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INDIA'S OVERALL FUEL CONSUMPTION
FALLS 46% TO LOWEST SINCE 2007**SPORT 10**
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**USUAL SUSPECTS**
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

No foolproof way to keep Covid at bay

As a rule, most people are loath to admit that they are whistling in the dark. The tendency to comment with an air of certitude is irresistible in democratic societies. In the past, being opinionated was largely confined to people with a passion for films and cricket. Everyone had a definite view on the latest Bollywood or the tactics to be used in one-day cricket matches. During election seasons, this was enlarged to include politics and every tea shop in the country — particularly in the land mass from Varanasi to Kolkata — was witness to passionate arguments on who was winning, and which party would be conclusively thrashed in the polls. Journalists were unquestionably the worst offenders since this is a profession that encourages verbosity without accountability. The number of times you are likely to encounter media people who claim to have anticipated some development or other is dreadfully countless. For too many people, the phrase 'I don't know' is unknown.

In India at least, the experience of coping with Covid-19 is just about eight weeks or so, since the Prime Minister's broadcast in March that triggered the chain of events beginning with the Janata Curfew. Prior to that, while the steady spread of the disease was noted, the pre-eminent focus was on not triggering panic. Parliament, for example, functioned till March 23 as a confidence building gesture. In hindsight, it didn't amount to very much since the 18-day lockdown had to be announced the very next day. But there was no doubt that the gesture was well-intentioned and sincere.

The real problem that has confronted both the *aam janata* and the decision-makers is the absence of a well-travelled path. Epidemics are not unique in the human experience but a global spread of this nature is possibly the first of its kind, unless we include the advent of the ice age. History tells us that the Inca civilisation was destroyed by the smallpox that the Spanish brought with them to South

America. Much earlier, it is entirely possible that what is called the Indus-Saraswati civilisation that stretched from Central Asia to North India was destroyed by some strange phenomenon that could have been climate change or even an epidemic. The Spanish flu in 1918-19 was quite global and was spread by the post-War troop movements. But the scale of the global spread of Covid-19 is quite novel.

Simply put, being a decision-maker in India today, is both challenging and even treacherous. Like in war, there is no such thing as a foolproof approach

Take the case of Odisha, a State that managed the initial spread quite effectively and efficiently, thanks in part to its long record of handling cyclones and floods. But the best plans were scuttled by the entry of people returning home from other States where the spread of coronavirus is more rampant.

What happened in Odisha is happening in different ways in other States too. Maharashtra is one of the worst affected States and here the epicentre seems to be the Dharavi slum — the biggest in Asia, it is said — and Malegaon. One is the function of over-crowding that makes social distancing impossible to maintain and the other seems to be a consequence of the reluctance of Muslim communities to treat the pandemic with the necessary degree of seriousness. The latter can be tackled with a blend of persuasion and strictness but how is urban overcrowding going to be handled in a hurry? Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's job isn't enviable.

After the 18-day lockdown was extended, I used to get irate messages from libertarians in Mumbai suggesting that the Swedish model of containment should be pursued in India. In recent days as the situation in Mumbai looks grim, these messages have ceased.

Greater Kolkata, which includes Howrah, presents another problem. In the initial days, Mamata Banerjee took the pandemic quite casually. It is my guess she equated it with another dengue epidemic or a variant of a super cyclone that Bengal has experienced before. She perhaps saw it as a great political opportunity to regain some of her party's lost ground in 2019. The whole response to the crisis was over-politicised. The consequence of this approach was that the lockdown was indifferently implemented, and the public health system used to suppress numbers. On top of all this, the already fragile social balance in the State was further unsettled by the impression and the evidence that Muslim localities were being treated differently from the rest. This despite growing anecdotal evidence that the death toll in the minority community was disproportionately high.

The experience of Mumbai and Kolkata, not to mention the concerns over unsettled and traumatised migrant workers all over the country, is instructive. It points to the enormous difficulties of evolving anything remotely resembling a national strategy in a country as large and varied as India. In Europe, despite all the lofty pretensions of the European Union, the strategies for dealing with the pandemic have been country specific. In Germany, they are even trying to adopt different approaches for different regions. If this is the case with Europe, the difficulties of evolving a national strategy in India is obvious.

It is interesting, however, to note that rural communities have managed the lockdown and social distancing more effectively than urban India. This, however, is based on pure anecdotal evidence.

The problem is further complicated by wildly conflicting 'expert' advice. The case of how the UK got it all wrong initially, notwithstanding expert advice, is well known. Similarly, the experience of the US has been shambolic. Indeed, apart from South Korea, where mass testing has blended with a disciplined and careful population, no other country appears to have really evolved a containment strategy that goes beyond lockdown.

Simply put, being a decision-maker in India today, is both challenging and even treacherous. Like in war, there is no such thing as a fool-proof approach. The best plans can so easily go wrong.

2 evacuees +ve despite screened entry

These 2 from Gulf end Kerala's joy over 'flattening' Covid curve

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala's joy over the "flattening" of the coronavirus curve on the 100th day of the reporting of the first case in the State received setback as two persons who landed in Kochi and Kozhikode airports from the Gulf tested positive for the pandemic on Saturday. This has happened despite all screening and checks of the evacuees before the repatriation.

"A passenger who reached Kozhikode from Dubai and another person who arrived at Kochi from Abu Dhabi on March 7 by the Vande Bharat flights tested positive and both of them have been admitted to the nearest hospitals," said Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan during his daily media briefing on Saturday.

While the passenger who landed at Kochi, a 23-year-old male hailing from Malappuram district has been admitted for observation at Kalamassery Medical College near the airport, the other person who tested positive had reached Kozhikode airport from Dubai. He too has been admitted a nearby specialty hospital for observation and treatment, said Vijayan.

Otherwise the State retained its zero-Covid-19 status as there were no fresh cases detected on Saturday.

"Though a person had been admitted to hospital in Idukki district on Friday, tests proved that he has no coronavirus infection and hence he was discharged," said the Chief Minister.

The Air India flights from Dubai and Abu Dhabi which were deployed for bringing back the expatriates were led and managed by specially trained pilots and cabin crew. The pilots and cabin crew were given special training for a week at Kalamassery Medical College.

Passengers who reached Kochi and Kozhikode airports have been quarantined at specially prepared hostel rooms. According to the details furnished by Vijayan, till Saturday 505 persons have been tested positive for corona virus.

"There are 17 persons undergoing treatment in various hospitals in the State. We have put 23,930 persons under observation. Out of this 23,596 persons have been quarantined at their own homes and 334 persons have been admitted to hospitals," said the Chief Minister.

Vijayan cautioned the people that though the coronavirus curve has been flattened in the State, utmost care has to be continued in the coming days as more and more people from West Asia as well



A girl shows a stamp on her arm received on the arrival from Dubai by Air India flight at Chennai airport on Saturday

PTI

as other north Indian States would be reaching Kerala.

Meanwhile, the Air India on Saturday brought back 129 Indians stranded to Delhi from Dhaka. This was the second flight from Dhaka under the Vande Bharat Mission. Another flight with 177 passengers is expected to land in Kochi from Muscat.

As many as 1,741 Indians, including 21 infants, have returned home in the past three days from Abu Dhabi,

Dubai, Singapore, Dhaka, Bahrain and Riyadh so far. The flights landed in on Saturday are from the UAE, Kuwait, Bangladesh, Oman and Malaysia. They are expected to touch down in New Delhi, Lucknow, Chennai, Hyderabad and Trichy.

Till Friday, 1,441 Indians including eight infants, were brought back on two Air India and four flights of Air India Express.

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Bengal hurdle in efforts to send back migrants: Shah

TMC hits back at HM, asks him to prove charge or apologise

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Centre and the West Bengal Government are engaged in a fresh face-off after Home Minister Amit Shah accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of red-flagging the special Shramik trains carrying migrant workers from entering her State.

In a letter to the Chief Minister, Amit Shah said the Trinamool Government wasn't allowing trains to reach Bengal and warned this would make life even harder for them.

Hours after Shah's letter, the Trinamool Congress exploded calling Shah a 'peddler of lies'.

"He is peddling bundles of lies," said TMC MP and Chief Minister's nephew Abhishek Banerjee asking the Home Minister to prove his allega-

tions or seek apology.

Saying that Bengal's apathy towards its migrant workers will only aggravate their condition, Shah in his letter wrote that the Central Government was "facilitating (the return of the migrant labourers) but we are not getting expected support from the State Government. This is injustice with the migrant labourers. This will create further hardship for them, as the workers are eager to return to their homes."

Within hours the junior Banerjee hit back wondering who was responsible for the current state of affairs and for whose lack of foresight the dreaded disease could enter India. Later he tweeted, "A HM failing to discharge his duties during this crisis speaks after weeks of silence, only to mislead people with bundle of lies!" adding "Ironically he's talking about the very people who have been literally left to fate by his own Govt."

He said Shah should prove his charges or apologise. Prove your fake allegations or apologise (sic)," he wrote.

The TMC leadership also wondered how a letter written to the Chief Minister found its way to the media before reaching its actual destination.

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Give back jobs or let's return home, migrants demand, clash with police

PTI ■ SURAT

Hundreds of migrant workers came onto the streets and clashed with the police at a village in Surat district of Gujarat on Saturday to demand that they either be sent back to their home States or allowed to resume work at local industrial units to earn money, police said.

The police resorted to lath-charge and fired tear gas to disperse the angry migrants workers. Over a 100 workers were detained in this connection, an official said.

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115 deaths on Sat, cases mount to 62,808; Maha adds to misery

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

There seems to be no respite for India from Covid-19 as cases mounted to 62,808 on Saturday with 2,101 deaths. Maharashtra remained the worst hit States with 20,228 cases and 779 deaths, while Gujarat occupied the second spot with 7,797 cases and 472 deaths.

The health authorities in Maharashtra went into a tizzy on Saturday, as the State recorded highest-ever day's fatality of 48 deaths and registered a phenomenal 1,165 new cases. Gujarat chipped in 394 cases and 24 deaths. The day saw a record number of 115 deaths across India.

Of the total deaths in Maharashtra, Mumbai accounted for 27 deaths, while there were nine deaths in Pune and eight in Malegaon. One death each was reported from Pune district, Akola, Nanded and Amravati.

The eight deaths reported from Malegaon took place between the period of April 25 and May 8. With the new 27 deaths, the total number of deaths in Mumbai has risen to



Doctors wear protective gear as they prepare to collect samples from people to be tested for the coronavirus in Dharmasala on Saturday

AP

489, while the total number of infected cases has jumped to 12,864.

Meanwhile, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in an advisory issued on Saturday urged the people not to panic and asked "all positive corona patients" who do not have symptoms not rush to the big hospitals for admission when the test result is positive.

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62-year-old man becomes second fatality in Gautam Buddha Nagar

Noida: A 62-year-old man died due to coronavirus in Noida, becoming the second Covid-19 fatality in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar district.

ED seizes AJL's ₹16 cr assets, slaps PMLA on Motilal Vohra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday attached assets worth ₹16.38 crore in the form of a nine-storey building with two basements in Mumbai in a money laundering case relating to Associated Journals Limited and its chairman Motilal Vohra.

The market value of the property is estimated at ₹120 crore, sources said.

"The attachment order was issued against the Associated Journals Limited and Moti Lal Vohra, Chairman-Cum-Managing Director of the Associated Journals Limited," the Directorate said in a statement.

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CAPSULE

DEFAULTER FLED WITH ₹411 CR: SBI TO CBI

New Delhi: Three promoters of Ram Dev International, recently booked by the CBI for allegedly cheating a consortium of six banks to the tune of ₹411 crore, have already fled the country before the State Bank of India reached the agency with the complaint.

CREDAI: 40-50% HIKE IN CEMENT, STEEL PRICES

New Delhi: Realtors' apex body Credai on Saturday said cement and steel rates have increased by 40-50 per cent in last few weeks and alleged price cartelisation and unfair trade practices by the manufacturers.

ICMR-BHARAT BIOTECH PLAN COVID VACCINE

New Delhi: Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has partnered with Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) to develop a fully indigenous vaccine for Covid-19.

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230 ghosts & counting

Couldn't come together and share your ghost story on National Paranormal Day? Fret not. Tune in to Laal Ishq on &TV, a romantic/horror series that brings you a new ghost and monster with each episode to satisfy fans of horror genre, says SHALINI SAKSENA

Believe it or not, besides Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day and a slew of other days, there is a National Paranormal Day. It is celebrated on May 3 and people are encouraged to come together and share their eerie stories and or experiences. But given the present situation — COVID-19 lockdown — the get together is not be possible. So how the next best thing? Watch ghosts come alive on your small screen.

"There is a reason why we love to hear or see shows and films that relate to the paranormal. We have all grown up listening to *bhoot ki kahanis* from our grandparents: '*Ki aisa usne dekha thha*'. That fascinates us. Just like those who are addicted to sci-fi movies and want to believe in aliens, we have out our home-grown *bhoots*," Mayank Mishra says, who has been playing the ghost for the last one year on the show. He tells you that he has forgotten how many different ghosts he has played till now since one rolls into another.

He tells you that it was his dream to play a ghost since he was a kid. "While growing up, we each dream of becoming or doing something. Since I had always wanted to be an actor my dream role was to play ghost and today, I am living it. It is interesting to play a bhoot. It is unlike playing any other character. There is so much more than just role play. Since each episode has a different ghost, I need to give it a different look, walk and voice. I do a lot of study and watch shows and films around the genre to try and see how I can improve on the creature that I have to play. Then there is the whole time spent in getting the prosthetics and make-up and wearing a costume that weighs over 10 kg and spend the next 12 hours in that get up and then shots. It is extremely challenging but I love it," Mishra tells you.

Though Mishra may have played over 25 so far and counting, there are two creatures that he loved playing. One was the episode he which he played the ice man. "There was something so interesting to play a creature that was covered in white from top to bottom and



coming out of a fridge. The other was Chanda mama, the moon ghost. This was nice since the kids loved what I have done here," Mishra tells you whose favourite Bollywood ghost movies are *Raaz*, *1921* and *IT* (Hollywood).

Nitica Kanwar, one of the writers who came on board for the show tells you that one of the biggest challenges that come with writing a monster story as opposed to any other story is how it is different from what one has done before. "One has to be more creative, imaginative and think out of the box. Every story that you have has to bring in a new element, not seen before. So that people, when they come back, have a new creature and a new ghost. It is definitely challenging and a lot more fun," Kanwar says who came on board when the show had more of creatures, monsters and bent towards fantasy rather than ghosts.

She tells you that when you write for such shows, a lot of research has to go into studying if there was any folklore associated with what you are writing

about or if there was a mention in mythology. "One doesn't want to create a monster or a creature that doesn't exist or impossible to imagine," Kanwar says. While it may not always be possible to go out and create a *Marvel* on TV, what is not lacking is the talent to write scary fantasy stories. One has to see if what I have written can be executed. The first concern is that the creature doesn't appear to be tacky. We have to see if one can shoot it was the graphics and VFX level. Also, horror/fantasy as a genre has not been explored much and in the industry and that brings in its own challenges. It involves a lot of work as well," Kanwar says. It takes her around two-three days to write story before the process of positive feedback from the channel and the producer beings before the story is finalised.

Hemant R Prabhu, tells you that working with horror/fantasy genre is a passion for him and not only has he produced 13 episodes of the show, he has directed most o them. For him there are two biggest challenges. First, to keep

the audience thrilled enough so that they don't surf. Second, revolves around the look of the monster. "There is so much software out there. Every story has to be different and new look," Prabhu says.

Directing comes easy to him since most of back-end works in taken care of before the episode goes on the floor. "Most of the work is beforehand. A lot of homework is done. Pre-production meetings take care of any other wrinkles that may come up," Prabhu says.

Jitu Mhatre, the man behind the prosthetics and make-up who has given face to 90 per cent of the monsters tells you that the biggest challenge he faces is to deliver things on time. "We are given only three-four days to come up with the look that is finalised. This takes a lot of time and effort and a slew of people. We also have to ensure that the monster even though scary is not yucky. People should be scared not repulsed with the monster. This is what attracts people to horror genre; the fact that we have come up with a new look that has not been seen before," Mhatre explains.

Then there is the VFX and the challenges that for a show on ghosts. Sarika who is behind the camera and ensures that the ghost does all scary stuff like fly and appear and disappear in less than a fraction tells you that while the make-up artist will give the look, it is not always possible to have a perfect looking ghost or a monster. This is where the VFX people step in and ensure that the ghost does what it does best — scare the jeebies out of you.

"Even after the prosthetics artist has done his job, it has limitations. He can't make the eyes glow nor can he make the arms or the entire body twist and turn at a horrible angel that will scare you. That is where we step in. The CG can do so much more. Even if it a small scene, it can create that scare quotient. This adds to the thrill factor for the fans of horror genre and they love it. They also want to know what new we have to offer to them that will add to the whole experience of watching a really scary show," Sarika says.

Plan Your Stay At Home Sunday Mother's Day Special

Gift your mother Me Time with Meditative workshop: We all know that motherhood is a thankless job. It can leave the mother feeling inadequate, anxious and sometimes depressed. On top of that, the outbreak of the coronavirus has created a stressful environment for all leading to worldwide psychological chaos. Especially females are having a hard time with their entire family being at home. They have to look after their domestic work, kids and in some cases their professional work as well. All these create a psychological burden on them. Dr Anju Sharma, psychiatrist, sound & energy master, wellness-holistic coach, International Speaker and Founder of the Musical Healing Band — "Sound of

Infinity" is organising an online meditative workshop for all the mothers on today. In this time they can do anything they want to like listening to music, watching their favourite series or simply by taking a quick nap. They must take this 'Me Time' which is equal to a yoga nidra that helps to rejuvenate one's body, mind and soul. This online session with Dr Anju Sharma will help to strengthen and upgrade your present version. She will share some breathing techniques that will enable you to let go of the thoughts or situations that are bothering you. She will also discuss how various online chef competitions are creating an environment of depression and anxiety in females and their families.

BOOKS TO READ

Girl Stop Apologizing by Rachel Hollis: This one is so empowering and great that it will make you double down and start checking off every thing on your 2020 goals list.

In this title she challenges women to stop talking themselves out of their goals and dreams and live out their life instead of feeling trapped into their mother/wife/best friend etc roles they have defined for themselves.

Mom Up: Thriving with Grace in the chaos of Motherhood by James, Kara-Kae: Being a mom is hard and mothers every where know it. we all think we are failing at this job, but we aren't. The book aims yo help moms stop merely surviving their motherhood journey and start thriving. The book focuses on intentional motherhood, emphasises the importance of rest and how to embrace the chaos.

COOKING FOR MOM

BEGUN BHAJA	CHEESE CAKE
	
Ingredients <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ 1 Eggplant/Baingan — large◆ 1/2 tsp Turmeric Powder◆ Roasted jeera 1 tbsp◆ Red chilly fried 5 no◆ Salt to taste◆ Mustard Oil for frying Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Wash the eggplant and wipe it dry with a kitchen towel.◆ Cut into 1 cm thick slices.◆ Mix turmeric powder, jeera powder and salt in a plate.◆ Apply this mixture all over the eggplant slices.◆ Heat mustard oil in a pan.◆ Shallow fry in hot oil on high heat until golden brown from both the sides.◆ Sprinkle with roast jeers and place fried red chilly on top.◆ Serve immediately. <p>By Chef Arvind Rai, The Ashok</p>	Ingredients <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ ½ Tablespoon butter○ 1 lemon Zest○ 3 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice○ 900 gm cream cheese○ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract○ 1 ¼ cups sugar○ 4 eggs○ Half cup cracker crumbs Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pre heat the oven to 350 degrees F.○ Grease a 3? deep 8? round one-piece cake pan all the way up to the rim, including the rim itself, with butter. Mix lemon zest and juice in a small bowl.○ Put cream cheese into the bowl of a standing mixer and beat on medium high, scraping sides and bottom of bowl with a rubber spatula often, until completely smooth. Beat in vanilla and sugar well.○ Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition, but do not beat any more than necessary to mix. Stir in lemon zest and juice with the spatula.○ Generously spray the buttered cake pan with nonstick spray, and then pour in batter.○ Place cake pan inside a larger 3? <p>deep pan. Place it in oven and pour hot water into larger pan, about 1 ½" deep.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bake in preheated oven until top of cake is rich golden brown and feels dry to the touch, 1 ¼ - 1 ½ hours (cake will be soft inside and become firm when cooled and refrigerated).○ Lift cake pan out of water and place it on a cake rack. Let cake cool in pan for 3 hours.○ Cover pan with cling wrap. Place a flat plate on top, invert, and remove pan. Sprinkle bottom of cake with cracker crumbs.○ Gently place another flat plate on top of crumbs. Very carefully invert again, leave plastic wrap in place, and refrigerate cake overnight. Remove plastic wrap carefully. <p>By Executive Chef, Suresh Shelar, Banjara Restaurant, Mumbai</p>

ACTORSPEAK

Dedicating a whole day to honour and celebrate the women who raised us is beyond special. Mothers are selfless, they are strong and can overcome any obstacle with all their might to protect their family. This Mother's day, Colors' artists take the opportunity to wish all mothers, celebrate them, and immensely thank them for being the true warriors and protectors of their children.

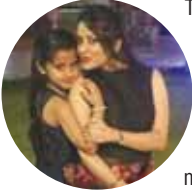
I believe there is no role in life more essential than that of a mother. The most beautiful word on the lips of a person is mother, maa or mummy. With mothers being the creators, Mother's Day technically becomes one of the most special days in the life of the entire human race. They are a form of God. As for me, words cannot express how much my mother means to me. The unconditional love and affection she gives me every day. The way she has borne my pain, with so much ease, and the way she has struggled to raise me considering I was a difficult child. She transformed me into a civilised person and provided me with the best of education so that today I can perceive the world in a better way. For all these things and so many more, I will be indebted to her my entire life.

— Avinesh Rekhi as Sarabjit from Choti SarraDaami



As a mother this day is very special to me. However, my kids make me feel like every day is Mother's Day. This year, they won't be able to do much because of the lockdown, but I think they have already planned something for me. They have requested me to keep myself available for some time on Sunday. Just like last year, I am expecting lots of fun with my kids.

— Anita Raj as Kulwant Kaur from Choti SarraDaami



This lockdown is helping me to spend more time with my mom. On Mother's Day, I am planning to get up early and wake her with a kiss! I will also be making a card and will bake a cake for her along with

my dad. Not only this, but I also have some fun indoor games planned for her with my entire family."

— Aura Bhatnagar as Bondita from Barrister Babu

Even the thought of living without my mother makes me feel incomplete. I will always be grateful that I got the chance to spend the entire lockdown phase with her, since I do not get much time to spend with her because of my hectic schedule. She does so much for me that I wish I could do something special for her every day, and not just on Mother's Day. Luckily, this time I will be at home and I will make sure that I make this day as special as I can for her. I also plan to cook something very special for her.

— Namish Taneja as Vivek Vardhan Singh from Vidya



'I'd like to play naive character'

ANUJA SATHE who plays Ashraf Bhatkar in MX Player's Ek Thi Begum speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about her love for strong characters and that she won't mind exploring a naive character, among other things

■ What is your role in Ek Thi Begum?

This story is from the late 80s and the early 90s when the underworld was at its peak. I play Ashraf Bhatkar *aka* Sapna. The entire story revolves around her as her journey from a normal lady to one who is seeking for revenge is shown. Her husband was killed by an underworld don that is why she chose the path of revenge.

■ What all preparations did you have to do for the role?

I have never portrayed a character like this before, so it was definitely exhausting. There are many shades in Ashraf's character and I had to explore the depths of it. I had many discussions with Sachin Darekar, the writer-director of the series. It was important for me and him to be on the same page. I wanted to follow his vision, we had lots of workshops and tried to take out all the things between the lines. It took a lot of homework actually and that's how we went ahead with the process.

■ Do you think there is a need to bring more such stories at the forefront?

Definitely. What we have seen or heard is that underworld was man dominated. However, I believe that there are many such women who in that era also became the police informers and came at the forefront. There was a lot of power to women even back then. It is important that we show people that women were no less. We do need such content.

■ What kind of rapport do you share with your co-actors?

I have worked with most of the actors on the sets. For Ankit Mohan, who plays my husband. He is a friend but we never got a chance to work together. It was a fantastic experience. Everybody has put their 100 per cent in the characters they are playing. When you are working with a bunch of people, then it is more of a team work. It is no longer a story about a particular person rather it is a compilation of everyone's story. And Sachin, he has put a lot of efforts in the series. I have never got a chance to work with him, though he was the writer of one of my shows. The experience if for a lifetime.

■ How was the environment on the sets?

It was always fun. Obviously not when we are shooting an emotional sequence because it takes a little while to get out of that moment but otherwise it was an extremely positive environment on the sets which is why our work became all the more fun.

■ From Radhabai to now Ashraf Bhatkar, you have played the roles of



women of substance. What attracts you to these roles?

It is the strength inside me may be. I have been fortunate that I have been getting to do so much of work and such kind of characters.

It is my inner strength that I like to portray such characters. I can connect with all the characters that I have played because there was some common trait. Also all the roles have been different. Any actor would die for such roles. Till now, I have never played a naive character or someone who don't have a spine. I enjoy doing such type of characters.

■ How did your first show Tamanna happen with you?

I auditioned for it almost five times for that show. Then I got a call from the team, but still it was not finalised. There was a

50-50 chance. I was hoping to get the role. And when it happened, I knew that it was an opportunity where I have to prove myself to myself *ki main yeh kar sakti hun*. I am glad that it happened because it opened a lot of doors for me.

■ What kind of roles would you like to experiment with?

I don't mind playing similar kind of characters as long as I am getting to show my strength. Also, I would like to explore the side of mine which I haven't till now like I said I have never played a naive or a *bichari* character. But my inclination will continue to be towards strong characters.

■ What is there in the pipeline?

There are some projects but I am not allowed to talk about it right now. Once everything will fall in place, I will share the details.

224 fresh cases push Covid tally to 6,542

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

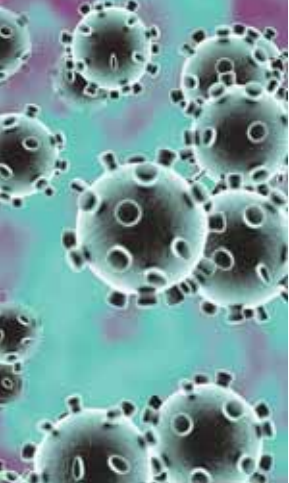
With the addition of fresh 224 Covid-19 cases on Saturday, the total number of corona positive stood at 6,542. Delhi Heath Department on Saturday in its report mentioned that no single corona death was reported between 4 pm till 11:59 pm while the active cases in Delhi are 4,454 with 68 death toll.

The State health department has done cumulative testing of 84,226 people till May 8.

As per the data of Delhi corona specialised hospitals - 505 corona patients admitted in LNJP , 118 in RGSSH,25 in LHMC, 55 and 114 patients admitted in RML and SJH while 350 patients detained in AIIMS (Delhi and Jhajjar branches).

In private hospitals of Delhi, Apollo has 83 patients, Max and Ganga Ram have 82 and 85 corona patients.

Delhi Heath Minister



Satyender Jain took a meeting through video conferencing to review the status of Covid-19. Secretary Home Affairs, Government of India also participated in the meeting.

“A meeting of Empowered Group was held to discuss the various issues related to planning and ensuring implemen-

tation of Covid-19 response activities. An order has been issued regarding providing treatment /quarantine facilities to Covid-19 positive officers/officials of Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Autonomous Bodies, Corporations and Local Bodies and their family members at three designated hotel premises. RGSSH will provide Covid-19 health care facilities at these premises,” a senior Delhi Government official said.

According to Delhi government officials, an order has been issued regarding appointing representatives of Chief Minister, to Covid-19 testing centers (CTC) also to manage and resolve individual grievances of patients and Medical staff.”

The Delhi Government has been issued an order for constituting an Enquiry committee to look into the various aspects of major discrepancies in the reports of Dr. Lal Path Lab.

23-yr-old woman commits suicide at AIIMS after mother's death

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old woman allegedly committed suicide at the AIIMS hospital following the death of her mother's death due to cancer at the hospital. Police said that the body of the woman found on Saturday inside the hospital premises, they said.

“Her mother was a cancer patient. She was being treated at the hospital and had died during the treatment on Wednesday,” said Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district.

“Her father was doing the formalities when she left the area. She was also reported missing since Wednesday. The family hails from Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh,” said police official privy to investigation.

“The body was recovered from near new private ward block of the hospital. She jumped from the building and committed suicide. A hospital staff saw her and informed police. The block was closed due to which nobody saw her body till Saturday,” he said.

Police said she called her friends and told them that she will commit suicide. “The body has been recovered and proceeding is underway,” said police.

Police issue SOPs to track corona infection among personnel

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In wake of the coronavirus outbreak, the Delhi Police Commissioner, SN Shrivastava has issued orders of 'Standard Operating Procedures' (SOPs) for daily health monitoring of its personnel.

According to the order issued on May 7, in case of medical emergencies or a suspected case of Cronavirus, the Station House Officer (SHO) or inspector in-charge of the concerned unit will be responsible for taking the police personnel to a doctor.

“If required, the test should be organised and the person should be hospitalised or sent in home-quarantine on doctor's opinion. The SHOs shall sensitise staff during the morning briefing on procedures to be followed,” the order further stated.

“If any person complains of fever or breathlessness, the police official and personnel should be taken to the nearest facility with Covid-19 testing and emergency facilities,” the stated the orders.

“AIIMS, Apollo, Safdarjung hospital, Ram Manohar Lohia, Lok Nayak Jai Prakash, Deen



Dayal Upadhyay and Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality -- are the hospitals for the treatment of the officials The Joint Commissioners and the Deputy Commissioners of Police will be responsible for effective training and implementation of the SOPs,” the order added.

Recently, a Delhi Police constable Amit Kumar, a resident of Sonipat in Haryana, who was posted at Northwest Delhi's Bharat Nagar police station, had died after his colleagues took him to hospitals, but the doctors refused to admit him. The constable's death was first in Delhi Police due to the novel coronavirus.

Arrange transportation of workers to home States: Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress has submitted a list of 7,299 migrant labour stranded in the National Capital due to nationwide lockdown to the Delhi Government requesting it to arrange for their transportation to send the stranded workers to their native place.

Party Delhi unit president Chaudhary Anil Kumar accused the Delhi Government for taking false credit of paying for the train fares of the migrant labour. Kumar demanded reimbursement from the States, saying that there is no need to indulge in such a charade as Delhi Congress had already expressed its readiness to pay for the train fares of the migrants.

The Congress president further said that the party will

start its next phase of the sanitisation maha abhiyan “Congress Ke Sipahi, Karge Corona Ki Dhulai” from Sunday mostly at outside liquor shops, mother dairy outlets, ration (PDS) shops and schools where meals are being served to the poor people.

He also accused the government for not doing any sanitization drive in these crowded areas despite the ever-rising number of Corona cases in the Capital.

Kumar said that the Delhi Government has created a virtual death-trap outside liquor shops as no lockdown rules are being followed. “The Delhi Government has been indulging in black marketing and profiteering through the sale of liquor which may result in community spreading of the disease.



SDMC to reopen Ayush Centres from Tuesday

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has decided to reopen all its Ayush Centres from Tuesday for the general public to distribute immune booster medicines from its 40 centres.

A senior SDMC official said that a team of 53 Ayush doctors and 53 paramedical staff will be deployed at all centres across four zones to provide the free consultation and medicines to the patients.

In all the 40 centres, Ayurvedic Immune booster medicines will be made available and distributed to the citizens, the official said, adding that all these centres will function from 9 am to 3 pm from Monday to Saturday.

The official said that the department has already distributed Ayurvedic immune booster medicines to the Delhi Police including 5000 combination of Dashamoola Khand (250gm) and Haridra Khand (100 gm) were provided to the Southern Range of the Delhi Police.

These medicines will boost the immunity and physical strength of the police personnel deployed at the frontline against this national pandemic, he added.

The civic body had distributed Ayurvedic medicines to 32360 Corona worriers in first phase and more medicines will be provided to other staff as well.

₹2L insurance cover for virus warriors: Sikh body

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) on Saturday announced an insurance cover of ₹2 lakh to all its employees in case of death due to the life-threatening coronavirus.

“DSCMC will provide an insurance cover of ₹2 lakh for all its 2500 front line workers who are in the frontline of the battle against the coronavirus threat. They are providing langar (free community meals), sanitation, transport and other services at various locations in Delhi and extending helping hand and support to various



agencies engaged in the fight against Coronavirus,” Manjinder Singh Sirsa, president of DSCMC.

Besides, the Committee is taking care of accommodation

and food for around 200 doctors, nurses etc involved in treating Corona affected patients, he said, adding that it has also provided free accommodation to front line Corona

warriors like doctors, the paramedical staff of various government hospitals like AIIMS, RML,, Safdarjung hospitals.

Elaborating it further, he said that life insurance scheme would cover all including sanitation staff, langar cooks, raagis (religious preachers), security staff and other front line Gurdwara workers employed with the distribution of langar distribution and sanitation services etc at various locations.

Sirsa said that the decision to provide life insurance cover to all these employees is a step to say thanks to them for their service during Covid-19 pandemic.

Drunk man booked for damaging public property in Kalyanpuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police have booked a for allegedly obstructing public servant and damaging public property in east Delhi's Kalyanpuri area. The incident, which took place on Friday, was captured in a video and circulated on social media.

In the video, a shirtless man can be seen in drunk state and obstructing a police gypsy. "He repeatedly bangs on its windscreen and made a crack on it. People are trying to take him out of the way, but he refuses and stands in front of the gypsy," as per video.

According to Jasmeet Singh, the Deputy

Commissioner of Police (DCP), East district, the incident took place on Friday and police have arrested the accused.

"On Friday around 4.30 pm in Trilokpuri area. Accused identified as Harkesh has been arrested. He was drunk at the time of the incident," said the DCP.

"A case under sections 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and damage to public property act registered as PS Kalyanpuri," the DCP added.

NDMC employees donate ₹1.50 cr to PM-CARES Fund

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Saturday donated ₹1.50 crore in the PM Cares Fund to fight against coronavirus.

A senior NDMC official said that the one day basic salary and dearness allowances was contributed voluntarily by approximately 15,000 employees (regular and others) for funding measures taken to contain the spread of corona virus in the country.

"A cheque of ₹1,50,22, 251 was presented to Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy by Chairman of NDMC Dharmendra in presence of Additional Secretary (UT) MHA

Govind Mohan, Secretary NDMC Amit Singla and financial advisor of NDMC Pushkal Upadhyay," he said.

The civic body is also simultaneously fighting vigorously to contain the spread of Covid-19 in its area through various health, sanitation, sanitisation, medical and welfare activities and taken measures as per guidelines of the Central Government, he added.

Even during lockdown, the NDMC is providing all municipal services to its residents and important offices, buildings of central government as well as diplomatic missions in their jurisdiction during lockdown period through its dedicated team of officers and employees, he said.

Six cops of Khajuri Khas police station test +ve

New Delhi: Six policemen of Khajuri Khas police station in North East Delhi have tested positive for coronavirus infection, an official said on Saturday.

The infected policemen are of the ranks of constables and head constables, he said, adding that they tested positive in last couple of days.

They have been admitted to hospitals.

The area assistant commissioner of police and Khajuri Khas station house officer are taking precautions and have restricted themselves to self isolation, a senior police officer said.

In North East district, total 10 policemen have tested coro-

na-positive. They include six from Khajuri Khas, two from Welcome and one each from Jyoti Nagar and Jafrabad police stations, the officer said.

Elsewhere in Delhi, a constable posted at the Mandir Marg police station had tested positive for Covid-19 on Friday.

The police station barracks, where the constable stayed, was sealed. He has been put in isolation and 11 more police personnel have been quarantined at separate places.

Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava on Friday had approved creation and monitoring of a WhatsApp group of all Delhi Police personnel who have been tested positive for Covid-

19.

"A DCP-rank officer has been asked to supervise the functioning of staff monitoring the 'Let's Fight Covid-DP' WhatsApp group which coordinates the grievances of corona-infected police personnel, who are either hospitalized or are in isolation.

"This has been necessitated because of the increasing number of Covid-19 positive personnel and the need to deploy some more staff to attend helpline number as well as monitoring the WhatsApp Group in order to enable grievance redressal of the Covid-positive personnel," the order read.

PTI

HC declines to entertain plea to link metro card with address proof

New Delhi: A plea seeking linking of a metro card or token with a commuter's address proof was not entertained by the Delhi High Court as no representation about the issue had been made to the DMRC before moving the court. A Bench of justices Manmohan and Sanjeev Narula disposed of the plea, but gave petitioners liberty to move a representation before the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on the issues raised in the plea.

In case the petitioners move a representation to the DMRC, it is supposed to dispose of the plea within four weeks by a reasoned order after taking inputs from authorities concerned.

PTI

City Govt issues 4.75 L e-tokens to buy liquor

New Delhi: The Delhi Government has so far issued around 4.75 lakh e-tokens to buy liquor in the national capital, an official said on Saturday.

Under the e-token system, customers are given specific time for purchasing alcohol so that there is no violation of social distancing norms by people queuing up outside liquor stores.

The e-token is sent on mobile phones of registered people. The new system was introduced on Thursday in the wake of long queues outside liquor vends and people not following social distancing norms there.

The Delhi government has allowed around 200 liquor



shops to operate in the city.

"The government has so far issued around 4.75 lakh e-token since Thursday evening to people to buy liquor without

standing in long queues," the official said.

People willing to get e-token can apply through a web link www.Qtoken.In where they are allotted specific time for purchasing liquor after they fill personal details.

According to the official, the e-token system is maintaining social distancing and cutting down on waiting time in long queues by specifying time for each e-coupon holder to buy liquor at a shop.

People are required to furnish address of liquor shop in their area along with their mobile number and other details, while applying for e-token on the web link.

PTI

HC extends by 45 days interim bail of 2,177 undertrial prisoners

New Delhi:The Delhi High Court on Saturday extended the interim bail of 2,177 undertrial prisoners by 45 days to decongest jails in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

A Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Talwant Singh passed the order in view of a high-power committee's recommendation that it would be dangerous to put the prisoners back in jail as the risk still remains high.

The committee, headed by Justice Hima Kohli, on May 5 opined that since there was a paucity of space in jail premises to create sufficient number of isolation wards for the prisoners returning after expiry of their interim bail, the relief should be extended by another 45 days.

During the hearing, Delhi Government standing counsel Rahul Mehra and advocate Chaitanya Gosain, appearing for the prison authorities, said they have no objection to the extension of bail.

"Accordingly, it is ordered that the interim bails for a period of 45 days granted to 2,177 UTPs, in view of the recommendations of HPC...Are hereby extended by another period of 45 days from the date of their respective expiry of interim bails on the same terms and conditions," the bench said.

It directed the Director General (prisons) to ensure that the order was conveyed to all 2,177 under-trial prisoners (UTPs) by telephone and other available modes and listed the matter for hearing on June 22.

PTI

Confusion prevails over Covid-19 death toll

City Govt data doesn't match with hospitals'

New Delhi: Confusion prevailed over the number of deaths due to coronavirus in the national Capital, with data from four hospitals showing that 92 people succumbed to the infection as against 68 fatalities reported by the Delhi Government.

The toll of 68 shared by the Delhi Government in its health bulletin on Friday is based on

data collected from 10 hospitals, including AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital, Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital and Lady Hardinge Medical College.

According to the bulletin, AIIMS (Delhi and Jhajjar) reported two deaths, Safdarjung Hospital reported four, RML 26 and Lady Hardinge Medical College had none till Friday.

However, officials from these hospitals said the number of people who died due to coronavirus in the national Capital till Friday is higher than that reflected in the Delhi Government's bulletin.

AIIMS (Delhi Trauma

Centre and Jhajjar) has recorded a total of 14 deaths, an official said.

According to All India Institute Of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Medical Superintendent Dr DK Sharma, the discrepancy could be because the Government is only counting the fatalities from the Trauma Centre, which has been converted into a dedicated Covid-19 hospital, and has not taken into account data from the Jhajjar facility.

At Safdarjung Hospital, 23 people have died due to Covid-19. "They (Government) are calling us for the data. We have told them we are regularly sending you the correct, updat-

ed figures. We don't see any reason why wrong figures are being reflected," said a senior doctor at Safdarjung Hospital who did not want to be named.

RML Hospital has reported 52 deaths of Covid-19 patients.

"We are providing them (government) data regularly and correctly. It is up to them to incorporate it in their chart. We do not understand why they are showing incorrect figures," RML Medical Superintendent Minakshi Bhardwaj said.

Lady Hardinge Medical College Director Dr NN Mathur said the hospital has given the government a figure

of three deaths.

After the discrepancies between the COVID-19 death toll reported by the government and figures from hospitals came to light on Friday, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain asserted that the government is not hiding data.

"If we had to hide data, we wouldn't have released Thursday's number of fresh COVID-19 cases which was the highest single-day spike of 448 cases. We would have said there were only 48 new cases, but we did not. Once the reports come, the hospitals have to inform the government immediately," he had told reporters.

PTI

Nepal upset at India’s link road via Lipulekh Pass

Kathmandu: Nepal on Saturday raised objection over India inaugurating a strategically crucial link road connecting the Lipulekh pass at a height of 17,000 feet along the border with China in Uttarakhand with Dharchula, saying this "unilateral act" runs against the understanding reached between the two countries on resolving the border issues.

Nepal's Foreign Affairs Ministry in a statement said the government "has learnt with regret" about the inauguration of the link road connecting to Lipulekh pass, which Nepal claims to be part of its territory.

The 80-Km new road inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday is expected to help pilgrims visiting Kailash-Mansarovar in Tibet in China as it is around 90 kms from the Lipulekh pass.

After inaugurating the road through video-conferencing, Singh said pilgrims going to Kailash-Mansarovar will now be able to complete their journey in one week instead of up to three weeks. The road originates at Ghatiabagarh and ends at Lipulekh pass, the gateway to Kailash-Mansarovar.

The Kailash-Mansarovar yatra involves trekking at high altitudes of up to 19,500 feet, under inhospitable conditions, including extreme weather and rugged terrain.

Raising objection on the construction of the link road, Nepal's Foreign Ministry said, "This unilateral act runs against the understanding reached between the two countries including at the level of the Prime Ministers that a solution to boundary issues would be sought through negotiation."

Lipulekh pass is a far western point near Kalapani, a disputed border area between Nepal and India. Both India and Nepal claim Kalapani as an integral part of their territory - India as part of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district and Nepal as part of Darchula district.

"The Government of Nepal has consistently maintained that as per the Sugauli Treaty (1816), all the territories east of

Kali (Mahakali) River, including Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh, belong to Nepal," the ministry said.

"This was reiterated by the Government of Nepal several times in the past and most recently through a diplomatic note addressed to the Government of India on November 20, 2019 in response to the new political map issued by the latter," it said.

It said that Nepal had expressed its disagreement in 2015 also through separate diplomatic notes addressed to the governments of both India and China when the two sides agreed to include Lipulekh pass as a bilateral trade route without Nepal's consent in the Joint Statement issued on May 5, 2015 during the official visit of PM Modi to China.

"With this in mind, the Government of Nepal has proposed twice the dates for holding a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries, as mandated by their leaders, for which the response from the Indian side is still awaited," it said. **PTI**

First repatriation flight from London takes off for Mumbai with 326 Indians

PTI ■ LONDON

The first Air India flight from the UK, as part of the Vande Bharat Mission to repatriate Indians stranded overseas due to the coronavirus lockdown, took off from London's Heathrow Airport on Saturday with 326 passengers to Mumbai.

The packed flight took off with Indian students and tourists, who were seen queuing with their luggage at the airport from early on Saturday as they prepared for the journey home.

Each one of them underwent temperature tests before boarding and face 14 days of quarantine at a hotel or other location designated by the Maharashtra government on landing, with those details to be made available on arrival in Mumbai in the early hours of Sunday.

While there is no social distancing possible on the packed flight, Air India is providing a kit for all passengers confirmed to fly, with meals, snacks, sanitizer, mask and gloves.

"Finally going back to India! Although it was at the last moment but I was lucky enough to get the ticket of the first flight to India under Vande Bharat Mission," said a relieved Indian student, who was part of a group of seafarers that came to the UK for an examination.

"We got continuous updates from NISAU (National Indian Students and Alumni Union) and ISWAN (International Seafarers' Welfare Assistance Network) looking after seafarers stuck in the UK. Thanks to all the representatives who worked tirelessly in coordination with the Indian High Commission," said the student, who did not wish to be named.

The flight marks the first of seven Air India routes organised by the Indian government from London's Heathrow Airport to six Indian cities over the next week - Mumbai (Saturday and Tuesday), Bengaluru (Sunday), Hyderabad (Monday), Ahmedabad (Wednesday), Chennai (Thursday) and New Delhi (Friday).

Indian envoys in Gulf nations assure expats of more flights to home

Muscat/Riyadh: As India began to evacuate its stranded citizens from the Gulf nations due to Covid-19 linked travel restrictions, the country's envoys have assured the worried expatriates that there would be more flights in the coming days for people with compelling reasons to return home.

India began evacuating stranded nationals in Oman and Saudi Arabia on Saturday under the 'Vande Bharat' mission.

The first of such flights began operating from May 7 from Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the UAE, taking home 363 Indians to Kerala.

The Riyadh to Kozhikode repatriation flight carried 152 passengers, Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahsan Sayeed said on Friday.

"The composition of the flight was basically distressed workers who lost their jobs (due to the coronavirus outbreak). It also included several medical cases needing attention immediately and a large number of pregnant nurses from Kerala," Sayeed said. The Indian mission in Saudi Arabia is arranging four flights next week to repatriate Indians -- including a Riyadh to Delhi flight on Monday.

A Damam to Kochi route and two flights from Jeddah to Kerala have been planned for later this week.

For those people in Saudi Arabia from different states of India like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Telangana different flights are being planned for the week after from May 16 onwards.

Ambassador Sayeed said Indians who want to be repatriated should register on the Indian embassy website, assuring all stranded persons that they will be accommodated in earliest possible flights.

"In the meantime, it is very important that all of you stay calm and keep your morale high and do not get panicky," said Sayeed.

The Muscat to Kochi flight left with 181 Indians on board on Saturday.

Indian Ambassador to Oman Munu Mahawar thanked the ministries of home, civil aviation, health and external affairs for the smooth repatriation process.

He further thanked the Government of Oman and its Royal Police.

"In the coming days, we will be organising more flights, and I am sure all Indian nationals who wish to return to India for compelling reasons will be able to travel back," said Mahawar.

Meanwhile, an Air India flight from Sharjah in the UAE left for Lucknow on Saturday with 182 passengers on board. The flight comprised mostly nurses.

This was the second round of Indian nationals being repatriated from the Gulf kingdom.

On Thursday, two special flights from the UAE carrying a total of 363 Indian nationals, including nine infants, left for Kerala.

On Friday, almost 200 workers, 37 pregnant women and 42 people with medical issues travelled to Chennai on two flights from the UAE.

India's Ambassador to the UAE Pavan Kapoor was personally present at the Abu Dhabi airport talking to passengers taking the flights to India. **PTI**

NIA arrests narco-terrorist

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Saturday arrested an alleged narco terrorist Ranjit Singh from Sirsa in Haryana.

"The NIA along with teams of Punjab Police and Haryana Police carried out an intelligence-based raids in Sirsa, Haryana and arrested notorious narco-terrorist Ranjit Singh alias Rana alias Cheeta, son of Harbhajan Singh, resident of Ram Tirath Road, Amritsar," the agency said in a statement.

Ranjit Singh along with co-accused Iqbal Singh alias Shera are the prime accused in case registered by NIA in connection with the seizure of 532 kg of heroin hidden in a consignment of rock salt imported from Pakistan.

The seizure was made by the Custom Authorities at Integrated Check Post (ICP) Attari on June 29 last year when the contraband was discovered during inspection of the consignment.

"Investigation revealed that Pakistan based entities are smuggling narcotics from Pakistan into the Indian territory by hiding it in sacks of rock salt which is imported from Pakistan," the NIA said.

This, the agency said, is done through an elaborate network of importers, Customs House Agents, transporters and the operation is financed through illegal International Hawala channels. Investigation also established that the seized consignment was a part of a total of five consignments of drugs, out of which four had been successfully smuggled into India, the agency said.

First charge-sheet in the case was filed by NIA on December 27 last year in the Special NIA Court, Mohali allowing 15 accused persons including four companies and also Ranjit Singh who had been absconding after the registration of the case.

Ranjit Singh is also the prime accused in the recent Hizbul Mujahideen terror funding module which was busted with the arrest of Hilal Ahmad Wagay, a resident of Nowgam, Awantipora, Jammu & Kashmir with Rs 29 lacs in cash in Amritsar by Punjab Police on April 25 this year.

Indian-American grocery store owner in Silicon Valley charged with price gouging

Washington: An owner of a popular Indian-American grocery store in California has been charged with price gouging, marking some items up as much as 200 per cent, during the coronavirus pandemic when the entire US state is under stay-at-home orders.

Following consumer complaints filed on Thursday in Alameda County Superior Court, an investigation revealed that Rajvinder Singh, owner of the popular Apna Bazaar in California's Pleasanton, had allegedly increased the prices of grocery items after the emergency declaration by the governor on March 4.

Based on evidence provided by customer receipts, the investigation confirmed that the pricing of several food items exceeded the 10-per cent increase allowed during a state of emergency, with some prices being as much as 200 per cent more than what was previously charged, according to a joint statement issued by California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley.

The food items listed in the complaint include yellow onions, ginger, green beans, instant noodles, tea, chili peppers, pomegranates and red yams.

"We take price gouging seriously and are committed to going after those who break the law during the public health emergency," Becerra said.

Singh faces imprisonment in the county jail for not more than a year and/or a fine of not more than USD 10,000. California law prohibits charging a price that exceeds, by more than 10 per cent, the price of an item before a state or local declaration of emergency.

"The law prevents businesses from profiteering when we are in a state of emergency. All businesses throughout Alameda County must be on notice that we will not sit idly by and allow consumers to fall prey to price gouging. My office will ensure that businesses adhere to the law and do not exploit consumers," said O'Malley. **PTI**

Virus: Mumbai police ASI who died on Friday tests positive

Mumbai: The samples of an assistant sub Inspector attached to Vinoba Bhawe Nagar police station in Mumbai who died on Friday have tested positive for novel coronavirus, officials said on Saturday.

He died in the early hours of Friday after being admitted in a civic hospital on Wednesday with Covid-19 like symptoms, an official said.

"He was also a diabetic. His samples returned positive on Friday evening. This is the fourth Covid-19 death in Mumbai police. Some 350 personnel in the metropolis' force have tested positive for the virus so far," he added. **PTI**

Give back...

From Page 1

The incident took place at Mora village near industrial town of Haziraa.

"Over 100 workers were detained after they took to the streets, demanding that they either be sent back home or allowed to work at the industrial units they were employed at in Haziraa and paid salaries," joint commissioner of police (Sector 2) D N Patel said.

Protesting workers came out of their homes in the workers' colony at Mora village and started walking in a large group towards Haziraa industrial area, he said. The migrants demanded that the district administration should arrange for their return to their hometowns in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha and other states, Patel said.

"Some workers hurled stones at the police, after which four tear gas shells were lobbed and we had to resort to baton charge to control the unruly mob," Patel said.

Bengal hurdle in...

From Page 1

Later, the State Government clarified its stance saying it had already cleared the entry of 8 trains to Bengal. The respective Shramik specials were bringing people from Karnataka, Hyderabad Punjab, Rajasthan and other places were bringing 31,000 people back to Bengal. Most of those coming back are from Malda, East and West Burdwan, Howrah, Kolkata, West Midnapore, Bankura and Hooghly, sources said.

Clarifying the State's stand further Sougato Roy said the delay in bringing the workers back was caused because the delay on the part of the Central Government to allot its trains. Now they have allotted the trains and we are getting the workers back."

A statement from Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Chowdhury, however, tended to buttress Shah's claim when he said that he had himself appealed to the Home Minister to provide special trains for Bengal when "he told me that the State Government is not allowing the trains to enter Bengal."

Meanwhile, Bengal witnessed 11 more corona deaths in the past 24 hours taking the total number of deaths to 99, State Home Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay said adding however that 72 more deaths had been caused earlier on account of co-morbidity conditions.

Apart from this, the past 24 hours saw 108 new infections taking the total number of cases to 1,786. The number of active corona cases in the State was 1,243. This included the new cases noticed in the hitherto "green zone" district of North Dinajpur in North Bengal.

115 deaths on Sat, cases mount to 62,808; Maha...

From Page 1

"Health department will guide you for the same to nearby corona care centres. Please take the following precautions: Asymptomatic Covid-19 positive non-comorbid patients can remain home isolated, if feasibility and assessment for the same is ensured by the health department and provided patients give undertaking and abide to instructions given by the health department. Citizens are requested not to panic," the advisory stated.

"If any close family member, neighbour has turned out Covid-19 positive. As per ICMR guidelines only very close high risk contacts of the positive case can be tested once between 5-14 days of exposure or earlier if they become symptomatic," the BMC advisory stated.

"All contacts need to self-quarantine at home, or will be quarantined in an institution if belong to slum like areas as per the directions of Health Department," the advisory added.

Meanwhile, a Central team comprised of AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria rushed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's hometown Gujarat which has reported a large number of coronavirus cases and deaths.

Dr Guleria, who is a pulmonologist, and Dr Manish Soneja from the AIIMS department of medicine, visited the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital and SVP hospital to provide expert guidance and advice to the doctors on treatment for coronavirus-infected patients there.

With 390 more people testing positive for Covid-19 and 24 fatalities, the total number of cases in Gujarat climbed to 7,797 and the death toll reached 472 on Friday.

Of the total coronavirus cases in the State, Ahmedabad has the highest number of Covid-19 cases at 1,298 confirmed infections, followed by Vadodara (188), Rajkot (40) and Bhavnagar (32).

Delhi took third place on the list with 8,406 positive cases so far, including 2,020 recovered patients and 68 fatalities followed by Tamil Nadu, with over 6,535 positive cases including 1,605 recoveries and 40 casualties.

Rajasthan had 3,655 cases and 103 deaths while Madhya Pradesh registered 3,457 positive cases including 1,349 recoveries and 211 deaths. Scenario in Uttar Pradesh was no better with around 3,214 cases including 1,387 cured patients and 66 casualties.

With 1,930 positive cases, Andhra is the second-worst affected State in southern India. 842 patients have been discharged in the State while 44 have died so far.

West Bengal is fast emerging hub of virus with 1,786 positive cases including 364 people who were cured and 171 who died while Punjab has 1,762 cases including 152 recoveries and 31 deaths. Number of coronavirus cases in Haryana reached 675, including 376 active cases, 290 recoveries and 9 deaths. Odisha has 289 cases.

The total number of coronavirus Covid-19 cases across 187 nations reached over 40

lakhs and the death toll stood over 2.7 lakhs. The number of the persons recovered from the viral infection is 1.4 lakhs

Meanwhile, the CRPF on Saturday reported 62 fresh cases of Covid-19 patients in its ranks followed by identification of 35 new infected persons in the BSF, 13 in CISF and six in ITBP, taking the tally of coronavirus-hit personnel in the paramilitary ranks to 653.

On Saturday, 62 new cases of coronavirus infections were reported from Rapid Action Force, an anti-riot Force under the CRPF. All the 62 positive cases are from 194 Battalion of RAF deployed in the national capital. They have been isolated at White Lee Public School, Bawana in the national Capital, a senior CRPF official said.

Earlier, the CRPF had reported 172 cases of Covid-19 infections. Out of the 234 cases, 231 are active, two have recovered and a Sub Inspector had died last week. In the BSF, 25 corona virus infected personnel were reported from Tripura and 10 personnel in the national capital contracted the viral disease.

With 258 Covid-19 positive cases in its ranks, the Border Security Force (BSF) is the worst-hit paramilitary in terms of number of personnel infected by the pandemic followed by 234 cases in the Central Reserve Police Force and 100 in the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

With six fresh Covid-19 positive cases on Saturday, the ITBP has now 100 coronavirus infections in its ranks. All cases of coronavirus infections in ITBP have been reported from Delhi.

Four personnel of ITBP are undergoing treatment at AIIMS, Jhajjar, Haryana and two personnel are admitted at Safdarjung Hospital here.

ED seizes AJL’s ₹16 cr assets, slaps PMLA on...

From Page 1

The ED had initiated investigation under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act after taking cognisance of an FIR registered by the Haryana Police and CBI which revealed that Plot No. C-17 Sector 6, Panchkula was allotted to AJL in the year 1982.

However the plot was resumed/reverted to the Estate Officer, Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) through an order on October 30, 1992 as the AJL did not comply with the conditions of allotment letter. The Resumption Order attained finality after dismissal of the Revision Petition before a court in 1996.

"However, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the then CM, Haryana/Chairman HUDA, blatantly by misusing his official position dishonestly allotted the said plot afresh in the guise of re-allotment to the AJL at original rates plus interest in violation of necessary conditions/ policy of HUDA vide order dated 28.08.2005," the ED said.

Hooda also did not adhere to the legal opinion of officials of Land Reforms and recommendations of HUDA Officers. There was a wrongful loss to HUDA and wrongful gain to AJL. Hooda further favoured the AJL by granting them three undue extensions for construction of plot from May 1. 2008 to May 10, 2012 until the AJL completed the construction in the year 2014, the agency said.

Earlier, investigation under PMLA revealed that Moti Lal Vora and Bhupinder Singh Hooda were involved in the process of illegal possession of "Crime Proceeds".

The property was provisionally attached and the Adjudicating Authority under PMLA has confirmed the attachment of plot at Panchkula.

"It is further revealed that the accused used this "Proceeds of Crime" i.e. Plot No. C-17, Sector-6, Panchkula for availing loans from Syndicate Bank, I. P. Estate Branch, Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, New Delhi by way of pledging it for approval of Construction of building at Plot No. 02, Survey No. 341, Near Kala Nagar, EPF Office, Bandra (E), Mumbai- 400051 held in the name of Associated Journals Limited valued at Rs. 120 crore," it said.

The attached property in Mumbai is a nine-storey building having two basements and the total built up area is 15,000 square metres.

"Thus, the said Asset at Mumbai, germinated out of Proceeds of Crime, has been attached to the extent of Rs. 16.38 crore."

Shah scotches health rumours, says...

From Page 1

"The country is currently fighting a global epidemic, the coronavirus and as I keep busy being the Home Minister of the country, I did not pay attention to all of this. When this came to my notice late at night, I thought that all these people should enjoy their imaginary thoughts. So I did not give any clarification," he said.

"But millions of my party workers and my well-wishers have expressed a lot of concern for the last two days. I cannot ignore their concern. So I want to clarify today that I am perfectly healthy and I do not have any disease," he said.

"Taking a jibe at the rumour mongers, Shah said according to the Hindu belief, rumours about one's health could strengthen the person further. "So, I would request every such person to give up this meaningless talks and let me do my job and they may go ahead doing theirs," Shah wrote.

In the last paragraph, he said he has no ill will or anger against the rumour mongers. "Wishes to you people too," he said. But four people were arrested in Ahmedabad for spreading rumours about Shah's health on social media.

Now, patients...

From Page 1

The other serious Covid-19 affected patients will have to be in the hospitals only, as per the revised guidelines issued by the Ministry.

For moderate cases, if fever resolves within three days and no oxygen support is needed, the patients can be discharged after 10 days of onset of symptoms.

However, if symptoms are not resolved in three days and the patients require oxygen support, they can be "discharged only after resolution of clinical symptoms and ability to maintain oxygen saturation for three consecutive days.

In all these cases, the patients can be discharged as their symptoms are relieved without an RT-PCR test; they have to be isolated at home for seven days.

Those with severe symptoms will be "discharged only after clinical recovery" and

"after testing negative once by RT-PCR (after resolution of symptoms)".

At any point of time during his/her recovery at the health facility, if the oxygen saturation levels dip below 95 per cent, patient will be moved to "a dedicated Covid-19 health centre".

After discharge, if the patient again develops symptoms of fever, cough or breathing difficulty he will contact the Covid Care Centre or State helpline or 1075. A follow-up will be done on day-14 through teleconference.

As per the global estimate, around 81 per cent of Covid cases are mild cases while remaining 20 per cent may develop complications which would require hospitalisation. Out of the hospitalised cases, only 5 per cent may require ICU care. Doctors said the primary treatment for viral infection is supportive treatment in more than 80 per cent of the patients and oxygen therapy in around 15 per cent of patients along with other drugs.

Keep Noida-based crew...

From Page 1

"It may be noted that a large number of Air India crew members are staying in Gautam Buddha Nagar, and they would be performing their duties in bringing back Indian citizens stuck in other countries due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"And to perform their duties, they will frequently go to Delhi and come back to their respective homes in Gautam Buddha Nagar, which may trigger the spread of coronavirus infection," the officer was quoted as saying in a statement.

"Since Gautam Buddha Nagar falls under 'Red Zone', a request has been made to the Air India CMD to accommodate the crew members in Delhi itself. They might come back to Gautam Buddha Nagar after the completion of this operation and after following the protocol laid down by the Centre," the officer added.

She said after consulting the district administration and the state's additional chief secretary (Home) in this regard, a request has been made to the Air India CMD that crew members may be stationed in Newaw Delhi during this operation.

In a bid to contain the coronavirus spread, the district administration had also sealed its border with Delhi last month, banning movement between the two cities except for those under medical emergency or engaged in fight against coronavirus infection or essential supplies, besides doctors and media personnel.

High recovery rate a hope: Health Min

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India is nearing its daily testing target of 1 lakh with 95,000 tests conducted on Saturday even as the Government sought to allay Covid-19 fears saying it does not anticipate the worst kind of situation in India like other developed countries, which are badly hit by the contagion.

To substantiate its claim, the Government cited the country's fatality rate which is hovering around 3.3 per cent while the recovery rate is climbing up to 29.9 per cent.

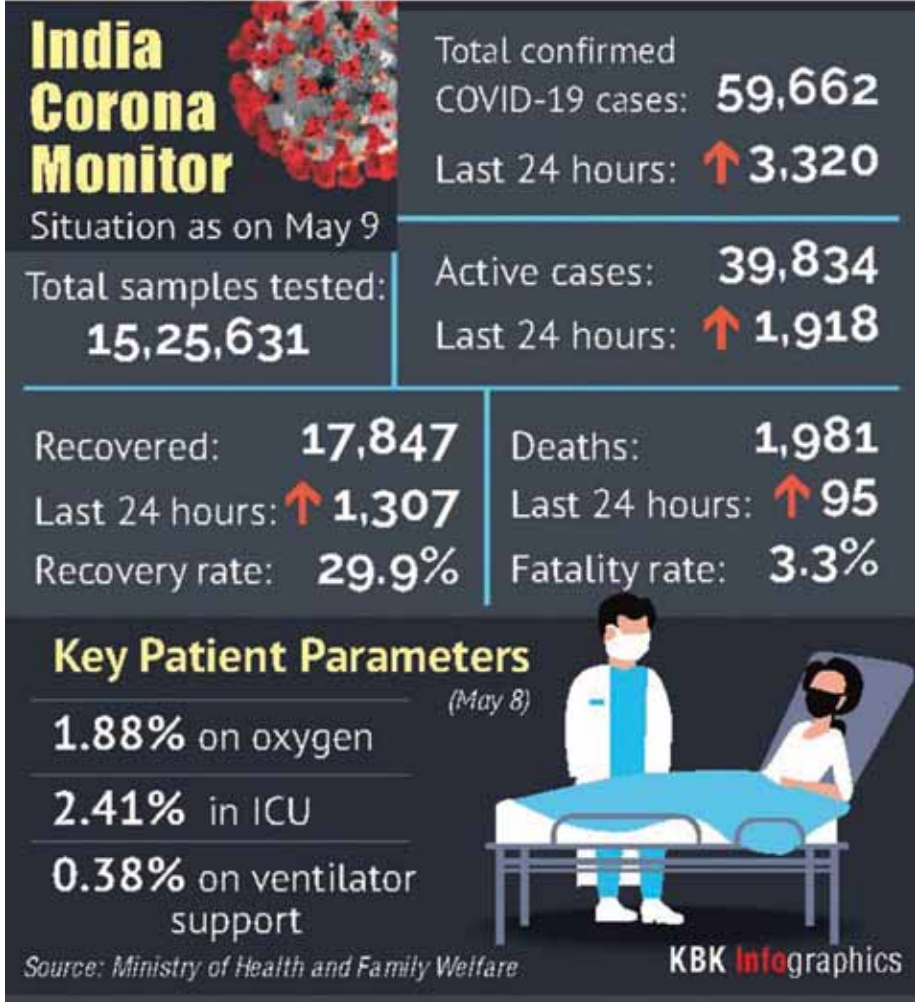
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- The total cases on Saturday crossed 60,000 while around 2,000 deaths have been reported till date
- Testing capacity for Covid-19 has been scaled up to 95,000 per day and total 15,25,631 tests have been conducted so far across 332 Government and 121 private laboratories
- During the detailed interaction, the States highlighted various issues related to testing facilities, health infrastructure, surveillance, contact tracing etc. and also shared their best practices, as per statement issued here by the Ministry

the Health Minister.

"We have dedicated 843 hospitals exclusively for Covid-19 patients' treatment, which have about 1,65,991 beds in it for the same. Across the country, there are 1, 991 dedicated Covid-19 health centres which have 1, 35, 643 beds. These beds include isolation as well as ICU beds," he added. Vardhan said that the Health Ministry is continuously coordinating with the states and monitoring the data on a daily basis.

"There are 7, 645 quarantine centres across the country. We have distributed 69 lakh N-



95 masks have been to various State Governments. A total of 32.76 lakhs PPEs have been distributed to State Governments by the centre. We started from one testing lab in Pune and now we have over 453 labs in the country," he said.

"Yesterday evening we evaluated the data from various states and found that only 0.38 per cent of the patients were on the ventilators. 1.88 per cent requiring oxygen support and 2.21 per cent were on ICU beds," he added.

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CBSE answer sheets to be evaluated from home

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown, examiners will evaluate over 1.5 crore answer sheets of students, who took the CBSE Class X and XII Board exams, from their homes.

The Government on Saturday identified 3,000 CBSE schools in the country as the centres from where the answer sheets will be sent to the homes of the teachers. This process will be completed in approximately 50 days, HRD Ministry officials said. The HRD Ministry's move followed the MHA's go-ahead in this regard.

Ministry officials said the CBSE paper evaluation will be resumed from Sunday and CBSE board examiners will be able to carry out the CBSE board exam answer sheet evaluation from their respective homes.

Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' took to Twitter on Saturday evening to announce the news and said that around 1.5 crore CBSE board exam answer sheets from around 3,000 exam centres across India will be delivered to the homes of the board examiners who will carry out the checking process.

After the paper evaluation is done, officials will come and collect the answer sheets to take them back to the board exam centres.

In a video statement on social media, Nishank thanked

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the Home Ministry for giving this permission in the lockdown so that students can get the CBSE board exam results 2020 as soon as possible. Pokhriyal said that the whole process of CBSE answer sheet evaluation should be over within 50 days.

On Friday, the HRD Minister had announced on Twitter that the remaining CBSE board exams of Class XII (all over India) and of Class X (only students whose exams were postponed due to North Delhi violence) will be carried out from July 1 to July 15.

The new CBSE board exam dates for each of the 29 subjects that are still to be conducted or the full CBSE board exam schedule after lockdown will be announced in 1-2 days he had said on his Twitter webinar on Friday.

CBSE Secretary Anurag Tripathy said due to the Covid-19 lockdown which has now been extended for the third time and is set to continue till

May 17, CBSE has been forced to put a complete halt to paper evaluation.

"We will need 1.5 to 2 months to carry out the paper evaluation. As soon as we get the advisory from the Central Government, we can start off the paper evaluation process while maintaining social distancing," he said.

The CBSE paper evaluation had started off around a week after the board exams started in February.

But after the Covid-19 pandemic started to spread, the process had to be stopped completely after 15 days of paper evaluation.

Around 70 per cent of CBSE answer sheets still need to be evaluated even though some of them were done in the 15 days of evaluation before the Covid-19 lockdown was imposed, Tripathy said.

There are around 35 lakh students who appear for board exams and 2 crore CBSE answer sheets need to be checked, said the CBSE secretary.

In this regard and to expedite the process, Nishank had met the education ministers through webinar later last month of all the states and advised them to start off with the paper evaluation of state board exams.

He also asked the Ministers to make provisions for CBSE to carry out their answer sheet evaluation in the respective States as well.

INS Jalashwa sets sail with 698 Indians from Maldives



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy warship INS Jalashwa has started its homeward-bound journey after evacuating 698 Indian nationals from Maldives and was joined on Saturday by some more Indian warship missions deployed in the Indian Ocean region, highlighting India's unwavering commitment to safeguarding her diaspora anywhere in the world. The ship carrying Indians is expected to reach Kochi, Kerala, late this evening.

This even as another warship INS Magar is about to enter Male, Maldives' capital to bring out more Indians who want to return to their country in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

The naval rescue effort is code-named Operation Samudra Setu which commenced on May 7 when the 17,000 tonne landing platform dock (LPD) or amphibious ship INS Jalashwa set sail along with the 10,000 tonne INS Magar for Maldives. The two ships are expected to bring back more than 1,500 stranded Indians, sources said on Saturday.

India's High Commissioner in the Maldives, Sunjay Sudhir, had earlier expressed his deep gratitude to the Indian Navy, the Maldives Government and its agencies for extending complete cooperation for the success of the operation. An Indian Navy spokesman said there were a number of pregnant women and children among the Indians

who are travelling to Kochi in Kerala.

Officials said the second will leave for Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu on Sunday with 200 Indians. He said the exercise will be repeated next week by the Indian Navy warships.

The deployment of warships in rescue effort is part of the repatriation mission launched by the Indian Navy to bring Indian citizens home from foreign shores, the Indian Navy said in a statement. The massive repatriation effort is testimony to Maldives-India friendship, the Indian High Commission said in another tweet. Several Indians who are travelling by the warship lauded the exercise launched by the Government.

Coronavirus cases in paramilitary up to 653

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF on Saturday reported 62 fresh cases of Covid-19 patients in its ranks followed by identification of 35 new infected persons in the BSF, 13 in CISF and six in ITBP, taking the tally of coronavirus-hit personnel in the paramilitary ranks to 653.

On Saturday, 62 new cases of coronavirus infections were reported from Rapid Action Force, an anti-riot Force under the CRPF. All the 62 positive cases are from 194 Battalion of RAF deployed in the national capital. They have been isolated at White Lee Public School, Bawana in the national capital, a senior CRPF official said.

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231 are active, two have recovered and a Sub Inspector had died last week.

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THE CRPF REPORTED 62 FRESH CASES OF COVID-19 PATIENTS IN ITS RANKS FOLLOWED BY IDENTIFICATION OF 35 NEW INFECTED PERSONS IN THE BSF, 13 IN CISF AND SIX IN ITBP



Four personnel of ITBP are undergoing treatment at AIIMS, Jhajjar, Haryana and two personnel are admitted at Safdarjung Hospital here.

At the CAPF Referral Hospital, Greater Noida run by ITBP, 94 ITBP personnel are lodged followed by 27 personnel of BSF, two of CRPF and

one of CISF. Two family members of ITBP are also being managed here. A total of 126 patients are admitted at the referral hospital and the condition of all patients is stable.

Till now, five paramilitary personnel have succumbed to the viral disease — two each in BSF and CISF and one

case in CRPF.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Saturday reported 13 fresh cases of corona virus infections taking the total count of the viral infection to 48. Out of the 48 cases, 31 were deployed at Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and 13 at Mumbai airport, three at Delhi airport, two at Ahmedabad and three at Mumbai airport. The Sashastra Seema Bal had contracted at least 13 positive cases.

Officials said, all the protocols of Covid-19 infection management are being scrupulously followed but the disease is being contracted by the personnel as they are in the frontline of assisting the law enforcement agencies like the police for ensuring lockdown measures and social distancing.

TN moves SC against HC order barring counter sale of alcohol

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Tamil Nadu Government on Saturday moved the Supreme Court challenging a Madras High Court order for closure of state-run liquor outlets on the ground that there was total violation of guidelines meant to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Madras High Court had on Friday ordered closure of liquor outlets noting that there were huge crowds and no social distancing was being maintained by tippers. It, however, allowed doorstep delivery of booze through online mode.

The top court too had taken note of crowding at liquor shops and asked states on Friday to consider non-direct contact or online sales and home delivery of liquor during the lockdown period to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The appeal against the high court order has been filed by the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC), a government firm which sells alcoholic beverages in the state, seeking permission to sell liquor through vends also.

The High Court order restraining counter-sale of liquor was passed on a miscellaneous petition filed by advocate G Rajesh, besides a plaint from the Kamal Haasan-led Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM). The HC had said there was total violation of its interim order issued on Wednesday, when it declined to stay a government order allowing resumption of sale of liquor through outlets.

NRDC evaluates herbal drug as immunity enhancer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Recognising the efficacy of Indian herbs in helping boost immunity, the Government enterprise National Research Development Corporation's (NRDC) Compendium of Indian Technologies for Combating Covid-19 has evaluated herbal drug Fifatrol as immunity enhancer being prepared from the extracts of medicinal plants.

Launched by Dr Shekhar C Mande, Director General, CSIR here, the Compendium is compilation of about 200 Covid-19-related Indian technologies, ongoing research activities, technologies available for commercialisation, initiatives and efforts taken by the Government to tackle the deadly viral infection which has caused havoc across the world.

The Compendium notes that, "Researchers have suggested that Fifatrol, a natural formulation providing fast relief from nasal congestion, sore

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The Compendium further points out various benefits of the herbal drug, stating that "It is a rationale combination of vital phytoconstituents, immune-modulators and antioxidants which justifies its beneficial effect for the treat-

ment of viral upper-respiratory infections."

Developed by AIMIL Pharma, the key ingredients of Fifatrol includes well-known immunity enhancer herbs like Guduchi, Daruharidra, Apamarga, Chirayata, Karanja, Kutaki, Tulsi a few others.

Dr Mande after releasing the Compendium said that most of the technologies in the document are proof-of-concept (POC) tested and can

help the entrepreneurs to take the product to market faster as they do not have to reinvent the wheel. It is very timely and would benefit the MSMEs, Startups and the public at large, he said.

Dr H Purushotham, CMD, NRDC, said that attempt has been made to compile most relevant and emerging indigenously developed technological innovations, including those which are at research stage, to fight Covid-19 for the benefit of all stakeholders.

As coronavirus is fast spreading its tentacles across the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been at various platforms urging AYUSH practitioners to pitch in to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. He has also been exhorting the people to look towards traditional home remedies during times of such a global health crisis to boost their immunity. In India, over 61,000 people are infected with the virus which has claimed over 2,000 lives so far.

ICMR teams up with Bharat Biotech to develop vaccine

New Delhi: Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has partnered with Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) to develop a fully indigenous vaccine for COVID-19, the apex health research body said on Saturday.

The vaccine will be developed using the virus strain isolated at the ICMR's National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, a statement said. The strain has been successfully transferred from NIV to BBIL, it added. "Work on vaccine development has been initiated between the two partners. The ICMR-NIV will provide continuous support to BBIL for vaccine development. ICMR and BBIL will seek fast-track approvals to expedite vaccine development, subsequent animal studies and clinical evaluation of the candidate vaccine," the health research body said in the statement.

Naqvi: Ministry plans to train 2K more to join fight against Covid-19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs, which has trained 1,500 people as healthcare assistants and put them in the anti-coronavirus services in the hospitals and health centres, is planning to train 2,000 more so that they could also join the health services to contain the pandemic in the country.

Giving this information, Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Saturday that a batch of 2,000 would be trained this year under the Ministry's skill development programme and join the anti-Covid-19 services. He said health assistants are being trained by the well-established hospitals and health organisations in the country.

The Minister said 16 Haj houses in the country have been handed over to the different states to be used for quarantine and isolation purposes. The healthcare assistants, 50 per cent of whom are women, were trained under the ministry's skill development programme and are now employed in hospitals and healthcare centres across the country.

He said to create awareness about the social distancing and need to adopt healthcare protocols to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the Ministry will soon launch the "Jaan Bhi, Jahan Bhi" nationwide awareness campaign.

The Ministry is also to create quarantine facilities in States to cater to workers from

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India and abroad.

Waqf boards across the country have contributed Rs 51 crore to the Prime Minister's and Chief Ministers' relief funds for the pandemic with the support of religious, social and educational organisations. The Aligarh Muslim University contributed Rs 1.4 crore to the PM-CARES fund and AMU Medical College arranged 100 beds for treating coronavirus patients, according to a statement by the Ministry.

AMU also arranged Covid-19 tests and more than 9,000 tests have been done till now, Naqvi said.

The Ajmer Dargah Committee and associated organisations provided facilities worth about Rs 1 crore, which included arrangements to send people back to their states, he said. Naqvi said under Dargah committee "Khwaja model school" and "Kayad" rest house has been opened up for the coronavirus affected people from across the country and being used for quarantine and isolation. He said 4,500 visitors of all religions who were stranded on account of the lockdown were served with food and medical services.

48 more Maha deaths: Toll 779

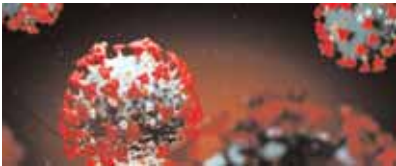
TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

The health authorities in Maharashtra went into a tizzy on Saturday, as the State recorded highest-ever day's fatality tally of 48 deaths and registered a phenomenal 11,65 infected cases taking the total number of cases to 20,228.

On a day when the total number of deaths mounted to 779 and the total number of infected crossed 20,000 mark in the state, as many as 48 persons succumbed to Covid-19.

Of the total deaths, Mumbai accounted for 27 deaths, while there were nine deaths in Pune and eight in Malegaon. One death each was reported from Pune district, Akola, Nanded and Amravati. The eight deaths reported from Malegaon took place between the period of April 25 and May 8. With the new 27 deaths, the total number of deaths in Mumbai has risen to 489, while the total number infected cases has jumped to 12,864.

Of the dead, 21 were men while 27 were women. Twenty seven of them aged over 60 years, 18 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 3 were aged less than 40 years



While the Information regarding comorbidities of 9 patients who died was not available yet, 28 out of the rest 39 patients (72%) had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

Out of 2,27,804 laboratory samples, 2,06,481 were negative and 20,228 have tested positive for coronavirus until Saturday. There are 1243 active containment zones in the state currently. "Total 12,388 surveillance squads worked today across the state and surveillance of 55 lakh population was done," a state health bulletin said.

Meanwhile, 3,800 patients have been discharged till date after full recovery. Currently, 2,41,290 people are in home quarantine and 13,976 people are in institutional quarantine.

Meanwhile, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in an

advisory issued on Saturday urged the people not to panic and asked "all positive corona patients" who do not have symptoms not rush to the big hospitals for admission when the test result is positive.

"Health department will guide you for the same to nearby Corona care centres. Please take the following precautions: Asymptomatic Covid-19 positive non comorbid patients can remain home isolated, if feasibility and assessment for the same is ensured by the health department & provided patients give undertaking and abide to instructions given by the health department. Citizens are requested not to panic," the advisory stated.

"if any close family member, neighbor has turned out Covid-19 positive. As per ICMR guidelines only very close high risk contacts of the positive case can be tested once between 5-14 days of exposure or earlier if they become symptomatic," the BMC advisory stated.

"All contacts need to self-quarantine at home, or will be quarantined in an institution if belong to slum like areas as per the directions of Health Department," the advisory added.

BODIES-NEXT-TO COVID-19 PATIENTS ROW

BMC appoints Dr Bharmal as new Sion Hospital Dean

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

Within two days after a video showing at least four bodies wrapped in black plastic lying on beds next to Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment at the LTMG Hospital at Sion in north-central Mumbai went viral, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has appointed Dr Ramesh Bharmal as the new Director and Dean of the Hospital.

Dr Bharmal, who has replaced Dr Pramod Ingale as the new Dean of the Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General (LTMG) Hospital at Sion, took charge as the head of the Sion hospital on Saturday.

Informed sources in the BMC said on Saturday that in a damage control exercise undertaken after the receipt of the report of an inquiry ordered into the shocking inci-

dent of the bodies of the Covid-19 deceased being found next to the beds of Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment at the Sion hospital, Dr Ingale was given marching orders on Friday night.

It may be recalled that Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar personally visited the BMC-run LTMG Hospital on Thursday and ordered an inquiry into the disturbing incident. Among other things, the Mayor had disapproved the incident, by saying that "Whatever happened at the Sion Hospital is totally wrong".

Her visit to the Sion Hospital had followed a public furore triggered by a chilling video posted by BJP MLA Nitesh Rane that showed at least four bodies wrapped in black plastic lying on beds next Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment at the LTMG

Hospital. The Opposition BJP had demanded a full-fledged inquiry into the incident and also the resignation of then Mumbai Municipal Commisisoner Praveen Pardeshi.

Dr Ingale, who had himself said that the inquiry ordered by the Mayor would be completed within 24 hours, is understood to have been indicted in the inquiry report.

While announcing an inquiry into the incident, the BMC had said in a statement: "A video clip showing dead bodies being kept on the trolleys in a ward of Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital where other patients are being treated is circulating on media.

To understand the reality and confirmation of the facts, an inquiry Committee has been constituted. Committee members

have been instructed to submit the report within 24 hrs. Depending on the report, disciplinary action will be taken against the guilty".

Ironically enough, the LTMG Hospital authorities had admitted themselves that there is already a guideline that the body of a deceased Covid-19 patient should be handed over to its family.

"In view of guidelines of Govt. of Maharashtra, a circular was issued u/no. LTH/108/Dean (L) dtd. 2.5.2020 which stated that a dead body should be handed over to patient's relative within 30 minutes of death in the suspect Covid and Covid positive wards. But it is found that many a times relatives are not available to handover the body or they are not willing," the LTMG Hospital said in its statement.

Eleven more deaths take West Bengal toll to 99

IAN S ■ KOLKATA

With death of 11 more coronavirus patients in the last 24 hours, the death toll due to the disease in West Bengal climbed to 99 on Saturday, a senior Government official said.

"Eleven more fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours, taking the total death toll to 99, except those 72 comorbidities declared by the death audit committee. This figure stood at 88 on Friday," West Bengal Home Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay told a press conference at the state secretariat Nabanno here.

He said that as many as 108 news cases had been reported in the last 24 hours from across the state. With this, the total number of confirmed corona cases reached 1,786 in Bengal

"Altogether, 1,234 corona patients are undergoing treatments in various hospitals," Bandopadhyay said.

As for the return of migrant labourers and pilgrims stuck in other States, the Home Secretary said that the State Government is taking necessary steps.

Tirupur industrialists send SOS to PM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A SOS message has gone from Tirupur to Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a plea to save the cotton knitwear industry in the district, popularly known as the knitwear capital of India. Tirupur knitwear industry accounts for 90 per cent of cotton knitwear exports, employs more than 6,00,000 workers and earns anywhere more than ₹200 billion by way of exports.

With the breaking out of coronavirus and the resultant national lockdown, Tirupur wears a deserted look as most of the migrant laborers working in the knitwear factories have returned to their villages. The industrial units were forced to lay off a major chunk of the workforce following large scale cancellation of export orders from USA and Europe, the main consumers.

The Tirupur Exporters'

Association (TEA) said in its message to the Prime Minister that though the Reserve Bank of India had asked the Banks to offer three months moratorium on long terms loans taken by the industry vide its order dated March 27, many Banks are yet to make this option available to the industry on the ground that either the respective Bank corporate office is yet to take a decision on this or that the Auto debit instruction in the system cannot be undone at the branch level or any such flimsy reason.

The exporters pointed out in the message that the textile units in the district pay ₹100 crore every year to the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). "Hence it is fair on our part to expect the ESIC to pay at least a month's salary to the workers employed by us at this hour of crisis, the type of which has not been faced by the industry in the

known history. It is not for us we are asking this concession but to save the industry from drifting away," said S Sakthivel, executive secretary, TEA.

Raja M Shanmugham, president, Tirupur Exporters Association in a letter to the Prime Minister said the industrial cluster in Tirupur are experiencing a never seen before financial crisis and if no urgent measures are taken and that too on a war footing measure, the Tirupur Knitwear Industry would become a thing od the past soon.

"Almost all the buyers in Europe and US has stopped making payments for our supplies effected since December. Most of them have officially extended the payment terms for our supplies effected since December. Most of them have officially extended the payment terms from 60-90 days to 150-180 days and beyond. Orders in the pipelines are

being cancelled and suspended and even the finished orders are not allowed to be shipped," said Shanmugham in the message to the PM.

More than the grievances of the textile export units, Shanmugham has lambasted the financial institutions (read Banks) for their callous and indifferent attitude to the directives issued by the Reserve Bank of India to the Banks in the country asking them to take appropriate measures to help the industry to tide over the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

According to Shanmugham and all members of the TEA, the Indian bureaucracy works based on a Rule Bound approach imbibed from the British legacy in all spheres of governance including administrative, legislature and judiciary. "The Britishers implanted this Rule Bound approach so that nobody could

easily comprehend the rules of governance which also gives the rulers to interpret the rules in their favour," he said.

Shanmugham has said in the message that more than the Rule Bound approach, what the country needs at this critical juncture is wartime strategies to save the industry. "Let the Reserve Bank of India issue directions to the Banks which should be implemented in letter and spirits instead of giving them options to hel the Banks. What we look forward is not for freebees but some concession in the repayment mode. We will definitely pay back to the government what we owe in the form of bank loans but taking into account the seriousness of the situation, we are asking for a moratorium on loans repayment for a period of one year. We will pay back all outstanding loans over a period of five years," said Shanmugham.

Kerala CM: 14-day home quarantine must for all returnees

IAN S ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Fourteen-day home quarantine for all Keralites returning from other States would be compulsory, said Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, here on Saturday.

"Kerala's home quarantine protocol has been very effective. Hence top health expert B. Iqbal suggested that in the present context it would be best that those who arrive from within the country and having no symptoms be home quarantined," said Vijayan.

According to the state-owned Norka-Roots web portal, around 200,000 people have registered to return and a majority are from neighbouring States and Maharashtra.

Those with symptoms would be tested and, if needed, be isolated in hospitals, he said and added, the PCR test would also be conducted.

The Chief Minister said all those waiting to enter the state from the six border check-posts would be issued passes. "But none will be allowed in without a pass," said Vijayan.

J&K reports 13 fresh cases, steady increase in Valley

PNS ■ JAMMU

Despite enforcing lockdown guidelines strictly on ground zero, the total number of positive cases of coronavirus are recording a steady increase across Kashmir valley for last one week. Since May 1, 211 fresh cases of coronavirus were detected from across different districts of Kashmir while 117 patients have been discharged during the same period.

Reporting of large number of positive cases may be attributed to enhanced testing capacity. Over 7,000 samples were tested in the last 48 hours in J&K.

The five districts of Bandipora, Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla and Shopian alone accounted for 71 percent cases of total cases.

Out of a total number of 836 positive cases in Jammu & Kashmir, 601 cases were spread over these five districts with Bandipora topping the charts at 134, Srinagar 131 and

Anantnag 122 cases. Baramulla have reported 106 and Shopian 100 positive cases so far.

On Saturday, 13 fresh cases were detected in Jammu & Kashmir, 12 from Kashmir and only one case was reported from Jammu division. A total number of 29 more Covid-19 patients were also discharged from various hospitals, 01 from Jammu division and 28 from Kashmir division on Friday and four on Saturday.

Relatively, the situation in Jammu division remained under control. At present, out of 459 Active cases in Jammu & Kashmir, Kashmir accounted for 446 cases and Jammu only 13. Out of these 13 cases, Five cases are active positive in Jammu, 2 in Udhampur, three in Samba and one each in Kathua, Reasi and Ramban.

The Bulletin further said that out of 44753 test results available, 43917 samples have tested as negative till May 09, 2020.

New Municipal Commissioner visits Dharavi

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

In an indication of his priorities, Mumbai's new Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal on Saturday visited BYL Nair Hospital and the coronavirus-hit Dharavi's slum and took stock of the situation there, even as one more person died and 25 more persons tested positive for Covid-19, taking the total number of deaths to 27 and the total infected cases in Asia's biggest slum to 833.

Chahal -- who took over as the new Mumbai civic chief from senior IAS Praveen Pardeshi late on Friday evening within a couple of hours after his appointment -- hit the ground running on Saturday morning.

Chahal's port of call was the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) BYL Nair Hospital & TN Medical College at Mumbai Central in south Mumbai, where he wore protective medical gear and interacted with the Covid-19 patients there and advised them to get in touch with the administration in case they faced problem of any kind during their stay at the hospital.

The Nair Hospital, which



has been functioning as a Covid-19 medical facility since April 18, has in all 531 beds -- all reserved for Coronavirus patients. There are as many 53 Intensive Care Units (ICUs) at the hospital. The hospital, where 44 pregnant women have delivered during the last 22 days, has 110 beds for pregnant women. It has 27 dialysis units for Coronavirus patients.

While reviewing the situation at the hospital, Chahal interacted with doctors, nurses and other medical workers there on the availability of

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for medical staff, drug availability, facilities at the ICUs and line of treatment adopted by the doctors to deal with the Covid-19 patients.

After his visit to Nair Hospital, Chahal headed straight to Dharavi slum, where he visited worst-affected localities of Mukund Nagar and Shastri Nagar and took stock of the situation there.

Later on, the new Municipal Commissioner visited a containment zone located near Tata Colony and inter-

acted with the residents there.

As part of the visit to the Tata colony, Chahal visited a public toilet and inspected it. His inspection of the public toilet should be seen in the context of the fact that public toilets in Dharavi have become a major source for the spread of Covid-19 in Dharavi.

Interacting with the police officials posted there, Chahal advised them to enforce the lockdown norms sternly in the area in view of the rapid spread of the pandemic in the area. He also spoke to some private

Dharavi

doctors in the area. Chahal advised the BMC medical staff to intensify the tracing of Covid-19 "contacts" in the densely populated slum and put them in an institutional quarantine in a big way to prevent the rapid spread of the Covid-19 in the area.

Meanwhile, one more dweller of Dharavi succumbed to Coronavirus on Saturday, 25 new infected cases were reported from this slum.

With the new death and infected cases, the total number of deaths in Dharavi mounted to 27, while the total positive cases rose to 833 in the area. On Friday, Dharavi had recorded five more deaths. These deaths came to light as part of the BMC's follow up calls of cases. "We got to know that the patients had succumbed to the pandemic on different days earlier and not Friday," a senior BMC official said.

Significantly, as many as five new infected cases were reported from Mukund Nagar, which incidentally was one of the areas that the BMC's new Commissioner visited on Saturday. Like in the past, positive cases were reported from different localities of Dharavi on Saturday as well.

UP Congress launches chat portal to help migrants

Lucknow: To help the migrant workers stranded in several states, the Congress, here on Saturday, launched a web portal, even as the political slugfest continued over rail fares of migrants being ferried by Shramik Special trains.

The Congress launched chat portal tinyurl.com/UPmitra to help UP workers stranded in other states as well as those stuck in the state. The portal has been developed by Valuefirst free of cost. "We have launched this chat portal to provide help to those in need. The problems raised by them will be listed and the party workers will help them," UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu said.

The list of the problems would also be shared with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, he added. The Congress, he said, was running community kitchen in 17 UP districts since the nationwide lockdown was announced to combat the spread of Covid-19. Meals and ration had been provided to over 47 lakh people, he added. IANS

Rajasthan sends 96,000 migrants, receives 2,12,006

IAN S ■ JAIPUR

The Rajasthan Government has set up a panel, led by Additional Chief Secretary Subodh Agrawal, to ensure ease of travel for stranded labourers.

Agrawal has been keeping a tab on movement of labourers and is in touch with other states. "It's time to ensure that every citizen is fed and reaches home without any trouble. We are monitoring labourers' movements every day. Several trains have been deployed to shift labourers. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is personally monitoring the developments and has said no one should sleep hungry," said Agrawal.

The State Government is taking care of travelling migrants' meals, masks and sanitizers, and is ensuring strict implementation of social distancing norm. Passengers are also being checked by medical teams on railway stations.

Till now, 96,000 migrant labourers have been taken to their home states. Of this, 4,292 labourers travelled to Gujarat, MP (37,442), Punjab (7,774), Haryana

(5,580), Bihar (5,942), Uttarakhand (1,589), West Bengal (677), Maharashtra (554) and Odisha (79).

Similarly, 2,12,006 Rajasthani migrants have returned from Gujarat, 36,814 from Maharashtra, 17,233 from MP, 1,128 from Punjab, 3,713 from Haryana, 5,614 from UP, 1,132 from Uttarakhand, 863 from West Bengal, 398 from Bihar and 272 from Odisha. As soon as the government got the nod for migrants' transportation, 8,12,423 registered themselves to travel via trains to their home states. Similarly, 10,64,417 labourers registered to reach Rajasthan from across India.

"In the coming days, thousands of workers will be sent to their home states and brought back to Rajasthan. We hope things will go hassle-free. After an unfortunate incident in Aurangabad, we have taken strict measures to ensure safety of stranded workers," Agrawal said. The State Government started registration of stranded people through eMitra. Any stranded person could register on eMitra portal by providing relevant details along with documents or using +181/18001806127, Agrawal said.

Agra: Corona cases surpass 700 mark

IAN S ■ AGRA

The number of Covid-19 cases in Agra surpassed the 700 mark on Saturday, with 26 more people testing positive for the coronavirus in the past 24 hours a health official said.

The total tally now stands at 706 and the overall death toll at 23, the official added. District Magistrate P.N. Singh said that so far a total of 303 patients were discharged from various hospitals after recovery.

The new cases were mostly from the 42 hotspots and those who had come in contact with some infected persons. The district health department has so far collected 8,835 samples.

In Firozabad, the tally has climbed to 174, while in Mathura two new cases have been admitted to the district hospital. The number of cases has gone upto 38 in the holy city which continues to see a

drought of pilgrims as a result of the lockdown.

The Agra administration on Saturday announced new quarantine centres for the incoming migrant labourers who will be required to spend 14 days before entering villages.

Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner Anil Kumar visited several hotspots and government hospitals to review the state of preparedness and facilities being offered.

Senior physicians and homeopaths of the city have been urging citizens to change lifestyles and follow the guidelines for their safety.

"The coronavirus, was not likely to be controlled soon, till medicines or vaccines were developed. The only remedy or antidote, according to them was personal hygiene, social distancing, healthy food and regular exercise", said senior doctor Ashok Viz.

43 new cases in Andhra, active count below 1,000

Amaravati: With just 43 cases reported on Saturday, Andhra Pradesh reported it's lowest daily tally of Covid-19 cases in weeks. A steady decline in the number of positive cases over the past one week, combined with increasing numbers of people getting cured, has resulted in the state's active cases dipping below the 1,000 mark.

The State Nodal Officer has reported that of the 8,388 samples tested, 43 cases were detected in the 24 hours ending 10 a.m. on Saturday. However, the death toll increased further, with two persons reported dead in Krishna district and one in Kurnool district.

The state's top Covid-19 hotspot of Kurnool district continued to register very low positive cases. Only six cases were reported from here, while



Krishna district reported the highest daily tally of 16 cases. Visakhapatnam reported five cases, while Anantapur and Chittoor districts reported three and two cases respectively.

In a reversal of sorts, a decrease in the number of positive cases over the past week

has been observed in Andhra Pradesh. 54 cases were detected on Friday, while the 24-hour tally on Thursday was 56. The daily tally was 60 cases on Wednesday. Similarly the tally on Tuesday and Monday was 67.

Prior to this, the daily tally of positive cases used to range between 70 and the highest single-day tally of 81.

On an average, the state tests around 7,500 samples per day and has the country's highest test ratio of 3,091 tests conducted per million population. So far, the state has conducted 1,65,069 tests. The state's positivity rate stands at 1.17 per cent, while the Covid mortality rate is 2.28 per cent. The death toll on Saturday increased to 43, with three deaths reported in the past 24 hours. IANS

AMID HISTORIC US JOB LOSSES

Trump says ‘no rush’ on more aid

Washington: President Donald Trump says he’s in “no rush” to negotiate another financial rescue bill, even as the Government reported that more than 20 million Americans lost their jobs last month due to economic upheaval caused by the coronavirus.

The president’s low-key approach came Friday as the Labor Department reported the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression and as Democrats prepared to unveil what Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer calls a “Rooseveltian-style” aid package to shore up the economy and address the health crisis.

Some congressional conservatives, meanwhile, who set aside long-held opposition to deficits to pass more than USD 2 trillion in relief so far, have expressed reservations about another massive spending package.

“We’ve kind of paused as far as formal negotiations go,” Larry Kudlow, the director of the National Economic Council told reporters Friday.

He said the administration wanted to let the last round of recovery funding kick in before committing to hundreds of

billions or more in additional spending.

“Let’s have a look at what the latest round produces, give it a month or so to evaluate that,” Kudlow added that talks were in a “lull” and that administration officials and legislators would “regroup” in the next several weeks.

Still, White House aides are drawing up a wish-list for a future spending bill, including a payroll tax cut, liability protection for businesses that reopen and potentially billions in infrastructure spending.

Kudlow added that the White House was also considering allowing businesses to immediately expense the costs of modifying their facilities to accommodate public safety measures necessary to reopen. The notion was brought up on a call with House members advising the White House on reopening plans Thursday evening and drew bipartisan support.

“We’re in no rush, we’re in no rush,” Trump told reporters Friday during an event with House Republicans. He called on Democratic-controlled House to return to Washington, adding, “We want

to see what they have.”

The emerging Democratic bill is expected to include eye-popping sums, centered on nearly \$1 trillion that states and cities are seeking to prevent mass layoffs as governments reel from the one-two punch of skyrocketing costs from the

pandemic and dismal tax receipts in the shuttered economy.

The package being compiled by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi — the fifth from Congress in a matter of weeks — draws on requests from governors for \$500 billion, and

from cities and counties for up to \$300 billion to prevent widespread layoffs of police, fire and other frontline workers during the pandemic.

“No one could look at today’s jobs report, the highest unemployment since the Great Depression, and say we should

hit the pause button on further government action,” Schumer said in a statement.

He compared Trump and his GOP allies in Congress to former President Herbert Hoover, who is often seen as failing to respond adequately to that crisis. “We need a big, bold

approach now to support American workers and families,” Schumer said.

But the package has had little input from Republicans and is finding scant support, even as some in the party support certain provisions, including the local aid. **PTI**

China continues to hide, obfuscate Covid-19 data from world, says Pompeo

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

China continues to hide and obfuscate Covid-19 data from the world, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said, asserting that he has seen a significant amount of evidence suggesting that a laboratory in the Chinese city of Wuhan was “underperforming” and the virus may well have emanated from there.

By Friday, more than 78,000 Americans had died and 13 lakh tested positive for the coronavirus. Globally, more than 2.74,000 people have died and 39 lakh have tested positive

for the disease, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

“I have seen a significant amount of evidence that suggests that the lab was underperforming, that there were security risks at the lab and that the virus could well have emanated from there,” Pompeo told Ben Shapiro in an interview on Friday.

“But I am happy to suspend the decision about that. What we need are answers. There are still people dying,” he said.

The American economy and that of the rest of the world have come to a standstill.

Trump utterly failed to prepare for Covid-19 pandemic: Biden

Washington: Democratic Party’s presumptive presidential nominee and former US vice president Joe Biden alleged on Friday that President Donald Trump utterly failed to prepare for the Covid-19 pandemic and said his entire economic strategy is focussed on helping the wealthy and big corporations.

Referring to the record 2.05 crore jobs lost in April alone, resulting in an unprecedented unemployment rate of 14.7 per cent now — the highest since the Great Depression — Biden, in a major policy speech, said it is an economic disaster, worse than any in

decades, and it was made all the more worse because it did not have to be this way.

“Donald Trump utterly failed to prepare for this pandemic and delayed in taking the necessary steps to safeguard our nation against the near-worst-case economic scenario we are now living in,” he said in his remarks on “Trump’s Disastrous Economy”.

Covid-19 caused a massive economic challenge, but the crisis hit the US harder and will last longer because Trump spent the last three years undermining the core pillars of the American economic strength, Biden alleged.

Around the Globe

London: A six-week-old baby has become the youngest victim of coronavirus in England as the official death toll across hospitals and the wider community linked to COVID-19 hit 31,241 in the UK.

Tehran: Iran warned Saturday that coronavirus infections were rising in the southwest despite falls in other regions, as it announced more than 1,500 new confirmed cases.

Kabul: A shootout erupted on Saturday at a protest in western Afghanistan by residents demanding economic assistance, leading to the deaths of at least six people, including a local reporter and two police officers, officials said.

London: The UK is planning to bring in compulsory 14-day quarantine for all travellers arriving in the country from any part of the world, except the Republic of Ireland, as part of measures to track the spread of coronavirus, according to media reports.

Islamabad: Pakistan on Saturday began easing the month-long lockdown despite a steady rise in the number of the coronavirus cases which rose to 27,474 after health authorities reported a big jump of 1,637 infections and 24 deaths in a single day.

New York: New York Gov Andrew Cuomo, who has won bipartisan praise for rallying supplies for his ravaged hospitals and helping slow the coronavirus, is coming under increasing criticism for not bringing that same level of commitment to a problem that has so far stymied him: nursing homes. “We’ve tried everything to keep it out of a nursing home, but it’s virtually impossible,” Cuomo told reporters.

Washington: The Trump administration is tightening visa guidelines for Chinese journalists in response to the treatment of US journalists in China, as tensions flare between the two nations over the coronavirus. The Department of Homeland Security has issued new regulations, set to take effect Monday, that will limit visas for Chinese reporters to 90 days. There is a potential to extend the visa.

China reports 15 new asymptomatic cases

Beijing: China has reported 15 new asymptomatic coronavirus cases, taking their total to 836 while one new imported COVID-19 infection was confirmed, health officials said on Saturday.

According to China’s National Health Commission (NHC), as for Friday 836 asymptomatic cases, including 63 from overseas, were still under medical observation.

The NHC said one imported case of coronavirus was reported on Friday and 15 new asymptomatic cases, all domestic ones, were confirmed in the country.

Most of the asymptomatic cases were being reported from first coronavirus epicentres Hubei province and its capital Wuhan where no confirmed cases were reported for the 35 days, the local health commission said.

Normalcy is returning to the province as the lockdown



has been lifted and offices, business and factories have been opened since last month.

The province still has 628 asymptomatic cases under medical observation, after 13 new cases were reported on Friday, the commission said.

Death toll in China remained at 4,633 as no new fatalities have been reported on Friday while the total number of cases stood at 82,887, including 208 patients who were still being treated, the NHC said. **PTI**

Outbreaks in Germany, S Korea show the risks in easing up

Rome: South Korea’s capital closed down more than 2,100 bars and other nightspots Saturday because of a new cluster of coronavirus infections, and Germany scrambled to contain fresh outbreaks at slaughterhouses, underscoring the dangers authorities face as they try to reopen their economies.

Elsewhere, Belarus, which has not locked down despite increasing case numbers, saw tens of thousands of people turn out to mark Victory Day, the anniversary of Nazi Germany’s defeat in 1945. That was in contrast to Russia, where a muted event took place over an empty Red Square.

Around the world, the US and other hard-hit countries are wrestling with how to ease curbs on business and public activity without touching off a deadly second wave of infection.

Germany and South Korea have both carried out extensive

testing and contact tracing and have been hailed for avoiding the mass deaths that have overwhelmed other countries. But even there, authorities have struggled with finding the balance between saving lives and saving jobs.

In South Korea, where a decline in new cases had prompted the government to loosen up, Seoul shut down thousands of nightclubs, hostess bars and discos after dozens of infections were linked to clubgoers who went out last weekend as the country relaxed its social-distancing guidelines.

Many of the infections were linked to a 29-year-old man who visited three nightclubs before testing positive.

Health officials in Germany faced outbreaks at three slaughterhouses in what was seen as a test of the government’s strategy for dealing with any resurgence of the virus as restrictions are eased. Meanwhile, govern-

ments came under fresh scrutiny over their handling of the crisis. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said Europe must acknowledge that it “wasn’t well-prepared” for the outbreak. In the US, internal government emails obtained by The Associated Press show that a decision to shelve detailed advice from the nation’s top disease control experts for reopening communities during the epidemic came from the highest levels of the White House.

Worldwide, the virus is confirmed to have infected over 3.9 million people and killed more than 275,000, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University based on data reported by Governments. Hard-hit Italy saw people return to the streets for their traditional aperitivos and revel in fine weather as restrictions there have eased. In some cases, people went too far for the authorities. **AP**

Egypt’s President expands powers, citing virus outbreak

AP ■ CAIRO

Egypt’s President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has approved amendments to the country’s state of emergency that grant him and security agencies additional powers, which the Government says are needed to combat the Covid-19 outbreak.

An international rights group condemned the amendments, saying the government has used the global pandemic to “expand, not reform, Egypt’s abusive Emergency Law.”

The new amendments allow the president to take measures to contain the virus, such as suspending classes at schools and universities and quarantining those returning from abroad. But they also include expanded powers to ban public and private meetings, protests, celebrations and other forms of assembly.

The government has waged an unprecedented crackdown on dissent since 2013, when el-Sissi rose to

power, and unauthorized protests have been banned for years. The amendments, which el-Sissi signed off on Friday, also allow military prosecutors to investigate incidents when army officers are tasked with law enforcement or when the president orders it. The country’s chief civilian prosecutor would have the final decision on whether to bring matters to trial. The amended law would also allow the president to postpone taxes and utility payments as well as provide economic support for affected sectors.

Parliament, which is packed with el-Sissi supporters, approved the measure last month.

Egypt has been under a state of emergency since April 2017, and the government extended it late last month for another three months.

The law was originally passed to give the president broader powers to combat terrorism and drug trafficking.

5-year-old boy dies from rare inflammatory illness linked to Covid in US

New York: In a worrying development, a five-year old boy has died in New York from a rare inflammatory illness linked to the coronavirus, while the death of another seven-year-old boy is being investigated for possible links to the mysterious pediatric syndrome. The New York State Department of Health is investigating several cases of the severe illness in children and child deaths that may be linked to the serious inflammatory disease called “Pediatric Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome Associated with COVID-19.” There have been 73 reported cases in New York where children are experiencing symptoms similar to Kawasaki disease and toxic shock-like syndrome possibly due to COVID-19. **PTI**

Sir Lankan Muslims urge Govt for burial for Covid-19 victims

Colombo: Muslim theologists in Sri Lanka have urged the government to reconsider its decision on cremating the Muslims who died due to the coronavirus, saying the revised rule goes against the Islamic tradition.

Sri Lanka has made cremations compulsory for coronavirus victims, ignoring protests from the country’s Muslims, who make up 10 per cent of the 21 million population.

In a letter to the Director General, Health Services, the All Ceylon Jamiiyathul Ulama (ACJU) claimed that more

than 180 countries in line with the guidelines of the World Health Organisation have allowed burials for Muslims who die of COVID-19.

“It is our moral and ethical duty to abide by the law of the country and to guide people towards it. But it does not imply that we endorse or give consent to this ruling as it is against our religious principles”, the letter said.

They urged the health authorities to reconsider the decision. The Muslim clerics in Sri Lanka had earlier also made an appeal regarding their opposition to cremations. **PTI**

Europe wasn’t well-prepared, says Germany

Berlin: German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas says Europe must acknowledge that it “wasn’t well-prepared” for the coronavirus pandemic.

In a statement marking Europe Day, Maas said that initially most countries, including Germany, were focused on coping with the outbreak at home.

While defending the national response as “necessary, in order to safeguard our ability to act and then also help other,” Maas said the European Union had “grown in the crisis.” The EU’s sluggish response has given way to cross-border medical aid, a massive financial support package and coordinated scientific research programmes. **AP**

China’s socialist political system has shown it can overcome any challenge: Xi

PTI ■ BEIJING

Mounting a strong defence of the ruling Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping has said the Covid-19 fight has once again shown that the CPC leadership and the country’s socialist political system can overcome any challenge.

Xi’s comments came as China faced global criticism for its initial inaction to act against the novel coronavirus, which according to Chinese officials emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December last year.

Pressure is also mounting on Beijing to agree for an international probe on the ori-

gins of the vicious virus, including from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), as claimed by the US leadership.

China curbed the spread of the coronavirus in over a month and brought COVID-19 under control at its first epicentre in Wuhan in about three months, Xi, also the General Secretary of the CPC, said at a symposium held on Friday to get suggestions from non-ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) parties on COVID-19 prevention and control. He termed the curbing of the COVID-19 pandemic as “hard-won achievements” for the world’s most populous country and the second-biggest economy.

The COVID-19 fight has once again shown that the CPC leadership, China’s socialist system and its governance system can overcome any challenge and make big contributions to the progress of human civilisation, he said.

Xi said China had basically curbed the spread of the virus in over one month, managed to bring the daily number of new domestically-transmitted cases down to single digits in about two months, and secured decisive achievements in protecting epicentres Wuhan and Hubei province in about three months. “For a huge country with 1.4 billion people, these are hard-won achievements,” he said. **PTI**

Pak Army major among six killed in roadside bomb attack

Karachi: At least six security personnel, including an Army major, were killed when a roadside bomb struck a patrol vehicle in south-western Pakistan’s restive Balochistan province, close to the border with Iran.

The Army on Friday said in a statement that a vehicle of paramilitary Frontier Corps was targeted through a remote-controlled improvised explosive device (IED) in Kech district’s Buleda area, about 14 km from the Iran border.

“A major and five soldiers were killed while one soldier was injured,” according to the Army. No one took responsibility but Baloch militants often target the security forces in the province.

Security sources said the route where the explosion took place was monitored round the clock because of suspected movement by smugglers and insurgents in the border area.

A search operation was launched by the security forces in the area to trace the elements involved in the attack. **PTI**

US awards border wall contract in Texas to begin in 2021

Houston: The U.S. Government has awarded a \$275 million border wall contract for construction that would begin in South Texas in January, at the start of President Donald Trump’s second term if he is re-elected.

Caddell Construction Company, based in Montgomery, Alabama, won the contract to build 14 miles (22.5 kilometers) of barriers in and around Laredo, Texas, a city of 260,000 people on the Rio Grande, the river that runs between Texas and Mexico. US Customs and Border Protection announced the contract award Friday night using funds it had previously received from Congress rather than military funding re-directed to the wall.

The CBP said construction would begin in January 2021 “pending availability of real estate.” There is little existing wall separating Laredo and its sister city of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Much of the planned construction would cut through private land in neighborhoods close to the edge of the Rio Grande, requiring the government to take property through its power of eminent domain. **PTI**

Militants increasing attacks on Burkina Faso mines

Bouda (Burkina Faso): Jihadists burst into the gold mine where Moussa Tambura worked in Burkina Faso, forbidding everyone from smoking and drinking. It wasn’t long before the men returned and leveled the place to the ground.

“They attacked the site, killed people and burned houses,” said Tambura, 29, clenching his fists. He was able to find work again after fleeing to Bouda, another town in country’s north that still has small-scale mining. Still, he struggles to provide for his family since his new job isn’t as lucrative as his old one.

Jihadists linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State organization have been overrunning gold mines like Tambura’s one

by one as they try to gain control of Burkina Faso’s most lucrative industry.

The extremists are then collecting a “protection tax” from communities living around the gold mines and also forcing the miners to sell them the gold exclusively, which is then smuggled and sold across the border in places like Benin, Ghana or Togo.

The violence already has shuttered many small mines across the volatile north and the government also has tried to shut down other small-scale mines in the east so that they can’t be used by extremists to finance more attacks.

Mining Minister Oumarou Idani has called the measure a necessary step in the “fight

against terrorism.”

But some of the remote sites continue running anyway as they escape the reach of the national government in Ouagadougou, other officials and analysts said.

Some are warning too that the government’s strategy to cut off the flow of money from the east may also backfire, as unemployed miners falling deeper into poverty could become more sympathetic to the jihadists’ recruitment messages of marginalization.

“You’re opening up the gates to push people to the terrorists,” said Oumarou Ganemtoré, secretary for the National Union of the Artisanal Miners Association of Burkina Faso. **AP**

Russia, Belarus mark Victory Day in contrasting events

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin marked Victory Day, the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, in a ceremony shorn of its usual military parade and pomp by the coronavirus pandemic.

In neighboring Belarus, however, the ceremonies went ahead in full, with tens of thousands of people in the sort of proximity that has been almost unseen in the world for months.

Putin on Saturday laid flowers at the tomb of the unknown soldier just outside the Kremlin walls and gave a short address honoring the valor and suffering of the Soviet army during the

war. Victory Day is Russia’s most important secular holiday and this year’s observance had been expected to be especially large because it is the 75th anniversary, but the Red Square military parade and a mass procession called the Immortal Regiment were postponed as part of measures to stifle the spread of the virus. The only vestige of the conventional show of military might was a flyover of central Moscow by 75 war-planes and helicopters.

The ceremony was the first public appearance in about a month for Putin, who has worked remotely as the virus took hold. **PTI**

SBI complains to CBI about ₹411-cr fraud

DEFAULTER FLEE COUNTRY

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Three promoters of Ram Dev International, recently booked by the CBI for allegedly cheating a consortium of six banks to the tune of ₹411 crore, have already fled the country before the State Bank of India reached the agency with the complaint, officials said on Saturday.

The CBI had recently booked the company engaged in export of Basmati rice to the West Asian and European countries and its directors Naresh Kumar, Suresh Kumar and Sangita on the basis of complaint from the State Bank

of India (SBI), which suffered the loss of more than ₹173 crore, they said.

The company had three rice milling plants, besides eight sorting and grading units in Karnal district with offices in Saudi Arabia and Dubai for trading purposes, the SBI complaint said. Besides SBI, other members of consortium are Canara Bank, Union Bank of India, IDBI, Central Bank of India and Corporation Bank, they said. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) did not carry out any searches in the matter because of the coronavirus-induced lockdown, the officials said.

The agency will start the process of summoning the accused, incase they do not join the investigation, appropriate legal action will be initiated,

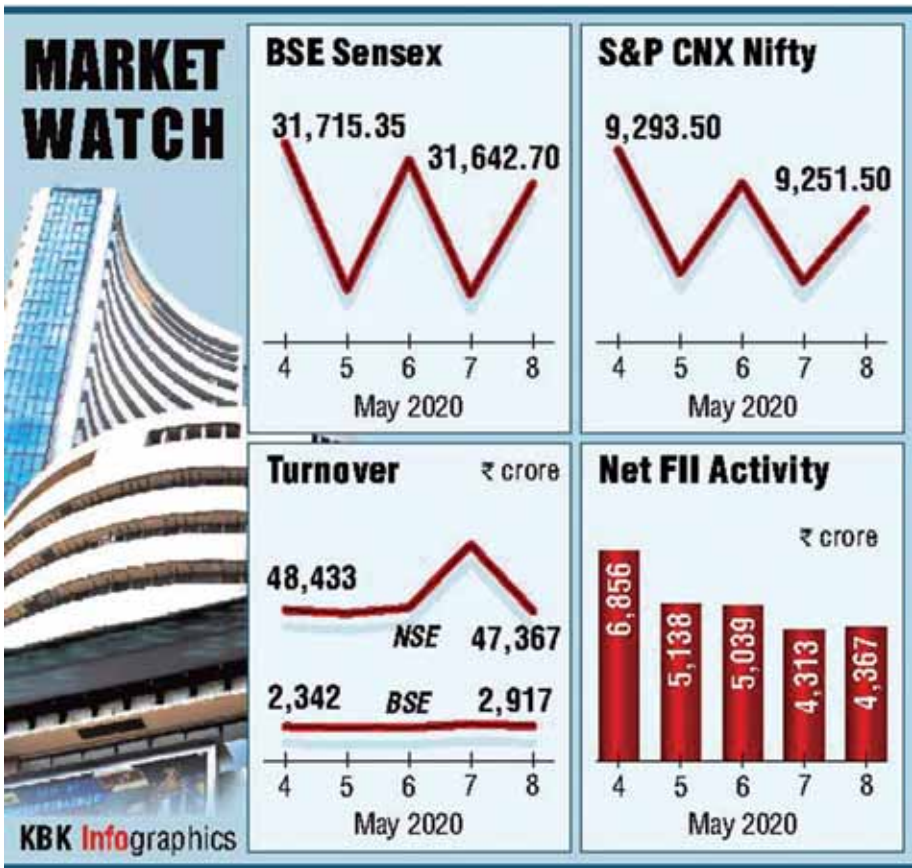
they said.

According to the complaint filed by SBI, the account had become non-performing asset (NPA) on January 27, 2016.

The banks conducted a joint inspection of properties in August and October, nearly 7-9 months later only to find Haryana Police security guards deployed there, they said.

"On inquiry, it has come to notice that borrowers are absconding and have left the country," according to the complaint filed on February 25, 2020, over four years after the account had become NPA.

The complaint alleged that borrowers had removed entire machinery from old plant and fudged the balance sheets in order to unlawfully gain at the cost of banks' funds, it said.



More firms across sectors partially resume operations in lockdown 3.0

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Several companies across sectors ranging from textiles to consumer electronics and liquor to pharma on Saturday informed that they have partially resumed operations after getting permission from local authorities in the third phase of the lockdown. The manufacturers have assured to adhere to safety precautions mandated by the Government and respective local administrations. The Govt had last week permitted the companies to restore their manufacturing operations in red, green and organ zones with certain riders.

Auto parts and equipment maker Rane Holdings Ltd in a regulatory filing said it has partially resumed operations at most of its plants and offices with restricted manpower. It, however, said that the continuance of operations in these places depends on directives from local authorities, issued from time to time. Liquor maker IFB Agro Industries has also resumed operations at its distillery and select bottling plants.

"The company has partially resumed operations at its distillery and some of its IMIL bottling plants wherein lockdown restrictions have been eased," it said.

India witnesses 40% inc in peak internet traffic, says report

PIANS ■ BENGALURU

The Internet peak traffic saw 40 per cent rise in March in India and there was significant spike in downloads and uploads per user, owing to the high volume of work and streaming content across all major cities including tier II markets, says a new report.

While the average downloads increased by 66 per cent per user per month, the average uploads surged at 37 per cent per user per month, according to ½State of Internet Traffic Trend' report by ACT Fibernet, one of India's largest wired Internet Service Provider. The data is based on overall traffic data measured from February-April 2020 from 19 cities.

One of the most interesting revelations was that on a particular day in March, 98.7 per cent of entire ACT Fibernet subscriber base was concurrently online.

"In the last two months, we have seen a significant shift in data consumption across cities as people moved to working from home, spending more time streaming content, indulging in online gaming, taking online classes/course, video conferencing etc," said

The data is based on overall traffic data measured from February-April 2020 from 19 cities

Bala Malladi, CEO, Atria Convergence Technologies Ltd.

While there has been an overall surge of 55 per cent in streaming traffic, there was no significant difference between weekday and weekend streaming and/or traffic now.

There was an overall traffic increase by 73 per cent on weekdays and 65 per cent increase on weekends, said the report.

India now has 504 million active Internet users, out of which about 14 per cent are in the age bracket of 5-11 years, according to a new report from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).

Based on data from the Indian Readership Survey (IRS) 2019, the research also found that nearly 70 per cent of the active Internet population in India is daily users.

The time spent on the Internet continues to be higher in urban India compared to rural India.

Govt disburses ₹18,253 cr to 9.13 cr farmers under PM-KISAN scheme during lockdown

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said ₹18,253 crore has been disbursed to 9.13 crore farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme during the ongoing nationwide lockdown.

Under the PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) scheme, each farmer gets ₹6,000 in a year in

three equal installments directly in bank account.

Front-loading the release of the first installment under the PM-KISAN scheme was part of the ₹1.70 lakh crore Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP) announced on March 26 to protect the poor from the impact of the coronavirus lockdown. The lockdown was imposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

March 25 to curb the spread of COVID-19, and since then it has been extended twice.

With regard to further assistance to farmers, the Finance Minister said that 3 crore farm loan borrowers have opted for a three-month moratorium. "Since March 2020, 9.13 crore farmers have been paid ₹18,253 crore under PM-KISAN during the #lockdown," Sitharaman said in a tweet.

After flip-flops, IndiGo clarifies pay cut for senior employees will be for entire 2020-21

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After announcing on Friday that it was reinstating pay cuts of up to 25 per cent for its senior employees, IndiGo airlines said the reduction in salary would remain effective through the 2020-21 financial year. It said it would take a decision on restoring original salary "closer to the end of this financial year".

The country's largest domestic airlines had on Friday announced pay cut ranging between 5 and 25 per cent, in addition to its leave-without-pay programme for May, June and July, for senior employees.

The announcement, made through internal emails, came after a series of flip-flops on the matter as India's largest domestic airline struggled to stay afloat amid grounding of all commercial passenger flights due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown.

In the emails accessed by PTI, the airline said the salary cut will be effected from May till the end of the 2020-21 financial year. It has already paid full salary of April to its employees. The airline had first announced its decision to cut salaries on March 19 when the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic was apparent.

Hyundai rolls out 200 vehicles from Chennai plant on first day of resuming operations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hyundai Motor India on Saturday said its Chennai-based manufacturing facility rolled out 200 cars on the first day of resuming production.

The company re-started manufacturing activities at its plant in Sriperumbudur (near Chennai) on May 8. The auto major has commenced production at the facility adhering to 100 per cent compliance of safety and social distancing norms, Hyundai Motor India said in a statement. In line with the government's objectives of reviving the economy and company's global vision of progress for humanity.

UJVN Limited
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808 & Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866
DATE EXTENSION NOTICE-3
Due to unavoidable reason the date of submission and opening of bid against Tender No. : 16/EE(G)/KPS/TN/2019-20: & 17/EE(G)/KPS/TN/2019-20: invited by Office of the Executive Engineer (Generation), Khodri Power Station, Dakpathar is extended as given here below:-
Last date of down loading tender : May 16, 2020, 17:00 Hrs.
Last date of submission of tender : May 18, 2020, 15:00 Hrs.
Date & Time of opening of tender : May 20, 2020, 14:30 Hrs
Other terms & conditions will remain unchanged, for further details, please visit our website i.e. www.ujvnl.com.
प्र सं: 276 - 09/05/2020
Executive Engineer (Generation)
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED
General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Pooja, D/o: Rampal Kashyap, R/o: H.No. R-9, Vikas Nagar, Mohan Garden, Delhi, Aged: 15 years, has been missing/ kidnapped from the area of P.S. Ranhola, Delhi since 23.02.2020 at vide FIR No. 123/20 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 25.02.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Ranhola, Delhi.** Her physical description is as under:
Height: 4' Feet, Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Clothing: Yellow Colour Suit-Salwar and Hawai Chappal in feet.
Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, Ranhola, Delhi at **E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641**
S.H.O P.S. Ranhola, Delhi
Ph.: 011-28363001, 28363002, 28363003
DP/125/OD/2020.

RIL's first rights issue in 3 decades likely to open on May 22

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The rights issue of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) is expected to open on May 22. It will be priced at ₹1,257 per share with a share ratio at 1:15. The issue amount is ₹53,125 crore. As per the payment terms, 25 per cent of the amount will be on application and the balance on more calls.

Market sources said there is a strong repositioning of RIL as consumer/technology company with Jio and retail platforms.

As new strategic investors participate in growth engines, the rights issue will reward existing shareholders by enabling them to participate in consumer/technology business value creation.

The rights issue ensures minority shareholders' participate in next wave of value creation.

The price of "Right" shares to maintain the earnings per share (EPS) is ₹1,077. At 8 per cent discount on the market price of ₹1,427, the rights issue will be at ₹1,314 with a total

size of ₹55,533 crore.

If the discount is 10 per cent, the price will be ₹1,284 at a total size of ₹54,265 crore. If the discount is 12 per cent, the rights issue price will be ₹1,257 with a total issue size of Rs 53,124 crore.

Market sources said that RIL is well-positioned to navigate the macro headwinds and diversified earning streams but with conservative gearing. It has a robust and resilient business model, as 35 per cent of EBITDA is coming from consumer businesses.

In addition, the investment cycle has been completed and it has stronger cost positions across products and reduced Capex intensity. Sources point out that new business models create disproportionate value and the golden decade of value creation lies ahead.

They point out that asset light technology companies have created more value over the last decade than the aggregate market capital of energy companies in the S&P.

They cite the examples of

Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Google.

The strategic investments in digital services and organized retail platforms underpin RIL's participation in the next leg of value creation in India.

There has been a significant re-rating of the stock with the launch of Jio in September 2016, with growth in the consumer business visibility. Sources say the re-rating will continue with increasing share of consumer businesses in earnings.

Giving the rationale for the rights issue, market sources said the global pandemic is reshaping the way the world lives and works.

There is a visible acceleration in digital services, heightened need for robust supply chain-led new commerce model.

Market sources say this is a value accretive rights issue and the first rights issue by RIL in three decades.

The rights issue will ensure all investors get to participate at the same level as promoters in upcoming opportunities.

Metro carrying out maintenance activities during lockdown

Kolkata: Metro Railway, Kolkata has been carrying out various maintenance activities during lockdown period arising due to Covid-19 pandemic.

During this period, various safety measures like sanitation, disinfection activities are being carried out in the Carshed.

Dry and wet cleaning on both outside and inside of rolling stocks are also being carried out for proper disinfection and sanitization maintaining social distancing and other specified safety norms. .

The communication system and display boards in each of the six coaches of every rake are being checked and kept in working condition.

Cleaning of the escalators and lifts at all Metro stations is also being carried out at 15 days interval and functional testing is being checked at 3 days

India's overall fuel consumption falls 46% to lowest since 2007

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

India's fuel demand dipped 45.8 per cent in April from a year earlier, as a nationwide lockdown and travel curbs to combat the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) eroded economic activity. Consumption of fuel, a proxy for oil demand, totalled 9.93 million tonnes - its lowest since 2007, Government data showed on Saturday.

State fuel retailers in the country sold 50 per cent less refined fuel in the first two weeks of April than the same time a year earlier as the country came to a standstill due to the lockdown that was put in place on March 24.

The Government last week extended the lockdown until May 17, with some relaxations in lower-risk areas, although travel by air, rail and metro and inter-state movement of people by road was still banned.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) in its latest report said the country's annual fuel consumption will decline 5.6 per cent in 2020 compared with growth of 2.4 per cent forecast in its March report.

Consumption of diesel,

which is widely used for transportation as well as for irrigation needs in the country, was down about 55.6 per cent year-over-year at 3.25 million tonnes.

Sales of petrol dropped by 60.6 per cent from a year earlier to 0.97 million tonnes.

Cooking gas or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sales rose about 12.1 per cent to 2.13 million tonnes, while naphtha sales fell 9.5 per cent to 0.86 million tonnes.

State-retailers sold 21 per cent more LPG in the first fortnight of April from a year earlier.

The Government is providing free cooking gas cylinders to the poor for three months to June to help them weather the impact of the lockdown.

Sales of bitumen, used for making roads, slumped 71 per cent, while fuel oil use dipped 40 per cent in April.

However, the country's fuel demand is set to recover with easing restrictions on industrial activity and transport in areas that have contained the spread of coronavirus, oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan said earlier this week.

ICICI Bank Q4 consolidated profit up 6.91% to ₹1,251 cr

Sets aside ₹2k-cr for virus impact

PTI ■ MUMBAI

ICICI Bank on Saturday reported a 6.91% growth in March quarter net at ₹1,251 crore on a consolidated basis, after setting aside over ₹2,000 crore in provisions for potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. On a standalone basis, the second largest private sector bank's profit grew 26 % to ₹1,221 crore as against ₹969 crore in the year-ago period. For fiscal year 2019-20, it reported a 135% jump in standalone profit to ₹7,930.81 crore.

From an asset quality perspective, the bank reported an improvement in gross non-performing assets (NPAs) ratio to 5.53% as against 6.70% in the year-ago period and 5.95% as of Dec 2019, despite over ₹5,300 crore in fresh slippages during the reporting quarter.

नालको NALCO
National Aluminium Company Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Capitol Power Plant,
Angul-759145, Odisha, India
CIN : L27203OR1981GO00920
A NAVTIKATA COMPANY
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
Digitally signed online tenders are being invited from experienced bidders on OPEIN/Two-part (E-tender) mode through Central Public Procurement Portal for the following jobs at NALCO, CPP Plant at Angul, Odisha:
1-NIT No. MC-4888
Name of the work: Coordination, Liaison, Loading, Supervision and Movement of Coal Rakes for Linkage Coal, Bridge Linkage Coal and E-Auction Coal supplied through Railway BOBRN rakes.
2-NIT No. MC-4897
Name of the work: Area development in designated area by Nalco Pond Ash.
For details of NITs like contract period, EMD, Date and time of E-submission, Part-I Bid Opening, Modification/Amendments (if any) please log in to www.nalcoindia.com & <http://eprocure.gov.in>
AGM (Elect.), Contract Cell

उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे
ई-निविदा आमन्त्रण सूचना
संजल रेल प्रबन्धक, इन्जीनियरिंग, उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे, जेधपुर द्वारा भारत के राष्ट्रपति के लिये एवं उनकी ओर से ई-निविदा के माध्यम से प्रवर्तित निम्न के अन्तर्गत निविदा प्रस्तावों में निविदा लेना चाहते के लिए आमन्त्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा सूचना सं. 2020-21/ 58, कार्य का नाम व स्थान: Ancillary track work in connection with TBR (Deep screening by BCM) and LC maintenance works (142.89km) Ratanagar-Degana section of jodhpur division in section of ADEN/Degana अनुमानित लागत रुपये: Rs. 4,17,65,557.30/-, ब्यान्ने की राशि रुपये: Rs. 3,58,800.00/-, ई-निविदा सूचना सं. 2020-21/ 58, कार्य का नाम व स्थान: MERTA Road -LIFTING FACILITIES FOR DEMU CAR, अनुमानित लागत रुपये: Rs. 11,14,28,197.35/-, ब्यान्ने की राशि रुपये: Rs. 7,07,200.00/-, निविदा सूचना संख्या 2020-21/ 42 to 57 तक निविदा प्रस्तुत करने की तिथि 02-06-2020 को 15:00 बजे तक है। वेबसाइट का विवरण जहाँ पर ई-निविदा देखा व भरी जा सकती है- www.ireps.gov.in 461-58/20
हमें ftr/NWRRailways पर फॉलो करें

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
Following E-Tenders are invited by XEN/WS/Al/NWR-Ajmer at 15.00 Hrs on the mentioned date: **Tender No. 03-Workshop-All-2020-21, 1. Name of work: Ajmer- Zone No-1 (2020-21 & 2021-22):** Repairs & maintenance of building & sanitary work in the area of Loco workshop, Loco ground STC & STC hostel at, **Approximate cost- Rs. 16984082.00, Earnest money - Rs. 234900/-, Tender closing date- 04.06.2020, Tender No. 04-Workshop-All-2020-21, 2. Name of work: Ajmer- Zone No-2 (2020-21 & 2021-22):** Repairs & maintenance of building & sanitary work in the area of Carriage workshop, Electric Power House, General Store & Carriage ground at, **Approximate cost- Rs. 16984082.00, Earnest money - Rs. 234900/-, Tender closing date- 04.06.2020, The detailed information of the above Tender is available on website www.ireps.gov.in and at the notice board of this office 458-58/20**
Please join us on ftr/NWRRailways

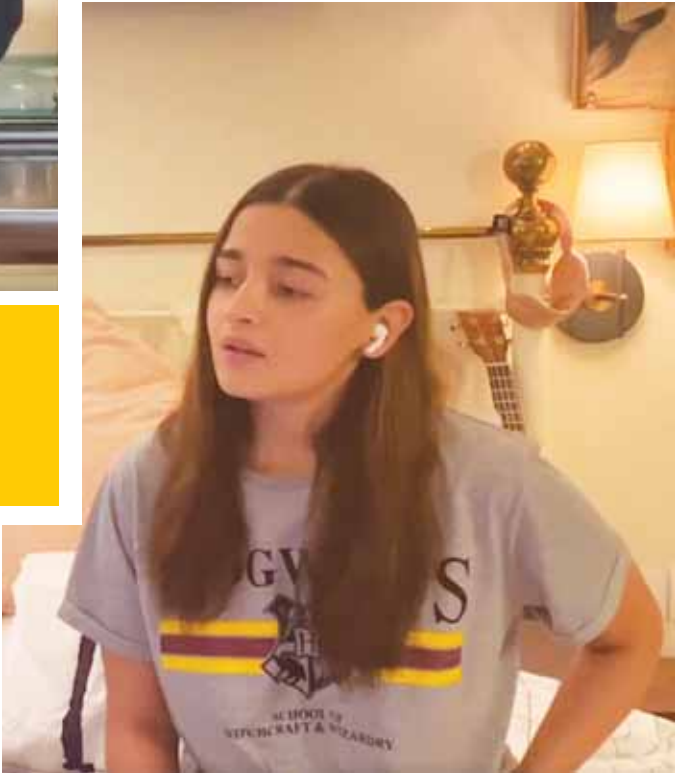
CORRIGENDUM NOTICE				
Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP./AUTH	OLD REFERENCE/NIT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH
1	THE KURUKSHETRA KARNAL COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD. AT KURUKSHETRA	HIRING OF ROUTE VEHICLES FOR MILK LIFTING, FOR KURUKSHETRA (FOR ROUTE NO. 205, 207, 208, 101 A, 101 B, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 117, 120 & 121) MANUAL TENDER PROCESS & COLLECT COMPLETE TENDER DOCUMENT @ RS. 1000/- EACH FROM OFFICE OF MILK UNION KURUKSHETRA GT. ROAD NEAR VILL. SANWALA KURUKSHETRA ON ANY WORKING DAY 10:00 AM TO 5:00 PM.	Tender Date extended EMD & Bid Submission till 18.05.2020 at 11:00 Hrs. , Bid Opening Date 18.05.2020 at 11:30 Hrs.	www.vitaindia.org.in
2	HVPNL, PANCHKULA	OUTSOURCING OF SKILLED/UNSKILLED MANPOWER UNDER TS ZONE, HVPNL, PANCHKULA FOR FY 2020-21. NIT-13/CETS/PRK/2020	The last date of online bid submission is extended up to 19.05.2020 at 11:00 hrs. and opening date of tender is extended up to 20.05.2020 at 15:00 hrs.	www.hvnpn.org.in
3	HVPNL, PANCHKULA	NIT NO.01/CMD-2/VOL-XI/HVPNL/2020-21. DATED:- 10/04/2020 (ONLINE TENDER ID NO. 2020_HBC_125916_1)	Last date of online bid submission is extended upto 19/05/2020 (13:00 hrs) Due date for opening of E-tender (Technical Bid):- 20/05/2020 at 11:00 hrs.	www.hvnpn.org.in
4	HVPNL, PANCHKULA	(ONLINE TENDER ID NO. 2020_HBC_125963_1)	Last date of online bid submission is extended up to 19.05.2020 at 11:00 hrs. and opening date of tender is extended up to 20.05.2020 at 15:00 hrs.	www.hvnpn.org.in
5	HVPNL, HISAR	OUTSOURCING OF SKILLED/UNSKILLED MANPOWER UNDER TS ZONE, HVPNL, HISAR FOR FY 2020-21. NIT-12/CETS/HIS/2020	The last date of online bid submission is extended up to 19.05.2020 at 11:00 hrs. and opening date of tender is extended up to 20.05.2020 at 15:00 hrs.	www.hvnpn.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in RO NO. 80816

WESTERN RAILWAY				
MISCELLANEOUS ENGINEERING WORKS IN UKAI SONGHAD-JALGAON SECTION				
Divisional Railway Manager (WA), Western Railway, 6th floor, Engg. Deptt., Mumbai Central, Mumbai-400008 invites e-Tenders as per details given as follows :				
Sr. No.	Tender Notice No. & Date	Work and Location	Approx. cost of work (₹)	EMD (₹)
1.	BCT/20-21/52, dtd. 06.05.2020	Ukai Songhad-Jalgaon section : Maintenance of P-way for Up/Dn line under SSE(P-way) Dharangan for one year. (Total 40.867 kms)	2,29,59,228.41	2,64,800/-
2.	BCT/20-21/53, dtd. 06.05.2020	Ukai Songhad-Jalgaon section : (1) TSR 2.586 kms. (2) TRR(P) 0.235 kms, (3) Providing ballast siding at Ranala station.	2,52,24,856.16	2,76,100/-
3.	BCT/20-21/54, dtd. 06.05.2020	Ukai Songhad-Jalgaon section : Housekeeping of Officer Rest House at Amalner & Jalgaon under SSE(W)/Amalner for two years.	13,84,490.38	27,700/-
Date & Time of submission : For each Sl. Nos.-On 04.06.2020 till 15.00 hrs. Date & Time of opening : For each Sl. Nos.-On 04.06.2020 at 15.30 hrs. Regarding detailed nature of work, containing cost of tender document (non-refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions, Please visit website www.ireps.gov.in Manual offers will not be considered				
Like us on : facebook.com/WesternRly			Follow us on : twitter.com/WesternRly	



STAYING LIVE



The pandemic has kept us home locked. But that has not locked up entertainment. Celebs from around the globe are doing their bit to keep spirits rocking through digital concerts, dance workshops, music jams and even a crafts mela for shopaholics. SHALINI SAKSENA tells you more

Just because it is a lockdown, doesn't mean that one has to give up live concerts. It could be a Lady Gaga or Chris Martin from Coldplay or even Pink who let the world in as she learnt how to play the piano. Back in India, B-town celebs Shah Rukh Khan, Abhishek Bachchan, Karan Johar, Varun Dhawan, Hrithik Roshan and many others came on Facebook live for a four-hour charity event to raise funds for COVID-19 warriors and keep people entertained.

Then there are others who are making fans laugh away their woes by either holding live ticketed shows on Zoom app or posting audio clips or videos on Insta.

Take Amit Tandon. He has been busy not only holding workshops on comedy writing to those who are willing to learn for a fee that goes towards charity, but is also making people laugh on Zoom app.

"There were two-three things that started the minute the lockdown began. First, I knew there will be no live physical performances for the next three-four months. So, I started online workshops for a fee; the money goes to a charity. I knew that teaching was easier than doing a show on a digital platform. We had people from five countries taking these five-hour classes spread over two days. In the process, I learnt how to use the app effectively. Second, I started getting offers to do corporate shows online and did them. Third, I had to do a mindset change, to do online shows," Tandon says.

For this, he had to change his body language. In the beginning, he would perform as a stand-up artist. Now, he sits and acts like he is having a conversation with his friends in his drawing room. This has helped him get his body language right. He has also had to concentrate on getting his facial expressions correct.

"On stage, one has to focus on the body posture as the stage is six feet away. For online, one has to take care of facial expressions as the camera is only two feet away. I had to master all these changes including how to use the app. We have a group

of stand-up artists; the 35 of us got together to learn how the it worked and shared our experiences and came up with best practices. Now I am regularly holding ticketed shows. We are also trying to rope in open mics. After the lockdown, their source of income has disappeared. We get a comedian to open the show. He then he also administers the call for some money. On the app, when I keep everyone on, if one of them has a cranky kid, there is a disturbance, this person mutes all that. I have also started doing shows for the US audience as per their time," Tandon tells you.

Tandon also had to change how he delivers content online. He tells you, that while the content is more or less similar, there are some changes. "The jokes have to differ. One has to repeat lines online since sometimes, the sound quality may not be good. One has to louder and be closer to mic," Tandon says whose ticketed show are not for more than 50 people but for corporates it can go up to over 2,500.

Stand-up artist Anubhav Bassi has been keeping his fans entertained by posting audio clips on Insta.

"People ask me to post videos from my previous shows. They don't realise that it is not always possible to record all live performances. Though, I am not creating any new content, I am posting behind the scene clippings from many of my shows. I am trying to edit them, make sense out of it and posting them. Also, people who are on this social platform are keener to know me personally. I don't have any intentions of creating anything new but if I find something funny for that day, I post it," Bassi says who is busy thinking of content and penning it down for his shows once the lockdown opens.

"The content obviously revolves around lockdown. It also depends on what my mood is on a particular day. Like I had tweeted: If you think that your house is small, *koi pochcha laga kar dekhe*. While I am busy writing, I am not sure how much of it will actually find itself in my live shows," Bassi tells you. People call him a storyteller, but he disagrees. "I only do one kind of

comedy, it is anecdotal," Bassi says.

Actor Nitin Arora who hosted online Gratitude Concerts, to salute the medics featuring artists like Sonu Nigam and Sunil Grover, tells you that the idea to hold the concert came while he was walking the terrace and talking over the phone about the lockdown and that there was need to do something for front-line warriors. "It took us two days to organise the first show. The minute the idea took root, I called Sonu Nigam. In fact, he was the first one to recommend that we do something digitally once the lockdown began. But since we are a company that does large events, I was not too sure. But once the idea stuck, I called him. The problem was that he was in Dubai so he had to set up the equipment himself and play the instrument. But he worked hard and came through beautifully," Arora recalls.

It was not easy for Arora to have a mindset change. To do a show digitally was not something that the actor had even thought about. But there is an adage: Necessity is the mother of invention. "It was the need of the hour and I jumped right into it. The show had to reach 20,000 doctors so we planned things accordingly and were able to pull it off. We have done 10 shows and the response has been overwhelming," Arora says who hosted the show as well.

He tells you besides having to wrap the mind around doing an online show, it was stranger to host it with no audience.

"It was so strange. When we did the first show, it was just Sonu bhaiyya, Sunil Grover and me. I knew there were some 19,000-20,000 medical staff was watching but for me there were just the three of us. On Zoom, when you are talking, you are the bigger picture and the others are smaller one. I have hosted over 4,500 shows, I had never looked at the script. But here, I was scared and had to practice in front of the mirror. But the three of us cheered for each other and it became easier," Arora says.

Whether this is going to be the norm for the industry is early days, Arora opines. "Every day there are different reports. But we do know

WE DO KNOW THAT THINGS ARE NOT GOING BACK TO WHAT THEY WERE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. THE CHARM AND THRILL TO WATCH A LIVE PERFORMANCE CAN'T BE REPLICATED DIGITALLY. A SONU NIGAM OR SHAAN OR KATRINA KAIF DANCING LIVE GIVES A DIFFERENT HIGH. WE WILL BOUNCE BACK BUT IT WILL TAKE TIME

— ACTOR NITIN ARORA



that things are not going back to what they were given social distancing for the next few months. However, the charm and thrill to watch a live performance can't be replicated digitally. A Sonu Nigam or Shaan or Katrina Kaif dancing live gives a different high. We will bounce back but it will take time," Arora says.

Besides the live performances and the concerts, the digital space is helping people celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. A case in point is Zee TV's *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*, which is turning 25. The channel is organising a Live-a-thon and an Ek Desh, Ek Raag event on May 23-24, 2020. It is a 25-hour digital music marathon with over 350 performances by singers that include the likes of Himesh Reshammiya, Javed Ali, Kamal Khan singing from confines of their homes.

Shaan, the host the concert, tells you that he feels honoured to be a part of this. "*Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* has been close to my heart since the beginning. Seeing it complete 25 years is surreal. I believe that music has a power to uplift people's moods and am sure the concert will be able to help people rise above the gloom of this pandemic," he says.

To add to the entertainment factor, Vodafone, as part of its initiative #RechargeForGood, in partnership with BookMyShow has been organising live sessions since April 24. Nine artists perform live from their homes to yours for free. Lift your spirits with great musical performances by artists like Prateek Kuhad, Dhvani Bhanushali, Ankur Tewari and Indian Ocean.

Those interested in classical music need not feel left out. The National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) has been organising digital series — NCP@Home on its YouTube channel. Last month, the series had seen stalwarts likes of Girija Devi, Mallika Sarabhai and Ustad Zakir Hussain and many more take centrestage. If you missed this fret not. Tune into Kathak performance by Pandit Birju Maharaj on Monday, May 10, 2020 at 6 pm.

Swapnokalpa Dasgupta, head of dance department, NCP, Mumbai, a renowned Odissi dancer and disciple of Guru Late Kelucharan

Mohapatra, tells you that in India, there are some challenges to have digital shows. "The bandwidth being one of them. But the good is that the artists adapt to changing situations and take things in their stride. It is also strange to see reverse of *guru-shishya parampara*; during COVID-19, it is the shishya teaching the guru how to use technology," Dasgupta says.

She also tells you that dancers like herself have had to change teaching methodology and gives an example. "If one is taking a Zoom class, one has to keep in mind that the student is not behind you imitating your moves but in front. If I say raise the left hand, I have to raise my right hand on-screen," she says.

Murad Ali Khan, sixth-generation *sarangi* player from the Moradabad *gharana* and son of Ustad Ghulam Sabir Khan, says that for an artist a live audience sets the mood but here, there was nobody in front so it was a tad strange.

"But technology has made some many things possible. While I has no audience, I was able to read comments and took cues from it. My reason for coming on the digital platform was to make people take a break from their normal routine. If we can, through our music, make people stay at home, we have done our bit," Khan says.

Ustad Shujaat Khan, who was part of the HCL Concerts Baithak series opines that the idea of performing with no audience was extremely strange.

"Any kind of music, as oppose to cinema or painting, is a live interaction with humans. When one is performing the energy that comes from notes of the *ragas* goes to the people and back. But this kind of live performance was really strange. My only apprehension to be part of the digital space stemmed from the technical side and the anxiety that came with it," Shujaat tells you.

Despite no audience, the sitarist tells you that since he has been performing for nearly 55 years on stage, experience came into play as over the years he has learnt the art to tune out distraction and be in place where he taps into himself and is in a place where he rises above all this and is in a zone where he uses

his energy and emotions to play for himself.

Yamini Reddy came onboard the digital platform because even though she has done a lot of stage shows, she wanted to be part of the virtual world. "I was intrigued and then curious how the whole would work. Being on the digital platform, one can reach out to a much wider audience. With virtual concert, one can be anywhere and watch the performance, it transcends borders and time zones," Reddy says.

There was preparation as well. She had to see where the lighting was good, how to place the camera and what background to choose including curating a background score for the dance performance. She also had to choose music that had a balance of North and South to give an edge to her Kuchipudi performance and even though it was strange to get ready, not wait backstage and wait for the name to be called out, the entire experience was interesting.

Maalavika Manoj *aka* Mali, who released her single on Spotify's Radar cover says that she got the inspiration for her single after she watched an episode of *Conan Without Borders* with a reference to the Syrian war.

"This got me thinking and wrote this single. It is pure coincidence that the song sits perfectly under present situation. I had already recorded the song but we had to get a video done. I reached out to a lot of family and friends from across the globe who sent me five to 10 second videos. I used this footage for my song," Mali tells you.

However, for her, the digital platform is not something that she would subscribe to.

"What I have observed, presence of people on social media is going down, People are saturated and don't want to open their apps. There is no replacement for live performances even though there are people who are looking at ways to monetise the digital space. For artists, performing in front of a live audience gives a different feel and the energy can't be recreated. It is good to have an alternative but everything that is happening right now is temporary," Mali says.

Q U O T E U N Q U O T E

We have been doing online concerts for some months now. We also have a digital app. We know how to use technology to bring the artist and listeners together online. But for the HCL Concerts — *Baithak* series — the trigger was COVID-19 and the lockdown that came with it.

We took the idea from traditional *baithaks* where the artists would perform and talk about the art form, life's journey and anecdotes. But to organise a concert — a series of live, virtual Indian classical music and dance performances —

help beat the blues was not easy. The artist was at home with limited access to technology. We had to work even in a situation if the bandwidth was low. We had to have a series of calls on how to use the software, how to check bandwidth and what angel to put their mobile. But there were many positives. The artists are familiar with social media and had worked with us.

And while the artist didn't have a live audience in front of him, we ensured that the artists were given a live feedback on

FB page.

We have already planned the series to continue till end of May. Since we don't know when physical concerts will happen, digital concerts will be an important part in future.

We have got great response till now (over 5 million views for the 10 sessions that we have done) through social media platforms and emailers. The artists help as well. We use WhatsApp and send links. We have our own employees; that helps.

— Rohit Kaul, Head, HCL Concerts

Till now we have done 15 live shows on Instagram and each session is for 45 minutes to an hour. Now, that the lockdown has been extended, we are going to extend the programme. The idea is to introduce classic music to the people and how it has evolved through different *gharanas*. In these sessions we choose a topic and through renowned artists a discussion takes place on how music in their respective *gharanas* changed. They talk about speciality of their *gharanas*. For example, Ustad Vilayat Khan has made changes to his sitar; he increased the tumba and even the wires became a little thicker. This gives those interested a sneak peek into

the history of music and not just music.

Our live sessions has gems like Murad Ali (sarangi), Nandini Shankar (violinist), Ajay Prasanna (flautist), Ramakant Gaikwad (vocalist) and Alam Khan from the US (live today at 9 pm IST). These people talk about how they are similar with other *gharanas* and how they are different. People also get to hear these great play from the comfort of their homes. The good part of the *riyaz room* is that people who don't understand classical music will get an understanding. We announce our sessions through posters on social media. Artists too do their bit and let people know.

— Anshul Aggarwal, Founder, Riyaz Room

The India Craft Week (ICW) is an initiative that we have been doing for the last three years. We wanted to bring the designers and artisans together. The world is talking about sustainability, organic, ethical and responsibility. Craft sector is the only sector that can deliver on these counts.

This year, the lockdown happened but we still wanted to continue to create an ecosystem for the craft sector who are fragmented. Hence India Craft Week Digital Preview (global) where people can come and see

the work of the artisans and pre-book what they want. We already have a huge following on Facebook. We sent out bulk mail and got amazing response. We pulled in industry people like British Council; India and World Craft Council supported us.

All that people had to do was to log in to our FB page and be part of not just the preview but watch some great performances like exotic dance that they performed from the confines of their homes. It was amazing to see the engagement we got from performers. A folk

dance troupe even went to the desert to shoot a video and sent it us. It was brilliant. Those who have missed this preview need not worry. All the recording would be available. Also, the product list will be on our ICW website.

We have to now change our mindset how to shop since social distancing will continue to be a norm. Digital platform is the way forward even though there were challenges to put such a preview on a short notice.

— Somesh Singh, Co-founder, Craft Village

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

“So what you can control to an extent is your own mindset and just looking at things with positive frame of mind and the only good thing is

PTI ■ BENGALURU

News.

"These guys need to bowl so hopefully this year we've got wickets that are favourable for everyone."

**IANAS** ■ LAHORE

IAN S ■ SYDNEY

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan batsman Umar Akmal AFP/File Pic

IAN S ■ CHENNAI

IANAS ■ NEW DELHI

Southern Stars captain Meg Lanning AP

taking too big a hit, women enough with.”

they can muster together, I'm going to be happy enough with."

Manu very hopeful of Olympics next year

NEW DELHI: Indian pistol ace Manu Bhaker is “very hopeful” of the Olympics taking place next year and maintaining her terrific game and poise too until then, despite the uncertainty gnawing at the world of sports due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

A medallist at ISSF World Cup, Commonwealth Games and the Youth Olympics, Bhaker was primed for success at sport’s grandest and biggest stage in Tokyo later this year, but the unprecedented health crisis intervened and forced a postponement of the Games by a year.

With the world still far away from bringing the situation under control, there are doubts if the Games would be held even next year.

“Yes, the Indian shooters were in great form heading into the Games, but health is a bigger concern,” Bhaker said.

“I am very hopeful of the Olympics taking place next year and also confident of maintaining my game and hitting peak form there. This is a difficult time for the world but I have no negative thoughts and I am mentally prepared.”

Bhaker has recently got an electronic target system installed at her makeshift shooting range in Haryana’s Gorla village home at the expense of an archaic manual machine that was prone to frequent breakdowns.

The old machine was causing her “immense irritation” of late.

Delighted by the reboot in her training after waiting for the machine to be transported from Faridabad, the teenage star has got down to preparing with renewed vigour and optimism.

The multiple medallist is not only hopeful of the Olympics taking place next year, despite the uncertainty gnawing at the world of sports, but also



maintaining her form until then.

“I have recently got the machine installed at my home and this will be surely more beneficial in my training,” Bhaker said during an interaction over phone from her home, where the range had been set up by her father after she showed exceptional skills in the precision sport.

The target *HS10* machine from Swiss company *SIUS Ascor* is designed for all airguns for distance ranging from 10 to 20 meters. Some of the salient features of the machine are its accuracy, integrated high-intensity LED target illumination, low operating costs (no paper rolls/rubber rolls) and it is also suitable for outdoor shooting.

Yashaswini, Rudrankksh claims top positions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tokyo Olympics quota holder Yashaswini Singh Deswal and teen prodigy Rudrankksh Patil on Saturday claimed top spots in 10m air rifle and 10m air pistol event finals at the third International Online Shooting Championship.

Rudrankksh from Maharashtra won the 10m air rifle event with a world record score of 252.9 but it will not be registered by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) as it was not a recognised event.

Another young Indian shooter Yash Vardhan claimed the second spot with a score of 250.8, while France’s Etienne Germond finished

third after scoring 228.5.

In the 10m air pistol final, Yashaswini, who had claimed a Gold medal at World Cup in Rio de Janeiro last year to secure an Olympic quota, shot 243.8 to claim the top spot.

Gaurav Rana and Manu Bhaker, a medallist at ISSF World Cup, Commonwealth Games and the Youth Olympics, finished second and third with scores of 240.6 and 218.3 respectively to make it an all-Indian affair.

It is the third edition of the championship where the participants logged on to the *Zoom* platform from their respective locations and shot electronic targets, set up in their houses.

World Archery releases updated Oly qualification procedure

LAUSANNE: World Archery released its updated qualification procedures for the postponed Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. It confirmed in its statement that no further qualification events will take place this year. Furthermore, the period in which athletes can shoot minimum qualifying scores has been extended until June 28, 2021.

“Continental qualifica-

tion events in the Americas, Europe and Oceania are delayed until spring/summer 2021,” said World Archery. “The final qualification tournament is delayed until summer 2021 and is planned to take place as a separate tournament alongside the Paris stage of the 2021 Archery World Cup.”

World Archery also said that National Olympic



Committees (NOC) will retain quotas that have been won thus far by athletes in competitions. Eighty-seven of the 128 quota places for the Olympics have already

been awarded. Ninety-three of the 140 spots for the Paralympics have been distributed to date.

The deadline for NOCs to confirm places won at all events except the final qualifier is tentatively set as June 1, 2021 and for the final qualifier “is tentatively set as July 2, 2021.”

“The entry deadline for the Olympic Games is 5 July 2021,” it added. **IANS**

Negative thoughts do come sometimes: Sakshi

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

2016 Olympics Bronze medal winning wrestler Sakshi Malik’s qualification to the 2020 Games has been a story of an ever-narrowing window. After her defeat to 18-year-old Sonam Malik in the trials for the Asian Olympic qualifiers, Sakshi was left with a nervy wait for the results of the tournament, which would decide if she would be able to compete at the last gasp world qualifiers.

All of this however was before the coronavirus pandemic took truly global proportions. Eventually, the Asian qualifiers was shifted twice before being postponed altogether and eventually, the Olympics itself got postponed to July 2021.

India went into a lockdown on March 25 that has been extended twice. Sakshi has been at her home in Rohtak, Haryana all this while, where



Sakshi Malik in action during Asian Wrestling Championship

PTI/File Picture

she fixed an old *akhada* in her backyard and, in the absence of a sparring partner, has been keeping her shoulders down and training individually.

Sakshi says that she had slacked off in the early days of the lockdown but eventually realised that this could be a long haul. “Yes, in the beginning I took it easy thinking it’s just a 15-day lockdown,” Sakshi

said. “I was thinking it’s fine if I have no partners for this amount of time because training is anyhow not going to take place properly.”

“But then obviously it kept getting extended and I changed my mindset accordingly. We all have to try and adapt to our situations or else we will all have all sorts of mental problems. So I just changed my mindset

according to the situation.”

Life for the 27-year-old has mostly revolved around travel for wrestling over the past 15 years, whether it be for competitions or training camps in the country and abroad. “This is the first time in my life I am experiencing anything like this — being quarantined at home. Life is completely different,” said Sakshi.

“I rarely spent more than 15 days in one place. Either I would be travelling to camps or abroad for training or for tournaments. So yes, negative thoughts do come sometimes. I wonder sometimes if I have gone too far away from wrestling. But then I remember that this situation is not something that only I am facing. Everyone around the world is going through this or worse.”

Sakshi says that she is maintaining her normal routine — training in mornings and evenings and rest during

the day.

“As I said, there is no sparring partner so I do individual work on the mat. I have an area where I can do strength-based exercises. I have maintained my usual schedule that was there before and a good part of the day still goes in training, there have been no changes on that front,” she said.

Sakshi also follows advice that women’s foreign coach Andrew Cook sends on *Whatsapp*. For now, she is not thinking about the risk of injuries whenever wrestling returns after the unusually long break.

“He keeps sending videos of what sort of training we can do on an individual basis. Right after the lockdown they plan to hold a camp with all the girls in one place. The risk of injury is there for everyone. So this situation is not something that we are thinking too much about,” she said.

Hamilton grateful for GP sabbatical



LONDON: Six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton has said he feels “fresher than ever” following an unexpected break from Formula One.

The start of the 2020 Grand Prix season has been delayed until July by the coronavirus, with 10 races out of what should have been a record 22-event

championship either cancelled or postponed.

Hamilton, however, is trying to make the most of the downtime ahead of his bid for a record-equaling seventh world title.

“There have been times in the past five years that I thought a rest would be good for body

and mind,” he said in a video released by his Mercedes team on Saturday.

“For an athlete in their prime, it’s never a good thing to step away for a year but we have been handed a part-sabbatical, which I am enjoying.”

The 35-year-old British driver added: “I feel fresher and healthier than ever.”

Hamilton explained his enforced absence from the track was “almost a blessing on one side because it gives you even more appreciation for the things you love and do” and had left him “excited for the future”.

Hamilton said the prospect of racing without spectators “gave me a really empty feeling because the fans make the race”.

Nevertheless, he understood racing of any kind would be a boost for GP enthusiasts amid the pandemic. “I don’t know how exciting it’s going to be for people watching it on TV but it’ll be better than nothing.” **AFP**

Umtiti suffers calf knock in training



AFP ■ PARIS

France defender Samuel Umtiti has picked up a calf injury in just the second session since Barcelona returned to training from the coronavirus quarantine, the Spanish champions announced on Saturday.

Barca said that Umtiti picked up an injury to his right calf during Saturday’s individual training session at the club’s Joan Gamper facility, but did not specify how long the 26-

year-old would be out for.

Spanish media report that he will be unavailable for two or three weeks, so will likely be back in time for a potential June 20 restart for football in Spain as the country attempts to loosen coronavirus restrictions.

The 26-year-old Umtiti joined Barca from Lyon in 2016 after he helped France to the final of Euro 2016. He had further success with France in their successful 2018 World Cup campaign.

He played 16 times for the Catalan giants this season before play was suspended in March, and was twice injured earlier in the campaign, causing him to miss 10 matches between September and November last year.

Barca Eves win Liga Iberdrola

MADRID: Barcelona’s women’s team have been declared as champions of Spain’s Liga Iberdrola after the national football federation’s executive committee agreed to end all non-professional competitions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With nine rounds of matches still to be played, FC Barcelona Femeni topped the table by nine points ahead of Atletico Madrid and with the season unable to be completed, the Catalans (unbeaten in their 21 games) have been awarded the title.

The Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) also announced that there will be no relegation, with Santa Teresa and Eibar promoted to make it an 18-team competition in 2020-21. After earning a fine third place in the Reto Iberdrola, the reserves will be staying in the second division. **IANS**

USWNT file appeal after legal setback

NEW YORK: The US women’s national team on Friday filed an appeal against a legal setback in their equal pay lawsuit, saying they are being paid less than the men even though they win twice as much.

In dismissing their equal pay claim last Friday, Judge Gary Klausner said the case was unwarranted because they had previously turned down an offer in the Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations to be paid along the lines of the US men’s team.

“The argument that women gave up a right to equal pay by accepting the best collective bargaining agreement possible in response to the Federation’s refusal to put equal pay on the table is not a legitimate reason for continuing to discriminate against them,” said USWNT spokesperson Molly Levinson on Friday night.

She listed a series of grievances in the motion to appeal which was filed in a federal district court in California and is part of a larger lawsuit for equal pay.

Levinson said the women are being discriminated against because they are



not getting as much as the men on a per game basis and that making “close to the same amount” is not valid.

“Equal pay means paying women players the same rate for winning a game as men get paid,” Levinson said.

“The argument that women are paid enough if they make close to the same amount as men while winning more than twice as often is not equal pay.”

“The argument that maternity leave is some sort of substitute for paying women players the same rate for winning as men is not valid, nor fair, nor equal.”

“Today, we are filing a motion to allow us to appeal immediately the district court’s decision so that the Ninth Circuit will be able to review these claims.” **AFP**

Jovic suffers heel break

AFP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid attacker Luka Jovic has fractured his right heel, the La Liga giants have announced.

In a statement, Real said the 22-year-old’s injury had been diagnosed during tests at the club’s medical centre, but didn’t say how long they expect him to be out of action.

According to Spanish media, Serbia’s Jovic picked up the injury while training at home shortly after returning to Spain from his home country at the start of the week.

Jovic caused controversy in March when he left for Serbia while Real were in quarantine after some of the club’s basketball players tested positive for coronavirus. He subsequently explained his test for the virus was negative.

He arrived at Real last summer from Eintracht Frankfurt for a reported fee of 60 million euros (\$65.1 million). Before the season was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic, he had played 22 times for the capital city club in all competitions, scoring twice.

Some players recovering from virus: Milan Prez

AFP ■ MILAN

AC Milan president Paolo Scaroni revealed on Friday that some of his squad members were still recovering from coronavirus.

Serie A has been on hold since mid-March but Italian Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora said on Thursday he was hopeful group training could resume on May 18.

“We have some infected players in the process of

recovery,” Scaroni told local media.

Scaroni believes Italian football must live with Covid-19 and take an example from the Bundesliga which will restart on May 16.

“We have to get used to living with the virus and this also applies to football,” he said.

“It is not possible to stand still until there is zero infection. Basically we can adopt the German for-



mula that provides that those who are sick go into quarantine while their teammates continue.”

Milan technical director Paolo Maldini, together with his 18-year-old son Daniel, a youth team player, have both recovered from the virus.

“Maldini father and son are doing well. There are players who are improving, but we want to start playing again,” said Scaroni.



Red Bull F1 driver Daniel Ricciardo

Ricciardo braced for ‘chaos’ when F1 starts

AFP ■ LONDON

Australia’s Daniel Ricciardo anticipates “chaos”, “rust” and “adrenaline” should the 2020 Formula One season start at last.

Officials at the FIA, motor-sport’s world governing body, are hoping to launch the season behind closed doors in Austria on July 5.

“(It will be) some form of chaos, hopefully in a controlled manner,” the Renault driver told *BBC Radio Five Live*.

“I am not really referencing cars everywhere. But there is going to be so much rust, a combination of emotion, excitement, eagerness.”

Ricciardo, waiting out the crisis on his farm near Perth, Western Australia, believes a dramatic season-opener is in prospect at the Red Bull Ring.

“Everyone is going to be ready to go,” he said. “You are going to get some guys who perform on that level of adrenaline and others who might not.”

“So you’re going to get some bold overtakes, some miscalculated ones.”

“You’re going to see a bit of everything, I’m sure.”

Even though the pandemic means it has been several months since Ricciardo was on a race track, the 30-year-old believes his experience of eight full seasons of Grand Prix racing means he will be in the right physical condition should the 2020 campaign finally get underway.

“If this was my first year or two in F1, if I was still not completely adapted to it, my answer would be yes (it would take me time to get used to driving again),” he said.

“But winter testing is normally a good reference point. My first few winter testings, day one always felt like a bit of a shock to the system again. And the further my career has gone on, the less of a shock that has been.”

“The rookies, the first-year, second-year guys, will feel it a little bit more.”



How worried are you to get back to work once lockdown opens?

I have no apprehensions. I am not even worried right now. These are testing times and we are all facing it. It is not as if one person is going through it. It doesn't scare me. I am prepared and am a positive kind of person. I know that it will take time for us to get back to the sets. But I also know that the makers will ensure that each one of us is going to be safe. I am sure we will start only when things are safe.

What is the teleplay Court Martial about?

It is a classic play in the world of theatre that was staged back in the 80s. It is one of the much appreciated plays. Doing a play was always on top of my bucket list. When people would ask what my dream role was or whom I wanted to work with, but I knew I wanted to do theatre. While this is not a play in front of the live audience, it has been shot like a play. For me to work with actors from National School of Drama and to be part of the 90-minute play was a huge challenge but I jumped right into it. I was very nervous but I took the plunge. Then began rehearsals and I am proud that I was part of this project.

Were there challenges that came with playing a defence lawyer?

I play an Army officer who is a defence lawyer. There were plenty of challenges but not when it came to the Defence part of it. I come from Defence background; my bother and father are in the Army. I didn't need to work on body language or how to salute. I would help others. We also had a senior retired Army officer who was part of the play and helped with ay technical aspect. The challenge came because I had 300-400 word dialogues. I had to walk to each character and have these lengthy monologues. I had to look in

I KNEW THAT MY FUTURE WOULD BE ALL ABOUT CHEMISTRY WHEN IT COMES TO PERFORMANCE. I AM A GRADUATE IN THE SUBJECT AND THEREFORE HAVE A GREAT ON-SCREEN CHEMISTRY. I AM SMART GUY THAT WAY

front since it is a play. One couldn't fumble since it was a collective effort. But it was fun.

Would people find a connect?

Definitely. *Court Martial* shows a side of the Army that few are aware of — how things were back in the 80s. The paly is issue-based and the imbalance

between the officers and other ranks when it comes to privileges. In the last decade or so things in the Army have changed. The play is set four decades back and there will many takers even if they don't agree with the subject.

Can you tell us about your film — Ateet?

The film belongs to the director Tanuj Bhramar. It is in the horror-suspense zone. When Tanuj came to give me a narration, I liked the screenplay. He told me that even though he was a first-time director, he knew each technical and action aspect of the film and needed to be trusted. I play Captain Ateet Rana who is in the Army and disappears during a mission and is believed to be killed. In the meantime, the wife has moved on and so has his best friend. The film is about what happens when he comes back.

You have done TV, films, web series and theatre. What made you work on different platforms?

It is not about platform but for the project that drives me. I am an actor and hence not limited to a medium. How many actors are there who has done projects for all mediums including hosting a show. There is a personal high — whether I can hold the attention of people across platforms.

Have you managed to move from Sujal Grewal as far as your fans are

concerned?

I will never move on for Sujal fans. I can understand that. Women don't gush over me but over Sujal. They are in love with the image that he portrayed. Women have an image of an ideal man and Sujal fit the bill — their idea of love. This is what has stuck in the minds. But I have moved on but have pocket of fans of some of the shows that I have done.

How does a person with a Bachelors in Chemistry end up acting?

I realised even back then that my future would be all about chemistry when it comes to performance. I am a graduate in the subject and therefore have a great on-screen chemistry. I am smart guy that way (laughs). On a more serious note, I always wanted to be an actor but there was something about the subject that I loved and when it come to picking up a subject for graduation, I took it up.

The industry is quick to typecast. Do you think that applies to you?

I have been typecast — people don't know what I will do next. I am an enigma and have an unconventional approach.

While I was hosting, I was doing TV, while I was doing TV, I was doing films with varied subjects and genres. Then I do *Marzi* and a stage show. Each project has been different. It is just my image that has been typecast.

Take the smart route

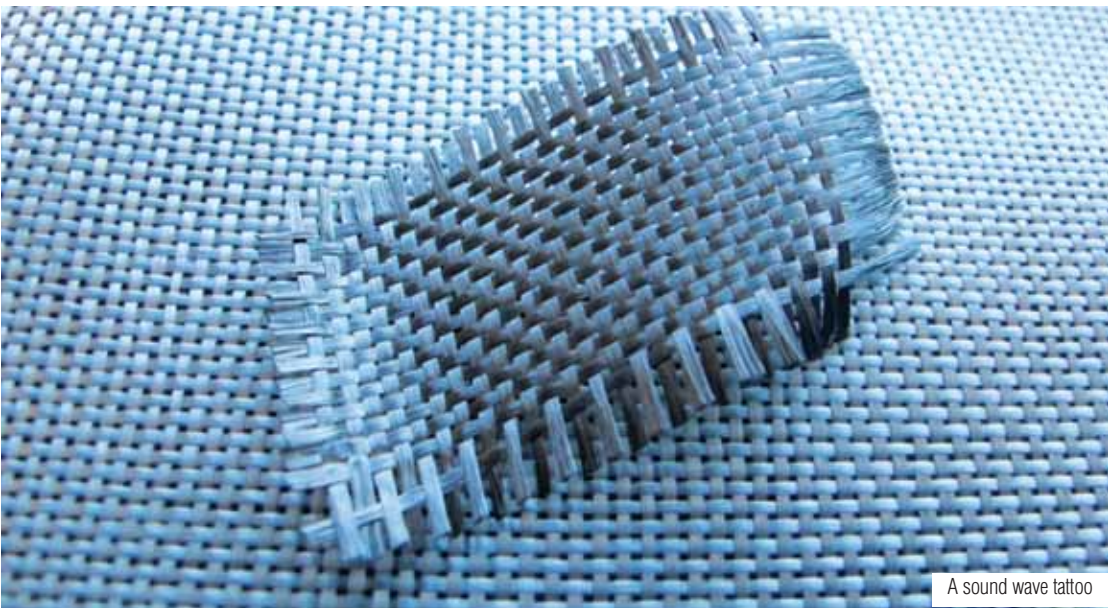
With only one week left for the lockdown to open, people are apprehensive about how they can protect themselves from COVID-19. SHALINI SAKSENA speaks to industry stakeholders who say smart clothes are the way forward

We have UVC-LED system to sanitise homes and public places and a locket that will send an alert if the six feet distancing is breached. Doctors advise that people continue to wash hands regularly or sanitise them and maintain social distancing. Still there are apprehensions as to what will happen when the lockdown is lifted and people are out in the streets and social distancing will be difficult to maintain given our vast population. Fret not. There are people who have come up with protecting gear — smart fabric and antiviral/antibacterial sprays to prevent spread of infection.

At the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, a team of researchers have developed affordable antimicrobial (antiviral/antibacterial) spray-based coating for Personal Protective Equipment. The idea has been developed by Dr Biman B Mandal, Professor, Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering along with his PhD scholars, Bibhas K Bhunia and Ashutosh Bandyopadhyay.

Prof Biman tells you that it is a nano-based technology. The metal nanoparticle cocktail like copper, silver and other active ingredients, present in the spray acts as an antimicrobial agent. The aim is to tied over the shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and masks.

"We came up with this innovation that will protect wearer from infection. There is a protocol to follow when it comes to PPE and masks but the common man doesn't adhere to it leading to growth of microbes. We wanted to create an active barrier. Earlier, the microbe was sitting on the surface for further spreading. With this antiviral/antibacterial spray, there is no accumulation since the spray disrupts the membrane of the microbe. It can no longer proliferate and survive therefore increasing the protection level. The innovation is affordable and can be used easily on any kind of surface including textiles and other medical device sur-



A sound wave tattoo

faces to get rid of microbial load," Biman explains.

He tells you that it is not just for the healthcare workers. One is told that microbes are not just limited to Coronavirus. "Microbes are all around us. We are touching surfaces and going to hospitals. Now, we have a personal spray that will clean the surface, drastically reducing the chances of catching infection," he says.

Biman says that this technology can be used to make clothes smart as well. "The clothes we wear get dirty in two ways. First, dirt like mud. Second, microbes from sweat, etc. What if there is fabric that restricts microbial growth? When we wash woollen garments, we put it in a special solution to keep it soft. This technology can be applied in a similar manner. After washing, we put the garment in the additive to make the cloth smart. It is like a knife. Once you have the gadget, it can be used to cut a fruit, or vegetable or even herbs," Biman says.

Yateen Gupta, founder of Fabiosys Innovations, an IIT Delhi incubated start-up, tells you that his smart clothes are all about providing coveralls for the healthcare workers, for the time being, since they are at the forefront when it comes to treating COVID-19 patients and need the protection.

This company uses a technology that is commonly available in the textile industry — machines through which the fabric passes making it infection proof. He tells you that the machine has a combination of chemicals that the fabric passes through. This process involves three-four steps where coagulant agent that are antiviral are combined with the fabric in order to retain functionality of the fabric.

"We take the entire bundles of cotton fabric. It is a combination of treatment and process. The fabric is then passed through the machine that has three-four chemicals which react with the material to make it antiviral. For now, we are concentrating on cotton

and cotton polyester and looking at a launch in the next one month," Gupta says. Then there is concrete Corona suit designed using cement fabric. The uniform is air-tight only allowing the air to flow and blocking everything else that is less than 0.05 microns as COVID-19 carries particles ranging from 0.06 microns to the largest is 0.14 microns. The suits offer 95-99 per cent protection. It also has a chip embedded so that there is no need to carry mobile phones. The uniform also has an inbuilt sanitising process.

Elsewhere, Neo Tech — a unique technology — developed by the Donear group of companies under Grado, has designed anti-viral and anti-bacterial fabrics that inhibits growth and retention of micro-organisms, making them safe and hygienic. The fabric has been certified by laboratories like NABL accredited Bio Tech Services, an autonomous body under the guidance of the Department Of Science & Technology.

Rajendra Agarwal, mentor, Grado tells you that they have been investing in R&D for a very long time. They have been pioneers in introducing a lot of innovative products in the market like a four-way stretch fabric, Ice-touch making the fabric five degrees cooler and uncrushable — wrinkle resistance. The antiviral fabric is just a step ahead given the present situation.

One is told that the Neo technology has been in use for the last two-three years. "We use two-three chemicals that are applied to the fabrics. It acts on the bacteria and microbials (viruses) protecting the wearer from infection to a great degree. In some cases, we are taking the fibre and then treating it, increasing their protective value. In other cases, we are treating the fabric which has a shelf life of up to 50 washes. The treatment will also be different depending on the sector. If it is healthcare, the treatment will be different as opposed to if the fabric is for daily wear," Agarwal says.

The idea of antiviral fabric came up after three years of R&D since there are harmful bacteria and virus in the air and there were people who were looking for protective fabric. "Earlier, there were only a few people who were aware of it. But now, due to Coronavirus, it has become the need of the hour. Also, people were not willing to pay a price for it. But things are different now," Agarwal tells you.

He is quick to point out that there is nobody who can guarantee that doing a certain thing will disintegrate the virus. "Washing hands with soap acts as a protection. Similarly, we also guarantee that our fabric can provide protection up to 50 washes after which it will lose its functionality. After that, one can wear the garment as one would any other normal garment," Agarwal says and tells you that the cost of the fabric would range between ₹250 to ₹10,000 per metre depending on what fabric one would buy — whether it is cotton or silk.

'If you are trolled, you are famous'



FAISAL SHAIKH aka Mr Faisu as he is known on TikTok speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his latest song, content he is working on and tie-up with WHO

Tell us about yourself.

I am a TikTok star and make videos for the platform in order to change their mindset and have 26 million followers. I also have 11 million followers on Insta. My work is to make videos that will inspire people through content that has a message to it.

I understand that you have started shooting new content. What is it on?

I just completed a song for T-Series YouTube channel — *Bewafai*, the song has recently been released and has garnered over 16 million views. Then there was another song — *Aeroplane* — in which I feature. Basically, I either make videos or feature in songs.

What is your group Team 07 about?

First, I would like to say that the No 07 has been lucky for us. This group has been around for six-seven years and has five members. We have great bonding and we work well together and that is why people like the content we post.

What made you take to TikTok?

Usually people take to a social media platform because something happened and they wanted to share that and other stuff. Nothing like this happened with me. Three years back, when I was in college, I used to make content (videos) for Dustmatch since TikTok was not there. We used to do dubbing of 15 seconds for the former. We loved it and people loved it. Then came Musical.ly app. We posted content there as well. Then we started posting content with messages.

Tell us about the videos you have been uploading on COVID-19?

All the messages and videos that we have been doing these days are related to COVID-19. These were related to how to wash one's hands. This video was in collaboration with WHO — to tell people that they needed to wash their hands for 20 seconds. Then there are other videos that I have posted like save electricity. In this video I am sitting at home and yet all lights are open even though there is good day light. I switch all those lights and then sit to enjoy the bright day outside.

I understand you have been approached by the WHO. What for?

I have some great review and views on Insta. Hence, they approached me to make the hand wash video just as the lockdown had started. I had also made a blog which I have just started where I tell people that one should maintain social distancing even with family and friends.

TikTok has come under a lot of flak recently. Should social media platforms not be used judiciously?

It is wrong if people are using social media platforms like TikTok to spread false information about COVID-19. An official maker on Tiktok will tell you why he is making the video and what it is about. He will always give out a positive message. There are of course, many unofficial makers (who use fake ID and post) on the platform who are promoting wrong things which is so not right.

Almost all celebs have been trolled or roasted on social media. Your take.

Those celebs who are being roasted or trolled, it means that they are getting popular. I too have been trolled and roasted. In fact, the first video that I had posted, I was roasted a lot and that went viral.

Sweet smell of relief

SHALINI SAKSENA ■ NEW DELHI

There is a reason why our elders insisted that we burn an *agarbatti* while offering a prayer or for that matter when there is a death in the family. Believe it or not, but the simple of act of burning an incense stick brings with it a sense of calm and peace. Therefore, it is not surprising that during this pandemic — COVID-19 — there has been a sharp rise in the demand of *agarbatti* and not just in India but all over the world.

Several Indian incense products manufacturers have been exporting incense to the US, the UK, United Arab Emirates, Belgium, Brazil and even Argentina. In 2018, the US incense market size was \$128 million and is expected to reach \$281 million by 2025, growing at a CAGR of 11.89 per cent. The *agarbatti* market is pegged at ₹6,000 crore for India. It is a

figure that the companies in the country may achieve sooner than later given the lockdown blues that Coronavirus has brought with it.

Ankit Agrawal, a partner with Mysore Deep Perfumery House (MDPH) tells you that there are several reasons for the recent peak in the demand for *agarbattis*. "The fragrance in the incense stick helps to relieve, anxiety, stress and has calming effect," Agrawal says. One is told that there is a German study that suggests burning of incense not only has soothing effect but it is useful for treating anxiety, insomnia, depression, restlessness and brings peace of mind. The study also suggests that in homes where incense is brunt, the atmosphere is more relaxed and calms kids as well. The only catch is that it has to be a good quality branded *agarbatti*.

Agarbattis have been



around for centuries and is an integral part of our religion and tradition. "Not only is India, but incense is used in China, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Taiwan. Then there is the whole idea of catering to the masses as a disinfectant. Lavender oil has anti-septic and anti-inflammatory properties. Therefor there is demand for it," Agrawal explains.

When one looks at the figures — four factories, 30 regional sales offices, a work strength of over 2,500 people, a kitty of 1,200-plus products that are exported to over 10 countries across four continents and processing over 30 million incense sticks daily and still there is a demand — means there are a lot of stressed out people out there.

The company's flagship brand Zed Black, which is endorsed by MS Dhoni, is available at over 7.5 lakh retail outlets across India. Daily more than 15 lakh retail packs were sold before the lockdown.

Even with the lockdown, the demand has not decreased and people have been calling up Agrawal wanting to know how they can buy it under present situation.

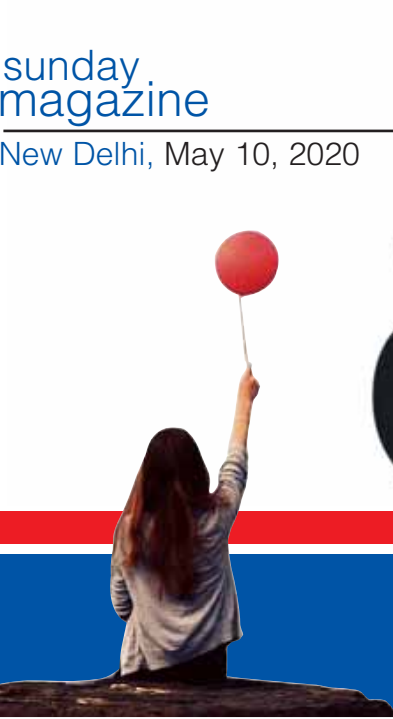
More than the religious purpose and the fragrance that an incense emits, the rise in demand due to lifestyle needs. "People tell me that they buy our product more out of lifestyle needs rather than religious purpose. The lavender incense sticks, Orva essential oils for diffusers and Sambrani are a lifestyle enhancement. They lift the mood. Such is the demand in the given the present situation the stocks that were exported for a period of six-month consumption have

already been sold out leading to a 100 per cent growth especially when it comes to the US market," Agrawal says.

He tells you that for the domestic market, there is a high demand for Sambrani Dhoop as it has benzoin (*loban*). "*Loban* is a well-known disinfectant and naturally occurring hence there are no side effects to it.

In today's situation with the pandemic, fumigating the house with this *dhoop* will help keep germs and viruses at bay since it gives a lot of smoke. In the essential oils section, lavender is best seller as it is said to have antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties.


This has led to increased sales volume both in domestic and global markets," Agrawal says. While there is no scientific study nor any research that has gone into it, Agrawal tells you that burning two incense sticks will do the needful.



the pioneer

agenda

Mellow doesn't always make for a good story, but it makes for a good life
— Anne Hathaway




FROM THE INSIDE

Let go to find your peace

To become spiritual, we must have a clean heart and mind. The way to do this is through forgiving and forgetting

2



4

Dhyana for self-empowerment

Mind being an instrument, can't move on its own. It needs a guiding principle for heightened awareness

Photos from the personal archives of the family of Rajendra Kumar

Jubilee Kumar is based on the real-life events of the legendary actor Rajendra Kumar as related by the actor’s family. It brings together their memories of his life’s events, their collection of news and interviews, their photographs, and the information shared in the form of video recordings and interviews with other film personalities, writes SEEMA SONIK ALIMCHAND in her introductory note. An edited excerpt:

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A SUPERSTAR

Out for a stroll on the grounds of Dimple, his tall shadow sauntering alongside, Rajendra Kumar paused in mid stride, cupping his hand around the flame of his silver lighter. Inhaling the nicotine from his cigarette and enjoying the warm, comforting feeling it gave him, he resumed walking. Moths fluttered around the garden lamps and nocturnal insects chirped happily. An owl called in the distance. The actor, however, was absorbed in his own thoughts. *No films in hand*, he pondered, his handsome face flushed with the winter chill. *The year has ended. It's unbelievable. And yet, I am the jubilee star.* He drew deeply on the 555, expelling rings of smoke. *There is so much enthusiasm, so much passion within me, and there are so many stories! First thing tomorrow, I will call up all my industry friends. My dear film industry will respond. They will not turn me down.*

But for all his efforts and enthusiasm, what eventually landed in his kitty was a handful of special appearances in Punjabi films like *Dukh Bhanjan Tera Naam* and *Do Sher*, both with Dharmendra as his co-star, although in the second film, where the younger actor appeared in a song sequence and one scene, Rajendra Kumar played a central role as a dacoit. The films released in 1974. Thereafter, sleepwalking into 1975, Rajendra appeared in *Teri Meri Ik Jindri*, a Punjabi film made to launch Dharmendra's cousin Veerendra. What did perk up the jubilee star a bit, though, was the release of two of his Hindi films.

The first was the remake of a Telugu film, *Sunehra Sansar*, directed by Adurthi Subba Rao and helmed by women actors, with Mala Sinha playing Rajendra Kumar's wife and Hema Malini his former flame. In the publicity posters of *Sunehra Sansar*, superstar Hema Malini featured quite prominently. Though the film was not a commercial success, she was much appreciated in a rare negative role. This was followed by *Rani aur Lalpari*, a children's musical with a melee of stars, such as Rajendra Kumar, Asha Parekh, Jeetendra, Feroz Khan, Reena Roy, Neetu Singh and others.

The year ended with *Do Jasoos*, a film that chalked up average profits. Produced and directed by Naresh Kumar, the film starred Raj Kapoor and Rajendra Kumar. Playing bumbling detectives, they were mere caricatures of their former celebrated selves. The adulation they had once enjoyed, the fame and stardom that had been at their fingertips had all but faded away. Of the two stars who were used to fans screaming, 'Raj! Rajendra! We love you!', Rajendra Kumar was still taken aback when he overheard somebody remark, 'I saw that actor and he looks old.'

I've seen it happening to others over and over again, and yet... Rajendra brooded one night, allowing his despondent mood to get the better of him.

'Biwi,' he said, turning to his wife, 'I'm not worried about growing old. But there is so much more that I want to achieve. I also have to keep the money coming in. All my money is

invested, but to maintain this lifestyle, we will need more.'

'Hmm...' Shukla murmured, her eyes moving around their spacious home as she listened to her husband voicing his ambitions and fears.

'Tonight, I need a few pegs of good Scotch,' Rajendra was saying, 'but I am worried about using up our Black Label stock.'

Shukla shook her head in exasperation. *Actors*, she thought to herself. *Always so dramatic!* But all she said was, 'Miyan, go ahead and drink to your satisfaction and leave the money management to me. We have enough.'

In the days that followed, a lethargic calm descended over Rajendra Kumar's life. But the underlying tension of having no work remained, surfacing ever so often. At times like these, he would feel helpless, broken. Lying in bed one night, Rajendra reflected that in the current scenario the world was backing away from him, disinclined to professionally engage with a star who, they all felt, was past his prime. He sighed, turning on his side. Like his fellow actors, he too had struggled constantly to ensure that he wouldn't lose track of his real identity — the human being that lay at the heart of his star persona. Now he was caught in a dilemma: what was real — the elevated status he had enjoyed earlier, the glorification he had revelled in, his decreasing relevance in the world of films, the growing obscurity he now faced? With a multitude of defeatist thoughts vying for space in his mind, the former star shut his eyes and fell into a troubled sleep.

The next day was a Saturday. Rajendra awoke, feeling surprisingly refreshed and charged. As part of his routine, he dressed in shorts and a striped T-shirt, ready to sweat it out on the courts with a game of tennis. Bounding down the staircase of his magnificent bungalow, he called out to Kaajal, his younger daughter, who always accompanied him to the club.

'I'm going for a run. Let me know when you are ready,' he told her, before jogging down the narrow paths that cut across the grounds of his house. A cow moored, bringing a smile to his lips. *Imagine*, he reminded himself, *in Bombay city, in Pali Hill, on the grounds of my luxurious bungalow, I have a cow, six dogs, a monkey and deer!* Rajendra smiled to himself, waving back at his neighbour who stood at the back gate.

'How's the cow doing?' Mr Choraria asked. 'Choraria Saab! What a gift you send over every morning!' the actor responded. 'A cow of our own to milk!'

'Of course! Growing kids need fresh milk, don't they?' Choraria remarked with a smile.

By this time, Kaajal, a sports lover like her father, had come running down the stairs. Father and daughter left for the club. Rajendra Kumar truly enjoyed playing tennis, because it offered him a reprieve from the depressing thoughts that seemed to preoccupy him much of the time. But once back home, even as he sat down to a hearty breakfast, his vacillating mind went into overdrive again. *Perhaps I*

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, A LETHARGIC CALM DESCENDED OVER RAJENDRA KUMAR'S LIFE. BUT THE UNDERLYING TENSION OF HAVING NO WORK REMAINED, SURFACING EVER SO OFTEN. AT TIMES LIKE THESE, HE WOULD FEEL HELPLESS, BROKEN

Photos from the personal archives of the family of Rajendra Kumar

should call it a day. I am at peace, he reasoned. But then, the workaholic in him raised its head. *No, I can't just sit at home all day doing nothing*, he told himself. *I have invested years in films and I am sure they will keep coming my way. Maybe not the choicest ones, but...* Stubbing out his third cigarette, he lit up afresh as the houseboy brought out a tray of fruits. What an industry, the actor reminisced, biting into a crisp apple. *It gave me so much and I too gave back wholeheartedly. I never played politics. On the contrary, I helped and advised many newcomers. Ramesh Behl lived with my family from the age of fourteen. It was for him that we started Rose Movies. And we signed Kaka [Rajesh Khanna] even before Aradhana [released and the actor's fame and popularity peaked]. Rose Movies also gave Daboo [Randhir Kapoor] a new lease of life with Jawani Diwani, which became such a huge success. And Manoj [Kumar]... He is as dear to me as my younger brother. He also lived with us, until he made it. I helped him too...*

'Chai.' Bahadur interrupted the flow of memories with a cup of tea and Rajendra Kumar accepted it absent-mindedly, still deep in introspection.

He recalled how it was through him that actor Manoj Kumar had finally got his break as a hero in H.S. Rawail's *Kanch ki Gudiya* opposite Sayeeda Khan. Rajendra had even recommended Rakesh Roshan for his debut role in *Ghar Ghar ki Kahani*. Then there were the filmmakers J. Om Prakash and Mohan Kumar. They had remained his dear friends.

The star sighed, still lost in the past, attempting to convince himself that his film-industry friendships had endured, despite the downward curve of his career graph. But a deep frown continued to furrow his brow.

Time ticked on. The trees in the garden cast long morning shadows over the solitary star as he sat in contemplative silence.

Excerpted with permission from *Jubilee Kumar: The Life and Times of a Superstar*, by Seema Sonik Alimchand, Hachette India, ₹599

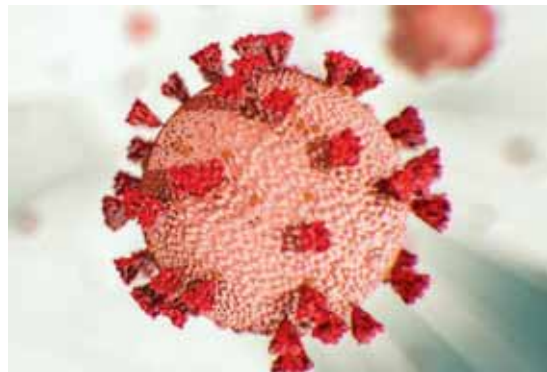


IN DIFFICULT TIMES, WE'RE
NOT SUPPOSED TO QUIT
BELIEVING; WE'RE NOT
SUPPOSED TO QUIT GROWING
—JOEL OSTEEN



HIDDEN SOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK

Parables on Coronavirus



For something as apocalyptic as the present times, the typical American slang is SHIT, that is, when the Shit Hits the Fan. A rather crude expression for a catastrophe. Nevertheless, as the whole world is in such a situation, let's examine what is happening. Two old time parables paraphrased here may help. First is the one I read in standard 4, some 5-and-a-half-decades back, in English Literature. It is titled the *Timid Hares*. The story goes that there lived in a jungle, a hare, that would always worry about the earth falling in. One day, as it was sleeping under a palm tree, a big coconut fell with a thud. The hare jumped in panic and started running, shouting that the earth is falling in. His fellow hare also followed suit. Coming across other animals, they frantically shouted the same message. Soon, all animals were running, creating a big commotion. The lion saw this and roared ferociously, asking what the matter was. The animal in front said that they were running because the earth was falling in. The lion asked where did he see that. The animal pointed to the one behind. When that animal was asked he also pointed to the one behind. This way, the first hare was traced. He then took the lion to the place where he thought the earth was falling in. As he pointed out to the palm tree, another coconut fell. The hare jumped again, wanting to run. But the lion asked him to stop and look. The hare saw the coconut and realised what the fact was. The lion asked him to tell this to all animals. The lesson here is that rationality usually takes a back seat in crisis situations. But that is where reassuring leadership is needed. A leadership that is firm and maintains a scientific approach. The second parable summed below will help the self-styled experts who are advocating more scare than care understand that fear also kills. There was an ascetic living in a hut on the outskirts of a village. One night he saw a dark shadow moving menacingly towards the village. The ascetic picks up the courage to ask the shadow who was he and what his motive was. The shadow replied that he was Death and was going to the village to pick up people who were to die due to an impending epidemic that was about to hit. The ascetic asked how many people would die. The shadow said 1,000 and moved towards the village. In a few days, the epidemic struck and a few thousand died. The ascetic was shocked. He thought The Death had lied. He decided to wait for the shadow to return. As the shadow returned, the ascetic charged him saying he had not kept his word because not 1,000 but several thousand had died. The shadow said that it did not lie. The epidemic had killed only a thousand. The rest died out of fear. The moral of the story is clear. Fear of death can be more dangerous than death itself. In these times of distress, old time parables are more educative and informative than the so-called real time information that is being disseminated incessantly and copiously. Psychologists have long believed that good reading helps. It motivates people, and encourages them to face crisis in a better way. The world needs such people today. We must forget fear. It is time to get back to work.

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The writer is a spiritual leader

LET GO TO FIND YOUR PEACE

To become spiritual, we must have a clean heart and mind. The way to do this is through forgiving and forgetting, writes SANT RAJINDER SINGH



Life brings us many disappointments and challenges. It is easy to fall victim not only to others who may hurt or mistreat us, but also to our own anger. When someone hurts us and we grow angry, we suffer two-fold. First, we have to bear the pain that others may cause us. Second, we have to bear the pain and suffering that comes with feeling angry.

Anger not only upsets us emotionally, but it has a deleterious effect on our physical body. It causes stress, which in turn contributes to stress-related ailments. This can affect us by increasing our risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke, high blood cancer, and other diseases. It takes a great amount of strength to withstand the temptations to overcome anger. We may think the angry person is strong, but actually they are succumbing out of weakness to this trick of the mind. It takes one who is brave of heart to say no to anger.

Let us trace what happens to us

when we do not forgive. Each of our personal stories generally begins with something that happens to us that we do not like. Some person has wronged us in some way. Maybe someone has said something to hurt our feelings or has hurt us physically. Maybe someone we love has stopped loving us and caring for us or has cheated on us. Maybe someone has taken our power, position, or wealth or has been dishonest with us.

We can safely assume that all of us go through life with some incident happening that we do not like or that hurts us. So, what happens next? We are upset, hurt, annoyed or angry. We think about what had happened. We do not like it and we cannot seem to forget it. We think about it again and again. We may speak about it repeatedly either to the person who hurt us or to others. Some person who has less control over themselves may lash out physically to the person or take out their anger physically on someone else. As the incident escalates, we find

WHEN WE FORGIVE
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our thoughts and words occupied with how to rectify the situation. Some people will try to solve the problem peacefully by talking it over with the person who they felt has done them wrong.

Sometimes they try that but the other person is not willing to listen or change. Then, we feel we have to do something drastic. This may lead to retaliation or revenge. We begin to think about ways to get back to the person who hurt us or we think about ways to get even with them. We want to see justice done. Our mind refuses to forget what had happened until we retaliate or see justice done. Thus, in response from one incident we end up creating more scenarios and situations. The other person then may get back at us for retaliating. A cycle of action and reaction may go on and on escalating a small situation into a major problem.

What has happened in the process? We have lost our peace of mind. The initial incident may have

lasted a few moments or a few hours, or a day, but we have now spent hundreds of hours and countless days replaying what happened and thinking about how to get even.

In this process, the precious moments of our life have been wasted. Instead of keeping our attention on what can help us become better, happier in life, we have wasted the time in replaying a bad movie. Thus, we lose more than the person to whom we are directing our anger. A Chinese proverb says that when we seek revenge, we dig two graves, one for the other person on whom we seek revenge and the other one for ourselves.

We become nothing more than a tape recording or video recording that plays the same bad scene over and over. How many of us want to see a bad movie twice, or hear a song we don't like played again and again? How many of us want to eat the same food we don't like again? We usually say, "This is yuck". That is what happens when we repeat in our minds all the wrongs done to us. The solution for protecting the body against the hormones released by hatred, anger and vengeance is simple: forgiveness. It is only through forgiveness that we can calm ourselves down and avoid the reactions of hatred and violence. What are the keys to developing the power of forgiveness?

One of the keys is to let go. When we forgive and forget, we are letting go the past and what has happened. We are saying, "I forgive the person for what has happened. Then I am going to forget about it." In this way, we are letting it go. When we let go of the past and the wrongs done by others, the gain is that we achieve peace in our life. If we want to succeed on the spiritual path we need to have a pure and clean heart and mind. The way to do this is through forgiving and forgetting, letting go, and getting God.

Let us learn to forgive and forget. It is time to wipe the slate clean and begin anew. Let us let go of all anger. Let us let go of all hatred. Let us let go of all feelings of vengefulness. Let us let go of all animosity. Let us devote ourselves to forgiving and forgetting, letting go and getting God.

We can tell our mind that we need to forgive everyone and everything from past and make a conscious decision to forget all the previous hurts. By sitting in meditation, free from all worldly desires and attachments, we can let go and find ourselves free to soar back to God. In this way, we can spend all our time in enjoyment, bliss, laughter, happiness, and love.

Idols not a showpiece

It is not right to place idols of God as a showpiece, because God is worthy of worship rather than a decorative item, says ACHARYA PRAVEEN CHAUHAN

In ancient times, we used to have simple idols made of wet clay of Gods and Goddesses. But as time passed, we started using colours in these clay sculptures. As a result, the magnificence of the idols of gods and goddesses enhanced.

Today, instead of those clay-coloured idols of God, idols of gods in the form of plastic, POP, metal, silver, gold, glass, photos, and calendars, etc. are being available in the markets.

Such sculptures are more luminous, beautiful, artistic, grand, and durable than those ordinary sculptures made of clay. At present, most of the people have seen that people put idols, photos and calendars of gods and goddesses in their house, shop and office in any place and any direction, where spinning them is not appropriate.

The name of God is considered to be a symbol of positive and constructive energy and just as everything has a limit, similarly positive energy also has a limit. It is not right to place idols of God in your home, office, etc. as a showpiece, because God is worthy of worship rather than a decorative item. A man should also follow his power, purity, and dignity completely.

Today, we get the idols of gods and goddesses on many occasions. In such a situation, we keep them at any place in our home and office. Apart from all these, most of the matrimonial invitation cards now have a small plastic statue of Lord Shri Ganesh, we remove these plastic statues from the invitation letter and place it anywhere at our house, and we do not even realise that is this the right place or not?

According to *Vastu Shastra*, idols, photos, calendars, etc. of Gods and Goddesses should not be applied mainly in the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, lawn, etc. These idols, photos, calendars should



be installed only at the place of worship of home and office.

At the same time, idols of God larger than 6 inches should not be installed in the place of worship of the house. Also, in any way, a broken (idol/image) or torn photo of God should not be installed in the home or office. Statues and photos should not be kept crooked at any place, as well as full care should be taken of the dignity of the idols.

It is considered very inauspicious to

keep idols of some deities in the house. These mainly include idols of Shani dev, Bhairav dev, Rahu-Ketu, Nataraja.

An idol of gods and goddesses made of metal, plastic, glass, silver, and gold is not a showpiece, but a symbol of positive and constructive energy. This is the reason that we should follow their power, purity, and dignity completely by keeping this energy symbol in the right place.

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Fear can be countered

We have forgotten the difference between fear and caution. Keep faith in God to rid of fear and become peaceful, says AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

I hope that we can return to the normal mood sooner than later. But this does not mean that we can eliminate the danger of Coronavirus in a hurry. No, we cannot do that. The danger is very real and must be accepted as such. Our problem is that we have forgotten the difference between fear and caution. We must always be cautious as we are personally being advised also, but no one is remotely suggesting that we should become fearful or paralysed with fear. This is not human intelligence.

Therefore, let us separate caution from fear. Cautious we must be always including now but fearful we should never be. But we become fearful helplessly. We do; don't we? Let us understand the mechanics of how fear works in our minds. Something fearful comes into our minds, and we give it shelter, i.e. do not deal with it rationally. This means that our minds have turned into our enemies, about which Lord Krishna has spoken in the *Bhagavad Gita*. (6.5-6) Sure enough, this affects our bodies like it affected Arjuna's. Gandiva was slipping out of his hand, his skin was also burning, he was unable to remain standing and his mind was reeling. (1.30) Now we have a serious problem, that is the mind is generating negative energy, which is affecting the body adversely.

How should we counter it? We can learn from Arjuna's example. Arjuna became fearful due to the likely deaths of his relatives and friends and that too on a very large scale. We are also placed similarly. There is danger of the virus affecting our friends and relatives. So what did Arjuna do? To begin with, he accepted his condition. Then, he requested Lord Krishna to guide him; help him. He said, "Please instruct me, who has taken your shelter." (2.7) Lord



Krishna did exactly that. He told Arjuna about how the human mind works; it can become one's friend and also an enemy. Then, the Lord went on to tell Arjuna how this mind can be made a friend by turning to God — the ultimate solution. The Lord said, "Develop My consciousness; become My devotee and offer obeisance to Me." (18.65) Arjuna wisely accepted God's instructions and said, "I am free from doubt, I am composed, and I shall follow your instructions now. (18.73)

Though we are not faced with any war but are similarly face to face with a pandemic. And our minds are generating fear, a lot of it. Our bodies are getting affected due to the negative energy generated by our fearful minds. There is an overarching mood of sadness. So we should follow Lord Krishna's instructions by developing God consciousness, becoming devotees of God and pay obeisance to God. As we are all different, we can choose to do in our own ways what the Lord has instructed, that is what suits us. I will cite my personal example. I have placed pho-

tos of God of His many incarnations in my room. I also chant God's names and also some *mantras*. When I look at God's photo/photos or chant God's names or some *mantras* or do both simultaneously, a miraculous change begins to take place. My soul, that is, me — a higher entity than my mind gets into act. The soul is now connected to God. This brings the ananda characteristic of soul to the fore. The process generates positive spiritual energy and the negative lower mental energy is countered and made ineffective. I gradually become composed and peaceful.

Believe me this is that simple but the practice must be done with faith and for some period till the effect is felt. But it will surely happen. It cannot fail. Both God and souls are realities. The moment we link with God, His energy begins to flow into us. Our *ananda* part is activated. Fear — a lower energy form is countered and we become peaceful, become composed. Just do it and reap its benefits as I am blissfully doing.

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America in world order: Trump's role

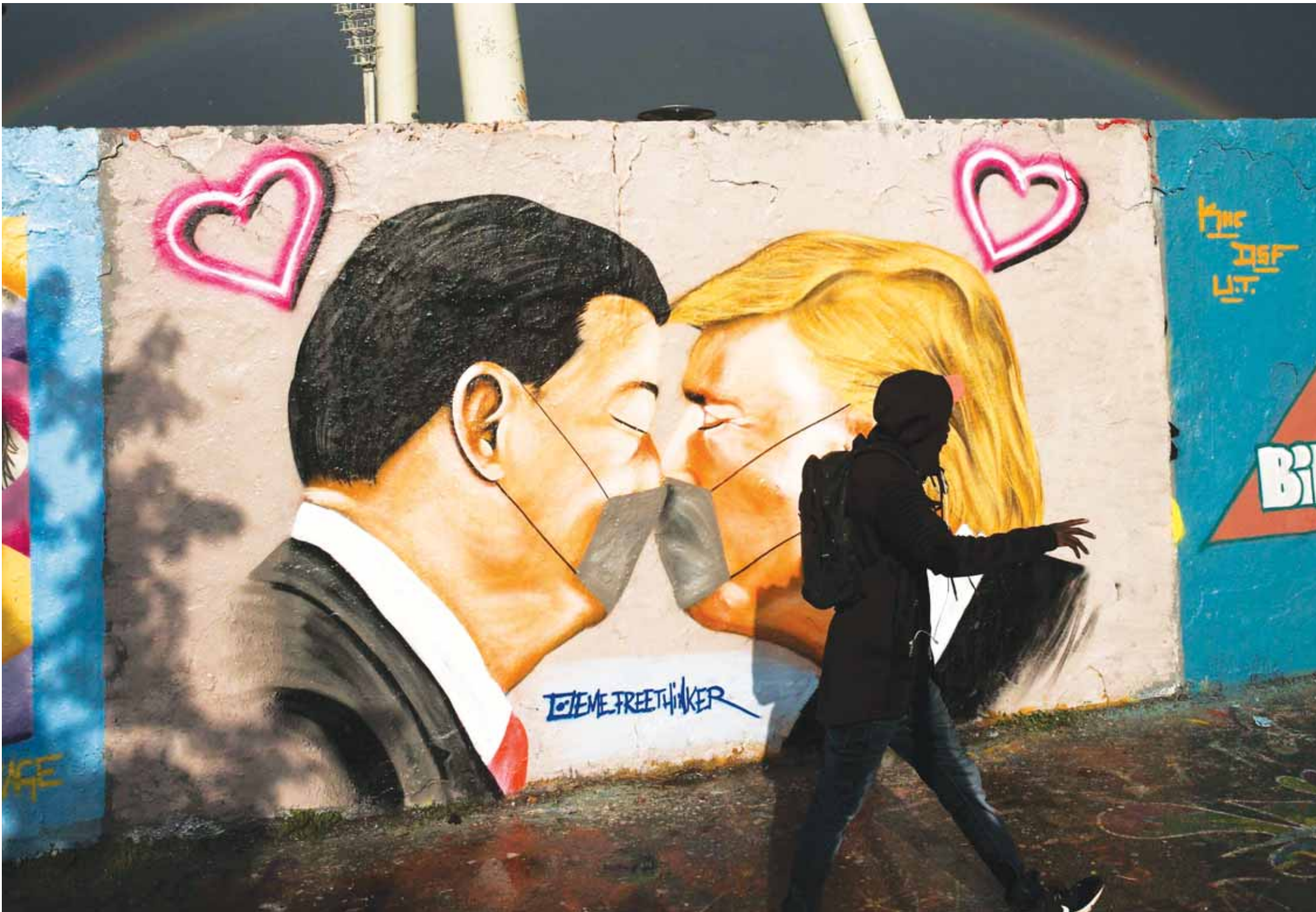
The “unrivalled power, prestige and influence” is how the USA of the 20th century has largely been defined. As Henry Kissinger rightly echoed, “In the 20th century, no country has influenced international relations as decisively and at the same time as ambivalently as the United States. No society has more firmly insisted on the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, or more passionately asserted that its own values are universally applicable.” This was how Kissinger defined American power under the newly emerged rubric of “New World Order” in 1994.

Even when the historic Paris Peace Conference was held in 1919, the differences in decision making between the European and American leaders became evident. The European representatives advocated in favour of maintaining the status quo whereas the US was firm on highlighting that the First World War was not the result of “intractable geopolitical conflicts, but from flawed European practices”.

Therefore a new sign of statesmanship was demonstrated by the American peace-makers by intervening in the existing European hegemony in diplomacy and policy making in international relations. Through his famous Fourteen Points, Woodrow Wilson said the international system should not be based on balance of power but on ethnic self-determination. And the security of the nations should not depend on military alliances but on collective security. Further their diplomacy should no longer be conducted secretly by experts but on the basis of open agreements, openly arrived at. It was clear from these historic lines that Wilson, instead of discussing the terms for ending the First World War and to henceforth restoring the global order, was indeed busy recasting a purely new order wherein the US was projected to lead the world. But then this came put forwarded by Wilson came into reality in a much stronger way only after the end of the Second World War.

Since 1945, as America moved on, it has experienced ups and downs. Even at the height of the Second World War, Henry Luce, the founder of the *Time* magazine, advocated that America had amassed too much wealth and power that the 20th century would come to be known simply as “the American Century”. Surprisingly, his prediction proved prescient. After almost seven decades of hegemony, though it had to live with the Cold War till 1990s, Washington has brilliantly managed to stay in prominence, prestige and relevance. But with globalisation, post-globalisation and especially, globalisation of terrorism, the US had to encounter new realities wherein its trade, security and stability have been badly challenged. With the Iraq War, the Afghan War, Syrian civil war, the Arab Spring, the emergence of al-Qaeda (September 11 terror attack) and finally, the arrival of the Islamic State (ISIS) have altogether altered the global power dynamics. China's gradual and quiet rise, the Eurozone crisis, the fast growth of nationalist regimes around the world have come as the last blow to the US-led liberal order once and for all. Around the same time, both the fantasies and credentials around which the global liberal leviathan has been constructed are badly exposed. This is because the liberal democracies have really become worse at improving their citizens' living standards leading to major public outcries against their leaders and age-old institutions. And this has culminated into the rise of populist movements and leaders that disavow liberalism. These kinds of regimes have shown their ugly heads starting from Warsaw to Washington and from Brussels to Brasilia. And one such regime, many say is undoubtedly headed by Donald Trump at the citadel of democracy.

Trump, who took up reins



as the 45th President of the US in 2017, has ushered the White House into a new age to American politics. With him, starting from his campaign till the day he assumed office on January 20, 2017, it was nothing but political populism that simply drove people around him. The middle class white Americans have really found in him a leader who could transform their agony into comfort and a good living. In some of the speeches made during his Presidential election campaign of 2016, Trump directly addressed the major concerns of the white working class with their sudden declining position in the national pecking order. Probably, his media advisers were smart and sensitive enough to locate a possible winning constituency left unaddressed by successive genre of Republicans and Democrats in the past elections. Therefore, Trump did rightly pick them up while moving towards the White House. He debated core concerns and raised their moral status by emphatically underlining them as truly hard-working Americans who were outright victims of an era of globalisation and post-globalisation. Much more than that, he courted them as “people above the politicians, professionals and the elite”. This indeed drew them not only closer to the Republican vote bank but also exposed a wound left unattended by the previous leaders. Capturing the current social dynamics of social engineering, he started drawing strong moral boundaries towards undocumented Muslims, refugees and immigrants across America. This was how Trump catapulted himself to power by transforming symbolic boundaries into engines of change in 2016 presidential campaign. What happened in the last four years of his presidency has constructed a new dimension of American power and influence, largely drawn towards “Make America Great Again”. Threatening to cut traditional ties with many of the US allies, suddenly withdrawing from historic global treaties, forums and dialogues, Trump has redefined an illiberal order symp-

tomatic of political populism, crude business tactics and sheer arrogance. So he has remained an unpredictable statesman with whom many of America's friends and democratic partners have dealt too cautiously till date.

Sadly, Trump's pugnacity has not worked in America's favour. It has brought only peril to his party, country and gentry along with the most common people of his dear land. His recklessness has largely eroded the US dominant position across the world. Saddest part of the Trump presidency is that his authority as a global leader has declined not because other leaders or nations have together or single-handedly challenged him; it's clearly as a direct result of his unwelcoming actions and untimely commentaries. At home, Trump has significantly lost his ground after the House of Representatives approved impeaching him.

It's not that Trump has solely made America weak. It is a long drawn process that has come to fruition over the years. Though globalisation of trade has proved to be tremendously profitable to for the US, it could hardly deliver to the country's middle class. While making globalisation work, the American policy makers advocated Russia to adopt privatisation and China to enter into the newly established World Trade Organization in 1995. Despite International Monetary Fund pushing for an agenda of privatisation, deregulation and severe austerity measures, leading to sharp fall in public faith over both the credentials of democracy and workability of capitalism, they backed such institutions to promote global trade and free market. To their utter dismay, these and many more such initiatives, instead of bringing open markets and free societies, have created a vast aura of opportunities for America's rivals to simply rise and challenge its traditional dominance around the globe. Elizabeth Warren, a Democratic US Senator, wrote in 2019 that as a result of such policies “Russia became belligerent and resurgent. China weaponised its

economy without ever loosening its domestic political constraints. Other countries' faith in both capitalism and democracy eroded. A programme once aimed at promoting the forces of freedom ended up empowering the opposite.” True. Absolutely true. Today China has turned out to be America's competitor number one. How to surge America ahead of all, with an ever growing democratic spirit is a matter of serious concern. Amid all these complexities, Trump has echoed wrong notes, even at right moments.

Around this Covid-19 time, what is milling around is that China might take over the global leadership from the US. Many say that this has already taken place. And with the coming of Trump at the White House, the final countdown has begun. But then is it going to be only economic yardsticks and growing military prowess of China that could be matched with the current US strength to decide the outcome. However, America's longstanding liberal order and traditions cannot simply be undone by one Trump and his populist policies.

What advantages the US has over China? Perfectly, Washington has much more advantage over Beijing. Liberal ideology offers a significant advantage to the US over China. As a free and open society that advocates for safeguarding basic premises of human rights and freedoms, America can be a much better ally of the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The reason behind is that many in these countries clamour for basic freedoms and they can directly draw inspiration from their daily struggle for reclaiming these liberties. When it comes to China, its dealings are accompanied by sharp abuse of the ally's people and their resources. But for America, its decision making is transparent in regard to its allies unlike China that quietly digs debt traps in the name of economic aids.

America has been a dominant power since 1945 and it wants to continue with this status. And this primacy has brought immediate and long-

term benefits to the country. This also offers Washington the capacity to shape regional balance of power. America's prominence in global stage has also guaranteed a tranquil environment for the rest of the nations to operate within their own independent spheres.

It has been argued very well that when a country reaches the top, it has nowhere else to go but simply downwards. Way back in 1950, when the Soviet Union acquired atomic weapons, the National Security Council warned that this advantage to the USSR might alter the geopolitical equations among the nations. Again when the Sputnik was launched by the Soviet Union that led many to prophesise that Nikita Khrushchev's pledge to bury “Western capitalism” may turn into reality. John F Kennedy in his heyday strongly believed that the USSR could be richer than the US. And Richard Nixon famously argued that America was becoming a “pitiful helpless giant”. In the meantime, America's defeat in the Vietnam War provoked many experts to argue and write works like “*After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*”. This all showed a persistent fear among both the leaders and intellectuals in the West that America might fall from the grace. And the Russophobia helped Ronald Regan to justify a major military buildup in the beginning of the 1980s. However with the coming of Paul F Kennedy's “*Rise and Fall of Great Powers*” wherein he advocated that the US is in the danger of “imperial overstretch”, the perception about its decline has taken a new turn. However Kennedy's new America decline narrative was aptly countered by Joseph Nye in his “*Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*”. Nye strongly put forward his view that America has distinct strengths and hence it would remain as leading power for many years to come. Afterwards, a number of books and essays such as Charles Krauthammer's “*The Unipolar Moment*”, G John Ikenberry's “*Liberal Leviathan*”, Nial Ferguson's “*Colossus*” and

Fareed Zakaria's “*The Post-American World*” have emphasised that American dominance would continue.

However what Dan Nexton, an American political scientist, has just revealed is absolutely more convincing. In his book “*Exit From Hegemony: The Unravelling of the American Global Order*” published by the Oxford University Press, this year, he emphatically says, “I do not doubt that the United States is capable of remaining and likely to remain a global power.” And for him, “China is only at the very beginning of its effort to develop the political infrastructure for power projection and it is capable of engaging in some limited overseas operations.” This kind of an analysis situates China as a regional power wherein it could be able to rise as little more than a challenge for America's continued dominance in East and South China Sea.

Is there any possibility that China may bypass the American juggernaut or may come closer to it in a post-Covid-19 economic downturn? There could be possibilities that for some time, China may take lead in the economic front. But certainly, the whole world would wake up to the call given by this virus and realise the fact that too much dependence on China may be disastrous. And this is not even conducive for China as well. China's capacity to lift millions out of poverty and adjusting the market dynamics to its socialist roots must be harnessed further to resolve the conflicts within and overseas territories of the country. May be a life President like Xi Jinping would be able to do a better job in this regard unlike his immediate predecessors. Instead of encircling the neighbourhood and expanding undeterred money and muscle power to the rest of the world in the guise of soft power, he can easily bring democratic reforms within his own country. This will ensure at least the basic minimum human rights to his brethren. Why is he unnecessarily creating animosity and repeating the same mistakes committed by earlier great powers? While advocat-

ing multi-polarity, China should not head for the same unipolar world order nurtured by the US.

Frankly speaking, a Chinese-led order will have few takers. The western liberal order offers enough space both for open society and even for its enemies as well. Beijing's tutelage will nowhere guarantee free speech and open dialogue. In the name of stability and economic development, a socialist authoritarian system would be imposed on all. One can simply witness the apprehension generated by such “red fear” among the Hongkongers since July 1997. The young generations and the most of the islanders are rejecting the mainland system whenever and wherever imposed by Beijing. This is more than sufficient for the international community to learn what an Asian order led by China can herald to all of us. Mere economic guarantee offered by Beijing will not simply ensure safe keeping of our basic freedoms.

Hope what President Franklin Roosevelt once echoed in 1941 comes into reality: “America is not a country which can be confounded by the appeasers, defeatists, the backstairs manufacturers of panic... This will of the American people will not be frustrated, either by threats from powerful enemies abroad or by small, selfish groups or individuals at home.” Hopefully, the American leadership will be back with a renewed strength. But Trump, when he comes back in 2021 for his second term, should not further jeopardise the liberal order that its forefathers built in the past. He must realise that only with this order, the country can retain its traditional leverage over other nations. And for its old allies, and particularly for the global governance system, America needs to be sensitive.

Finally, it's not only about a US-led order. But about a democratic world order wherein emerging nations like India would be able to rise and share its world view with the rest.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)



MAKHAN SAIKIA



Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Wednesday

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Camel brown
Lucky day Sunday

Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday

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