### An exit strategy for economy’s survival

There can be no disputing the fact that there cannot be an immediate end to the COVID-19 pandemic unless a suitable vaccine is developed to treat the illness caused by the virus. This is the only sure escape route from the pandemic. Now that it is clear that the virus isn’t going to disappear, it would be foolish for the nation to keep waiting to restart the economy. We have to start living with the virus and at the same time manage its spread. No Government, either the State or Central, can afford to continuously feed its population for days, months or years. Without revenues, it will be difficult for them to pay the salaries or run the exchequer.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is right to call for a phased lifting of the lockdown and announced his Government’s readiness to tackle the situation. While the focus must be on a gradual opening of the economy, this will also entail an upward curve of infections. This is why social distancing norms must be followed in the strictest possible manner. Besides, rapid testing and reportage of Coronavirus cases is a must.

### Mired in speculation

Sir — Speculations were doing the rounds about North Korean leader Kim Jong-un’s health after he disappeared for 20 days. All concerns were, however, put to rest on May 2 when he attended a ceremony in

Suncheon.

Report has it that the sudden disappearance of Kim did not happen for the first time. In 2014, too, he had disappeared from the public view for over a month. It was widely believed that he was dead and the announcement was delayed only because his successor was not yet named. Kim

Yo-jong, the sister of Kim Jong-un, was set to succeed him.

But why do we care about his disappearance all the time? This because although a tiny State, North Korea is very important to the world — not because it does anything good but because it’s a nuisance. The world cannot afford to ignore it. As a dictator,



Governments must also explore all available options to maximise revenues. This may even entail taking calculated risks. They must aim to provide relief in urban agglomerations, plan for a calibrated unlocking of economic activities and refurbish health services in the rural hinterland. Some sectors, such as hospitality and leisure, may take several months or longer to reopen fully. What is sure, however, is that life will never be the same again.

**Katuru Durga Prasad Rao**  
Hyderabad

Kim may be having more foes than friends. No wonder, he is curious to know how many will grieve or celebrate his death.

**KV Seetharamaiah**  
Hassan

### Ensure a safe return

Sir — The Union Government’s decision to operate special trains to let stranded migrant labourers reach home was long overdue and is welcome. The challenge now before State Governments is to ensure that the mass return of migrants does not lead to the spread of the Coronavirus disease. Of utmost importance is to ensure that social distancing norms are maintained during travel. Thereafter, when they reach their destinations, strict quarantine and effective monitoring is a must. As it is, the health infrastructure is very weak. With more than 42,000 cases, India cannot afford any further spread of the disease.

**Aditi Mallik**  
Via email

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com







Around the Globe

● The head of the maker of remdesivir, an anti-viral shown to reduce recovery times in COVID-19 patients, said Sunday the company has been exporting the drug and is making it available to patients in the United States through the US Government. Gilead Sciences CEO Daniel O'Day said the company is donating its entire existing supply of the drug — 1.5 million vials, enough to treat 100,000 to 200,000 patients. "We have been exporting for clinical trials and for compassionate use thousands of treatment courses," Mr O'Day said on CBS's "Face the Nation." "And our collaboration with the government has been such, we have been very transparent with them here in the United States and we have a good relationship on future allocation."

● Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he did not know if he would send his children back to school in the province worst-hit by the coronavirus outbreak. The provincial government has announced the voluntary reopening of primary schools and nurseries next week after weeks of closure, in a decision that has divided parents. Trudeau's three children are attending a French-speaking school — which remains closed — in Ontario province.

● China still faces the risk of Covid-19 rebound as 10 provincial-level regions have reported new locally-transmitted coronavirus cases over the last two weeks, a top health official warned on Monday. The National Health Commission (NHC) said that three new confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported on Sunday. All three were Chinese arriving from abroad. Also, 13 new asymptomatic cases, including two imported ones, were reported. As of Sunday, 962 asymptomatic cases, including 98 from abroad, were still under medical observation, the NHC said.

● Japan's Government prepared on Monday to extend its nationwide state of emergency to the end of May as it braces for a lengthy battle against the coronavirus pandemic. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared an initial month-long state of emergency for Tokyo and six other regions on April 7, later expanding it to cover the entire country. It is to expire on Wednesday, but Abe is expected to announce an extension to May 31 after consulting infectious diseases experts.

● Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro railed against the country's lockdown Sunday in a speech to thousands of anti-confinement demonstrators as the number of confirmed Covid-19 infections passed 100,000, with more than 7,000 deaths. Bolsonaro blamed state governors for continuing the lockdown in a speech outside his presidential palace in Brasilia.

● Iran on Monday reopened mosques in parts of the country deemed at low risk from coronavirus, as it said almost 80,000 people hospitalised with the illness had recovered and been released. Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 74 new fatalities brought to 6,277 the total number officially recorded in Iran since it reported its first cases in mid-February. Iran on Sunday recorded 47 deaths, its lowest daily count in 55 days.

WORLDWIDE CASES EXCEED 3.5 MN

2,49,744 deaths have been recorded globally

AGENCIES ■ PARIS

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide surpassed 3.5 million on Monday, with three quarters of them in Europe and the United States. At least 3,599,396 infections and 2,49,744 deaths have been recorded globally. The numbers around the world reflect only a fraction of the real figures as many countries test only serious cases

US: Anxious to spur an economic recovery without risking lives, President Donald Trump insists that "you can satisfy both" — see states gradually lift lockdowns while also protecting people from the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 67,000 Americans.

The President, fielding questions from Americans

Sunday night in a virtual town hall from the Lincoln Memorial, acknowledged valid fears on both sides of the issue. Some people are worried about getting sick; others are reeling from lost jobs and livelihoods. Trump increased his projection for the total US death toll to as many as 1,00,000 - up by as much as 40,000 from what he had suggested just a few weeks ago.

"Look, we're going to lose anywhere from 75,000, 80,000 to 100,000 people," Trump said. "That's a horrible thing. We shouldn't lose one person out of this. This should have been stopped in China." But he struck a note of urgency to restart the nation's economy, declaring, "We have to get it back open safely but as quickly as possible."

After more than a month of being cooped up at the White

House, Trump returned from a weekend at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland for the virtual town hall hosted by Fox News Channel.

The president said of his monumental backdrop: "We never had a more beautiful set than this." As concerns mount about his reelection bid, Trump stuck to his relentlessly optimistic view of the nation's ability to rebound soon.

"It is all working out," Trump said. "It is horrible to go through, but it is working out." Many public health experts believe the nation cannot safely reopen fully until a vaccine is developed. Trump declared Sunday that he believed one could be available by year's end.

Spain: For a second day in a row, Spanish health officials are reporting 164 new confirmed deaths from the coron-

avirus, the lowest daily death toll in six weeks, to a total of 25,428.

The figures came as a respite for a country that has spent seven weeks under a strict lockdown and that on Monday entered the first stage of its 4-phase lockdown rollback, expected to span over nearly two months.

People ventured out for the first time for haircuts, buying glasses or food take-outs, activities that are allowed on the condition of a pre-existing appointment.

Many small shops were still closed, as business owners worked on preparing to meet the strict health and hygiene guidelines that the government only published on Sunday.

Face masks are also mandatory on public transport and the government is distrib-

US warns China of very significant consequences for not honouring trade deal

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Monday warned China of "very significant consequences" for not honouring the trade deal signed between the two countries early this year.

"I have every reason to expect that they honour this agreement. And if they don't, there would be very significant consequences in the relationship and in the global economy as to how people would do business with them," Mnuchin told Fox News.

Mnuchin's warning to China came a day after President Donald Trump said that he will terminate the trade deal with China, if they do not honour the commitment of buying an additional USD 200 billion worth of agricultural products from the US. Under the US-China trade deal signed in January, Beijing agreed to buy at least USD 200 billion more in US products and services in 2020-2021 two-year period than it did in 2017. Responding to a question, Mnuchin said that Trump is reviewing all issues with China very carefully.

China either incompetent in preventing Covid-19 spread or did it for a reason: Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump, who has come under fierce criticism for his handling of the coronavirus crisis in the US, has alleged that the Chinese Government was either incompetent in preventing the deadly virus from spreading globally or did it for a reason.

More than 68,000 Americans have died of coronavirus in the last three months and over 1.1 million have tested positive. America accounts for the largest number of cases of infections and fatalities in the world. "It (coronavirus) is a terrible thing, a terrible thing that happened to our country. It came from China. It should have been stopped. It could have been stopped on the spot," Trump said during a town hall organised by the Fox News on Sunday.

"They chose not to do it or something happened. Either there was incompetence or they didn't do it for some rea-

son. And we're going to have to find out what that reason was," he said.

The Chinese, he said, knew they had a problem.

"I think they were embarrassed by the problem, very embarrassed," he said. According to the president, the intelligence agencies told him about it on the January 23. "Shortly thereafter, I closed down the country. But I didn't do it because of what they said, because they said it very matter-of-factly, and it was not a big deal," he said.

Unlike in the last few days, Trump refrained from giving a definitive answer if he wants to impose additional tariff on China as a punishment for their handling of the virus.

"Well, it's the ultimate punishment. I will tell you that...I don't like — again, I don't like to tell you what — because, you know, we're all playing a very complicated game of chess or poker. Name whatever you want to name. But it's not checkers. That I can tell you.

We have a very complicated game going," he said.

"Our country was being ripped off by every nation in the world. Now we have made unbelievable strides. Unfortunately, then we get hit by this whole situation. But we have done so well. We have taken in so much money. Going before the virus, China had the worst year they had in 67 years. That's a reason — and I'm not happy about that. But what it does is it says they were taking us for a ride," said the President.

Trump also alleged that the World Trade Organization has ripped off this country. "That's when China became an economic power. And, by the way, you have World Trade and you have World Health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been a disaster. Everything they said was wrong. And they're China-centric. All they do is they agree with China, whatever China wants to do," he said.

Researchers find antibody that blocks infection by coronavirus in cells

London: Researchers have identified a fully human monoclonal antibody that prevents the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) virus from infecting cultured cells. The discovery, detailed in the journal Nature Communications, is an initial step towards developing a fully human antibody to treat or prevent the respiratory disease Covid-19 caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.

The Covid-19 pandemic has spread rapidly across the globe infecting more than 3.3 million people worldwide and killing more than 235,000 people so far. This research from Utrecht University, Erasmus Medical Center and Harbour BioMed (HBM) builds on the work they have done in the past on antibodies targeting the SARS-CoV

that emerged in 2002/2003.

"Using this collection of SARS-CoV antibodies, we identified an antibody that also neutralises infection of SARS-CoV-2 in cultured cells," said study co-lead author Berend-Jan Bosch, Associate Professor at Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

"Such a neutralising antibody has the potential to alter the course of infection in the infected host, support virus clearance or protect an uninfected individual that is exposed to the virus," Bosch added. The researchers noted that the antibody binds to a domain that is conserved in both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2, explaining its ability to neutralize both viruses.

COUNTRY	TOTAL CASES	TOTAL DEATHS
USA	1,194,875	69,011
Spain	2,48,301	25,428
Italy	2,11,938	29,079
France	1,68,693	24,895
UK	1,90,584	28,734
Germany	1,65,745	6,866
Russia	1,45,268	1,356
Turkey	1,26,045	3,397



uting 14 million of them at major transportation hubs.

Political tension in the country is on the rise as opposition parties critical of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's handling of the crisis threaten to block extending further the state of emergency in a parliamentary vote later this week.

Italy: Italy's national statistics agency has released the first comprehensive data on the effect of the new coronavirus on Italy's mortality rates. The data found 38.7% more people died through March 31 than the average over the past five years.

ISTAT calculated an increase of 25,354 excess deaths from the start of the outbreak Feb. 20 through March 31, compared to the average from 2015 to 2019.

But only 54% of those excess deaths were actually positive for the virus, meaning Italy's official death toll of nearly 29,000 is likely off by at least 10,000. The report from ISTAT was released on the same day Italy began easing Europe's first and longest lockdown restrictions.

The report provides data to back up the anecdotal evidence of the staggering toll

Covid-19 has taken on some provinces in hardest-hit Lombardy region: Bergamo saw its mortality rate increase 568% compared to the five year average while Cremona's increase was 391%.

The report was produced in conjunction with Italy's Superior Institute of Health.

It said while only 54% of the excess dead were actually positive for the virus, the others were likely either positive but never tested or died as an indirect result of the pandemic because of the "crisis of the hospital system and fear of going to the hospital."

Italy begins to emerge from longest nationwide lockdown

AFF ■ ROME



Stir-crazy Italians will be free to stroll and visit relatives for the first time in nine weeks on Monday as Europe's hardest-hit country eases back the world's longest nationwide coronavirus lockdown.

Four million people — an estimated 72 percent of them men — will return to their construction sites and factories as the economically and emotionally shattered country tries to get back to work.

Restaurants that have managed to survive Italy's most disastrous crisis in generations will reopen for takeaway service.

But bars and even ice cream parlours will remain shut. The use of public transport will be discouraged and everyone will have to wear masks in indoor public spaces. "We are feeling a mix of joy

and fear," 40-year-old Stefano Milano said in Rome.

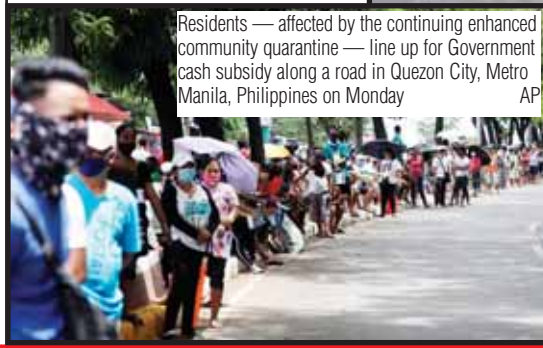
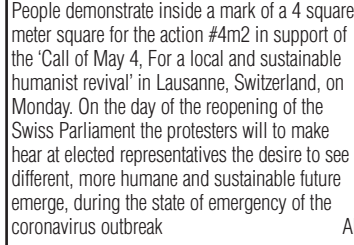
"There will be great happiness in being able to go running again carefree, in my son being allowed to have his little cousin

over to blow out his birthday candles, to see our parents," the father-of-three said. "But we are also apprehensive because they are old and my father-in-law has cancer so is high risk."

AROUND THE WORLD IN PICTURES



An Austrian militia soldier reacts as a doctor takes a swab from his nose to test for the coronavirus disease for mobilisation in Vienna, Austria, on Monday. Austria deploys its militia to help with virus-related duties. The Austrian government has moved to restrict freedom of movement for people, in an effort to slow the onset of the Covid-19 coronavirus



Residents — affected by the continuing enhanced community quarantine — line up for Government cash subsidy along a road in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines on Monday

A medical worker wearing protective equipment sprays disinfectant at his ambulance after delivering a patient suspected of being infected with the coronavirus to the Pokrovskaya hospital in St.Petersburg, Russia, on Monday

Daniel Pearl murder case: US demands justice from Pakistan

PTI ■ WASHINGTON/ ISLAMABAD

The US has again prodded Pakistan by seeking justice for murdered American journalist Daniel Pearl, days after his family filed an appeal before the Supreme Court against a verdict by a court in Sindh province which acquitted the prime accused and British-born top al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and three others in the case.

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

spy agency ISI and al-Qaeda.

On April 2, a two-judge Sindh High Court bench overturned the death sentence of 46-year-old al-Qaeda leader Sheikh, who was convicted in the abduction and murder of Pearl in 2002. He has been in jail for the past 18 years. The court also acquitted his three aides - Fahad Naseem, Salman Saqib and Sheikh Adil- serving life sentences in the case. The bench announced the verdict on the appeals filed by the four convicts 18 years ago.

"On the eve of World Press Freedom Day, we honour the legacy of journalist Daniel Pearl," State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells tweeted on Sunday.

Iran denies harming Afghanis in border incident

Tehran: Iran has rejected reports claiming that Iranian border guards had tortured and thrown Afghans into a river to prevent their illegal entry into the country, the media reported.

"The incident affecting a number of Afghanistan's citizens has taken place on that country's soil and the Islamic Republic of Iran's border guards have denied any involvement in this regard," Press TV quoted Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi as saying on Sunday.

"Taking into account significance of issue and in order to obtain accurate information about how incident took place on the Afghan soil, we have been probing the issue in cooperation with that country's officials," Mousavi added.

Pompeo reaffirms US mission to denuke N Korea

IANs ■ WASHINGTON/SEOUL

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has renewed Washington's goal of denuclearizing North Korea and creating a "bright future" for its people after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's return to the public eye following his 20-day absence, a media report said on Monday.

"Our mission has remained the same, to convince the North Koreans to give up their nuclear weapons, to verify the same, and to then create a brighter future for the North Korean people," the Seoul-based Yonhap News Agency quoted Pompeo as saying in an ABC News interview on

Sunday.

"That's been something President (Donald) Trump's been focused on since the beginning of his time in office and something we'll continue to work on," he added.

On Saturday, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported on Kim's visit to a fertilizer factory completion ceremony in Suncheon, north of Pyongyang, on Friday, ending rumours of his failing health.

Kim had disappeared from the public view since he presided over a premier ruling party meeting on April 11.

Various rumours emerged afterward, including Kim being in a coma after surgery or the

ruler simply self-isolating over coronavirus concerns.

Asked about Kim's weeks-long absence, Pompeo refused to comment in detail, said the Yonhap News Agency report.

"There's not much that I can share with you about what we knew about Chairman Kim's activities during that time. We don't know why he chose to miss that moment," he said, referring to his absence from an event marking the April 15 birth anniversary of his late grandfather and national founder, Kim Il-sung.

"We know there have been other extended periods of time where Chairman Kim's been out of public view as well, so it's not unprecedented," he added.

WikiLeaks: London court delays Assange extradition hearing

London: WikiLeaks said its founder Julian Assange will have to wait at least until September before a British judge will hear a US request for his extradition.

Assange, who faces espionage charges over the activities of WikiLeaks, is currently in Belmarsh Prison in London and is fighting the allegations.

Kristinn Hrafnsson, WikiLeaks' editor-in-chief, said in a video posted on social media that it was "completely unacceptable" that Assange has to spend another four months — and potentially longer — in prison. By the time any hearing begins in September, Assange will have spent a year in remand after he was dragged out of the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

GLOBE TROTTER

KIM'S HEALTH: 2 NKOREAN DEFECTORS SORRY

Seoul: Two North Korean defectors elected as lawmakers in South Korea on Monday apologized for their remarks over Pyongyang leader Kim Jong-un's ill health amid public criticism over fake news.

Thae Yong-ho, who won a seat in the recent South Korean parliamentary elections and also a former No. 2 diplomat in North Korea's Embassy in London, apologized his unconfirmed remarks on Kim's health, reports Yonhap News Agency.

5 AF SOLDIERS KILLED IN TALIBAN ATTACK

Kabul: At least five Afghan soldiers were killed and seven injured when Taliban militants detonated an explosives-laden truck near a military outpost in Helmand province, officials said on Monday. Attack took place in Nahr-e-Saraj district on Sunday.



# Build more, build faster with precautions to beat Covid induced slowdown: Gadkari

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has a simple mantra at hand, build more, build faster while maintaining all precautions to beat the Covid-19 induced economic slowdown.

Gadkari, the Union Minister for Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, in an exclusive interview with IANS, talked about a massive push to infrastructure creation as a means to mitigate the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic and to accelerate growth.

In essence, the minister aims to attain a faster pace of

highway construction, boost the Bharatmala Pariyojana programme, and aid the MSME and the auto sectors, among others.

Lately, Gadkari has been in touch with various stakeholders spanning multiple sectors via video conferencing to devise the strategies to re-start the clogged road networks, rescue the stranded truck drivers and allow limited construction activity.

At present, India is under a more relaxed form of lockdown which will last till May 17. However, ratings agencies have cut the country's GDP forecast on lack of economic activities.

Besides, many companies have instituted pay cuts and have downsized their workforce.

The circumstances are set to trigger a recessionary cycle, even though India has not been hit very hard by the actual pandemic due to the early preventive measures adopted by the Centre.

However, the lockdown to curb the spread of the virus has had an adverse impact on the country's economy.

The lockdown has dealt a heavy blow to commerce leading to temporary closure of shopping malls, dine-in restaurants, grounding of aircraft, shutting down of factories,

leaving the major market places deserted.

Not just sectors such as airlines, tourism, hotels and automobiles, but even the government's own revenue accretion has been impacted.

Particularly impacted are the MSMEs. The sector is essentially the backbone of the economy.

Consequently, Gadkari has come out with a plan to revive the economy while keeping all health related safeguards of social distancing in place.

According to Gadkari, the Centre will not hesitate "to take any decision required to bring complete transparency, remove bottlenecks and introduce fast-

track highway development".

"A lot of projects are of national importance and immediate start of work on these projects is very important. But we also understand the intensity of this pandemic. I have reviewed the present scenario," the minister told IANS.

"Wherever we can gradually open construction works in identified zones with the permission of the local administration, we shall certainly do so. We are exploring the possibility of restarting works as soon as possible.

"However, we are only looking at allowing those works to start where standard social distancing norms can be fol-



lowed and highest standards of hygiene and safety are adhered to," he said.

In terms of highway development, the minister said: "Though we are hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, we aspire to maintain the momentum of

last year and our targets for construction in FY 2020-21 are slightly more than last year at 10,250 km."

"Similarly, for awarding of new works, we have a target of 12,650 km," he added.

When asked about the process of reviving the BOT (Toll) mode of highway development and incorporation of amendments proposed in the Model Concession Agreement (MCA), the minister replied: "After an exhaustive process of consultations with all stakeholders, the process of incorporation of amendments in the Model Concession Agreement of BOT (Toll) mode is at the final stage."

"The objective of the entire exercise has been to take into consideration the concerns of the highway construction industry and revive BOT (Toll) mode as an attractive option for concessionaires keen to work with the government in the PPP domain," he said.

For the auto sector, the minister said that a scheme for scrapping old vehicles for certain perks that can be used by owners to buy new cars is being pursued and is also in the final stages.

The policy will benefit the auto sector and reduce the cost of procuring expensive metals such as copper from abroad.

# Sensex crashes over 2,000 pts

## As global selloff intensifies

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

Equity benchmark Sensex plummeted 5.94 per cent or 2,002 points on Monday, tracking massive selloffs in global markets amid rising US-China tensions.

After a highly volatile session, the 30-share BSE index settled at 31,715.35, plunging 2,002.27 points, or 5.94 per cent. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty suffered a heavy loss of 566.40 points, or 5.74 per cent, to settle at 9,293.50.

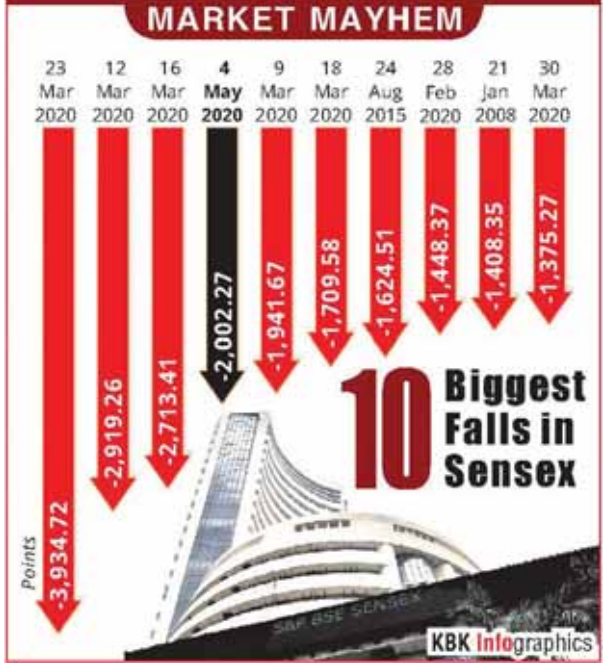
ICICI Bank was the top

laggard in the Sensex pack, sinking over 10 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, HDFC, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank and Maruti.

Shares of Reliance Industries fell over 2 per cent after the oil-to-telecom conglomerate on Thursday posted its biggest ever drop in quarterly net profit. Its net profit in January-March dropped 37 per cent to ₹6,546 crore, the lowest in three years.

Bharti Airtel and Sun Pharma were the gainers in the BSE index. According to Narendra Solanki, Head-Equity Research (Fundamental) at Anand Rath, the domestic markets opened lower taking negative cues from its global peers in Asia.

Claims by the US with regard Covid-19 sparked fears of a renewed trade war and fresh tussle with China over its role in the pandemic spread.



Although the major markets in Japan and China were closed for holidays, stocks in

other Asian markets fell as tensions between the US and China weighed on investor

## ₹ plunges by 64 p to 75.73 against \$ on trade concerns

**Mumbai:** The rupee depreciated by 64 paise to settle at 75.73 against the US dollar on Monday due to fears of a renewed trade war between the US and China, snapping its four-day winning run.

Heavy sell-off in domestic equities and a strengthening greenback overseas also weighed on the rupee.

"The greenback surged following safe-haven buying as uncertainty increased after President Trump threatened to impose new tariffs on China," Sugandha Sachdeva, VP-Metals, Energy & Currency Research, Religare Broking, said. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose by 0.27 per cent to 99.35. The selloff in domestic and global equities has led to selling pressure in the domestic currency at the beginning of the week, Sachdeva added.

**PTI**

**AP ■ BANGKOK**

Global stock markets dropped on Monday as tensions between the Trump administration and China over the origins and handling of the coronavirus pandemic rattled investors.

Benchmarks fell in most countries except for Australia, which was lifted by signs its own virus outbreak is being brought under control.

In Europe, where most markets returned from a long

holiday weekend, Germany's DAX dropped 3.5% to 10,480 and the CAC 40 in Paris lost 4% to 4,390. Britain's FTSE 100, which was open on Friday, declined 0.4% to 5,742.

The future for the S&P 500 slipped 1.1% and that for the Dow industrials lost 0.8%, pointing to a lower open on Wall Street after tech firms brought US markets down at the end of last week.

Tokyo, Shanghai and Bangkok were among markets

closed for holidays on Monday. Criticised over his handling of the crisis, President Donald Trump has tried to shift the blame to China. Beijing has repeatedly pushed back on US accusations that the outbreak was China's fault.

The antagonisms threaten to undo the truce in a trade war between Washington and Beijing that was struck just before China began shutting much of its economy down in late January to fight the pandemic.

# GLOBAL MARKETS DROP spooked by China-US tensions over virus

## Ola, Uber resume services in green and orange zones

**New Delhi:** With the Government easing restrictions in select zones across the country from May 4, Ola and Uber on Monday announced to resume their operations in green and orange zones across India.

Uber will provide rides in green zones like Daman, Kochi, Guwahati and more places while it will provide rides in orange zones like Amritsar, Udaipur, Mohali and Gurugram, among others.

"If you must travel, Uber is ready to serve residents in these zones from Monday, May 4. Riders will constantly be notified with further information and the status of specific cities through our app," the company said in a statement.

**IAN S**

# Silver Lake to invest ₹5,655.75 cr in Jio Platforms at an equity value of ₹4.90L cr

**Mumbai:** In yet another major development, Reliance Industries Limited ("Reliance Industries") and Jio Platforms Limited ("Jio Platforms") announced on Monday morning that Silver Lake will invest ₹5,655.75 crore into Jio Platforms.

This investment values Jio Platforms at an equity value of ₹4.90 lakh crore and an enterprise value of ₹5.15 lakh crore and represents a 12.5 per cent premium to the equity valuation of the Facebook investment announced on April 22, 2020.

RIL had announced that an equivalent investment of up to 9.99 per cent would follow the original Facebook investment. The second tranche has been made at a 12.5 per cent premium to the FB investment made

recently. But this does not complete the investment limit and further headroom is available for yet another investment opportunity claimed analysts.

Silver Lake is the global leader in technology investing, with over \$43 billion in combined assets under management and committed capital.

The Menlo Park headquartered Silver Lake is an American private equity firm focused on leveraged buyout and growth capital investments in technology, technology-enabled and related industries. Founded in 1999, the firm is one of the largest technology investors in the world and notable for participating in club deals.

Jio Platforms, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited, is a next-gen-

eration technology company building a Digital Society for India by bringing together Jio's leading digital apps, digital ecosystems and India's #1 high speed connectivity platform under one umbrella. Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited, which provides connectivity platform to over 388 million subscribers, will continue to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Jio Platforms.

Jio's vision is to enable a Digital India for 1.3 billion people and businesses throughout India, especially small merchants, micro-businesses and farmers. Jio has brought transformational changes in Indian digital services space and propelled India on path towards becoming a global technology leader and among leading digital economies in world.

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified female **Namely: Unknown, W/o Unknown R/o Unknown A/g** : About 45 years, **Height** : 5', **Face**: Round, **Complexion**: Dark, **Built**: Medium, **Wearing**: White and blue colour top and pink colour Payjama with bare footed has been found dead on 21.04.2020 in front of Thakur Electronics, Road No. 28, Raghuraj Nagar, New Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 34A dated 21.04.2020 has been lodged at Police Station Rajouri Garden, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this found dead female may kindly inform to the following:-

**SHO :**

**P.S. Rajouri Garden, Delhi West Distt., Delhi**

**DP/87/WD/2020 Tel. No. 011-25453990, 8750872711**

**Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**

(O/o CE/TS, B-1, Shakti Vihar, Patiala)

Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001.

Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813; Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)

**OPEN e-TENDER NOTICE**

Online Tenders are invited for the supply of the following material as per Tender Specification No. 208/SS(D)/2020 of PSPCL:-

Description	Qty. (No's)	Enquiry No./ Year.	Last date & time for raising queries for pre-bid conference	Date & time for Pre-bid conference	Last date & time for downloading of tenders	Last date & time for bid submission	Date & time of opening of bids
Manufacturing, testing and delivery of spare relays of various types for use in 86 kv sub-stations in PSPCL.	1961	208/ 2020	20-05-2020 11.00 A.M.	29-05-2020 11.00 A.M.	08-06-2020 11.00 A.M.	09-06-2020 11.00 A.M.	11-06-2020 11.30 A.M.

EMD:- 7,04,000/-  
Minimum EMD:- 1,76,000/-  
Detailed NIT and specification may be downloaded from PSPCL e-tendering website <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The prospective bidders may contact customer care of above cited website in case of any difficulty. It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, NO CORRIGENDUM will be published in newspapers. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on PSPCL e-tendering website <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.

C -141/2020 RO 773-C

-sd/-  
Dy. CE/Sub-Station Design  
PSPCL, Patiala

# Most firms across industries keeping salary hike budgets unchanged amid pandemic: Survey

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

With the unprecedented situation arising out of Covid-19 pandemic, companies across the world have re-evaluated their HR practices, and while 50 per cent organisations across industries are keeping their salary hike budgets unchanged, 36 per cent have opted for a decline, says a survey.

In its India's Covid-19 HR Practices Survey Report, KPMG said around 70 per cent of the organisations across levels have reported no change in the planned impact on fixed pay at the non-management and junior management levels.

In a bid to sustain these tough times, a few organisations are imple-

menting hiring freezes and wage freezes, while others are introducing remote working alternatives, revisiting employee engagement initiatives and additional financial assistance.

The survey titled 'Cutting through Crisis' noted that 50 per cent of the companies have deferred or suspended their promotion schedule.

Moreover, a downward trend in promotions numbers across all job levels was observed wherein 33 per cent of organisations admitted to having reduced it.

However, most organisations in IT/ITES, life sciences/pharma and retail sector have refrained from any downwards trend in overall promotion cycle, the survey noted.

However, if the Covid-19 situation persists, around 22 per cent of the organisations may defer, freeze or suspend incentive payouts to support their overall finances. While 50 per cent organisations across industries are keeping their salary increment budgets unchanged, around 36 per cent organisations have opted for decreasing the salary increment budgets, it said.

"Organisations are navigating an unprecedented and challenging time and are collectively at a level-playing ground as none had an upper hand of being better prepared or equipped to deal with the crisis," said Vishalli Dongrie, Partner and Head, People and Change, KPMG in India.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**TENDER NOTICE**

The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const-I, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India invites open e-tender under Single Packet system for the under noted work :-

1. <b>Name of work and location</b>	Scanning, Digitalization & Indexing of office files & documents etc. in the Head Quarter office of CAO/Const. Northern Railway at Kashmere Gate, Delhi.
2. <b>Completion period of the work</b>	02 (Two) months from the date of issue of acceptance letter.
3. <b>Approx. Cost of work</b>	Rs. 23.02 Lakh (Rupees Twenty three lakh & two thousand only)
4. <b>Earnest Money amount (to be deposited online)</b>	Rs. 46,000.00 (Rupees Forty Six thousand only)
5. <b>Date, Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender</b>	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on 28.05.2020 on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . The bidders can only participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 28.05.2020.
6. <b>Detailed Tender Notice &amp; Tender Document</b>	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website i.e. <a href="http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in</a> Above tenders document will be available on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 07.05.2020 to 28.05.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

No. 1-W/SE/C/ISSCANING/2020-21 Dated: 04.05.2020 1030/20

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**Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**

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C -141/2020 RO 773-C

-sd/-  
Dy. CE/Sub-Station Design  
PSPCL, Patiala



DOCYARD

DR VIJAY JANAGAMA

Director,  
New Initiatives

SUVITAS HOLISTIC HEALTHCARE





# Put your best foot forward

Cardiovascular Diseases claimed more than 17.5 million cases worldwide, of which at least a third of them previously had heart attacks. Surviving a major cardiac event is an extremely fortunate thing. However, most survivors go to a state of complete rest with no or minimal exercises soon after leaving the hospital. It is true that one must avoid excessive physical exertion after a heart attack. However, appropriate exercises along with medication and therapies including occupational and physical therapy, will help in improving blood circulation and overall well-being. Thus cardiac rehabilitation is a highly recommended program to eliminate the risk of a second cardiac event, or post operative complications in a survivor and improve overall emotional well-being of an individual.

Cardiac rehabilitation is a multidisciplinary recovery program designed to strengthen the heart, body and mind aof people who recovered from cardiac events. With the intent to inculcate heart-healthy habits in an individual, a variety of physical activities are taught along with providing necessary one-on-one support and awareness to relieve stress and enhance mental health. Each patient has a different pace of recovery. In general, cardiac rehabilitation is offered for a period of 12 weeks, ideally in an inpatient setting. However, depending on the individual condition, the program could run for longer duration.

Studies observe, people who undergo cardiac rehabilitation have 30 per cent less repeat cardiac events. They were also found to be healthier and could walk longer distances. Supervised exercise programmes can reduce blood pressure, stress levels, body weight; at the same time improve balance and flexibility.

Although individual conditions decide the ideal time by when one could return to or start exercising after a heart attack, but in general you should be able to start in six weeks. Individuals who don't participate in cardiac rehabilitation will need to take the doctor's consent before starting to exercise. One could slowly begin by doing gentle exercises like walking. For the first week, you could walk for five minutes at a time. The momentum could be gradually built and extended to 10 minutes by next week and 30 minutes after six weeks. This again depends on how active you were previously. Hence, consulting a doctor in choosing the right type of physical activity is of paramount importance.

- Listed below are few other safety tips that could be followed for safely resuming to or newly getting into active lifestyles.
- Start walking slowly, gradually increase speed and lower the pace before stopping completely.
  - Don't exert yourself at the end of the day when you are already worn out. The best time to exercise is early in the day or when you feel fresh and relaxed. Make sure you are hydrated before and during the activity. Never do any physical activity soon after a bath or taking meals.
  - Gradually, minimise sitting time and aim to do moderate intensity activities for at least 40 minutes, 4 days a week.
  - To feel more motivated and comfortable, you could consider exercising with a personal trainer or a close family member.
  - Monitor your progress and continuously update doctor on the achieved and newly planned goals.
  - Climb stairs slowly until you are able to do it at the same pace of a normal walking.
  - As your fitness and confidence increases over the weeks, you can slowly move from mild to moderate intensity activities like cycling, swimming or even light weight training.

Here are some Cardiac Rehabilitation exercises you can do at home: elbow bends, bent arm raises, side elbow extensions, straight arm raises, arm circles, marching at a place, waist bends, waist twists, knee touches and knee bends. Structured exercises, monitored and supervised by a medical team and custom tailored to the patient's condition are helpful in reducing the risk of a repeat cardiac event.

## SUMMERCOOLERS

**SATTU:** Sattu is a flour consisting of a mixture of ground pulses and cereals. The dry powder is prepared in various ways as a principal or secondary ingredient of dishes.

Drinking the sattu sharbat helps you stay energetic throughout the day. It can be prepared by mixing sattu with either sugar and water or *jaljeera*, green chillies, black salt and coriander leaves, depending on how you want to have it — sweet or sour.

*Sattu sharbat* is the perfect drink to battle dehydration and heat stroke.

*Sattu* has amazing hydrating properties, hence if consumed regularly; it can help restore your skin's natural glow. It also prevents the wear and tear of skin cells.

It is good for Diabetes too. It has a low glycemic index that keeps your sugar levels in check. The *namkeen sattu* drink may be a good option for diabetics. It also helps in weight loss by preventing unwanted hunger calls and also boosts digestion.



# Breathe easy in Corona times

On World Asthma Day, DR ANIMESH ARYA tells you that there are no proven risks associated with asthmatic patients related to COVID-19, especially when they are breathing fresh air in many years

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease, hence it may be a cause of worry for the asthma patients or the patients already suffering from a variety of other respiratory diseases, but till date there is no data to prove that the virus has a different effect on asthma patients however in asthmatics the COVID-19 disease may be more severe.

Every virus evolves as the time passes by; same is with corona virus as well. There have been changes in the disease pattern since the beginning of this outbreak, necessitating modifications in its management, precautions to be taken. Dry cough, cold, and fever were supposed to be initial symptoms of this virus but now there are varied presentations in form of gastric symptoms, loss of smell and many a patient may be asymptomatic as well. Possibly different prevalent strains of the virus may be affecting the persons differently, and varied symptoms may also depend on the age group, immunity or the pre-existing diseases a particular person may already be suffering from. Till date there is no proof that the virus affects the asthma patients differently as was initially expected, but the same cannot be said for the future as the virus is still evolving. Respiratory viruses are triggers for asthma, but not all viruses affect asthma patients equally. Basic precautions and proper medications are the mainstay for total control of asthma.

Asthma patients are prone to many viral infections: Coronavirus is a respiratory virus. The concern

of asthma patients in regard to coronavirus is justified, but it should also be kept in mind that they are prone to other viral infections as well like swine flu and influenza, which also triggers for asthma worsening. Having said that, keeping in mind the current air quality index, the asthmatic patients are getting to breathe fresh air in many years which is definitely a pro of the Coronavirus-led lockdown.

Pollen allergy is also a seasonal trigger. It is being assumed by public that less air pollution may give way to enhanced pollen allergy which is not correct, rather any amount of air pollution aggravates the pollen allergy. The entire world is in the grip of corona virus, which is actually worrying but at the same time it is very important not to ignore other infections as these patients are more prone to these as well. Hence the importance of hand washing, proper sanitisation, maintaining high level of disinfection and social distancing along with well supervised medication.

Vaccination is important: There are a number of vaccines which are given yearly like swine flu, influenza as a precaution to asthma patients. Take them timely as advised by your treating physician. Regarding corona virus, the vaccine is still awaited.

Keep your inhaler and medicines stock ready: During the lockdown period make sure you don't go out of stock of inhalers or any other required essential medicines. Avoid going to hospital for consultation in this time, keep in touch with your concerned doctor through

**POLLEN ALLERGY IS A SEASONAL TRIGGER. IT IS ASSUMED THAT LESS AIR POLLUTION MAY GIVE WAY TO ENHANCED POLLEN ALLERGY WHICH IS NOT CORRECT, RATHER ANY AMOUNT OF AIR POLLUTION CAN AGGRAVATE IT**

Telemedicine and keep updating about your health so as to avoid visits to the hospital. In case of any emergency make sure that only one attendant goes with the patient to the healthcare facility to manage the exacerbation. Avoid nebulisation as much as possible because of aerosol generation, posing risk of infection to others. However, follow the advice of the treating physician and one can use them in open space like porch

or balcony to avoid contact with others. Children do require extra care in this regard.

Follow other general precautions: Stay safe at home, go out only if necessary, maintain social distancing, don't touch your face without sanitising or washing your hands thoroughly with soap. Follow WHO's guidelines in this regard.


In case you feel feverish, suffer from sore throat, dry cough, chest discomfort or any new symptoms, please consult your doctor immediately or call at Covid help line.

Be careful while eating: During this lockdown period one needs to be very careful about food intake as well, especially those already suffering from any pre-existing diseases. Prioritise nutrition in your meals; add immunity boosting items to it, overeating should be avoided. Don't skip meals, take them on right time, keep yourself well hydrated, take plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, avoid items with preservatives like pickles, jams, or dried cut fruits. Any eatable item which might aggravate your allergy should be avoided at all costs. Be careful while consuming raw food like fruits, salads. Wash them properly in warm water. Maintain high level of basic hygiene. Take your treating doctor's advice and follow in this regard well.

Exercise and positive attitude: Do regular exercises — yoga, breathing exercises. Nutritious diet, regular exercise and a positive attitude would go a long way in leading a happy and a healthy life.

The writer is Senior Consultant in Respiratory Medicine, Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute

## PUT HEALTH ON FOREFRONT

**Quarantine can be emotionally challenging. NMAMI AGARWAL**

shares tips that can help beat the blues by taking extra care of overall health

No or fewer outings during the quarantine might lead to stress, anxiety, low mood, and irritability and affect our overall health and well being. Watching the same news every hour and scrolling the social media too much can make us feel depressed, exhausted and tired. Sure, quarantine can be emotionally challenging but more than ever taking care of ourselves physically, mentally and emotionally should be at the forefront of our minds. Here are some easy ways that can help promote good health while staying at home.

To boost physical health:  
**Follow a healthy and balanced diet:** There is nothing better than consuming a healthy and well-balanced diet to achieve virtuous health. A diet filled with nutrients helps in maintaining your weight while lowering down the risk of various diseases. You can add fresh and seasonal fruits and green leafy vegetables in your diet and stay on the track of overall health. Also, one thing we can do to stay hale and hearty, is follow a healthy diet regime with regular meals. But, due to irregular sleeping patterns these days, many of us tend to skip breakfast sometimes. But make sure to start your day with a healthy and nutritious breakfast that provides essential nutrients to stay focused and energised throughout the day. Include a power packed home cooked breakfast such as idli, upma, paratha, poha in your daily diet.

A very important aspect of diet to take control is mid-day snacking, which mostly goes wrong for most of us. Why not replace your unhealthy snacks with healthier options like roasted *chana*, roasted *makhana*, salads, seeds or nuts. If you aren't much into preparation or hooked to your laptop for work, stick to a handful of nuts. A handful of walnuts equivalent to 28 grams especially can do wonders for your health.

**Build a home-based exercise routine:** A regular home workout cannot only help you in maintaining your weight but also fill you up with positivity and great energy levels. 30-45 minutes of a workout session can do wonders for your stress levels while improving your overall health and well-being. Use your stairs and balcony and add in squats, lunges, pilates, yoga, and aerobics in your workout.

To boost mental health:  
**Meditation:** There is nothing great than adding a session of meditation in your lifestyle to calm down your mind and to eradicate those negative vibes. Research suggests meditation can easily combat stress levels and lower down the symptoms of depression and anxiety while giving a great boost to memory. You can do breathing exercises, breath counting, and positive visualisation for about 30-45 minutes.

**Sound sleep can do wonders:** A night of sound sleep can give a great boost to your mental health like nothing else. Sleep deprivation cannot only make a person dull and absent-minded but it also takes a person closer to various health problems like heart diseases, diabetes, and obesity. Regular sleep of eight hours is a pre-requisite for a healthy body and mind.

The writer is Nutritionist & Founder-CEO, NmamiLife

# KEY TO SOUND SLEEP

A recent study finds that around 33 per cent Indian adults suffer from insomnia. Moreover, there has been a staggering increase in cases of childhood insomnia over the last few years. PULKIT SHARMA shares tips on how people can overcome this and improve sleep

The silent epidemic of insomnia is invading our lives, triggering a gamut of problems — physical and mental exhaustion, emotional disturbances, diminished productivity, accidents and lifestyle diseases. A recent study which appeared in the Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care states that around 33 per cent Indian adults suffer from insomnia. Moreover, there has been a staggering increase in the cases of childhood insomnia over the last few years, and this has had an adverse impact on children's growth and development. We all know that getting around six to eight hours of sound sleep is a must to remain healthy, but a large majority finds it daunting to put this into practice.

The problem usually starts with our desire to stay awake as much as possible. We are always spurred by a load of unfinished business and distractions — demanding projects, tight deadlines, fascinating videos, endless updates on the social media and buzzing smart phones. Under the spell of this constant

stimulation, we keep on stretching our waking hours and fighting our need for sleep. Late night coffee and tea are fast becoming a norm because they muffle all signs of slumber.

Over time, such behaviours ruin our inbuilt sleep-wake cycle by keeping us overly aroused during the night, sluggish during the day and slowly insomnia creeps in. Thereafter, it becomes a challenge to fall off to sleep, remain asleep or feel fresh after waking up. This is when insomnia tightens its grip around us. Thankfully, most of us can easily escape from the clutches of insomnia and retrain our minds and bodies to sleep better.

We must remember that our waking life and sleep influence each other and therefore spending our day meaningfully, peacefully and productively allows us to go to bed with a happy and relaxed frame of mind. In this state, there is no resistance to sleep and we drift away into the dreamworld rather swiftly. In other words, a day well-spent brings happy sleep. Therefore, let us



make our waking life balanced, generously demarcating spaces for work, leisure, exercise and fun.

A bunch of practices known as sleep hygiene, if followed consistently can improve your sleep. Start by curtailing your daytime naps to 30 minutes, anything longer than that can spoil

your sleep at night. Do not consume tea, coffee or alcohol after 5 pm because they can keep your mind stimulated for long. Encourage yourself to relax and instruct your brain to slow down two hours before bedtime. This includes eating a light and easily digestible meal, keeping away from electronic gadgets

and television and dimming the lights in your house. You may play some soft and soothing music, read a nice book, chitchat, practice gentle breathing exercises or meditation to utilise this time. If any disturbing thoughts and emotions come up, note them down telling yourself to peruse them the next day. Finally, switch off the lights and lie down on the bed focusing on your breath, allowing yourself to slip into sleep.

Despite doing all this, there will be times when sleep may not come easily. Even then refrain from worrying because that will push your mind and body into hyperarousal making it difficult for you to doze off. You can either continue to lie down, making your breath calm and focusing on it or you can get up and do some light activity till the time you feel sleepy. In any case if you continue to be calm, happy sleep will eventually come.

The writer is clinical psychologist and author of *When The Soul Heals*



Trend  
Blazer

Aamir clarifies the truck rumour

Recently, an unverified video had surfaced on social media that said that **AAMIR KHAN** has dispatched a truck full of bags of wheat flour packets with ₹15,000 cash in each of them, to be distributed in an underprivileged area in Delhi.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, the video stated that the truck was said to reach the village area on April 29 and the vehicle was loaded with one-kilo packets of flour, sent by Aamir.

Refuting all such claims and rumours, Aamir took to social media to debunk the news and stated, "Guys, I am not the person putting money in wheat bags. It's either a completely fake story or Robin Hood doesn't want to reveal himself! Stay safe."

**'I have always looked to better myself. I believe that we are blessed to learn and evolve for as long as we live. I'm a seeker of knowledge. I have always loved Indian history and have been keen to know more about it. It's fascinating and rich. I have some spare time currently so I'm enrolling myself to an online course.'**

—Ayushmann Khurrana

Veteran actor **JEETENDRA** will make his digital debut in the second season of daughter **Ekta Kapoor's** ALTBalaji production, *Baarish*. The 78-year-old Bollywood veteran hopes the audience likes his "short stint in this show."

Jeetendra will play the role of Jeetuji Gandhi, a veteran in the diamond business. "It's great to be back on screen for a show like *Baarish*, which finally convinced me to make my digital debut in its upcoming season. The cast and crew have been extremely warm on set."

The show stars Sharman Joshi and Aasha Negi in lead.

Amber devastated by mother's death

Actor **AMBER HEARD** took to Instagram to share that her mother Paige Heard has died.

The 34-year-old *Aquaman* star shared the sad news through an emotional post, featuring vintage photographs of the two.

"I am heartbroken and devastated beyond belief at the loss of my mom, Paige Heard. She left us too early, claspng onto the memory of her beautiful, gentle soul. She will be missed from the very depths of our hearts forever," she began her post.

"Her unflinching, open heart made her the most beautiful woman I have known. I feel truly lucky to have been her daughter. This has been an unbelievably painful time," she added.

A MEMOIR OF A THOUSAND MILES

British textile historian **JENNY HOUSEGO** lays bare her idyllic childhood, aspirations and struggles in her recent e-book, *A Woven Life*, co-authored by journalist **MAYA MIRCHANDANI**. By **SAKSHI SHARMA**

*My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour, and some style.*

These lines by Maya Angelou pretty much sum up British textile historian, Jenny Housego's recently released e-book, *A Woven Life*. Layered and candid, it is an ordinary memoir of Housego, who as a child in countryside England thought she would grow up to be a spy but life had other plans for her. Along with journalist, researcher and teacher, Maya Mirchandani, she lays bare her idyllic childhood in the aftermath of the second World War; her aspirations of being in the arts and then as a researcher at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

"Life unfolds in mysterious ways. In the course of one of my earliest jobs at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, I was transferred to the textile department even though I had been interested in ceramics and pottery. I had no interest in textiles since I was a student of Christian art. Today, I realise that this was not just a godsend opportunity, but also perhaps destiny showing me the way. As I walked through the museum's textile galleries, I was transported to lands and cultures I knew nothing of. I had wanted adventure. I wanted to travel and see the world, and suddenly I had found a doorway to lead me to it all," she quotes in her book.

Brought to the world of Asian textiles, art and museums, she has over the last five decades travelled across Asia to document traditional, local, and nomadic weaving and handcrafted textiles. She says that her life is an exciting story and she enjoyed it thoroughly with its own ups and downs. Perhaps, the reason why Housego wanted to tell it to the world! "I lived in many different countries and each place has had a profound impact on me. The people I met and the places I travelled to gave me rich experiences to share," adds she.

The book also talks about her struggles of falling in and out of love, a broken marriage and parenting.

How does it feel to lay yourself bare in front of people you didn't even know or maybe more so, those who supposedly knew you? Well, Housego promptly answers, "I felt anxious." She goes on to add a few more points but her British accent makes it tough for me to understand what she is saying over the call. Her friend, Asaf, intervenes and smoothen the semantics. But he makes sure that he apprises me of the fact that Housego had suffered a stroke long back. But she is a survivor. "A stroke



might have inhibited my movement but certainly not my spirit! However, my memory, sometimes, is not what it used to be, and so in order to fill in some gaps, I relied on a host of my family and friends to piece some of my life together," she interjects and makes her point, though, gently.

Recently, in an interview, Maya said that Housego's anxiety about what the world might think of her when the story is out makes her real and so relatable. "Yes, I feel Housego is a truly remarkable woman. Resilient and reticent at the same time. Vulnerable, yet incredibly brave. She is witty, extremely talented and prioritises family and personal

relationships. Her personality is one that seeks both unity and perfection and she has to struggle especially after her stroke and a turbulent personal journey to reconcile all these various pulls and pressures. To tell one's own story, to write a memoir and yet keep that delicate balance of relationships intact even as she dissects them in her words was what made me say that," says Maya.

She had her own set of interests while co-authoring the biography. Maya goes on to add that she came to help Housego put her thoughts to pen and paper, help her distill what she felt would appeal to a general reader, and



what would be a valuable contribution to the understanding of the Indian textile journey. She says, "It was interesting that so many people behind some of our great textile brands have been foreigners/expats... so it was curiosity more than anything about what brought them here, what attracted them to our textile tradition and how they found a language to communicate with our craftspeople. Art is universal and people like Housego are living proof of that."

As someone who has reported from Kashmir and been a student of the history of Iran and Afghanistan too, Maya was fascinated by her journey. Housego was witness to some landmark moments in history — the extravagant dinner in Persepolis for example, that turned much of Iran against the Shah. "In Kashmir, I found it remarkable that a woman shook off fear, even foreboding and went back to work when her son was kidnapped by militants in 1994 at the height of the insurgency... so naturally, it was an appealing story. The opportunity to weave political history with a textile journey was compelling," says Maya.

Housego had a strong connect with Kashmir. The author of *Tribal Rugs: An Introduction to the Weaving of the Tribes of Iran*, and of *Bridal Durries of India*, says that she finds watching the craftsmen and women in Kashmir adopt her enthusiasm and give their ideas thrilling. She quotes in her book, "It is in Kashmir that the threads of fabric I first encountered at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London came together in majestic weaves and embroideries, allowing me to revive, create and innovate."

During her over three decades in India, Housego has worked with weavers and embroiderers to forge new ways of combining traditional craftsmanship with contemporary designs.



W for we

*I For India*, the mega live-streaming fundraiser concert, saw a massive Hollywood and Bollywood participation

The nation, on Sunday, witnessed one of the biggest virtual events, *I for India*, where 85 Indian and global stars assembled on Facebook to raise funds for GiveIndia COVID-19 relief fund.

Actors Amitabh Bachchan, Akshay Kumar, Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Ayushmann Khurrana, Hrithik Roshan, Ranveer Singh, Tiger Shroff, Vicky Kaushal, Vidya Balan, Katrina Kaif, Rani Mukerji, Arjun Kapoor and Diljit Dosanjh were among the ones who participated in the virtual concert.

Also joining in were Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Nick Jonas, Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Saif Ali Khan, and Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan.

International stars including Jack Black, Will Smith, Russel Peters, Mick Jagger, Nick Jonas, Joe Jonas and Sophie Turner were also a part.

Everyone did their bit to entertain the audience while performing at the noble show, which was organised by filmmakers Karan Johar and Zoya Akhtar. The objective of the philanthropic concert was to pay tribute to those who are working on the frontlines and to provide 100 per cent proceeds from the fundraiser concert to the India

COVID-19 Response Fund, to support on-ground relief efforts. Over ₹3 crore was raised by the end of the four-hour digital concert.

Amitabh Bachchan gave a tribute to the late actor and his close friend Rishi Kapoor during the concert. SRK and Hrithik turned singers.

Shah Rukh sang, "*Sab sahi ho jayega*," assuring people that things will be alright soon. His son AbRam too made a special appearance in the song, composed by rapper Badshah.

Hrithik played piano and crooned to *Tera Jaisa Yaar Kahaan*, which was composed by his uncle Rajesh Roshan for the 1981 Amitabh Bachchan-starrer *Yaarana*. Reportedly, Hrithik spent over seven hours honing his musical skills prior to the concert.

Ayushmann Khurrana, who is also an established singer, sang *Ik Vaari* and *Mitti Di Khushboo*.

While Akshay Kumar recited a poem, titled *Tumse Ho Nahi Paega*, Aamir Khan and his wife, filmmaker Kiran Rao, spoke about how important it is to extend support to the needy. They also sang Raj Kapoor's *Kisi Ki Muskurahaton Se* and *Aa Chal Ke Tujhe* by Kishore Kumar.

Alia Bhatt, along with sister Shaheen and composer Ankur Tewari, sang *Ik kudi* from her film *Udta Punjab* while Priyanka Chopra Jonas too recited a poem on the current situation.

Farhan Akhtar along with his band performed the songs of *Rock On*, while the film's composer trio, Shankar Ehsaan Loy, belted out some of their blockbuster hits.

—Agency inputs

It was raining when the old woman's son left for the US. She says the house wept too. She is sitting in the courtyard, alone. Maybe because the rooms are in mourning.

There is a certain rhythm to things in the way filmmaker Harjant Gill handles migration in his documentary, *Sent Away Boys*, which illuminates the experiences of those who are left behind, of course, in addition to exploring the phenomenon of global migration through the framework of gender (specifically, masculinity). Rather than following the journeys of migrants, he prefers to gaze at how families and communities are transformed by their absence as well as the circumstances that motivated their decision to leave their home.

If you watch Gill's three documentaries *Sent Away Boys*, *Mardistan* and *Roots of Love* back to back, what strikes most is not the lives of the subjects or the research. But the pregnant pauses. While *Mardistan*, a reflection on manhood, addresses the urgent and widespread issues of patriarchy, son-preference, sexual violence, and homophobia in the Indian society, it also presents the responsibilities and challenges confronting Indian men today. A married gay man, who insists that cannot leave his wife for she is not at "fault."

*Roots of Love* delicately talks about identity, the turban and hair being representative — a young Sikh man, who has cut his hair, listening, while the mother tells the camera her anguish.

Associate Professor of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice at Towson University, Gill, a 2020 Fulbright-Nehru Research Fellow, who is, at present, developing a script which is a Punjabi adaptation of the great American novel, *The Great Gatsby* is also writing his book, *Coming of Age in Macholand*.

Though all the three documentaries in the masculinity series were funded by the PSBT (Public Service Broadcasting Trust), the filmmaker agrees that funding for this format is certainly dwindling. "I have stopped applying for funding to Indian institutions primarily because I want filmmakers in India to be availed of those dwindling opportunities. I have also been writing a lot about how the distribution landscape has changed in the last 10 years, with the arrival of streaming."

He adds, "And now, with COVID-19, this will force us to innovate and come up with new ways of sharing our work and scholarship. I am ultimately hopeful and excited about the possibilities that emerge out of these new limitations which will lead

Leaving Neverland

There is a certain rhythm to things in the way filmmaker **HARJANT GILL** handles migration in his documentary, *Sent Away Boys*, which throws light on the experiences of those who are left behind



to innovation in technology of storytelling."

Talk to him about Punjabi cinema's obsession with romantic comedies and the unserious depiction of people from this part of the country, and he asserts, "Punjabi men are the biggest audience of these films. For instance, my parents who live in CA watch almost every Punjabi film that has been released in the last 20 years. I would argue that Punjabi audience interacts with Punjabi films very differently from Hindi films that feature Punjabis. While Hindi films like *Singh is King* or even *DDLJ* are seen as "exaggerated" fantasy films, where transgression of social norms, such as interfaith or inter-caste marriages are possible, Punjabi films like *Tera Mera Ki Rishta* or *Munde UK De* are viewed as a more accurate/authentic reflection of the reality on Punjab, albeit through rose-colored glasses of transnational migration."

He adds, "Even though they are poorly scripted and acted, Punjabi films are more palatable because they don't transgress social norms around marriage, love,

Co-founder of Shades of India and Kashmir loom, Housego feels that cloth has its own way of telling stories. It has always fascinated her. "Each thread carries a history. Each shade of each colour evokes a different emotion. And together, each type of fabric — cotton or muslin, silk or satin, organza or lace, and especially wool — opens up different worlds of mystery, spirituality, livelihood and wanderlust," she says. However, when asked about her challenges as a businesswoman, she laughs and says, "I am not good with expression. I can only count my fingers. How can I be a businesswoman?"

One wonders what does the future of the written word look like since we are swamped by digital entertainment, especially in these trying times? We are even devoid of the pleasure of walking into a bookstore and scanning hundreds of books lining the shelves. Well, Housego has a tendency to find a silver lining in situations. She says that they are still going to be read because there are a lot of things you cannot watch. Personally, she feels, in India people read a lot of books. However, contrary to her, Maya says, "The written word has also gone digital. After all, *A Woven Life*, was first released as an e-book due to the lockdown. Moreover, broadly, irrespective of formats as long as there is a good story to be told or written, there will always be someone to read it."

She shares that her growing up years influenced her writing as she read many books. When asked to recall a few, she names *War and peace* (Leo Tolstoy) followed by a laugh as she couldn't remember more.

However, she recalls various authors she loves to read, namely, Julian Barnes, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Pankaj Mishra, Journalist Karan Thapar, VS Naipaul and many other Indian authors. Though she isn't able to recall any of their books, she says, "I love Indian authors."

When you ask a woman, who has seen decades, some anecdotes from her chequered life, you expect many to come through as Housego has already written a book on some of them. But to the contrary, I could sense her trying hard to recall one. She says, "There are many. I can't recall one. I love going around and visiting textile monuments." A historian by profession, Housego lists some of her favourites — Orchha and Sanchi Stupa in Madhya Pradesh, and Hampi in Karnataka and many others.

"I love going around India and I love mountains. I also love going to Kashmir or watching anything being woven beautifully, for I know it is a gift which is given to only a few," says she.

(The book will be published by Roli Books.)

etc. There were films in 1980s such as *Long Da Lishkara*, where this was done, but the films that have come out after the 1990s — particularly the "NRI genre" of Punjabi films, are fairly muted in their plot lines. As an interlocutor summed it up for me, 'Punjabi films are basically a travel video about *videsh* (foreign), where you get to see how Punjabis live abroad, you go on a *videsh-di-saar* (foreign tour), while enjoying AC for three hours, what more do you want?'"

Stressing that with social media, he is seeing a lot of imagination at play, Gill adds. "The young are definitely engaging in everyday artistic expressions, which is how they cope with the utter banality and hopelessness that young Indians are confronting. I just wish there was more critical reflection, more questioning and more challenging of norms that went on among young Indians. Maybe, we need to make films that appeal to them and can translate to platforms they prefer? There's a reason why most of my films have been under 45 minutes. My students in USA, like their Indian counterparts, look interested within 30 minutes. It's not their fault, they grew up in an environment where their attention span is constantly being interrupted or diverted. Yet, most Indian documentary filmmakers I know are still making films that are two hours long, maybe it's the filmmaker and storytellers who need to look at their approach."

Still in touch with the subjects of his documentaries, Gill checks in with them via Facebook or WhatsApp. "Sometimes even if I don't want or need to talk to them, they call me. I quite like the fact that they feel comfortable to get in touch. A subject moved to Canada in November 2019. I learned about it via his Facebook page most Punjabis won't tell their friends that they are going abroad... their friends only learn about their migration when they post selfies at the airport. I am hoping to travel to Canada sometime soon, after flights resume, and interview them for follow up interviews for my book."

—IANS



# World Test C'ship can follow Olympics path: Tendulkar

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**

The real challenge for any international cricketer comes with playing Test cricket. But with countries forced to postpone tours due to the coronavirus pandemic, questions have been raised on the fate of the inaugural edition of the World Test Championship. It now looks almost impossible that the final can be played at Lord's in England in June 2021. However, the legendary Sachin Tendulkar has a solution.

Speaking to IANS, Tendulkar — the only cricketer to play 200 Test matches — said that a leaf can be taken from the books of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in how they dealt with shifting the Tokyo Olympics to 2021 and still decided to call it Tokyo 2020. Tendulkar feels some permutation and combination will need to be worked out to ensure the inaugural edition is completed without a hiccup.

"I think so (need permutations and combinations to be worked out). With regards to the World Test Championship, if you see, the Olympics also has been postponed but it will still be called 2020 Olympics even though it will be now held in 2021. They are still calling it 2020 Olympics and in that way, we need to figure out a window where you know all these games which would have ideally happened at this time, how can we accommodate them in the future and yet continue with this championship.

"To start a fresh would be a big thing. And if you have started something, it needs to be completed in the best and fairest manner where we are



Indian captain Virat Kohli celebrates with his teammates

able to accommodate all the remaining matches and give everyone a fair chance. We could extend the time limit a bit because these tours also aren't cancelled totally, they have been postponed. So, along with the tours, the championship also gets postponed," he explained.

Another debate in recent times has been on whether players should

be picked on the basis of age or fitness. With the fitness level of players across the world getting better, it is often questioned if seniors are blocking the way for youngsters to break into the scene and establish themselves on the international stage.

In fact, even in the Indian team, there have been questions on whether a young Rishabh Pant should get a

longer rope or whether Wriddhiman Saha should don the wicket-keeping gloves in Tests. While Tendulkar doesn't wish to get into selection policies, he says that fitness should be the criteria, not age.

"Whoever is good should be given a go. It is not about a youngster or such things. If Saha is fit and fit enough to deliver, he should be given

**"To start a fresh would be a big thing. And if you have started something, it needs to be completed in the best and fairest manner where we are able to accommodate all the remaining matches and give everyone a fair chance. We could extend the time limit a bit because these tours also aren't cancelled totally, they have been postponed. So, along with the tours, the championship also gets postponed"**

a go. Similarly, if Pant is fit, he should be....let the team management decide. I am not saying Saha should be ahead of Pant or Pant should be ahead of Saha. Let the team management decide that.

"If someone is fit, age criteria shouldn't come into play. So, to cut my answer short, if someone is fit, age criteria should not come into play and the team management should decide whoever needs to play," he pointed.

## Mushtaq advises Chahal to use crease more

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Yuzvendra Chahal is among the leading leg spinners in world cricket but he can be more effective with better use of the crease, says former Pakistan spinner Mushtaq Ahmed.

Ahmed, who has coached all around the world and is currently a consultant for his native team, said India's ability to take wickets in the middle-overs in the limited overs format through Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav has been a game-changer for them.

Both the wrist-spinners were brought into India's limited overs set-up following the 2017 Champions Trophy. Though, of late, both Chahal and Kuldeep haven't been playing together.

"Chahal is a very good bowler but can use the crease a m u c h better. He can go wide of the crease at times. You got to be smart enough to understand pitches. If it is a flat pitch, you can bowl stump to stump," Ahmed, one of the best leg-spinners Pakistan has produced, told PTI.

"If the ball is gripping, you can go wide of the crease because you can trouble even the best of batsmen with that angle. That way your googly also doesn't turn as much as the batsman expects and you end up taking a wicket."

Ahmed also feels the likes of Chahal and Kuldeep have benefitted immensely from former captain M S Dhoni's advice from behind the stumps.

"You have got to be one step ahead of the batsman.

You should know your field position as per the batsman's strength. I always say attack with fielders not with the ball. If you understand that theory, you will always be successful," the 49-year-old, who played 52 Tests and 144 ODIs, said.

"India has always been a force to reckon with in all three formats as it uses its bowlers really well. Dhoni was a master at getting the best out of his bowlers in limited overs cricket and now you have Virat Kohli."

## Feel very emotional whenever I talk about Dhoni: Samson



Sanju Samson left with M S Dhoni right pose for a photo Sanju Samson/Instagram

**IAN S ■ NEW DELHI**

India batsman Sanju Samson has narrated an incident involving former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and referred to him as India's greatest captain ever.

He also stated that Dhoni is one-of-a-kind cricketer and whosoever tries to copy him on the field, usually comes back empty-handed.

"A guy coming from Jharkhand and becoming India's greatest captain ever. I feel very emotional whenever I talk about Dhoni," Samson told Rupha Ramani in a video shared by Chennai Super Kings on their Twitter handle.

"You tend to observe his game and then try to copy him but you fail. You just cannot copy him or get into his shoes," he added. Samson then went onto talk about a dream featuring Dhoni. He revealed that hasn't told him about this story yet but is planning to do so soon.

"I actually saw him in my dream where Mahi bhai was the captain of the team and he was changing the field around. I was standing in the slips and he said 'Sanju wahan ja', Samson said.

"Then after a few days later he stepped down as captain and I thought how will my dream come true now.

"Then there was a game between India 'A' and England where they asked him to captain. And when I was standing in the slips and he said 'Sanju udhar ja'.

"I think I should tell him that this happened and it just might bring a smile to his face," he added.

## Issue is not so much the teams as the crowds: Richard Colbeck

**PTI ■ MELBOURNE**

Australia can deal with the challenge of getting teams into the country for the T20 World Cup but whether it is worth having the tournament in empty stadiums is the main point for consideration, feels sports minister Richard Colbeck.

Travel restrictions and question marks over how long it would take to contain the COVID-19 pandemic has put the future of T20 World Cup and India's tour of Australia in doubt.

Cricket Australia is staring at a staggering loss of 300 million Australian dollars if things don't go ahead as planned.

"I'd love to see an Australia-India Test series this summer and I'd really like to be able to see the World Cup go ahead

"... The issue is not so much the teams as the crowds and that's probably one of the

hurdles we really have to consider and probably one that world cricket will look at pretty closely as well," Colbeck told SEN Radio on Monday. He said logistics of hosting the event in the post COVID-19 world can be dealt with.

"We all know the difference in atmosphere ... But in a team sense I'd like to think that we can build some protocols with the cooperation of the sport and the players, that's going to be extremely important, with appropriate quarantine and bio-security protocols to see if we can make the competition go ahead."

While T20 World Cup is scheduled for an October 18 start, India's tour of Australia will begin with a T20 tri-series in October and end with a four-match Test series in December.

The International Cricket

Council recently said that preparations were still on for the 16-team tournament and a final decision will be taken by August.

Australia is considering making travel exemptions for the Indian team's tour Down Under to save the cricket board for the financial loss but Colbeck said they need to be careful in expanding exemptions to other nations for the T20 World Cup.

"Those conversations are being had, discussions about what the protocols might look like," Colbeck said.

"They will be difficult because one of the things that has been a key part of our success is that we limited access to Australia from areas where there were significant outbreaks of Covid-19 and that's contributed to the low rate of spread we have now.

"But we would have to be prepared to consider appropriate plans put forward by the various codes."

## PCB never tried to save me: Asif

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Tainted former Pakistan pacer Mohammad Asif says he wasn't the first nor would be the last to have indulged in spot-fixing and should have been treated better by his country's Cricket Board, which gave "everyone a second chance" except for him.

Asif said he should have got a second chance like many others, whom he did not name.

"Everyone makes mistakes and I did too. Players had been indulging in fixing before me and even after me. But those before me are working with PCB and there are few after me still playing," Asif told *ESPNCricinfo*.

"Everyone was given a second chance and there are few who never got the same treatment (as me). PCB never tried to save me regardless of the fact that I am the kind of bowler who was highly regarded by everyone in the world.

"But anyway I'm not sitting around brooding about the past or hung up on it."

Asif said he takes pride in the performances he dished out in his limited career.

"However much I played in my career, I made it count, duniya hila

ke rakh di thi (I shook up the world). That is more important for me to think about. Even today, so many years later, the best batsmen in the world still remember me and they talk about me.

"Just think how big the impact was that I had on the world. So this is what makes me proud - that there is a reason KP, AB de Villiers, Hashim Amla talk highly about me. That is what makes me happy."

The 37-year-old, who also failed a dope test in 2006 and served a one year suspension for it, admitted that he "should have behaved better off the field."

"That is where I had issues. I want to give the kids this message that when you cross the boundary line into the field, your ambition should be to do well for yourself and for your team."

"I was selfish as a bowler because I wanted to take wickets, and that was to help the team win. Being selfish isn't bad if you're playing your part for the team," he said.

## Lloris wants PL title settled on the pitch

**AFF ■ PARIS**

Hugo Lloris believes that ending the English Premier League season without declaring Liverpool champions would be "cruel", but the Tottenham captain wants the final table decided on the field.

The goalkeeper is following the English social isolation rules at home with his family in London, helping his two oldest daughters with their homework while trying to stay fit in case the reason restarts.

"We're in a situation where everyone wants to finish and get the verdict from the pitch," Lloris told French sports daily L'Equipe.

"It would be terrible if it all ended like that with nine or 10 games to go in the Premier League."

"We're coming into the most exciting, beautiful time of the season. Nobody wants it to end like this." Liverpool lead the table by 25 points. "It would be cruel for Liverpool with the lead they have. They're practically champions.

"There would be a taste of the unfinished business."

The France captain says that resuming the Premier League without fans will be strange.



"It'll be weird wherever it happens. Football is not a closed-door sport," he said.

"Without spectators, it's not the same sport. That's not how I see football.

"We're here to bond, to share our emotions. We all want full stadiums, with atmosphere, fans, colour and song." "But you have to take the context into consideration."

"Everyone has to find the right compromise

between health, which is above all else, and the need to finish this season," he added.

The British government still has not given any indication when football will be able to resume.

"We have to be ready. Just in case," said Lloris, who was among the players to return to Tottenham's training centre last week for individual sessions.

## Feel like a kid again, just want to play some cricket: Roy

**PTI ■ LONDON**

Feeling like a kid again, England batsman Jason Roy can't wait to get back on the cricket field but says it would make sense to postpone the T20 World Cup in October-November if teams don't get enough time to prepare for the mega event.

All cricketing activities have come to a halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the future of T20 World Cup in Australia is also in doubt.

"If players aren't able to pre-



pare in the right way and are not able to get over to Australia, then it makes sense to postpone it," Roy was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"But if it goes ahead, it's our job to play cricket - and if we're told we have three weeks to prepare to go and play in the World T20, all the boys will be putting the yards in to make sure we're ready for that.

"I think all the boys are on edge, waiting for the call saying, 'Right, we have a month turnaround or a six-week turnaround.

Get in the nets and go hit some balls.' I think the boys will be as ready as they can be," said the 29-year-old opener.

While Roy is eager to be playing again, he said safety is paramount.

"I've got a huge amount of trust in the ECB. I think they will look into every single avenue of all the positives, all the negatives. So, I guess I would trust in what they say, probably have a chat with Morgs (Morgan) and see where his head's at and go with that.



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Delhi Capitals spinner Axar Patel has credited skipper Shreyas Iyer for helping him adjust to his new IPL team smoothly after spending half-a-decade with Kings XI Punjab.

"I've played with Shreyas at India A also, and when I came to Delhi Capitals, it was really easy for me because we bond really well," he said while speaking on the franchise's official Instagram handle during a live session.

"On the field, he gives freedom to his bowlers, and lets you

adjust the fields. He is quite patient as well, and I have really enjoyed playing under him."

Patel said he was worried about his future at the time of auction.

"I was sceptical at first because I had spent five years at the Punjab franchise, and I didn't know where my future would lie. But when I was picked up by Delhi Capitals, I was really excited because the team had so many players I had played with before.

"It was a bit different in the first couple days when I joined the pre-season camp, but it took me no time to adjust into the team due to the mood in the squad," he said.

Reflecting on his first season with the franchise, Patel said, "I feel when you're winning, the feeling is really different and the confidence is high.

"We had a great combination in our team, and the team environment was such that it brought out the best in all of us. Making it to the play-offs in my first season with the franchise was great."

## La Liga ready to begin testing players ahead of training

**AFF ■ MADRID**

Professional soccer players in Spain will be tested this week so they can start training again for the first time in nearly two months.

Basic training has been allowed to resume in Spain on Monday after the government eased some of the lockdown measures that had been in place since mid-March because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Spanish league players are expected to get back on the field later in the week after they are tested for COVID-19 and after the clubs' training facilities are properly prepared and disinfected. The facilities will have to be inspected to make sure they comply to the cleaning protocols established by local authorities.

All players, coaches and club employees who are going to be involved in the initial training phase will have to be tested two days before the individual practices can begin.

The tests will reportedly begin as early as Tuesday, and the league wants them to be conducted daily after the individual training sessions begin.

The league wants a period of training of about a month before it can resume with matches in empty stadiums sometime in June. There is no set date yet for the league's resumption.

The league recently sent clubs a protocol with safety guidelines on how to return to practice. The protocol, which was obtained by The Associated Press, has a four-stage plan that details the current preparation phase, an individual training stage, a phase with smaller group sessions and finally one with full squad sessions.

Players will be allowed to use the teams' training facilities but won't be allowed to interact with teammates in the initial phase. They will travel individually to the facilities and must arrive already wearing their training uniforms.

No more than six players will be allowed on the field at the same time, and they must stay "the greatest distance possible" from each other. The use of equipment should be limited and coaches must supervise players from a distance.

Players must wear gloves and masks until going onto the pitch, and only one or two players can share the gym at a time. The league protocol, which was prepared by the medical staff of some first-division clubs, recommends that players - and those living with them - should not leave their homes other than to go to practice. It says each club must establish a food-delivery system for first-team players.