

OPINION 6
A DANGEROUS
FLASHPOINT**WORLD 8**
AS TRUMP PULLS BACK FROM VIRUS,
CONGRESS RACES TO FILL VOID**SPORT 12**
TEAM LACKS COMPLETE
FIELDER: KAIF

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10 VIVACITY

India's Covid growth 2nd highest

Nation only after Russia in terms of spike rate among 13 worst-affected countries

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

The speed of coronavirus spurt in India, both in terms of duration of doubling of cases as well as ratio of growth over a period of one month, could provide little comfort despite reassuring claims by officials and experts. The country has surpassed the global average and raced ahead of some of the worst-affected nations by a big margin on both these counts.

In one month, India saw a nine-time rise in the number of cases, going up from 6,700 cases on April 9 to 63,000 plus cases on May 9. In the same duration, the worldwide count rose from 1,600,590 to 4,098,288 cases, which amounts to a near 2.5-time rise.

The USA saw a similar 2.5-time growth with cases rising from 4,29,000 to 10,29,494 between April 9 and May 9.

India has surpassed some of the other worst-affected countries such as France, Italy, Spain Germany, China, and Canada, Turkey and Iran with even much faster momentum. With its doubling speed of 11 days, India now trails only



People come out on the streets after shops were opened briefly after a long break during lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus on the outskirts of Jammu on Sunday

AP

Russia in terms of ratio of growth over a period of one month among 13 worst affected countries.

In aggregate terms the world's doubling up speed is consistent at 22-24 days, whereas the USA, France, Italy,

Germany, Canada, Spain, Turkey and Iran are taking anywhere between 24 to 39 days to double up.

On May 9, the worldwide count of positive cases stood at 4,115,559. In reaching here from the halfway mark of

2,057,779, it took 24 days — the number stood at 2,076,503 on April 16. The global rate of doubling has been nearly consistent in the last one month with average daily addition of between 75,000 to 95,000 new cases. One third of these cases

are reported from the USA alone on daily basis.

The USA has also contributed more than 25 per cent of the total global cases. The USA's May 9 tally of total cases stood at 13,47,318, where it reached after doubling up from 6,52,476 on April 15 in 24 days. In the same period between March 21 and April 15, the USA raced from 5,600 to 65,246 cases, registering a 12-time growth.

Now take the case of Spain which seems to have peaked out after weeks of daily spikes. The country's total stood at 262,783 on May 9 whereas on April 9 the figure was 153,222, which is far less than two-fold rise in one month. In fact, Spain doubled up from 1,31,646 on April 15 to 2,62,783 on May 9 in 24 days.

The United Kingdom has also seen a similar trend. The country's total stood at 2,15,260 on May 9, with a less than four-time rise from 65,000 on April 9 in one month period. The UK took 22 days to double from the halfway mark of 1,08,692 on April 17.

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India, China scuffle on Sikkim border

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After months of lull on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Indian and Chinese Armies were involved in two face-offs in the last few days. On Saturday, soldiers of both the sides came to blows in Sikkim while a similar tense situation was resolved at the local level earlier last week in Ladakh region.

The entire 4,000 km odd long LAC was devoid of any serious stand-offs since the 73-day long such incident in Doklam near Sikkim in 2017. The two armies backed off after intervention at the highest political and diplomatic levels from two countries.

The face-off in Naku La, at a height of more than 16,000 feet near North Sikkim took place on Saturday afternoon, sources said here on Sunday.

There were more than 150 soldiers from both the sides and some of them traded blows, it was learnt. A minor scuffle also broke out before the situation was brought under control, officials said. The

Tense situation near North Sikkim resolved after intervention at highest political-diplomatic levels



Naku La is a pass in North Sikkim at 5,000 metres.

The Indian Army later said, "Aggressive behaviour by the two sides resulted in minor injuries to troops. The two sides disengaged after dialogue and interaction at local level. Temporary and short duration face-offs between border

guarding troops do occur as boundaries are not resolved."

Officials also said troops resolve such issues mutually as per established protocols. Unconfirmed reports said at least three Indians and seven to eight Chinese soldiers were injured in the scuffle.

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PM to talk with CMs Covid lockdown road ahead today

Resumption of public transport, dilution of curbs likely on agenda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A week ahead of the scheduled expiry of the extended lockdown on May 17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a meeting on Monday through video conferencing with all the Chief Ministers to assess the situation and road ahead.

The meeting is convened at 3 pm and the main agenda is expected to be on the opening up of public transport and the dilution of current lockdown norms.

Modi on Sunday evening had consultation with key Ministers in the Cabinet and senior officials in the empowered group of officers. The Cabinet Secretary also convened meeting of all Chief Secretaries and Health Secretaries to assess the present situation.

This will be the fifth meeting of the Prime Minister with the Chief Ministers since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

The Prime Minister's Office took to Twitter to share the information that he would hold the meeting via video-conference around 3 pm.



"PM Narendra Modi to hold the 5th meeting via video-conference with state Chief Ministers"

Cabinet Secy seeks States' help in running more spl trains for migrants

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the rising coronavirus cases in the country, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba on Sunday held a video conference with Chief Secretaries and Health Secretaries of all States and Union Territories to oversee the steps taken to curb the spread in the country and sought cooperation of the State Governments in running special trains for transportation of stranded migrant workers from different States to their respective native destinations.

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Select passenger trains from tomorrow

15 pairs of trains from New Delhi to Dibrugarh, Patna, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Mumbai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Railways will gradually restart passenger train operations from May 12, initially with 15 pairs of trains, the national transporter said on Sunday.

These trains will be run as special trains from New Delhi station connecting Dibrugarh, Agartala, Howrah, Patna, Bilaspur, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar,

Secunderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Madgaon, Mumbai Central, Ahmedabad and Jammu Tawi.

All passenger train services were suspended due to a lockdown announced on March 25.

After the resumption of these 15 services, railways will start more special services on new routes, based on the available coaches after reserving

20,000 coaches for Covid-19 care centres and adequate number of coaches being reserved to enable operation of up to 300 trains everyday as "Shramik Special" for stranded migrants.

Booking for reservation in these trains will start at 4 pm on May 11 and will be available only on the IRCTC website (<https://www.irctc.co.in/>).

Ticket booking counters at

railway stations will remain closed and no counter tickets (including platform tickets) will be issued, it said. Only passengers with valid confirmed tickets will be allowed to enter railway stations.

It will be mandatory for passengers to wear face cover and undergo screening at departure and only asymptomatic passengers will be allowed to board the trains.

4K new cases on Sun, Maha adds 50%

Total crosses 67K with 111 more deaths

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India reported more than 4,000 new cases for the first time in a single day on Sunday with Maharashtra adding 1,942 new cases and Tamil Nadu chipping in with 669 new cases, taking the total count to 67,044 cases and 2,207 deaths, including 111 on Sunday. Total cases in Maharashtra mounted to 22,171 including 53 deaths.

Maharashtra is followed by Gujarat with around 8,195 cases and nearly 500 deaths. The State reported 398 cases and 23 deaths on Sunday.

State like Bihar and Odisha have registered significant rise due to infection detected among migrant workers returning home.

Delhi, with nearly 7,000 cases and 73 deaths, has slipped to the fourth spot. Delhi added 383 cases and five deaths on Sunday. Tamil Nadu has now become the third worst coronavirus-hit State, surpassing Delhi after reporting over 7,200 cases.

In Tamil Nadu, the bulk of cases were reported from Chennai, where the vegetable and fruit wholesale market at Koyembedu was declared a hotspot. More than 1,500 positive cases were found to be linked to the market. Of the total cases in Tamil Nadu,

1,824 patients have recovered and 44 have died.

Rajasthan added 106 new cases to reach a total 3,814 cases and 2 more deaths to total 108 deaths, while Madhya Pradesh reported 157 new cases for total of 3,614 and a high death count of 215.

UP reported total 3,373 cases including 79 deaths of which 5 died on Sunday.

West Bengal reported 153 new cases, taking the total to 1,939. With 14 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, the death toll rose to 113 in Bengal. 23 new cases of Covid-19 were reported from Haryana.

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Medics take sample from a woman for Covid-19 test in Moradabad on Sunday

Stay put: Kejriwal to migrants

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday appealed to migrant workers not to leave the city, saying the situation will revive once the lockdown is lifted and they will find work. He also urged the workers trying to leave the national Capital to stay wherever they were, assuring them that his Government was arranging trains for their return.

PTI

Deaths 'very less' but 75% cases asymptomatic: CM

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said 75 per cent of Covid-19 cases in the city are asymptomatic or showing mild symptoms, and asserted that the number of serious patients and deaths caused by the infection is "less".

PTI

Ujjain records whopping 19% Covid death rate

PNS/PTI ■ INDORE

Even as Indore in Madhya Pradesh continues to be among the country's most worrisome coronavirus hotspots, the temple city Ujjain is making health officials uneasy as the latter's death rate from the infection as on Sunday stood at a whopping 19 per cent, far higher than the 3.35 per cent national average.

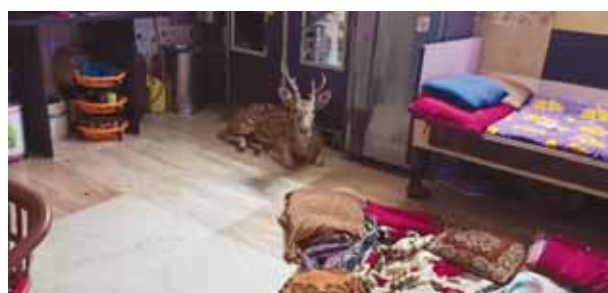
Ujjain, famous for the Mahakal Temple and a city with seven lakh inhabitants, has seen 45 of 237 Covid-19 patients succumbing to the infection, the death rate being a shade below 19 per cent at 18.9 per cent, as per official data.

Among those who have died are a police inspector and a BJP corporator, leading to major political parties pointing out to the city's creaky health infrastructure, and the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government responding by shunting out the district collector and the superintendent of police.

The BJP corporator had even made social media videos of the poor medical care available at a private hospital here.

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Chased by leopard, deer takes refuge in Mumbai house



TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The dwellers of a tiny hutment located off the IIT-Bombay campus at Powai in north-east Mumbai were in for a surprise as a large spotted deer — apparently after being chased by a leopard from the nearby Sanjay Gandhi National Park — crashed through their roof and landed in their house in the early hours of Sunday.

In what virtually came as a bolt from the blue, the deer

crash-landed into the one room house of one Mrs Sunita Singh in Hanuman Tekdi slum colony located on the neighbourhood of IIT-Bombay campus, which is on the periphery of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

As the forest officials surmised later in the morning, the deer might have run for its life after being chased from a nearby hillock of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, and crashed into hutment through the roof.

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11 migrants on way home die in MP

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Eleven migrant labourers died and 14 others injured in the last 24 hours in separate incidents like fatigue due to walking a long distance and a road accident in four districts in Madhya Pradesh, police said on Sunday.

The deaths were reported from Narsinghpur, Barwani, Sagar and Shajapur districts. Almost all the deceased were travelling to Uttar Pradesh either from Maharashtra, Hyderabad or Karnataka amidst the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

In Narsinghpur district, six migrant labourers were killed and 14 others injured, one of them seriously, when the truck in which they were travelling overturned near Patha village, around 40 kms from the district headquarters on Saturday night. Additional Superintendent of Police Rajesh Tiwari said.

The victims were headed towards Jhansi, Etah and Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh from Hyderabad in Telangana, he added.

"While five labourers died on the spot, two critically injured were rushed to a hospital at divisional headquarters Jabalpur for treatment, where one of them died around 6 pm on Sunday," Tiwari added.

Thirteen others, who suffered injuries in the accident, including the truck driver, are undergoing treatment at the (Narsinghpur) district hospital. They have been quarantined, he said.

In Barwani district, three migrants, who began their journey on foot from Mumbai to Uttar Pradesh, died due to exhaustion on Saturday afternoon near Sendhwa, located on Madhya Pradesh-Maharashtra border, police said. Two more deaths were reported from Sagar and Shajapur.

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Ganga Ram Hospital to resume OPD services from today

New Delhi: Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in the national Capital will resume its OPD services in a graded manner from Monday.

The services will be available from 10 am to 4 pm and each doctor will see a maximum of four patients in an hour, hospital authorities said. "The main Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, which is a Non-Covid facility, will resume OPD services in a graded manner from Monday," a statement said.

The hospital has created proper infrastructure facilities to minimise the spread of Covid-19, keeping in mind that nearly 70 per cent of coronavirus cases are asymptomatic. Patients are advised to show their "risk status" on Arogya Setu app and appointment details on their mobiles on demand, it said.

Detailed report on P3

5 pilots who flew cargo to China test positive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five Air India pilots, who had undertaken cargo flights to China prior to April 20, sources said. Regarding two staff of AIESL testing positive for coronavirus, the non-scheduled operator had informed the company in a recent e-mail. As per the e-mail, seen by PTI, the operator said outsourced MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) personnel attending its aircraft are also tested for coronavirus infection.

"AIESL personnel are also being tested in a phased manner. The results of tests conducted on May 7 have been received and two AIESL personnel have tested Covid-19 positive," the engineering head of the operator said in the e-mail to AIESL CEO.

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CROSSING BORDER

Indian trucks entry may up virus cases: Nepal

Kathmandu: With Nepal gearing up to ease the lockdown measures and allow factories to resume production, health authorities have warned that people entering the country in cargo trucks, especially from India, could increase the number of coronavirus cases, according to a media report.

The health authorities warned that cargo truck drivers and their helpers have been entering Nepal without undergoing proper health screening and reaching all major cities, The Kathmandu Post reported, as the number of coronavirus cases in the country rose to 110.

The mayor of Birgunj Metropolitan City, Vijaya Kumar Sarawagi, told the newspaper that the number of cargo trucks entering the country via Birgunj-Raxaul border point daily has reached around 700 and each truck carries two to three people-driver and their helpers.

"We just disinfect the truck's wheels, windshield and the driver's seat and measure

the temperature of its occupants before allowing them in," Sarawagi was quoted as saying.

"We cannot disinfect the people and they are reaching all major cities across the country." Besides the Brigunj border point, hundreds of cargo trucks are also entering the country via several other border entries such as in Bhairahawa and Nepalgunj.

"We all know that drivers and their helpers cannot stay inside the truck all the time," said an official. "Chances of the disease spread will be high when they come out and come in contact with other people," he said.

Representatives of local levels that share borders with India have asked authorities concerned to perform coronavirus tests on cargo truck drivers and their helpers before allowing them entry into Nepal.

"We have been prohibiting Nepal's stranded in Indian borders from entering the country to prevent the transmission of the virus. But we are

not paying attention regarding the risk of the disease spread from the people entering the country in cargo trucks," the official at the Health Ministry told the Post.

Birgunj Mayor Sarawagi said that risk could be mitigated if the incoming cargo trucks are stopped at border points and the goods are sent to their destinations in domestic cargo trucks.

People who do not have high temperature and other COVID-19 symptoms does not necessarily mean that they are free from virus, making the disease difficult to diagnose without proper testing, health officials say.

Nepal is among the nations with the lowest number of coronavirus infections.

As of now 31 people infected with the virus have been successfully treated. The number of active COVID-19 patients currently undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country stands at 79.

Seven Air India commercial flights to bring back stranded Indians from US

New York: Some of the Indian nationals stranded in the US due to Covid-19 related international travel restrictions will fly back home on Sunday on a non-scheduled commercial flight from New Jersey to Mumbai and Ahmedabad, even as authorities said another five flights have been arranged to repatriate others still stuck in the country.

Beginning May 9, Air India has scheduled seven non-scheduled commercial flights from the US to India facilitating the return of Indian nationals, who could not travel due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Indian Embassy in Washington had said in its advisory on Wednesday night.

The first flight took off from San Francisco on Saturday to Mumbai and Hyderabad. The Air India flight from Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey will fly on Sunday, taking back Indian nationals to Mumbai and Ahmedabad under India's biggest ever repatriation exercise named 'Vande Bharat Mission'.

Another flight from Newark will fly on May 14 to Delhi and Hyderabad. All passengers will be required to undergo medical screening before boarding the flight and only asymptomatic passengers will be allowed to travel.

All passengers on arrival in India will be medically screened and would have to download and register the Aarogya Setu app.

Further, all passengers will need to undergo a 14-day mandatory quarantine on arrival in India in institutional facilities on payment basis as per the protocols framed by Government of India.

Highly placed sources in the Indian Consulate in New York said that it "has been a relentless and non-stop work" to coordinate the repatriation exercise and authorities "are going out of their way to make sure not even one seat on the flight goes vacant" since a large number of Indians are stranded in the US due to various reasons and they are "desperate" to go home.

Mumbai civic body uses AI to fight Covid

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

On a day when Mumbai recorded 19 more deaths and 508 new infected cases, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) announced that it has begun to use an Artificial Intelligence technology in three health facilities in the city to assess the assess condition of Covid 19 patients.

The BMC's decision to use an Artificial Intelligence technology in three health facilities in the city came amid reports that the total number of deaths in Mumbai had mounted to 508, while the total number of infected cases had risen to 13,739.

With no let up in the

increasing fatalities and infections, Maharashtra on Sunday reported 53 Covid-19 deaths, while there were 1278 new infected cases. With the fresh tally, the total number of deaths has gone up to 832, while the total number of infected cases has scaled up to 22,171.

Announcing the introduction of new Artificial Intelligence technology in three health facilities in the city to assess the assess condition of CoVID 19 patients, the BMC said: "We have introduced a new technology 'QURE'S qXR CHEST XRAY SOFTWARE'. It is an Artificial Intelligence technology being used in HBT Trauma care Hosp, Kasturba Hosp & Podar Hospital & NSCI Dome CCC Worli to assess

condition of Covid 19 patients," the BMC stated in its medical bulletin issued on Sunday evening.

"Till now around 3000 X-ray scan have been assessed by this method. It is a new technology which is also used on pilot basis for screening and monitoring progression of admitted patients. This technique will also proposed to deploy in other hospitals," the BMC stated.

Of the 19 deaths reported on Sunday, 13 patients had comorbidities. Ten patients were men while nine were women. "while one of the deceased was below 40 years, five were above 60 years and 13 were aged between 40 to 60 years," the bulletin said.

5 pilots...

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"We request you to kindly take action as per your company policy. You are requested to note that these personnel shall not be allocated to our aircraft till they are cured and not without our concurrence," the e-mail said.

Meanwhile, 572 people landed at Mumbai airport in two flights - one from United Kingdom with 329 people and another from Singapore with 243 people on Sunday. Another Air India flight carrying 243 passengers from Manila is scheduled to land at Sunday late night.

The first repatriation flight from the United States took off from the San Francisco International Airport on Sunday, with around 200 people on board.

On the other hand, Air India Express flight that was scheduled to fly out with 181 Indian citizens stranded in Doha has been called off for now because of some technical reasons. It was to travel to Doha from Kozhikode around 1 pm and land in Thiruvananthapuram around 10.45 pm.

The Indian Navy ship INS Jalashwa, carrying 698 Indians stranded in Maldives due to international travel restrictions owing to coronavirus lockdown, arrived in Kerala's Kochi port on Sunday.

The warship had started its journey from the island on Friday night. Out of these evacuees, 440 are from Kerala, 110 from Tamil Nadu and 45 from Karnataka. "OP* Samudra Setu #Jalashwa with 698 Indian citizens embarked from Maldivesat Kochi, Kerala," a spokesperson of Indian Navy tweeted.

Manmohan Singh admitted to AIIMS

New Delhi: Former prime minister Manmohan Singh was admitted to the AIIMS here on Sunday evening after he complained of uneasiness, sources said.

Singh, 87, is under observation at the cardio-thoracic ward of the premier hospital, they said.

"All his parameters are fine. He is under observation at the AIIMS," a source close to him said, adding that he was taken to the hospital after he felt "uneasiness".

He was admitted under Dr Nitish Naik, a professor of cardiology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), around 8.45 pm.

Singh is a senior leader of the opposition Congress and is currently a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan. He was the Prime Minister between 2004 and 2014.

In 2009, Singh underwent a successful coronary bypass surgery at AIIMS.

MP: Two booked under NSA for attacking cop on lockdown duty

Ratlam (MP): Police in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam on Sunday booked two persons under the stringent National Security Act (NSA) for assaulting a police sub-inspector while he was enforcing coronavirus-induced lockdown in a containment zone in the city, a senior officer said.

A group of 20 people had attacked the sub-inspector Jairam Jamod on Friday night, district superintendent of police (SP) Gaurav Tiwari said. "Jamod had received information that some people had started gathering at a crossing in Mochipur containment area.

He rushed to the spot and made an announcement on a speaker phone asking people to stay indoors when he was attacked. A volunteer, identified as Suhail who tried to save the SI, was also beaten up," he said.

India, China scuffle on Sikkim border

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In a similar incident on May 5 and May 6, about 250 troops engaged in scuffle and some Indian and Chinese soldiers were injured. The stand-off took place near a site called "Finger 5" on the northern bank of the Pangong Tso Lake in Eastern Ladakh.

The same spot had witnessed a violent clash between two armies in 2107 also when troops from both sides hurled stones at each other. In the latest incident, local commanders from both the armies brought the situation under control, said officials, adding both the sides had increased force levels as a precautionary measure.

Following the incident, senior Indian army officers visited the area for an on the spot assessment, they said adding tension was simmering there since April 27 when patrols of two armies confronted each other.

The Pangong Tso, a 135 km-wide glacial-melt lake, is in both countries and hence both the armies patrol. On September 11, 2019 too, there was a face-off between the two armies on the northern bank of the lake.

The two latest face-offs came many months after the last such incident. The two armies were engaged in one of the longest stand-offs in 2017 in Doklam for 73 days after the

Indian Army objected to the Chinese army constructing a road in the strategically important region. Months later in April 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held their first informal summit in Wuhan. The two leaders issued "strategic" guidance to their respective armies for maintaining peace and tranquility at the LAC. Both the countries have set protocols to resolve issues and the local commanders are empowered to take decisions to resolve such matters.

In January this year, Army Chief General MM Naravane had said post the summit, "small differences are sorted locally and not allowed to escalate". According to information given in Parliament by the Government in November 2019, there were 1025 transgressions by the Chinese Army along the LAC between 2016 and 2018.

Cabinet...

From Page 1

As the plight of migrants stuck in far off places since March 25 lockdown has come in for scrutiny, the Cabinet Secretary highlighted that as many as 350 such trains carrying 3.5 lakh labourers have been run so far.

Gauba indicated that more trains could be on the tracks to bring-in migrants if States could cooperate more in this endeavour. The Cabinet Secretary's request for "cooperation" came a day after the West Bengal Government and the Centre were engaged in a war of words over running the 'Shramik Special' trains to the State.

"At the outset, the Cabinet Secretary noted that more than 350 'Shramik Special' trains have been run by the Railways carrying 3.5 lakh migrant workers, an

official statement said. "He requested the State Governments to cooperate with the Railways in running more 'Shramik Special' trains," it said.

At the beginning of the meeting, Gauba highlighted the cooperation of States on the return of Indians from abroad under 'Vande Bharat Mission' launched by the Centre to evacuate thousands of Indians stranded across the world due to coronavirus outbreak.

He emphasised that movements of doctors, nurses and paramedics should be totally unhindered and all steps be taken to facilitate and protect "corona warriors".

The Chief Secretaries briefed about the situation in their respective States and said that while protection is required from Covid-19, economic activities also need to be stepped up in a calibrated manner, the statement said.

Chased by leopard, deer takes refuge in Mumbai...

From Page 1

Woken up from their slumbers, the dwellers of the entire slum colony gathered outside Mrs Singh's tenement. Before long, a few of the slum dwellers alerted the Forest department about the incident

"We received a distress call from a few of the residents in the slum colony. They informed us that a deer has crashed into the house through the roof," Wildlife Warden Pawan Sharma said.

The Forest Department's Mumbai Range swiftly rushed a 7-member team to rescue

the large deer.

The team later took it away to Sanjay Gandhi National Park's Rescue Centre for further medical examination and rehabilitation.

The affected family said that the deer was lying in their house quietly before the rescue team arrived to take it back to the forest environs. "Though it appeared shocked, the deer remained calm and composed all through. The deer crash did not result in any damage to household articles like the fan, TV, gas, cupboards, bed etc," Mrs Singh said.

Sunday's incident should be seen in the context of the fact that during the lockdown, the animals from the wild like flocks of peacocks, kingfishers, dolphins, deer, foxes, mongoose, large snakes are being seen in the human habitats.

India Covid...

From Page 1

In the preceding 22 days, UK surged leaps and bounds, racing from 5,600 cases on March 22 to 1,08,692 cases — in statistical term a near 18-fold growth.

In case of Italy, which has seen a huge number of deaths, case doubled from 1,10,576 on April 1 to 2,18,268 on May 9, in 39 days. In the preceding 39 days, Italy saw a more than 500-time spike, rising from a mere 21 on March 21 to 1,10,576 on April 1. Italy tally stood at 1,43,726 on April 9, which shows that country saw a just 1.5-time growth in one month, six-time less than India.

France has taken 34 days to double from 87,579 on April 5 to 1,76,658 on May 9. In the same 34 days between March 1 and April 5, France saw cases registering a plus 80-fold growth --- from a mere 130 on March 1 to 87,579 on April 5. France had 100, 700 cases April 9.

Germany pace of growth is still slower. The country crawled from 1,18,235 on April 9 to 1,71, 324 on May 9. In the preceding 37 days, Germany saw a mindboggling 4500-time

rise, going from 18 on February 25 to 84,794 on April 2.

The same is the case with South American giant Brazil, which went up from 18,000 cases on April 9 to 156, 061 cases on May 9, registering a less than 8-time growth. However, Brazil more than doubled up in ten days from 79,361 on April 29 to 1,56,061 on May 9.

Turkey and Iran have taken between 24 and 36 days respectively to double up from the halfway marks from where they stood on May 9. Both countries reported far less ratio of growth than India over a period of one month.

Among the list of 13 worst countries only Russia and Peru have registered much faster growth than India in one month duration. Both the countries are seeing a late surge and have doubled in around 10 days.

Russia's total stood at 2,09,688 cases on May 9, doubling up from 1,06,498 on April 30 in nine days. In the preceding nine days Russia went up from 62,273 to 1,06,498 cases. During one month between April 9 to May 9, Russian saw 20-time spurt going up from 10,000 on April

9 to 2,09,688 on May 9. Russia's rate of doubling has increased sharply in the late order, and the curve is rising unlike many other European countries and even the USA.

In case of Peru, a South American nation with a small population of 3.2 crore, the total number stood at around 5,000 on April 9. It grew by nearly 13-time to reach 65,000 cases on May 9.

Analysis shows that after enforcement of lockdown while the rate of doubling slowed down in Europe and the USA, the pace increased in the Russia and South American, while India continued to grow at an alarming speed.

Reports are pouring in from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal about migrant workers returning to their native places broken, hungry, and infected. The fear of contagion arising from tens of thousands of liquor lovers jostling and wrestling with each other before the liquor vends for three days, is equally bone chilling. With the country in the "opening up" mode, the days ahead could be challenging going by the pace of Covid-19 growth in India.

PM to talk with CMs Covid lockdown...

From Page 1

The announcement about PM's interaction with Chief Minister came after Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba chaired a meeting with Chief Secretaries and Health Secretaries of all states and Union Territories (UTs) to review their status of Covid-19 management.

The Chief Secretaries informed Gauba about the situation in their respective States and also said while protection is required from Covid, the economic activities also needed to be stepped up in a calibrated manner.

The lockdown, enforced on March 25, was originally supposed to end on April 14. It was then extended to May 3 and then again to May 1.

Meanwhile, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has said he is hopeful that Parliament's Monsoon Session could be held on time, despite the Covid-19 crisis. The Monsoon Session normally begins in the last week of June or in the first week of July.

"Despite Covid-19 crisis, I am hopeful that session could be held on time. But it will also depend on the situation prevailing at that time," Birla told PTI

Last year, the Monsoon Session ran between June 20 and August 7. The Speaker underlined that it was a testing time due to the Covid-19 crisis, but expressed hope that the session could be held as per normal schedule. Asked whether it will be possible to hold the session if there are strict social-distancing norms still in place in June-July, Birla said a way out could be found when that situation comes.

4k new cases on Sun, Maha adds 50%

From Page 1

Total number of positive cases stands at 703 including 10 deaths and 393 active cases.

Odisha registered 15 new positive cases, taking the tally to 377. This includes 306 active cases, 68 cured/discharged and 3 deceased. The number of cases rose to 673 in Bihar after it saw the biggest single day addition of 62 cases, mostly from migrant workers returning home during the last few days.

Jammu & Kashmir reported 25 new positive cases, pushing the total number of cases to 861. The total death toll stands at 9.

The total number of Covid-19 cases in Punjab reached 1,823, with 61 more people testing positive. Number of active cases and fatalities due to the infection stands at 1,626 and 31 respectively.

Talking about the status of containment of Covid-19 in the country, Dr Harsh Vardhan said, "Prior to lockdown, on March 25, the doubling rate was 3.2 when measured over a period of 3 days, 3.0 when measured over

a period of 7 days and 4.1 when measured over a period of 14 days.

"Today it stands at 12.0 over a 3-day window, 10.1 over a 7-day window and 11.0 when measured over a 14-day window. Similarly, the fatality rate stands at 3.3 per cent while recovery rate has improved to 30.7 per cent. Clearly the situation has improved due to lockdown. This also reflects on the quality of healthcare being provided to the Covid-19 patients," he said.

During his visit in East Delhi on Sunday, the Minister said that a total of 855 dedicated Covid hospitals have been identified across the country with 1,65,723 beds (1,47,128 isolation beds + ICU beds); 1,984 dedicated Covid health centres with 1,31,352 beds (1,21,403 isolation beds + 9,949 ICU beds), and, 4,362 Covid care centres with 3,46,856 beds.

Informing about the treatment, he said, "We have noticed that only 2.48 per cent of these Covid cases have required ICU facility, only 1.94 per cent of them have required oxygen support while mere 0.40 per cent have required ventilator support."

He said that in 10 States/UTs, no new case has emerged in the last 24 hours. They are Andman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Goa, J&K, Ladakh, Manipur, Odisha, Mizoram, Puducherry. Moreover, there are 4 States/ UTs - Daman & Diu, Sikkim, Nagaland & Lakshadweep.

11 migrants...

From Page 1

The deceased trio in Barwani aged between 42 to 55 years, an official said.

A doctor at Sindhwa civil hospital, where two of the three labourers were taken, said dehydration and fatigue due to scorching heat might lead to heart attack, which might be the cause of their deaths.

A labourer walking towards UP from Karnataka died in Sagar. He collapsed on a ground by Sagar-Kanpur national highway on Saturday evening, police said, adding that he was declared dead at a hospital, an official said.

"As per his Aadhaar card, the deceased was identified as Rambali (31), a resident of Siddharthnagar district in Uttar Pradesh," Sagar Superintendent of Police Amit Sanghi said, adding that the family of the deceased has been informed.

Another labourer who died in Shajapur district on Saturday evening has been identified as Ramroop (35), police said, adding that he was returning to his hometown in Basti district of UP on a mini truck from Maharashtra when he took ill.

Govt in talks with Centre for more trains to take migrants home: CM

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday assured migrants in Delhi that his Government is making arrangements for them to take them back to their homes. Requesting people to stay where they are, Kejriwal said, "The Delhi Government is already in talks with the Central Government to arrange for more trains for all the States."

Kejriwal said, "Migrant labourers are still on the roads, trying to reach to their homes. Their condition is very unfortunate since they are walking for days. They have not eaten anything for days, and nobody is helping them on their way. They are carrying their children on their shoulders, and I also saw a man who was car-

rying his old mother on him. This makes me feel that all the Governments and all the systems have failed."

"I want to say to the people of Delhi, that you do not need to worry. We will ensure proper arrangements for all the people from other States in Delhi who want to go back," he said. "It is very disappointing to see people walking on the roads for days without food and any help," said Kejriwal. He requested the people of Delhi to stay where they are as the lockdown will lift soon and everything will revive. "This lockdown is going to end soon, and everything will be back on track. You will get employed again because everything will start running again." "Please do not leave Delhi. But if you are stuck here and want to leave under any situation, we are

arranging for trains for you. One train has departed for Madhya Pradesh and the second one for Bihar," said Kejriwal. "We are also in talks with the central government to arrange for more trains. Please wait for a few days, but please do not walk towards your homes like this. This is not safe. Some people lost their lives on the railway tracks, and some lost their lives in a road accident. Please do not do anything that puts your lives at risk. We are here to take care of you."

Meanwhile Delhi government has arranged buses for Punjab migrants. In Delhi, 150 migrants from Punjab stranded in Delhi have been sent to their homes by the Delhi government on Sunday on buses. CMO tweeted "Migrants from Punjab living in Delhi

govt's temporary shelter at Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, Nehru Vihar left for their home towns today morning. They were screened by our medical team and provided with food, masks and sanitizer. God bless them all." The medical team first screened and examined all the migrants. The migrants have been given food packets for their way.

They have also been provided with masks and sanitizers. Earlier, the Delhi government had sent buses to bring back hundreds of students stranded in Kota.

The Delhi government has also sent about 2400 migrants from Madhya Pradesh and Bihar to their home towns through special trains. Medical examination and screening were thoroughly conducted before sending them back.



It's our responsibility to take care of Covid warriors: CM to Opp

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said it is the responsibility of his Government to take care of Covid warriors who are putting their lives at risk by serving the people. The Chief Minister expressed disappointment over Opposition's remarks on the provision of special facilities for Covid warriors.

"What is the problem in providing ₹ 1 crore honorary compensation for Covid warriors who will died while dealing/treating corona patients," Kejriwal questioned opposition while interacting digitally.

Meanwhile citing health bulletin report, Kejriwal said, "There are 6,923 positive cases in Delhi, only 1,476 cases are in the hospital. All the other cases are either asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms. Out of these 1,476 cases, 91 cases are in ICU and 27 cases are on ventilators. I am personally monitoring the serious cases and working day and night for their recovery."

"Around 75% of the cases are asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms. "On the directions of the central government, we are making arrangements for such cases to be treated at home. Our team will visit their homes, inspect their premises for a separate room to see if isolation can be practiced there, issue advisories for the family members." "If everything is found satisfactory, these cases are advised home isolation, and all necessary



facilities for isolation are provided to them at their homes. Our team stays in regular contact with the affected person and is also available 24x7 for guidance. Cases who cannot be isolated at their homes are shifted to our Covid care centres and Covid health centres," he added.

He further said that the requisition of private ambulances has been done for government services. "I have been intimated often that people have to wait for hours for ambulances to arrive. Yesterday (Saturday) we have issued orders for the requisition of private ambulances for government services. These ambulances should be available for Government duty as and when required, along with continuing to operate for their hospitals as well."

He applauded the Covid warriors for being on the front-line and helping the people in these times.

"Our doctors, nurses, teachers, civil defense volunteers, Aasha and Anganwadi workers, etc are our Covid warriors and are at the frontline of fighting a battle against Corona. They are risking their lives to work for the people. It is our responsibility to do whatever we can for all of them. As per our directions yesterday, we have attached five-star hotels with the Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospitals, which has been declared as a dedicated Covid hospital. If any of our Covid warriors get affected by corona, they will be treated in those hotels. It is our responsibility to take care of them because they are working and taking care of the people all this time."

He said, "I want to appeal to everyone, this is not the time to do politics but to work collectively for the people and the nation in these tough times. Please help each other, work together against these issues, and work for the society."

2 drivers held for ferrying 100 workers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two truck drivers for allegedly ferrying nearly 100 migrant workers from the national capital to their native places in Bihar.

Police said that the two truck drivers identified as Upended Singh Yadav, a resident of Sector-2 RK Puram and Dharmendra Kumar Yadav, a resident of Indira Camp, Okhla Phase-1 were ferrying the migrant workers to their respective hometowns in lieu of money.

The police said their counterpart Noida police helped them in detention of these vehicles which have now been seized and the labourers were sent to their respective jhuggies.

According to R P Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast dis-



trict, during checking on Saturday night at around 10.30 pm, two truck bearing Delhi registration were caught near Southeast Delhi's Kalindi Kunj picket for ferrying migrant workers.

"One verification, we found that one of the vehicle was carrying 63 labourers from Ekta Vihar jhuggi camp, RK Puram. driver, Upender Singh Yadav, who also owns the vehi-

cle was illegally transporting these labourers from their jhuggies in Delhi to their native place in Lakhisarai district of Bihar in lieu of money," said the DCP.

"While another truck driven by Dharmendra Kumar Yadav, was also illegally transporting 34 labourers from Indira Camp jhuggies to their native place in Madhubani dis-

trict of Bihar in lieu of money. However, the owner of the vehicle Shrawan Yadav, also a resident of Indira Camp, Okhla Phase I, was not found present in the vehicle," said the DCP.

"On further verification, it also came to our notice that the labourers were allured by these drivers for money," the DCP added.

"A case was registered under 188 (for disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (Negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), 270 (Malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), 420 (Cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), 34 (Acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) sections of Indian Penal Code and section 3 of Epidemic Act in the regard," the DCP further said.

Girl used boy ID, provoked friend to test morality

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a major turnaround, in the 'Bois Locker Room' investigation, the Delhi Police cyber cell has revealed that a girl was using the fake identity of a boy in 'Snapchat' conversation, to get herself sexually assaulted. Police said the girl has taken this step in order to check the strength of character of the boy, who was the message receiver.

According to Anyeesh Roy, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), cyber cell (CyPAD), the two juveniles involved in the Snapchat conversation were not in anyway part of the Bois Locker Room Instagram group and that the conversation between them was held last month. However, their devices have been seized and sent for forensic analysis.

"During investigation, screenshots of the alleged chats between the group members were available in the public domain. Among the various

screenshots shared on multiple social media platforms, was a screenshot of a one-to-one Snapchat conversation, where a person named 'Siddharth' is suggesting a plan of aggravated

Bois Locker Room Probe

sexual assault of a girl to the other person, said the DCP.

"Probe has revealed that the alleged Snapchat conversation is actually between a girl and a boy in which the girl is sending chat messages through a fictional Snapchat account named 'Siddharth'. Using the fake identity of a male person, she suggested in the chat, a plan to sexually assault herself," he said.

"Her purpose of sending such messages to the boy was to check his reaction and to test the strength of his character, specially when someone talks bad things about the girl herself. However, the juvenile boy, declined to participate in any such plan and

stopped further communication with girl who was using a fake identity, the DCP said.

"The boy, however, took a screenshot of the chat and reported it to his friends, including the girl about whom the hypothetical conversation of sexual assault took place. One of the other recipients of the screenshot, however, posted it as an Instagram story for sometime, from where it started circulating in connected social media accounts of friends, schoolmates and when screenshots from Bois Locker Room Instagram started circulating on social media, the alleged Snapchat conversation also got mixed with those chats," he said.

"No case will be registered against the girl or the boy because both of them are juveniles. Although, creating a fake id is wrong but her intent was not

malicious so we are not filing any complaint," said the DCP.

Information about the Instagram group came to light after a girl shared screenshots of its activities. Following this, the group started being called out on social media.

The police said during social media monitoring, it was noticed that the group was being used by the participants to share obscene messages and morphed pictures of girls and women.

So far, 24 members of the alleged Instagram have been identified and police are still waiting for details sought by them from the social media platform and the Forensic Science Laboratory where they have sent the devices for examination. The group admin, also an active member of the group was arrested, a juvenile was apprehended was apprehended in the case, said police adding that a case under relevant sections of IT Act and IPC was registered on Monday.

50 cases filed, 2,349 detained for violating lockdown

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Sunday registered over 50 cases and detained 2,349 people across the national Capital for violating Government orders during the coronavirus lockdown.

According to the data shared by the police, 52 cases were registered under section 188 (for disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) till 5pm.

Police said that a total of 2,349 people have been detained under section 65 (persons bound to comply with reasonable directions of police officers) and 118 vehicles have been impounded under section 66 of the Delhi Police Act.

"The police also registered 25 cases against people for stepping outside their residence without wearing masks. A total of 363 movement passes have been issued," police said.

Since March 24, more over lakh people have been detained so far for violating order under section 65 of the Delhi Police Act.

However, on Sunday Delhi Police received over 700 calls on their 24x7 helpline number to resolve issues related to lockdown. Police said that total 41,788 number of calls received by police till Sunday on their helpline 011-23469526.

"Police received 781 calls from Saturday 2 pm to Sunday 2 pm. Out of 781, around 73 calls were related to outside



Delhi, which have been referred to respective state helpline numbers. A total of two calls were received related to no food/no money, which have been forwarded to NGO for direct relief at their addresses," said police.

"While 394 calls were related to movement passes and were advised to apply online on website of Delhi Police," said police.

"The food delivery network established in all 15 districts with involvement of nearly 400 NGOs/ RWAs/Good Samaritans facilitated by Delhi Police has led to provision of meals/food packets at more than 250 locations which enabled feeding of nearly 222787 persons and dry ration kits to 1710 persons," said the police.

The move comes following nationwide restrictions due to complete lockdown imposed across the country to contain Coronavirus.

JNU academic calendar out, exams to be over by July 31

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Saturday has announced its academic calendar and has fixed the deadline for the completion of exams by July 31.

According to JNU vice-chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar, the academic calendar has been unanimously approved by all the deans of Schools and Chairpersons of Special Centres.

"Tentatively, students are expected to return to JNU campus between June 25 to and 30 so that they can complete their remaining academic components and complete their examinations. Examinations will be completed by July 31," he said.

"The next semester for the

continuing students will start from August 1. Even if the examination results are not ready by July 31, students will have the opportunity to provisionally register and move on to the next semester," he said.

"The entire monsoon semester registration process will be completely online making it easy for the students to register even from their homes," the vice-chancellor said.

The deadline for research scholars to submit their theses/dissertations has been extended to December 31.

"This academic calendar is tentative at this time and depends on how the lockdown is lifted in stages across the country and what new guidelines we may receive from the UGC," the VC added.



Vehicles on a road amid dust storm during the nationwide Covid-19 lockdown in New Delhi on Sunday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Sir Ganga Ram Hospital to resume OPD services today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Sir Ganga Ram Hospital will resume OPD (outpatient department) services in a graded manner from Monday. The hospital administration has created a proper infrastructure facilities to minimize the spread of COVID-19 especially keeping in mind that nearly 70 per cent Coronavirus positive persons are asymptomatic.

"The hospital said it will resume OPD services in a graded manner from Monday from 10 am to 4pm. "Each doctor will see maximum four patients in one hour," the hos-

The hospital administration said that patients are advised to show their risk status on Aarogya Setu app and appointment details on their mobiles on demand

pital said in a statement.

The hospital administration said that patients are advised to show their risk status on Aarogya Setu app and appointment details on their mobiles on demand.

The Delhi government had declared Sir Ganga Ram City Hospital, Pusa Road (affiliated

to Main Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Rajinder Nagar) in Delhi as a Covid-19 hospital for admitting confirmed and suspected cases of Covid-19 on payment basis.

In an order issued on April 30, Delhi Health Secretary Padmini Singla declared two private hospitals -- Maha Durga Charitable Trust Hospital and Sir Gangaram City Hospital -- as Covid-19 hospitals for admitting confirmed or suspected cases.

With the addition of fresh 224 Covid-19 cases on Saturday, the total number of corona positive stood at 6,542.

366 special trains ferried 4 lakh of migrant workers: Railways

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Railways has operated 366 "Shramik Special" trains since May 10 and ferried home 4 lakhs of migrants stranded in various parts of the country amid the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

As on May 10, a total of 366 "Shramik Special" trains have been operationalised from various states across the country, in which 287 trains had reached its destination and 79 trains are in transit, the min-

istry said in a statement.

Out of these 287 trains, 127 terminated in Uttar Pradesh, 87 in Bihar, 24 in Madhya Pradesh, 20 in Odisha, 16 in Jharkhand, four in Rajasthan, three in Maharashtra, two each in Telangana and West Bengal, and one each in Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

The ministry further said that subsequent to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) order regarding movement of migrant workers, pilgrims, tourists, students and other

persons stranded at different places by special trains, Indian Railways had decided to operate "Shramik Special" trains.

These trains have ferried migrants to cities like Tiruchchirappalli, Titlagarh, Barauni, Khandwa, Jagannathpur, Khurda Road, Prayagraj, Chhapra, Balia, Gaya, Purnia, Varanasi, Darbhanga, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Jaunpur, Hatia, Basti, Katihar, Danapur, Muzzaffarpur, Saharsa etc.

In these Shramik Special Trains, maximum around 1,200 passengers can travel observing social distancing, it said, adding that proper screening of passengers is ensured before boarding the train. During the journey, passengers are given free meals and water.

Every Shramik Special train has 24 coaches, each with a capacity of 72 seats. However, only 54 people are allowed in a coach to maintain social distancing norms and the middle berth is not allotted

to any passenger.

While the railways have not yet announced the cost incurred on the special services, the officials indicate that the national transporter has spent around Rs 80 lakh per service. The government had earlier stated that the cost of the services has been shared on 85:15 ratios with states. Since the Shramik Special train service started, Gujarat has remained one of the top originating stations followed by Kerala.



Kesari takes supplies to 5 littoral neighbours



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reaching out to the littoral countries located on the rim of the strategically important Indian Ocean, India has dispatched its warship to supply essential items to at least five countries in the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. The ship INS Kesari set sail on Sunday as part of ‘Mission Sagar’ and this effort is in line with India’s role as the first responder in the region.

Giving details of the deployment, officials said here the countries which will get the items include Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros. The ship is carrying food items, COVID related medicines including HCQ Tablets and Special Ayurvedic Medicines

with Medical Assistance Teams.

The deployment is in consonance with Prime Ministers Narendra Modi’s vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) and highlights the importance accorded by India to relations with her neighbouring countries and further strengthens the existing bond.

The operation is being progressed in close coordination with the Ministries of Defence and External Affairs, and other agencies of the government, officials said here.

As part of Mission Sagar, INS Kesari would enter the Port of Male in Republic of Maldives, to provide them 600 tons of food provisions. India and Maldives are close maritime neighbours with strong and extremely cordial

defence and diplomatic relations.

This even as INS Jalashwa reached Kochi, Kerala on Sunday with 698 Indian evacuees from Maldives, another Indian Navy warship INS Magar reached Male, capital of Maldives on Sunday to bring out 200 more Indians. They will be ferried to Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. Both the warships are deployed for the rescue effort codenamed ‘Operation Samudra Setu.’

INS Magar has made all necessary logistic, medical and administrative preparations at her base port Kochi to comfortably accommodate civilians before setting sail towards Maldives.

The ship will evacuate Indian citizens while ensuring all precautions related to COVID-19 including social distancing norms are followed. An entirely separate section of the ship with essential facilities like food and washrooms has been prepared to accommodate the evacuees and a separate mess has been allotted for women, infants and senior citizens. Additional precautions have been taken by dividing the evacuees into groups to avoid crowding at common areas like dining hall and bathrooms.

No let-up in paramilitary woes; 56 new cases in ITBP; BSF, CISF 18 each

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ITBP on Sunday reported 56 fresh Covid-19 cases followed by 18 cases each in BSF and CISF besides two infected persons in CRPF. With the 56 new infections in these Forces, the total number of infected persons in the paramilitary ranks rose to 752 on Sunday from 653 on Saturday.

With the latest additions of coronavirus infection in its ranks, the tally of the patients rose to 276 in the BSF which continues to be the worst hit paramilitary by the viral pandemic.

While 16 cases were reported from Tripura, two were tested positive for Covid-19 in the national capital in the Border Security Force (BSF), officials said.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) contracted two positive cases on Sunday taking the tally of infected persons to 236.

The CRPF has the second highest number of positive cases followed by ITBP which has reported 156 cases so far.

In the CRPF, there are 233 active cases with two patients



recovering from the disease and a Sub Inspector succumbing to the viral infection.

With 18 new positive cases, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has 66 corona virus infected persons.

The number of corona virus infections in the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) rose to 18 from the last count of 13 positive cases last week.

Paramilitary officials said the personnel have contracted the infections mostly during frontline duty along with the local police for enforcing lockdown and social measures as part of the Government’s efforts to break the chain of spread of the disease.

The Forces have underscored that all safety protocols are being strictly followed by the personnel during deployment with civil police.

India’s silent saviours arouse hope for homeless, jobless

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

These are tough times. As the Covid-19 crisis looms to new proportions brining the world to standstill, leaving many shelter-less and jobless while disrupting medical aid to many patients, a diverse lot of individuals and organisations are working silently to help such vulnerable groups across the country, reinforcing the faith that not all is lost.

About 1,586 kilometers away from the national capital, Mohammed Shujatulah of Humanity First Foundation spends his days distributing food to the needy outside hospitals, orphanages and railway stations in Hyderabad. Shujatulah relies on crowd funding and individual donations to sponsor his charity work.

Similarly, many NGOs like KAB Welfare Foundation and Blood on Demand helpline (9266666666) from Giving is Living Foundation have been holding blood donation camps in Delhi and NCR region to ensure that patients suffering from Thalassemia and other blood disorders do not have to face difficulties in Covid-times. Blood transfusion is the main treatment for the persons afflicted with blood disorder.

Their representatives felt that at this time when there is

GS Kapoor, Director of Giving is Living Foundation called for uniform blood processing and other charges as has been done in the case with the test for Covid-19 test. Why should there be variation for such an important life saving product? he asked.

huge shortage of blood due to lockdown following restriction on movement and donors scared of going hospitals amid Covid-19 scare, there should be a centralised venue like Indian Red Cross Society where donors can donate the blood and hospitals including those in private sector collect the blood.

GS Kapoor, Director of Giving is Living Foundation called for uniform blood processing and other charges as has been done in the case with the test for Covid-19 test. Why should there be variation for such an important life saving product? he asked.

On the other hand, The Hans Foundation, a public charitable trust which provides funding support to NGOs in the country has been reaching out to lakhs of migrants, poor, sick and homeless and hungry people

through its more than 350 NGOs in 26 states and union territories particularly in rural India.

On its part, Smile Train, the world’s largest cleft organization, recently launched a digital campaign in India titled, #EndTheStigma, to create awareness around the stigma associated with COVID-19 while members of Inner Wheel District 301, New Delhi, a branch of International Inner Wheel, a global NGO has come forward to distribute packed food for 5 000 people at different slum areas in Delhi.

Then there are stories, of children donating their piggy banks for purchase of face masks and sanitisers, and for feeding masses who live on street, and of groups of young volunteers distributing food and masks to needy, of old men donating their life savings towards improving health care infrastructure.

There are about 92,000 NGOs and many more individuals, some acknowledged by authorities but most of them working anonymously, who are trying to comfort millions battling pandemic and penury.

Individually, these strivings may not count much. Yet each one of them affirm the commitment to healing the ocean of humanity called India.

DRDO develops automated contact-less ultraviolet sanitisation cabinet to fight corona



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Playing a major role in the national effort to fight COVID-19, Hyderabad-based Defence Research and Development’s (DRDO) premier lab, Research Centre Imarat (RCI), has developed an automated contact-less ultraviolet (UVC) sanitisation cabinet, called Defence Research Ultraviolet Sanitiser (DRUVS). It has been designed to sanitise mobile phones, iPads, laptops, currency notes, cheque leafs, challans, passbooks, paper, envelopes, etc.

The DRUVS cabinet is having contactless operation which is very important to contain the spread of virus. The proximity sensor switches, clubbed with drawer opening and closing mechanism, makes its opera-

tion automatic and contactless. It provides 360 degree exposure of UVC to the objects placed inside the cabinet. Once the sanitisation is done, the system goes in sleep mode hence the operator need not wait or stand near the device.

The RCI has also developed an automated UVC currency sanitising device, called NOTESCLEAN. Bundles of currency notes can be sanitised using DRUVS, however, disinfection of each currency notes using it will be a time-consuming process. For that purpose, a sanitising technique has been developed, where one has to just place the loose currency notes at the input slot of the device. It picks the notes one by one and makes them pass through a series of UVC lamps for complete disinfection.

NDMA issues new safety guidelines to factories to avoid future disasters



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of the Vizag gas tragedy, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued new safety guidelines to factories insisting for test or trial runs to avoid industrial disasters in the units. The NDMA under Union Home Ministry insisted that no units should go for full fledged scale of production at least for seven days and test or trial run should be conducted to check the safety of plants. The detailed guideline directed all manufacturing units must conduct safety checks and trial runs and test the plants and machinery to avoid leaks or blasts in the units.

The NDMA also directed a series of pandemic prevention in work places such as 24-hour sanitisation of premises, temperature check of all employees twice daily, providing face

shields, masks and PPEs (personal protective equipment), creating physical distancing by erecting barriers on work floors and dining facilities and ensuring no sharing of tools etc. The authority also directed the factories to make financial provisions for checking the health care of the workers.

The guidelines say, “Factories need to maintain a sanitisation routine every two-three hours especially in the common areas that include lunch rooms and common tables which will have to be wiped clean with disinfectants after every single use.” This has to be done even in case of accommodation, they add. Apart from two temperature checks a day, the guidelines have asked factories to ensure workers showing symptoms do not report to work and there are provisions for hand sanitisers, gloves and mask for all.

LS Speaker: Monsoon Session likely on time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Sunday said that he is hopeful that Parliament’s Monsoon Session could be held on time, despite the Covid-19 crisis. The Monsoon Session normally begins in the last week of June or in the first week of July. “Despite COVID-19 crisis, I am hopeful that session could be held on time. But it will also depend on the situation prevailing at that time,” Birla told PTI

Last year, the Monsoon Session ran between June 20 and August 7. The Speaker underlined that it was a testing time due to the COVID-19 crisis, but expressed hope that the session

could be held as per normal schedule. Asked whether it will be possible to hold the session if there are strict social-distancing norms still in place in June-July, Birla said a way out could be found when that situation comes.

Few days ago Birla met Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairperson Venkaiah Naidu and discussed on using video conference methods in the panel meetings of Parliament. Birla, on whose initiative a control room was set up in Lok Sabha and state assemblies for better coordination between states in helping people, said this experiment turned out to be very successful as elected representatives from different States got in touch with each other and helped peo-



ple from their respective constituencies who are stuck in other places.

“MPs cutting across party lines reached out to people and helped them during this pandemic-forced lockdown. They

should be praised and I thank them,” he said. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Budget session had to be ended prematurely on March 23, over 10 days ahead of its last scheduled sitting on April 3.

Restaurants, hotels urge State Govts to allow liquor sale

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) President Anurag Katrinar said on one hand we are sitting with expensive liquor inventory and on the other hand, we are cash starved. “We request every state Government to allow us an opportunity to sell our liquor stocks, preferably through home delivery model. “This will help us deplete our stocks, raise some money to take care of urgent people needs and will still be compliant to social distancing norms. We understand that this may require some amendments to the law but I am sure it can be carried out under the current extraordinary circumstances,”

Katriar said. In similar vein, The Beer Cafe founder and CEO Rahul Singh said liquor sales in India take place through three licenced verticals -- retail, horeca (hotels, restaurants and catering) and canteen stores department.

The total horeca licenced places are around 30,000 in the country and “at any given time, the stock in hand would be for 1 month. Which means that due to lockdown, the total unsold inventory lying at various horeca outlets across India would be around Rs 3,000 crore,” he added.

While retail sales of liquor are opening, the service indus-

try continues to be in limbo, he said.

“What we are asking the state governments is simple. All we are asking is to allow us to sell our stock on a temporary basis. We would like to sell our stock,” Singh said. Every country in the world has done this and it is also needed to be done here, he added.

“At least allow us to sell this stock that is with us of around ₹3,000 crore and get liquidity to pay wages and Government should make temporary amendments to the rules. It will also ease the queues at the retail outlets,” he added.

Netizens troll Radio Pak over faulty weather update about J&K

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Netizens trolled Radio Pakistan on Sunday after it committed a major gaffe in its bid to get even with India.

After Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) and Doordarshan started to include the Gilgit-Baltistan region and Muzaffarabad in their weather forecasts, Radio Pakistan tweeted with maximum and minimum temperatures in Ladakh, albeit with a major error.

In a series of tweets, Radio Pakistan provided the weather details for all the regions in India occupied Jammu and Kashmir. But in one tweet, a major goof-up attracted many Twitter users. “In Ladakh maximum temperature is -4 degree centigrade and minimum temperature is -1 degree centigrade,” the tweet read.

Social media users were quick to point out the mix-up of the words ‘maximum’ and ‘minimum’ by Radio Pakistan’s Twitter handle. Twitter users soon pointed out that -4 degree centigrade was actually lower than -1 degree centigrade and cannot be the ‘maximum’ temperature. “This is the result when



math teachers are part time suicide bombers and terrorists,” wrote one of tweeter user.

One twitter user commented “India started Weather Forecast of Bangladesh in 1970 & one year later East Pakistan became History & Bangladesh was born. History will repeat itself in PoK & Gilgit Baltistan. Pak army start preparing from today itself”.

One user pointed that the people in Pakistan did not know the difference between the maximum and minimum. Another user advised Pakistan to follow

India correctly, even if they intended to follow the country blindly.

“In #Ladakh, maximum temperature is -4 degree centigrade and minimum temperature is -1 degree centigrade,” read the tweet. Another tweeted “India started Weather Forecast of Bangladesh in 1970 & one year later East Pakistan became History & Bangladesh was born. History will repeat itself in PoK & Gilgit Baltistan. Pakarmy start preparing from today itself”.

One Twitter user said, “It’s high time for you to engage

yourself in Education and schooling rather than militancy. See your officials don’t even understand what’s Max and what’s Low.” Another tweeted, “Wrong... max should be -1 and minimum should be -4.” “Ye tweet padh ke Pakistan ki maximum aukat aur minimum IQ pata chal gayi..(After reading the tweet one gets to know Pakistan’s maximum status and minimum IQ),” read another tweet. Another tweeted, “This is what happens when you divert all the money to terrorism from education.” “RIP common sense!!! -

4 max and - 1 min??? Kon se gole se Science padhe hote???” another Twitter user wrote.

Radio Pakistan’s tweet aimed at levelling scores with India triggered a flurry of funny posts with some using memes featuring Pakistan’s founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s photo.

Many others, with their tweets, schooled Pakistan to not copy their ‘daddy’ - a reference used by many trolls since the country was born out of India in 1947.

The IMD move to include PoK, Gilgit and Baltistan and Muzaffarabad in the Jammu Kashmir sub division comes days after the Pakistan Supreme Court’s decision to allow the Islamabad to amend a 2018 administrative order to conduct general elections in the region. The move came close on the heels of Pakistan Supreme Court’s decision to let its government hold elections in Gilgit-Baltistan. India had lodged a protest with Pakistan, asking Islamabad to immediately vacate all areas under its illegal occupation. The Gilgit-Baltistan Order of 2018 provided for administrative changes, including authorizing the Prime Minister of Pakistan to legislate on an array of subjects.

North-west, eastern, southern States to get rainfall, thunderstorm in 4 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday said that north-west, eastern and southern States are likely to get rainfall, thunderstorm and hailstorms with strong winds in the next four days due to western disturbances and convergence of moist easterly and southwesterly winds in the lower levels. The present weather conditions are likely to stay for a few more days and will delay the onset of the heat wave. In the past one and half month, unexpected rainfall and thunderstorm have damaged 25-30 percent rabi and horticulture crops across India.

According to the IMD, northwest and north eastern states including Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu Kashmir, Gilgit, Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand witnessed squally winds with widespread rainfall, thundershowers and hailstorms on Sunday. “The present weather conditions over North West and central India will

remain till May 14. The Western Disturbance is likely to move further northwards and interact with the low-level circulation and easterlies over northwestern parts of India causing increase of moisture incursion in the region. This feature likely to cause isolated to scattered rain/thundershowers over Western Himalayan Region and plains of northwest India mainly during May 10-14,” the IMD said.

“Due to trough/wind discontinuity, isolated to scattered rain/thundershowers very likely over central & south peninsular India during the next 5 days,” it said.

The North West, Central, North-East and Southern states are also predicted to receive rainfall in the next four days.

According to Dr Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the regional forecasting centre of the IMD, said it was a result of a fresh western disturbance and this condition is likely to stay for a few more days and will delay the onset of the heat wave. The IMD has earlier predicted thunderstorms accompanied with lightning,

hail and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) at isolated places in parts of northwest India.

The IMD in its weather summary and forecast bulletin predicted isolated to scattered rain/thundershowers, due to the Western Disturbance, over Western Himalayan region and plains of northwest India mainly between May 10 and 14 with peak activities on May 10. The north eastern and eastern may also receive scattered rainfall/strong winds/hailstorms in the next four days due to convergence of moist southwesterly winds in the lower levels.

“The Western Disturbance likely to move further northeast wards and interact with the low level circulation and easterlies over northwestern parts of India causing increase of moisture incursion in the region,” the IMD bulletin read.

The IMD predicted thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty winds (speed reaching 30-40 kmph) at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, and Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) till May 14.

UP's 1st plasma recipient dies of renal failure

Lucknow: A Government doctor, UP's first corona patient to get plasma therapy, died on Saturday night due to kidney infection.

Dr Sunil Agarwal, the 58-year-old government doctor, was infected in the line of duty. His corona test report came negative for the second consecutive time on Saturday, hours before he passed away.

Dr D. Himanshu, in-charge infectious disease unit, King George's Medical University (KGMU), said, "He was diabetic and suffering from acute respiratory syndrome. He was on ventilator throughout the treatment and given antiviral and symptomatic treatment. Since he was critical, we tried plasma therapy on him, after which the condition of his lungs improved and heart functioning was better. However, five days ago, he developed UTI that was not related to Corona. The dialysis was done twice, but infection aggravated and he died due to kidney failure."

The doctor's wife, who was also being treated for coronavirus, was declared recovered and discharged after her two consecutive tests came negative. She was in the isolation ward adjacent to the ICU

Asked about the success of plasma therapy, Dr Himanshu said though patients showed positive signs after plasma therapy, nothing conclusive could be said at the moment

where husband was being treated. Their son is a MBBS final year student in KGMU.

Asked about the success of plasma therapy, Dr Himanshu said though patients showed positive signs after plasma therapy, nothing conclusive could be said at the moment. He said that clinical trials of the therapy will continue on other patients to reach a conclusion.

Dr Sunil Agarwal was an anesthetist, posted in Orai in Jalaun district. He was a part of the Covid-19 team deployed in the Jalaun Medical College.

Chief Medical Officer Jalaun, Dr Alpna Bartariya said, "He was the first Corona case in the district and we still do not know how he got infected." Family members said Dr Agarwal had fever for eight days and difficulty in breathing since April 16. He came to Lucknow along with his wife in an ambulance on April 24. Test reports of couple confirmed corona on April 25.

IAN S

Yogi Govt to provide 90L jobs in MSME sector

Lucknow: The Yogi Adityanath Government in Uttar Pradesh has decided to provide employment to 90 lakh people in Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSME).

At a meeting with officials in Lucknow, the UP Chief Minister said: "It is our commitment to bring back the glory of MSME sector. The present crisis due to coronavirus has given us an opportunity. We are taking it as a challenge to turn Uttar Pradesh into the hub of MSME sector. Banks will give loans to every willing entrepreneur on generous terms. This sector will provide at least 90 lakh job opportunities."

At present there are 90 lakh MSMEs units in the state. The CM said rules for all types of NOCs will be relaxed along with the environmental clearances for new units. For transparency, all certificates will be available in a single-window system, Adityanath said.

Uttar Pradesh has a rich history of micro, small and medium industries. The specific product of every district (one product in each district) is proof of this, he said.

Yogi said, "Entrepreneurs who set up units in this sector will be able to apply and get NOCs quickly. Online applications will be invited for loans from banks. Loans fairs will be organised between May 12 and May 15 in each district. Banks have been directed to provide loans on easy terms."

The Chief Minister said the officials should motivate more entrepreneurs to set up units in the state. "Prepare a detailed action plan as soon as possible. Despite the recession, this sector has contributed significantly to the growth of per capita income of the State in the last three years. We will further increase the income through this," he said.

IAN S

Man found dead in Shramik Special train from Gujarat

Lucknow: A man was found dead in one of the Shramik Special trains coming to Lucknow from Gujarat, late on Saturday evening, police said.

He was rushed to the hospital where he was declared brought dead. Superintendent of Police (SP), Railways, Saumitra Yadav said the train had arrived from Dholi in Bhavnagar district of Gujarat. The SP said, "None of the passengers informed us of the man being sick. When the train reached Lucknow, the police noticed a man lying lifeless and rushed him to the Balarampur hospital where he was declared brought dead." The deceased has been identified as Kanhaiya, 30, resident of the Sitapur district.

The SP said that since all the co-passengers had left the train when the police found the man, no details about his illness could be ascertained from them.

IAN S

Agra jail inmate's death from Covid causes concern

Jail authorities have quarantined 14 other inmates of his ward and 16 wardens

IAN S ■ AGRA

Agra Central jail's inmate 60-year-old Virendra's death due to Covid-19 on Saturday, has alarmed other inmates and the jail administration, which has taken a series of steps to halt the spread of the infection.

Jail authorities have quarantined 14 other inmates of his ward and 16 wardens. DIG Lav Kumar has twice visited the jail to review the conditions and the facilities available in the jail premises. Other prisoners are said to be panic-stricken and have demanded testing. Against a capacity of around 1,500, the jail is overcrowded with 1,943 inmates.

The deceased Virendra, serving life sentence, had been shifted to Agra from Jhansi in December 2019. He was admitted to the SN Medical College on May 3, after a brain stroke due to high blood pressure. His report on May 6, confirmed he was Covid-19 positive.

Questions doing round here raise an accusing finger at the jail management. When meetings "mulaakaat" had been discontinued with the prisoners, of relatives and outsiders, how did Virendra get infected. Possibly he caught the infection in the hospital, but that is discounted as his stay was very short.

669 more infections in TN, total at 7,204

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Government's decision to relax lockdown regulations from Monday morning suffered a setback as the State registered 669 new cases of coronavirus positive patients on Sunday. The addition of the 669 new entrants to the pandemic table took the number of persons tested positive in the State to 7,204. The last nine days saw the number of covid-19 patients in the State going up from 2526 (May 1) to 7,204, an increase of 4,678.

A medial bulletin issued by the Tamil Nadu Government on Sunday said the the number of fatalities rose to 47 as three more persons succumbed to the pandemic. Chennai with 509 coronavirus cases led the tally on Sunday and the number of patients in the metropolis went up to 3,839, the highest in the State.

But what is of concern to community health specialists in Chennai and the remaining parts of the State is the move by the Government to relax the lockdown restrictions and allow the opening of business and commercial establishments all over barring the containment regions.

The Koyambedu Fruits and Vegetable Market, spread across an area of 65 acres has been shut down and all the shops were shifted to Thirumazhisai outside the Greater Chennai Municipal Corporation. Only wholesale traders would be allowed to operate from the new premises, according to the Government release.

Dr K Kolandaswamy, former director of public health and preventive medicine, Government of Tamil nadu who



is working as an advisor to the State Government, told The Pioneer that there was no need to panic over the increasing numbers. "This is bound to happen and we are seeing is the impact of our carelessness towards hygiene and sanitation in the past. You can see that villages where people observed cleanliness and sanitation are absolutely free of this pandemic. The increase in the number of coronavirus cases will continue for some more time but what we need is courage and the flexibility to observe the restrictions," said Dr Kolandaswamy.

The Tamil Nadu Government as part of its efforts to fight the pandemic and revive the ailing economy has set up a 24-member committee of experts headed by former Reserve Bank of India Governor C Rangarajan to assess the immediate and medium term impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the State's economy. The 88-year-old economist and his colleagues in the committee has been asked by chief minister Edappadi Palaniswamy to suggest means to improve the tax-GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) ratio, diversifying revenue sources and re-prioritizing expenditure. Tamil Nadu Government is strategizing ways and means to woo the US and European companies who are quitting China to set up manufacturing plants in the State.

Kerala's physicist makes safety handcuff

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A physicist based in Kerala's Kayamkulam has brought to life the age-old adage 'Necessity is the Mother of Invention'. Rest and recuperation are two words which are alien to Dr M G Gireeshan, a PhD in electronics who works as the vice-principal of Perumbavoor's Jai Bharat College. There are more than 200 technology driven innovations and inventions, many with patents, to his credit. Some of his inventions include the technology to prevent video piracy and the automatic system to guard un-manned level crossings at railway tracks.

Though the national lockdown due to coronavirus pandemic forced Gireeshan to stay at home, 200 km away from his workplace, he did not sit idle. In addition to extending help to his father P M Gopala Menon, a well known tantric scholar in the State, during his pujas, Dr.Gireeshan immersed himself in finding out a technology to beat the coronavirus



using the medium of electronics. The end result is a path-breaking instrument, which may send chill down the spine of law breakers.

There were many instances of persons ordered to undergo quarantine and isolation escaping from the isolation wards hoodwinking the health staff as well as police men guarding them. Many who were sent home for quarantining too made use of the first available opportunity to come out of the isolation rooms much to the horror of the health officials

and the local population.

This may soon come to an end if the technology developed by Gireeshan is put into use. Gireeshan used a combination metalcraft and electronics to develop a fool-proof Safety Handcuff in the form of a bracelet which could be worn by the person who has been asked to undergo quarantine or isolation.

If the person tries to unlock or remove the bracelet in his bid to escape from the quarantine room, an alarm bell will ring in the neighbouring



houses. "This has been done taking into account the habit of Keralaites everywhere. Our best security guards are our neighbours who keep watchful eyes and ears to monitor any movements in our house. The small alarm system, as simple as a calling bell, could be installed in the neighbouring houses and once the alarm is sounded the neighbours can alert the relations of the patient as well as the local police station. It is a wireless system," Gireeshan told The Pioneer.

Please don't be under the impression that the uniqueness of the invention is over. "It is possible for the policemen in the control room to detect any attempts by the quarantined

person to remove the bracelet or to escape from the quarantine room.

The TV screen installed in the control room or the mobile phone number attached to the control room would alert the policemen on duty about the intention of the person," said Gireeshan.

He said that he incurred an expense of Rs 4,000 to develop the Safety Handcuff. Since medical experts, especially community medicine doctors are of the view that the Covid-19 pandemic would be around for some more time, mass scale production of Safety Handcuffs is sure to being down the prices. Any takers for Safety Handcuffs?

Kerala reports seven new coronavirus cases

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala's seesaw battle with coronavirus saw the pandemic getting an upperhand on Sunday as seven persons tested positive for the pandemic. The new cases of covid-19 were reported from the districts of Wynadu (3), Thrissur (2), Ernakulam and Malappuram (one each). K K Shylaja, Kerala Minister for Health, told a TV channel later in the evening that three of the seven fresh cases were from the expatriates who reached the State on Thursday.

The details of the status of covid cases in the State was disclosed through a press release by the Kerala Government as the daily media briefing by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan was called off in the last minute.

The release stated that 26, 712 persons are under obser-

vation in the State as on Sunday. Out of this, 26,350 were under house observation while the rests have been hospitalized.

The Vande Bharat Air India flight which was to bring back 181 expatriates from Doha was cancelled in the last minute. The flight was expected to land in Thiruvananthapuram airport at 10 pm but the onward flight to Doha was not given permission by the Qatar Interior Ministry to land in that country, according to Gopalakrishnan, district collector, Thiruvananthapuram.

"We do not know the reasons for denial of permission for the Air India flight by the authorities in Qatar. But the passengers who had booked their tickets in this flight would be brought back on Tuesday," said Gopalakrishnan. Besides passengers from the southern

districts of Kerala, many persons hailing from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra had booked their tickets in this flight.

Though the specially trained pilots and cabin crew for the flight had boarded the aircraft at Kozhikode airport by Sunday noon, they were called back as the authorities in Qatar denied permission to the aircraft to land in Doha.

Notwithstanding setbacks like the return of coronavirus and the cancellation of the flight from Doha on Sunday, the State administration is going ahead with preparations to receive and take care of all the expatriates who are coming back.

Many private college buildings have been converted into temporary quarantine stations by modernizing and sanitizing them to receive the West Asian returnees.

AP corona tally at 1,980, 2 more districts cross 100 mark

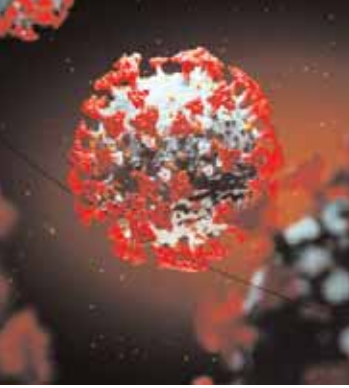
IAN S ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh's see-saw battle with Covid-19 saw the weekend close with 50 new cases on Sunday. The death toll further increased with one more death reported from the Kurnool district. Andhra Pradesh's nodal officer reported that the cumulative tally of Covid-19 cases in the state touched 1,980 by Sunday morning.

Of the 8,666 samples tested, 50 positive cases were detected in the 24 hours ending 10 a.m., Sunday. Chittoor district reported 16 cases —

the highest numbers in AP, followed by Kurnool with 13 new cases. Six cases were detected in the Guntur district and five cases each were reported from Anantapur and Nellore districts respectively. The Prakasam district had only two cases in the past 24 hours while Kadapa, Krishna, and Visakhapatnam districts registered one case each. No new cases were reported from four of the state's 13 districts.

Meanwhile, the death toll increased to 45, following the death of one person in the Kurnool district. The preceding 24 hours also saw 38



persons discharged from hospitals after they were declared totally cured of Covid-19. With this, the number of cured in the state stands at 925 people. Consequently, there are 1,010 active cases in Andhra Pradesh as of Sunday. On Saturday, the state's active cases tally had dipped below the 1,000-mark and with only 43 cases detected, Andhra Pradesh had reported it's lowest daily tally of Covid-19 cases in weeks.

Kurnool district's cumulative tally tops the state list at 553, followed by Guntur and Krishna districts with 376 and 338 cases respectively. Seven of

the state's 13 districts did not report any new cases in the last 24 hours.

The State's top Covid-19 hotspots of the Kurnool district continued to top the cumulative tally charts, with 566 cases detected here till date.

Guntur's tally stands at 382, Krishna district has 339 cases and Anantapur has 107 case.

Chittoor with 112 cases and Nellore with 101 cases are the latest to cross the 100-mark in terms of cumulative numbers. With the latest updates, six of the 13 districts have crossed the 100-mark.

Karnataka tally rises to 848 with 54 new cases

Bengaluru: A 56-year-old woman succumbed to Covid-19 here, even as people with travel history to north India spiked coronavirus cases in Karnataka, raising the tally to 848 with 54 new cases, highest single-day rise, according to an official on Sunday.

"Positive case number 846, a resident of Bengaluru Urban, died on Thursday. She was confirmed Covid-19 positive on Saturday," said a health official. The woman, who died in a private hospital, had symptoms of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI).

This is Karnataka's 31st Covid-19 death and Bengaluru Urban's seventh. Meanwhile, in the past 24 hours, Covid-19 cases spiked in Karnataka, with several people from Bagalkote, Belagavi and Shivamogga testing positive after visiting Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Ajmer in Rajasthan.

Gujarat has been badly hit by coronavirus and is second to Maharashtra in the number of cases. "As of 5 p.m. Sunday, cumulatively 848 Covid positive cases have been confirmed in the state. These include 31 deaths," said the official. On Sunday, 36 people were dis-

charged -- Kalaburagi (13), Chikkaballapura (4), Vijayapura (8), Belagavi, Gadag and Bagalkote, 3 each and Mysuru and others, 1 each.

Among the 394 active cases, 388 are isolated at designated hospitals and are stable, except six in the ICU.

Thirty-two of the new cases are men while 22 are women, including 15 below 20. There were also seven children below 10 years of age.

Of the 53 new cases, Belagavi contributed 22, Shivamogga and Bagalkote, 8 each, Bhatkal in Uttara Kannada, 7, Kalaburagi, 4, Bengaluru Urban, 3 each, Chintamani in Chikkaballapura and Davangere, 1 each.

All eight men from Shivamogga had a travel history to Ahmedabad, seven of whom are from Shikaripura, hometown of Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

Until Saturday, Shivamogga was a green zone without a case, but eight new cases in the past 24 hours made it an orange zone overnight. Shivamogga is 312 km northwest of Bengaluru. All Belagavi and Bagalkote cases had a travel history to Ajmer. All Bhatkal cases were contacts of earlier cases. IAN S

Maha council polls: Uddhav set to get elected unopposed

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

With the ruling Congress deciding one of its candidate from the fray of the Maharashtra Legislative Council polls scheduled for May 21, Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray is likely to get elected unopposed to the Upper House of the State Legislature along with eight other candidates in the fray.

A day after its state unit Balasaheb Thorat announced that the party would field two candidates -Rajesh Godirao Rathod and Rajeshkisho alias Papa Modi - for the May 21 Council polls, the Congress announced its decision to withdraw one of the two candidates from the poll fray.

Since there are now nine candidates for as many seat in the State Council for which the biennial elections are slated for May 21, the election of Uddhav and eight other candidates in the fray has become a foregone conclusion now.

Though Thorat was insistent on

contesting two seats instead of one seat as he did not want to give one extra seat to the BJP, the Congress high command directed him to field only candidate to ensure that Uddhav is elected unopposed in the elections.

The Congress high command did not want unnecessary complications which would have arisen in the event of an election for nine seats from among the ten candidates. If there was an election, there was a possibility of cross-voting which was not in the interest of the Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi in the state. "Elections to nine Maharashtra Council seats will happen unopposed. Keeping in mind ongoing Coronavirus crisis and the candidature of Uddhav Thackeray in the elections, the Congress has withdrawn one of its candidates. We are grateful to State Congress president Balasaheb Thorat and senior Congress leader Ashok Chavan," Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut tweeted in the evening.

Uddhav, who was sworn in as the chief minister on November 28 last year, is not a member of either of the

Houses of the State Legislature. As provided under the Constitution, Uddhav will in the normal course have to get elected to either of the Houses on or before May 27, the six-month deadline for his becoming a member of either of the Houses.

The biennial elections to the State Legislative Council have been necessitated by the retirement on April 24 of nine members -- comprising four from the NCP, three from the BJP and one each from the Shiv Sena and Congress.

Each party needs 29 votes to ensure its candidates elected to the Upper House of the State Assembly.

The BJP is the biggest gainer because of the Congress' decision to pull out one of its candidates from the fray.

Though it has a strength of 105 in the 288-member State Assembly as against 116 votes needed for winning four seats, the BJP had gone ahead and fielded four candidates. They are: Praveen Dhatke, Ranjitsinh Mohite-Patiol, Dr Ajit Gopchade and Gopichand Paralkar as its candidates for the State Council polls.

Meanwhile, 26 new positive cases, three from Jammu division and 23 from Kashmir division were detected on Sunday taking the final tally in Jammu & Kashmir to 862

number of Rohingyas, screened during the health audit across different temporary camps in Jammu also tested negative during the survey,official sources said.

Moreover, 15 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals of Kashmir Division, the bulletin said.

District Development Commissioner, Dr Piyush Singla Sunday said, they have made all arrangements to receive the people of J&K who are stranded outside and are being brought back to home through special trains and to be de-boarded at railway station Udhampur.

The DDC informed that magistrates along with other staff members have been deployed to receive these passengers at the platform. Besides, the district administration has made a specially designed app for registration of passengers. Data entry operators have been deployed to guide the passengers about process of online registration on App. The Nodal officer at control room will get the real time data for data base management, which will facilitate the allocation of buses for onward journey of these people to their home towns immediately.

As Trump pulls back from virus, Congress races to fill void

Washington: As President Donald Trump tries to moves on from the coronavirus, Congress is rushing to fill the void and prepare the country for the long fight ahead.

Jolted by the lack of comprehensive federal planning as states begin to reopen, lawmakers of both parties, from the senior-most senators to the newest House member, are jumping in to develop policies and unleash resources to prevent a second wave.

In the House and Senate, lawmakers are pushing sweeping proposals for a national virus testing strategy. One seasoned Republican wants a war-like public health fund. A New Jersey freshman launched neighboring colleagues on a regional bipartisan task force to help guide Northeastern states back to work.

“This is going to be on us,” said Rep. Mikie Sherrill, D-N.J., a former Navy helicopter pilot in her first term in Congress.

The legislative branch is stepping up in the absence of a consistent, convincing White House strategy, in much the way governors have been forced to go it alone during the nation’s pandemic response.

Congress is preparing its fifth coronavirus aid package, a

“Rooseveltian” effort, as Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York put it. It’s a Democratic-heavy plan that wary Republicans are watching, despite support in the party for some provisions.

Unlike the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, when President George W. Bush called on Congress to create a Department of Homeland Security, or during the Great Depression, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt led the nation to the New Deal, Trump is not seeking a legacy-defining accomplishment in the heat of national crisis.

Instead, Trump has turned the life-and-death decision-making away from the federal government and onto the states for the next phase of the response. He expects governors to arrange virus testing systems and find their own medical gear, saying the federal government is a “supplier of last resort.”

The White House coronavirus task force has abandoned daily briefings.

Encouraging the economic rebound, Trump said Thursday he’s looking forward to “getting on with it.”

“When the nation is in the middle of the major, historic

crisis, the norm is that both branches focus on the issue,” said Julian E. Zelizer, a Princeton professor of history and public policy. “It’s not normal for the president to just move on.”

The administration issued guidelines for reopening state and local economies, but shelved a more detailed 17-page report from the experts at the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

New projections say the death toll could essentially double this summer, from 70,000 as of Friday to 134,000 by early August, as states loosen stay-home restrictions, according to a model from the University of Washington.

“It is lot for Congress to take on,” Andy Slavitt, a former federal health official, told the House Energy and Commerce Committee on Friday.

“There’s never been a greater time when Americans need the support of Congress and their state and local leaders.”

As the Senate resumed this past week while the House stayed largely away, lawmakers drilled into pandemic policy.

Tom Frieden, a former CDC director, outlined a 10-point strategy in testimony before a House Appropriations

subcommittee.

“As bad as this has been, it’s just the beginning,” Frieden warned of the long wait ahead for improved treatments and an eventual vaccine.

Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma, the ranking Republican on the committee, was particularly interested in Frieden’s proposal for a new public health fund modelled on those Congress uses to pay the

wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, separate from budget caps.

“There needs to be a whole big plan,” said Cole.

On the other side of the Capitol, an exasperated Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., grilled officials about the national testing strategy she has pushed since early March. “We can’t reopen our country safely,” she said, until tests are “are fast, free, and everywhere.” *PTI*

3 members of White House virus task force in quarantine

Washington: Three members of the White House coronavirus task force, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, placed themselves in quarantine after contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, another stark reminder that not even one of the nation’s most secure buildings is immune from the virus.

Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and a leading member of the task force, has become nationally known for his simple and direct explanations to the public about the coronavirus and COVID-

19, the disease it causes. Also quarantining are Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, Stephen Hahn.

Fauci’s institute said that he has tested negative for COVID-19 and will continue to be tested regularly. It added that he is considered at “relatively low risk” based on the degree of his exposure, and that he would be “taking appropriate precautions” to mitigate the risk to personal contacts while still carrying out his duties. *PTI*

UK expected to stick to lockdown as Boris outlines future

London: Taking a different tack than most other nations, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to extend the bulk of the country’s coronavirus lockdown restrictions for three weeks or so when he speaks to the nation Sunday evening.

Following a week of mixed messages that started with Johnson indicating that there will be changes to the lockdown beginning Monday, the government has sought to douse speculation that they will amount to much. That’s because the U.K., which has recorded the most coronavirus-related deaths in Europe at 31,662, is still seeing a relatively high number of infections. “Extreme caution is actually the watchword on this,” Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said Saturday.

His comments came as British police warned they are “fighting a losing battle” as Londoners headed out to parks, families descended on the pebble beaches of Brighton in southern England and many

drivers set out on what are considered unessential journeys amid the lockdown.

“It’s vital that we don’t throw away essentially the great work of seven weeks of people respecting very impressively the rules and the guidelines, by throwing it away because it happens to be sunny outside this weekend,” Shapps said.

“That would be absolutely tragic.” The worry is that the U.K. Lockdown, which began March 23 and has clearly reduced the transmission of the virus, will need to be extended for longer than envisioned.

Johnson has voiced worries of a second spike in infections and deaths — something that health experts have said is absolutely going to happen worldwide as nations ease their lockdowns.

Johnson’s Conservative Government has also faced wide criticism for being too slow to react to the pandemic and for not supplying medical workers with enough protective gear. *PTI*

Citing virus, Iran says it’s ready for prisoner swap with US

Tehran: Iran says it is ready for unconditional prisoner swap talks with the United States because of fears that the coronavirus could put the lives of the prisoners at risk, Iranian media reported Sunday.

An Iranian news website, Khabaronline.Ir, quoted Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiei as saying there is a “readiness for all prisoners” to be discuss without condition.

“But the US has refused to answer, so far,” said Rabiei. “We hope that as the outbreak of the Covid-19 disease threatens the lives of Iranian citizens in the US prisons, the US government eventually will prefer lives to politics.”

Rabiei said Iran considers the U.S. Government responsible for the health of the Iranian prisoners, adding that “it seems that the U.S. has more readiness to bring the situation to an end.” Rabiei did not elaborate but Iranian media in recent months said there are several Iranians in US custody, including Sirous Asgari, a 60-year-old university professor. Last week, US officials said



they were making progress in efforts to secure the release of a detained Navy veteran in Iran. But they were also pushing back on Iranian suggestions that a swap was in the works for the imprisoned Iranian American officials have been trying to deport since last year.

Ken Cuccinelli, the acting deputy Homeland Security secretary, said Wednesday that the cases of American detainee Michael White in Iran and Asgari, the Iranian imprisoned in the United States, have never been connected. He expressed frustration with recent comments from Iranian officials that there may be a link between the two and complained that Iran had been slow to accept Asgari’s return.

White, of Imperial Beach, California, was detained in

July 2018 while visiting a girlfriend in Iran. He was convicted of insulting Iran’s supreme leader and posting private information online.

He was released from prison in March on a medical furlough that required him to remain in the country. White is among tens of thousands of prisoners granted medical furloughs by Iran, which was one of the first countries to be hit hard by the spreading coronavirus. Trump administration officials have repeatedly said they consider the release of American hostages and detainees to be a high priority.

In December, Iran released a Princeton University scholar held for three years on widely disputed espionage charges in exchange for the release of a detained Iranian scientist.

In March, the family of former FBI agent Robert Levinson, who vanished in Iran 13 years ago, said they had been informed by U.S. Officials that they had determined that Levinson was probably dead. Officials have not said how they reached that conclusion. *AP*

Pak reports record 1,991 new cases, tally crosses 29,000

Islamabad: Pakistan reported a record number of 1,991 coronavirus cases in a single day, taking the total number of infections to over 29,000, the health ministry said on Sunday

as the country began easing the month-long lockdown imposed to curb the spread COVID-19.

Despite a surge in the number of COVID-19 infections, the first phase of the easing of the lockdown began on Saturday. The government announced removing restrictions by allowing more businesses to open and operate from dawn to 5pm.

However, doctors have warned against easing the restrictions. The Representative of the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) have demanded that the government observe the World Health Organization protocols and implement a strict lockdown.

The Ministry of National Health Services said that 21 new deaths have been reported in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of fatalities to 639.

A total of 8,023 people have recovered so far.

Punjab registered 11,093 cases, Sindh 10,771, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 4,509, Balochistan 1,935, Islamabad 641, Gilgit-Baltistan 430 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir 86.

The total number of infections in the country has reached 29,465, it said.

So far, the authorities have conducted 283,517 tests, including 13,341 in the last 24 hours.

People flocked to the markets on Saturday even before guidelines were issued by the provincial governments on the easing of the lockdown.

While allowing more businesses to open, the Pakistan government asked people to strictly observe social distancing and avoid going out unless there is an urgent need. Meanwhile, Pakistan opened its border with Afghanistan at Chaman in Balochistan province from 8am to 5pm on Saturday to allow 2,977 Afghan nationals to cross over to their country. *PTI*

Around the Globe

Moscow: Russia’s count of coronavirus infections has climbed above 200,000 after its highest daily tally of new cases. Figures released Sunday recorded 11,012 new cases of the virus for a total of 209,688, with 1,915 deaths attributed to COVID-19.

Colombo: Sri Lanka has gradually begun relaxing curfew as the coronavirus outbreak is now “under control to a certain degree”, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa said on the eve of opening up economic activities in the country after nearly two months.

Johannesburg: Africa has more than 60,000 confirmed coronavirus cases, according to a tally from the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dhaka: Bangladesh has reported 14 more deaths due to coronavirus and registered a record 887 COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, bringing the total number of infections to 14,657, officials said on Sunday.

Beijing: China has reported 14 new coronavirus cases including one from the first COVID-19 epicentre of Hubei province, taking the number of infections in the country to 82,901, while over 4,630 people have succumbed to the disease, health officials said on Sunday.

Dubai: A UAE based 3D printing company has transformed its laboratories into a manufacturing hub to produce more than 1,000 reusable personal protective equipment for the frontline workers battling the deadly coronavirus in the country.

Berlin: Police in Germany say dozens of people were detained at protests against the pandemic restrictions after some rallies turned violent on Saturday.

Vatican City: Pope Francis is calling on leaders of European Union countries to work together to deal with the social and economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

Kuala Lumpur: Movement restrictions in Malaysia are to be extended by four weeks until June 9 despite a sharp drop in infections in the country.



Anti-Government protesters burn tires in front of barriers set up by security forces to close the Jumhuriyah Bridge leading to the Green Zone Government area, during ongoing protests in Baghdad, Iraq on Sunday

South Korea reiterates proposal to jointly tackle virus with North Korea

Seoul: South Korea’s president says his proposal to North Korea on jointly tackling infectious diseases such as the COVID-19 illness remains valid, though the North hasn’t responded.

President Moon Jae-in told reporters Sunday that he believes the North is suffering “various difficulties” over the coronavirus pandemic.

Moon didn’t elaborate. His spy agency recently told lawmakers the virus pandemic resulted in sharply shrinking the North’s external trade and causing panic buying in

Pyongyang, the North’s capital.

Moon says he’ll try to persuade North Korea to accept his offers for reconciliation projects after the pandemic is stabilized. Moon has proposed reconnecting severed railways, resuming reunions of families split by war and sending South Korean tourists to North Korea.

North Korea has been taking intense anti-virus quarantine steps but it has steadfastly claimed there hasn’t been a single case of the coronavirus on its territory. Many foreign experts are skeptical of the North’s claim. *AP*

Taliban say they don’t have missing US contractor

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

Taliban leaders searched their ranks, including the much-feared Haqqani network, and on Sunday said they are not holding Mark R. Frerichs, a Navy veteran turned contractor who was disappeared in Afghanistan in late January.

“We don’t have any information about the missing American,” Sohail Shaheen, Taliban’s political spokesman, told the AP in a message on Sunday.

A second Taliban official familiar with the talks with the United States said “formally and informally” the Taliban have notified US officials they are not holding Frerichs. He spoke on condition of

anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

Washington’s peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who negotiated a peace deal with the Taliban signed in February to allow America and NATO countries to withdraw their troops and end decades of war, asked for Frerichs’ release during his meetings this week in the Middle Eastern State of Qatar where the Taliban maintain a political office.

In a statement late Saturday by the US Embassy in Kabul, Khalilzad also sought Pakistan’s help in locating Frerichs. He arrived in Islamabad on Friday from Doha before heading next door to India in his pursuit of a lasting peace in Afghanistan.

HK police grapple with pro-democracy protesters

Hong Kong: Riot police in Hong Kong grappled with pro-democracy protesters who gathered in shopping malls on Sunday to sing, chant slogans and flash hand signs after permission for a Mother’s Day march was denied.

The incident indicated a desire on the part of some in the pro-democracy camp to revive the protests against Hong Kong’s Beijing-backed government that paralyzed parts of the semi-autonomous Chinese territory for months last year.

With the coronavirus outbreak subsiding, more people in Hong Kong have responded to online calls for action, although in far smaller num-

bers than the hundreds of thousands who marched last year against proposed legislation that could have seen dissidents or criminal suspects extradited to mainland China to face unfair trials and possible torture.

The legislation was eventually withdrawn, but the protests continued, growing increasingly violent as both police and demonstrators adopted hard-line tactics. Thousands, mainly young people, were arrested in the demonstrations for crimes including rioting and possessing weapons.

Local media reports said at least one person was detained in Sunday’s action, which

attracted numerous journalists wearing high-visibility vests.

The incident followed scuffles Friday in Hong Kong’s Legislative Council as lawmakers from opposing camps competed to preside over a meeting to determine who has authority over a key committee that scrutinizes bills.

Hong Kong’s pro-Beijing and pro-democracy lawmakers have been caught in an impasse over the delayed election of a chairperson of the Legislative Council’s House Committee, which reads bills and determines when they can be put to a final vote. Among the bills under consideration is one that would criminalise disrespect of China’s national anthem. *AP*

Older Turks enjoy walks outside as coronavirus rules relaxed

Ankara: Turkey’s senior citizens got their first chance to venture outside in seven weeks Sunday under relaxed coronavirus restrictions.

People aged 65 and over — the age group most at risk from the virus — were subjected to a stay-at-home curfew on March 21.

As part of a rolling program of reduced controls, they are now allowed out for four hours. People under 20, who are also subject to a curfew, will be allowed outside for a similar period later this week.

“It’s very nice to be out of the house after such a long time,” said Ethem Topaloglu, 68, who wore a medical mask as he strolled in a park in Ankara, the capital.

“Although I’ve been able to sit on the balcony, it’s not the same as walking around outside. My neighbours have been bringing my food and other things in these last weeks,” he said. “It’s important to stay at home and be safe but it’s very difficult as well.”

The relaxed curfew for over 65s came during the fifth weekend of lockdowns in Turkey’s largest cities. Health Minister Fahrettin Koca tweeted his thanks to the elderly for their “great support” in fighting the outbreak by staying at home and reminded them to wear masks outside. Turkey has recorded 137,115 infections, including 3,739 deaths, according to John Hopkins University. As the number of new

cases dropped, the government announced a “normalization plan” while warning of tougher measures should the number of infections rebound.

Entry and exit restrictions were lifted for seven provinces where the outbreak has been brought under control. They remain in place for 24 other provinces, including Istanbul and Ankara.

Monday will see shopping malls, barber shops and beauty salons open up under new social distancing restrictions. Domestic and some international flights will resume at the end of May.

After recording its first coronavirus case on March 11, Turkey shut down entertainment venues, sports facilities and imposed travel bans. *AP*

COVID-19 CRIPPLES ECONOMY

Calls for debt monetisation gain traction

PTI ■ MUMBAI

After the Government over the weekend hiked market borrowing by 54 per cent in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, calls for monetising debt seem to be gaining traction with experts saying that repercussions of not spending to support the economy will be irreparable.

Conservative monetary economist and former RBI chief Raghuram Rajan, over the weekend, has also pitched for monetising public debt and higher fiscal deficit in a “measured” manner to protect the economy and the poor and the vulnerable in these “abnormal times”.

The first such call came in early April when Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac after the State had to pay a tad less than 9 per cent for ₹ 6,000-crore market borrowing to meet the exigencies arising from the pandemic. Coronavirus has snuffed out lives of more than 2,100 people and infected nearly 63,000 in India. Globally, the death toll is over 2.79 lakh and more than 40 lakh have been infected.

Another solution for raising funds suggested by Isaac was to launch COVID bonds with under 5 per cent interest rate by the Centre and paying the states from the mop-up. Isaac had said RBI should buy such bonds from the Centre.

Many other economists have also called for adopting unconventional tools to help the poor and boost the economy. Monetisation is generally central bank printing more currency by expanding its balance sheet.

Monetisation should not be a constraint on public spending, Rajan said, adding, “the government should be concerned about protecting the economy and should spend what is needed”.

Devendra Kumar Pant, Chief Economist at India Ratings, also backs the idea of government borrowing more and supporting the economy at the cost of fiscal prudence, saying the repercussions of not spending now to support the poor and the economy will be much more severe and irreparable.

“The need of the hour is money. The Centre being the

Many other economists have also called for adopting unconventional tools to help the poor and boost the economy

best and the largest borrower, it has to do the heavy-lifting in these extraordinary times and should not be constrained by the worries about fiscal deficit and other attendant pains.

“Money is the only need now,” Pant told PTI without directly calling for monetising debt.

According to him, the Centre should bring money from wherever possible and give to the states as loans at a lower interest rate than they are being forced to pay now.

That Kerala, despite being the best performing large state in the COVID-19 fight, had to pay 8.96 per cent is not something that the Centre should ignore, Pant noted.

He underlined that talking about fiscal prudence now will be suicidal “as the repercussions of not spending now will

be so severe that it will take years to return to normalcy”.

Singaporean lender DBS Bank’s economist Radhika Rao also favours higher spending and suspending the FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act) goal posts given the extraordinary risks to growth and the need for pump-priming the economy. She also expects a larger fiscal package being offered soon as the so far given support - Rs 1.7 lakh crore or 0.8 per cent of GDP- is much smaller than the anticipated economic cost of the lockdown.

“The second package should be a combination of higher food and cash handouts to the vulnerable, backstop for MSMEs, shouldering part of the wage burden for smaller enterprises, temporary relief to taxpayers, amongst others,” she told PTI.

The Reserve Bank should contain the borrowing costs of the Centre and the states by higher bond purchases which will help quell bond yields, she added.

Rajan’s comments on monetising deficit has come after the finance ministry on

May 8 decided to raise market borrowing by 54 per cent to Rs 12 lakh crore for FY21, up from Rs 7.8 lakh crore estimated in the budget. This will take the total market borrowing by the Centre and the states to close Rs 24 lakh crore this fiscal.

“Monetisation will neither be a game-changer nor a catastrophe, if done in a measured way. However, the caveat- it should be measured - is key,” Rajan said.

On fiscal deficit, which is slated to top 5 per cent this year, Rajan in his blog post said the government “should also worry about getting fiscal deficit back in shape over the medium term, and the more it spends now, the harder that will be. But its inability to finance itself or fears of monetisation should not be a constraint”.

According to Rajan, the professor for finance at the Chicago University, large government spending will directly ignite demand which is needed especially “in abnormal times like this when demand is depressed and the environment is disinflationary, and this should not be a central worry”.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sales of non-essential items on e-commerce platforms in the first week of May were lower than last year on account of lockdown, but orders are scaling fast with people buying apparel, smartphones and grooming products among other items, according to industry executives.

E-commerce companies have been permitted to sell all items in orange and green zones starting from May 4, 40 days after the nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25.

In the first two phases of the lockdown, e-commerce companies like Flipkart, Amazon and Snapdeal were allowed to sell only essential items like grocery, medicines and healthcare products.

Depending on the number of cases of coronavirus infections, areas have been divided into red, orange and green zones.

However, in the red zones that include top e-commerce hubs like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune and Hyderabad, e-commerce com-

panies can still ship only essential items.

While people are going online to buy items like chargers, extension cords, notebooks and pens to facilitate work and study from home, they are also picking up grooming products like trimmers, games like chess, monopoly and carom, and books across genres, a senior industry executive said. The person added that since delivery of non-essentials is still not allowed across the country, the volume is less compared to previous year. However, against March numbers (pre-lockdown), the growth is certainly healthy.

Another challenge facing the industry is the availability of limited manpower for warehouses and delivery. “Our order volumes grew rapidly and swiftly reached 50 per cent of pre-lockdown volumes within five days of expanded operations. Compared year-on-year, the order volumes for the first 9 days of May 2020 was 52 per cent of volumes in the same period last year,” a Snapdeal spokesperson said.

The spokesperson added that another clear indicator of

demand was conversions (from visitors to buyers), which was more than double of pre-lockdown average and even though demand estimation is a complex process right now due to multiple variables, the intensity and speed of demand restoration exceeded expectations. Home use category like utensils, mixers and grinders, mops and brooms, and mosquito nets featured high in both search and sales.

Snapdeal gets more than 75 per cent of its business from non-metro cities.

The spokesperson said locations like Panipat, Ambala, Panchkula, Amritsar in north; Udaipur, Valsad, Jamnagar and Goa in west; Coimbatore, Visakhapatnam, Pondicherry, Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode and Tuticorin in south, Cuttack in India and Guwahati in North-East have emerged as current high demand zones. An Amazon India spokesperson said sellers on its platform have received orders for smart devices, electronics, kitchen appliances, clothes, toys and games and other work and study from home items.

States for reviving economic activities in calibrated manner

IAIS ■ NEW DELHI

The State Chief Secretaries on Sunday called for stepping up of economic activities in a calibrated manner considering the Covid-19 pandemic.

The demand was raised at a meeting Union Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba had with the Chief Secretaries and Principal Secretaries (Health) of states and Union Territories (UTs) through video link.

They shared with Gauba information on the situation during the lockdown. The lockdown, enforced on March 25, was to end on April 14. It was extended to May 3, and then again to May 17.

Reviewing the Covid-19 situation in states and UTs, the Cabinet Secretary noted that over 350 Shramik special trains had ferried 3.5 lakh migrant workers. He urged them to cooperate with railways in running more Shramik special trains.

Noting the cooperation of states and UTs in return of Indians from abroad under the Vande Bharat Mission, Gauba said movement of doctors, nurses and para-medics should be unhindered and steps be taken to facilitate and protect corona warriors.

RIL sets May 14 as ‘record date’ for ₹53,125 crore rights issue

IAIS ■ MUMBAI

Reliance Industries (RIL) has set May 14 as the ‘record date’ for the ₹53,125 crore rights issue.

“The rights issue committee, constituted by the board of directors of the company, has, at its meeting held today (Saturday), fixed May 14 as the ‘record date’ for the purpose of determining the equity shareholders entitled to receive the rights entitlement in the rights issue (eligible shareholders),” the company said in a regulatory filing on Saturday evening.

The rights issue opening and closing dates would be informed separately, it said.

On April 30, the RIL Board

The RIL Board approved the rights issue of up to ₹53,125 crore at ₹1,257 per share

approved the rights issue of up to ₹53,125 crore at ₹1,257 per share. The rights entitlement ratio would be one equity share for every 15 equity shares held by eligible shareholders as on the record date.

The proposed rights issuance will be the first by RIL in three decades. The issue will be structured as partly paid shares and will enable shareholders to phase out the outlay on their investment over time.

Liquor makers, restaurants pitch for home delivery of booze

Suggest several models

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The liquor industry along with restaurants, bars as well as some online food aggregators have urged the government to permit home delivery of alcohol, saying this will not only ensure social distancing but also be a lifesaver for sectors ravaged by the COVID-19 crisis.

The All India Brewers’ Association (AIBA) has suggested creating a “special license for private e-commerce companies (such as Flipkart, Amazon, Grofers and others) and food delivery companies

(such as Zomato, Swiggy and others) to take orders and fulfil demand from the existing licensed retailers and wholesalers in states.”

It also mooted setting up an online ordering platform for liquor, to be owned by the state excise departments.

Restaurants and hotels, which are sitting on a liquor stockpile of around Rs 3,000 crore, are asking state governments to allow them to sell the stock lying with them due to the coronavirus lockdown. “We request every state government to allow us an opportunity to sell our liquor stocks, preferably through a home delivery model.” This will help us deplete our stocks, raise some money to take care of urgent people needs and will

still be compliant to social distancing norms. We understand that this may require some amendments to the law but I am sure it can be carried out under the current extraordinary circumstances,” National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) President Anurag Katriar said.

Online food ordering platforms are ready to start such services if permitted by the government. As per industry sources, discussions are underway between various authorities and e-commerce players like Swiggy for online sales and home delivery of liquor.

“Governments should consider institutionalising home delivery as a separate channel administered online. We will give all necessary assistance and

Leasing of warehousing, industrial space to rebound strongly post virus crisis: Experts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The leasing of warehousing and industrial space has slowed down because of the nationwide lockdown but demand may rise post-COVID-19 with expected growth in e-commerce and possible shift of manufacturing activities from China to India, according to industry experts.

“Industrial and warehousing is the most resilient segment in India, which is

likely to emerge quickest and strongest post-COVID-19,” property consultant Savills India said in a report. The demand-supply of industrial and warehousing space is expected to soften as compared to previous estimates in the near to medium term due to coronavirus pandemic, the consultant said.

Higher supply contraction could lead to decrease in vacancies and optimum pricing, it added.

In its report ‘India Front & Center - Production & Supply Chain’, Savills India has revised its estimates downwards for both absorption and new supply of warehousing and logistics space for 2020. The projection for warehousing and logistics leasing has been revised to 30 million sq ft from 40 million sq ft earlier.

Fresh supply is now estimated at 12 million sq ft this year from 42 million sq ft projected earlier across top eight cities

- Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune.

When contacted, Embassy Industrial Parks CEO Aditya Virwani said, “Both logistics and industrial requirements will see an increase post-COVID. The digital shift to online retail has been a success during these times and that will result in e-commerce firms growing in India.”

Embassy Industrial Parks has facilities in Maharashtra,

Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Delhi-NCR. On industrial space, Virwani, who is also COO of Embassy Group, said: “India has not been able to compete with China and other Asian countries with manufacturing investments. Now is the opportunity to capitalise on the fear of setting up in China.”

With the right support of the government, Virwani said the industrial space can see a boom. “Our existing clients are holding off on growth in China

and looking for new markets.” Rajesh Jaggi, vice chairman - real estate, Everstone Group, said the warehousing segment is considered as an essential service and has therefore largely not been affected due to the lockdown. Everstone group-backed IndoSpace is into development of logistic and industrial parks.

“Leasing activity is expected to be slower in this period as companies will focus on maintaining efficiencies of their man-

ufacturing and supply chain processes, instead of new procurement. “While we have not experienced significant change in demand due to COVID-19, the timelines to close a contract may differ under current circumstances,” he said. Once the lockdown period is over, manufacturing picks up, Jaggi expects that sectors like pharmaceuticals, e-commerce, food industries would ramp up their storage capacities in line with the demand.

FPIs invest ₹15,958 crore in first week of May

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reversing their two-month selling streak, overseas investors pumped in a net ₹ 15,958 crore in the Indian capital markets in the first week of May.

As per latest depositories data, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) infused a net ₹18,637 crore in equities, but pulled out a net ₹2,679 crore from the debt segment between May 1-8, taking the cumulative inflow to ₹15,958 crore.

The latest inflow comes after two consecutive months of huge withdrawals. In March, FPIs had withdrawn a record amount of over ₹1.1 lakh crore on a net basis, while

₹15,403 crore was pulled out in April from the domestic capital markets (both equity and debt).

“Despite uncertainty looming large over the severity of the possible impact of coronavirus pandemic on the global as well as Indian economy, FPIs surprisingly changed their stance this week as they turned net buyers in the Indian markets,” said Himanshu Srivastava, senior analyst manager research, Morningstar India.

The recent investment could be attributed to India doing fairly well compared to many other countries in terms of containing COVID-19 pandemic from spreading aggres-

sively, Srivastava said.

In addition to that, measures announced by the government and the RBI periodically to revitalise the sagging economy would have also resonated well with investors, he added.

However, he cautioned that though it is a welcome shift in FPIs’ investment pattern, it would be premature to term it as a change in trend as this could be short-term buying given the relatively attractive valuations.

The growing fears of a prolonged global economic slowdown has triggered a risk-averse environment with investors taking flight to safety, he said.

Lockdown brings change in buying behaviour: Survey

MORE OLDER PEOPLE HOP ONTO DIGITAL TECH

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus lockdown has brought a sea change in the buying behaviour of many Indians, such as purchasing vegetables and other consumables without asking for prices, far from the old habit of asking ‘dhaniya’ or ‘mirchi’ free from vendors, according to a survey by Enormous Brands. The web-based survey, conducted between March 30 and April

22, took feedback from 3,737 respondents in cities including Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune and Ahmedabad. It found that there has also been a sharp increase in adoption of digital technology by older people to join the e-commerce bandwagon for ordering items like milk, grocery and home essentials and paying through wallets and UPI. The study also found that COVID-19 has helped in forming an opinion for pushing the ‘Make in India’ agenda, with 42 per cent believing that “there is an active and deliberate attempt by China.

‘Vehicle scrappage policy to help generate demand for new vehicles amid coronavirus pandemic’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The much-awaited vehicle scrappage policy would help in curbing air pollution, reducing fuel consumption and curtailing fatalities in road accidents, while generating demand for new vehicles in the country amid the coronavirus pandemic, industry sources said.

The proposed scrappage policy requires support from both the central and state governments, an industry source said. The governments at both levels would need to come together to make this programme successful by providing fiscal incentives for fleet modernisation, another industry source added.

An incentive based mech-

anism will make the scheme lucrative and encourage people to scrap their old vehicles and replace them with new ones, he added.

When contacted over the matter, SIAM President Rajan Wadhwa told PTI that the industry body has been engaging with the Government of India, requesting for an incentive-based scrappage policy with monetary incentives in the form of 50 per cent rebate in GST, road tax and registration charges.

Similarly, SIAM Director General Rajesh Menon said an incentive based policy will help in mitigating pollution, improving road safety and conserving fuel.

“And more importantly in the current context of impact

of COVID 19 on the Indian auto sector, also could kickstart demand,” he added.

A vehicle scrappage policy is in the works for some time now. The policy aims to put a cap on the life of vehicles in terms of years run.

Last week, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari had said that the scheme is likely to be finalised soon to boost the automobile sector.

The proposed policy once approved, will be applicable on all vehicles including two and three-wheelers.

Earlier, the policy was sent for a fresh round of consultation with stakeholders on the direction of the Prime Minister’s Office. Gadkari had earlier said that once the policy is approved.

Banks find new ways to amuse and inform during lockdown

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when the spread of COVID-19 has made social distancing a buzzword, banks have increased their reliance on social media to engage with their customers - may it be for disseminating information or for dispelling their boredom.

The Government imposed a 21-day countrywide lockdown beginning March 25 to check the spread of coron-

avirus, and extended it twice, prompting business entities including banks to get innovative on social media. Among the noteworthy initiatives by banks during the lockdown, HDFC Bank came out with a scheme to help its customers find their hidden artistic talent.

“Tired of staying home and having nothing to do? HDFC Bank Fingage presents The Art Project, to give you a #BreakFromBoredom! Unlock your creativity during the lock-

down & stand a chance to win exciting prizes!” tweeted the bank, trying to engage its customers during the lockdown. Punjab National Bank (PNB) has come up with a contest on the Mother’s Day with a catchy slogan, “For her, you will always remain a child.” Since the lockdown has made online banking more vulnerable to fraudsters, several banks are regularly warning their customers against possible frauds.

“Beware of fraudsters who

pose as bank officials and scam people by gaining remote access to their mobile phone screens through an app. Inform us when you identify a scamster through e-mail: epg.Cms@sbi.Co.In & report. Phishing@sbi.Co.In,” tweeted SBI.

Similar warnings were issued by a few other lenders. “Fraudsters find new ways to target innocent people. And this time, they are targeting through banking and other

payments apps to steal your hard-earned money. Be careful and keep following the #PNBKaFunda to learn the ways to avoid them,” PNB tweeted. Another public sector major Canara Bank warned its customers in a tweet, “Don’t get hooked by #Phishing! Always check before you click on any links. Be cautious about opening any attachments or downloading files received via email/sms, if source is unknown.”

A few banks have also come up with ‘lockdown offers’ for their customers.

HDFC Bank offered discount on purchase of jewellery on Akshaya Tritiya with a promise that part of the money would go to PM Cares Fund.

“This Akshaya Tritiya, buy jewellery from the safety of your home, with HDFC Bank Credit Cards! With every purchase above Rs.10,000, we will contribute Rs. 100 to the PM Cares Fund and you earn 5X

Reward Points,” HDFC Bank tweeted. Union Bank of India has offered discount on purchase of medicine. “In this difficult time, it’s easy to save some cash on your pharmacy bill. Just use #UnionBankofIndia cards at your nearest Apollo Pharmacy Store to get up to 15% off,” UBI said in a tweet.

SBI gave a similar offer to its customers: “Get a health check from the comfort of your home with Apollo 24/7. Earn great discounts on key lab

tests via YONO SBI app.” Some banks are telling customers how they are tweaking services to suit the times. Union Bank of India informed its customers that for the time being there would be no charge on withdrawal of funds from ATMs of other banks.

“To ease the lockdown burden, Debit card ATM withdrawals from any other bank ATMs will be free of charge till 30th June 2020,” the bank said in a tweet.

Trend Blazer

Teachers are important: Taapsee

Actor **TAAPSEE PANNU** feels that her teachers have played an important role in shaping her personality.

She took to Instagram and wrote: “I was visiting Jaipur for an event and I remembered that my school (ex)vice principal is now Principal in a school of Jaipur. Couldn’t miss this opportunity to meet her. What was unexpected was that her entire school came to meet me and kids were really sweet and inquisitive about a lot of things. School does play an important part in shaping up your personality and your teachers are the ‘*kari-gars*’ moulding the raw stones we all are.”



‘I am grateful to god for blessing me with my mother in this life, who has loved and supported me unconditionally and selflessly. She has been an incredible example of strength, dignity, ethics and love (to both Shamita and me). She has moulded us into the individuals we are today. She’s a beautiful, irreplaceable gift to us.’
—**Shilpa Shetty Kundra**

NEHA KAKKAR, who is riding high on success of her songs in the industry today, says she had never thought she would reach where she has today.



“It feels great. I always tell people that I am still living in a dream. How can this happen? A small town girl from Rishikesh went to Delhi and then Mumbai. It (the journey) has been good. Never thought about where I have reached today,” Neha said.
“It feels amazing and I think even now I have to make it even bigger in life,” added Neha, who rose to prominence with the song *Second Hand Jawani* in the 2012 film *Cocktail*.

Elle wants to direct films

Actor **ELLE FANNING**, best known for her roles in *The Neon Demon* and *Maleficent: Mistress Of Evil*, would like to explore the arena of direction.

“It’s something that I want to do badly. I’ve just got to find the right story. What is it that you want to tell? Is it going to be personal? Is it not? Are you going to write it? Are you not? A lot of big questions. I will for sure one day,” Elle said.

She said about her quarantine routine, “I’ve been living with my sister (Dakota Fanning) and my family cooking and baking a lot. My sister has been doing paint by numbers. Everyone’s embroidering. We’re getting creative. I’m doing a jigsaw puzzle of *Top Gun* poster.”



Here are some tips to disinfect your clothes, which could be the biggest carriers of germs

Germs could be anywhere — on the surfaces, in the air and around us. Every time people cough, sneeze, shake hands, touch or spit, it is likely for germs to spread more. Clothes can be one of the biggest carriers of germs. Therefore, especially in this Coronavirus-hit world, it is important to take necessary precautions by implementing safe practices and an integral part of it is disinfection of clothes. Here are simple tips on keeping your clothes germ and allergen free.

◆ **Wash clothes with hot water**
Hot water helps remove germs from the clothes. Washing clothes in hot water at 55-60



degrees not only cleans clothes better but also helps them get rid of being potential hosts for bacteria. Washing machines with in-built heaters are beneficial in this

case and are equipped to give customised care for clothes with the help of various multiple hot water modes like warm, hot, allergen-free, etc.

◆ **Use chemical disinfectants**

If the material is not resistant to high temperatures, chemical disinfectants can be used. Soak and disinfect the clothes with chlorine containing bleach. Turn the clothes inside out to reduce the chances of abrasion.

Well this comes with a disclaimer — use laundry detergent and bleach with the help of a dispenser. Chlorine bleach should never be poured directly onto clothes in a sink or washer because it can remove colour completely and dissolve the fibres. Either add the bleach to an automatic dispenser or into the washer water before adding the load of laundry.

◆ **Always clean your washers**

It is important to clean your washers occasionally as germs, bacteria and dirt can get accumulated at the bottom of the machine giving away foul odour. In case you are using the latest washing machine models, they are pre-programmed to automatically clean off all the impurities left on the inner walls of the tub at the time of spin during every wash cycle. If not, always run your washing machine with a cleaner to remove any contaminants after every few washes.

◆ **Dry clothes in the machine dryer**

Washer dryers are designed to remove moisture from wet clothes as damp clothes can become a breeding ground for

germs. Therefore, ensure you run a dry cycle of clothes in the washing machine to aid efficient cleaning. New washing machines have multiple levels of drying options to take care of different fabric types.

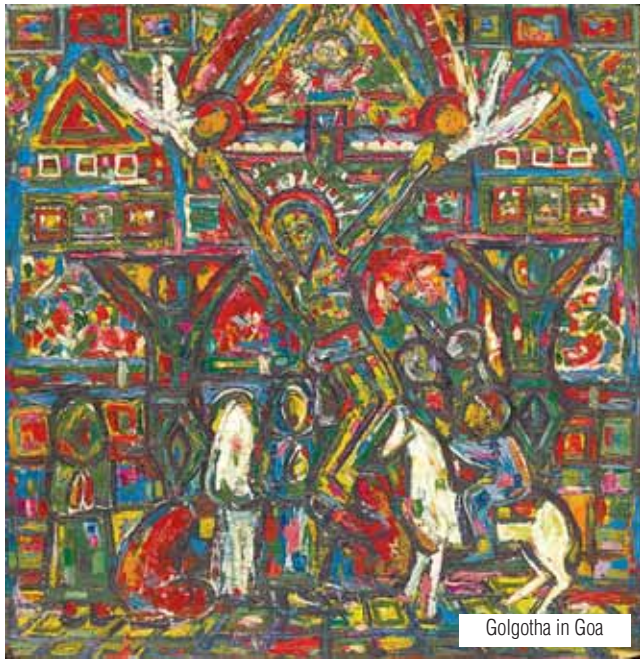
◆ **Steam clean clothes**

Steam cleaning clothes can also help remove bacteria from your clothes. It provides a gentle finish to them and acts as a trusted sanitiser. Realising the benefits of steam cleaning, it is the latest feature in washing machines with SteamCare technology that helps remove up to 99 per cent bacteria and allergens, ensuring clean and fresh clothes each time.

(The article is written on behalf of Whirlpool, India.)



Family



Golgotha in Goa

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PAST

Two of FN SOUZA’s multi-layered works, which are inspired by Catholic influences, speak volumes about his deeper understanding of the subject and the politics of the church, says **UMA NAIR**

Francis Newton Souza, founding member of The Progressives, would have turned 96 last month. As the world fights the COVID-19 pandemic, it is good to look at two of his works that define his brilliance in conception and composition — *Family* and *Golgotha at Goa*. Multi-layered, filled with dynamism, and brutally humanistic, Souza never stopped experimenting throughout his six-decade career, perpetually seeking new modes and languages of painterly expression.

LOVE FOR CHURCH HYMNS

In Delhi of 1998, he walked into the Church of Redemption in Viceroy’s estate to attend the Christmas concert of the city’s oldest choir, the Delhi Christian Chorus. Dressed in a black suit and scarlet tie, he sat on the first chair in the front row, agog, his mind in tune. After listening to the solo, *O little Town of Bethlehem*, he picked out his handkerchief and wiped a tear. At dinner, after the concert, he told this critic.

“I didn’t care for the dogmas of the church but I admired the grand architecture and the ritual splendour of the Holy Eucharist. As a young boy, I would watch the niches and grand vest-



ments of the priests. As the hymns would waft across, my eyes would be transfixed on the wooden saints painted with gold and bright colours, I

remember the smell of incense and the enormous crucifix became a permanent imprint. I would kneel and pray for hours. When the Sacristan came around with the collection plate, I would drop on it with great satisfaction, the large copper coin was given to me by my grandmother. I felt I had paid an installment for the salvation of my soul. My reason for loving hymns is different from yours. You believe in God, I laugh at the Gods! I consider nature the higher God!”

Today, it is his paintings of churches priests and the eucharist table that sell in millions at auctions. From the symbolism of the priests, he created a riveting series. In a world torn by the Coronavirus, nature seems to swing Souza’s way!

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Souza always spoke about his upbringing as a strict Catholic. The impact that this had upon the artist and the subject matter of his paintings is well known. His criticism of the church, clergy and the corruption of the priests, whom he created as many ‘Heads’ is not just symbolic but prophetic and mesmerising. His many paintings and drawings with religious Catholic con-

tent speak volumes about his deeper understanding of subject and politics of the church. We can sense his contemptuous and anti-clerical stances regarding the Catholic church and this reflected an unmistakable presence of religion in his life and his art.

FAMILY (1946)

It was during this period in 1946 that the revolutionary Souza painted the magnificent work, *Family*. This work done in impasto is one of his most seminal works. Painted in 1946, the year before India became independent, it represents a significant point of inflection in the definition and evolution of modern Indian art.

We could think of the idiom of social realism very much like the Mexican Revolutionaries as well as German Expressionist artists.

In the painting, a poor, humble family of four sits in a tiny room. This single room is evocative in the many things it tells us. Treatment of composition and colour makes it a painting of stunning splendour both in tonality and contours of the subject. The rustic image at once has Catholic symbolism in the rosary worn by the woman and the Madonna on the wall.

IN COMMUNION WITH GOA

Souza had a nostalgic connection with Goa. He thought of its many characteristics woven through his own memories. It seemed like a communion with his past. This is explained best by MA Couto.

“The first 12 years of an artist’s life are perhaps the seedbed of his creative life. In case of Souza, this influence may be summarised as living rural Catholic life as experienced in daily companionship with his grandmother. Her influence along with the vitality of folklore gave him a sense of the animistic and spirit ridden atmosphere of fields and home. The ritual symbols of cross, monstrance, ciborium, on a platform that resembles the Judaic Ark of The Covenant, but with surfaces which are distinctly Goan, are frequently found in Souza’s paintings and represent the passion and dread of a heretic creed seeking legitimacy and acceptance.”

GOLGOTHA IN GOA

In that context, *Golgotha in Goa*, presented in the Sotheby’s Sale, was a powerful testimony to his brilliance. In this early and important work, Souza adopted the formal composition from the altar at Golgotha, Jerusalem — the place where Jesus was crucified. When one views the image of the altar at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that was built at Golgotha, it is apparent that Souza has taken this imagery as inspiration for this painting.

Three large sconces envelop the altar at Golgotha and gold squares, containing icons and paintings, make up the background — all perfectly mirrored in this painting, titled *Golgotha in Goa*. This designation suggests to the viewer that this painted scene is actually in Goa but is a reflection of Golgotha nonetheless. Goa was at the time a Portuguese colony, where Catholicism was the main religion so it is very likely that elements from the altar at Golgotha were also incorporated in churches of Goa.

This vivid arrangement forms part of Souza’s iconic and extensive series of paintings, where he explored the theme of religious suffering that was so central in his childhood. His early works in particular were characterised by the deliberate use of powerful impasto.

Bold expressionist brushstrokes done in the impasto style add texture and create islands of abstraction. Bright blocks of colour pop out from these dark and deep recesses, producing a mosaic-like effect.

Souza evokes the imagery and textural tones of stained glass windows done in the Portuguese style of traditional stained glass windows of old churches in Goa. In life and thereafter, he belongs to his beautiful hometown, Goa.

TECH TALK

PAY MORE ATTENTION

Automakers and technology companies are coming out with features aimed at reducing injuries and deaths related to distracted driving

road ahead. The car will then notify you to pay more attention if necessary.

For cars with advanced cruise control systems, there are sensors to make sure your hands are still on the steering wheel and cameras watching your face. Some systems will put the control back in your hands if you start to look down at your phone or don’t keep your hands on the wheel.

A slightly older variation of this tech are the drowsiness metres found on vehicles from Honda, Mercedes-Benz and Volvo. These systems use steering inputs to determine whether a driver is getting sleepy. Notifications often take the form of a coffee cup in the in-dash digital display to suggest the driver stop for a break. These systems won’t steer the car or lock out controls but they can serve as a reminder to pay more attention. More advanced systems can link to a car’s navigation and suggest rest stops along the route.

LANE DEPARTURE WARNINGS
As any driving instructor will



tell you, our hands tend to follow our eyes, and if you’re looking at the scenery or down at your phone, it can be easy to wander out of your lane without noticing. That’s why lane-departure warning systems are becoming more common in new vehicles.

Essentially, these systems use sensors to keep track of where the vehicle is within its lane. If a system detects that the vehicle is straying across lane lines, it will issue a warning to the driver. The functionality varies from vehicle to vehicle but common alerts are

lights in the instrument cluster, a pop-up notification in a gauge cluster display or even a rumble in your seat.

LANE KEEPING ASSIST

Often used as a companion to lane departure warning, lane keeping assist takes the extra step of recentring the vehicle by applying light steering correction, though it’s not what you should consider self-driving. You may feel a light tug as the wheel turns slightly in your hand, recentring the car in its lane. If you have cruise control activated, lane keeping assist may deactivate cruise, forcing you to take more control of the car. These systems are found in late-model vehicles from BMW, Cadillac, Honda and more.

ANDROID AUTO AND APPLE CARPLAY

These two smartphone integration systems come in nearly every new vehicle on sale today. When you connect your Android or Apple phone to the vehicle, the

system will display many of your smartphone’s apps in your car’s infotainment system.

While these systems may seem like another distraction, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay can be beneficial. They provide a reliable voice control that can read out and reply to text messages, use navigation apps on your phone and allow you to communicate without looking at your phone. They can also prevent the phone from being used by locking out certain functions, including the on-screen keyboard on Android phones.

LOCKING OUT CONTROLS

Many vehicles from Mazda, Toyota and Volkswagen still use this older anti-distraction method today. These cars will partially lock out controls for an on-screen keyboard while the car is moving so you can’t type in an address, for example. But these functions can still be accessed by using voice commands. All this is done to prevent you from looking away from the road and down at a screen for an extended time.

Edmunds says: Having more tech in your car might sound like a cause for distraction but purchasing a vehicle with one or more of these features can help you be a more focussed driver.

—AP

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Besides battling a disease, COVID positive patients also face societal ostracisation. DR AMBRISH DHARMADHIKARI has some strategies to help a family member cope with both



Anu, a 32-year old married nurse, was working regularly as a front-line health worker against COVID in her ward. In the morning, she was going through all reports and attaching the respective files of the patients. While going through them, Anu suddenly froze for a moment; one patient of her ward was COVID positive. She was unable to process and didn't know how to respond. Anu was not afraid of contracting infection; she had faced it all her life and had been trained for same. But she was worried about the aftermath of being positive — home quarantine, reaction of family members, society and friends and so much more.

It is easier said than done when one has to be quarantined (especially at

home) after testing positive. Studies have shown that majority of positive cases show no or minimal symptoms of the virus. This has created anxiety among people and they fear contracting the virus from patients as s/he would show no symptoms. Home quarantined people feel anxious because of the reaction and anxiety of people surrounding them. This makes it more difficult to handle. If you are someone whose family member has tested positive, let us understand how to deal with societal pressure and judgments.

#ISUPPORT

Your family member needs support as these are challenging times and they might be feeling helpless and guilty, to some extent.

You are expected to take necessary precautions to avoid contracting the virus but at same time, the family member should not feel isolated and an outcast. It's time to step up and defeat the virus together. To express your support, being with the member matters the most. A sense of normalcy provided by other family members will give immense psychological support to the affected.

#ISHIELD

Having close contact with someone COVID positive will cause great scrutiny from people around; many societies have not welcomed such families and asked them to remain in institutional quarantine. It is traumatic to know that people are not welcome in their own homes.

Even if any family welcomes the affected member, the society often blames and treats them differently. This might create a feeling of guilt in the affected. It is important to be empathetic towards such family and not pass on the blame to them. It is time to reassure them, give them hope and lend an emotional support. You may also be required to defend them against other anxious people of the society who will rush to imaginative conclusions and worst outcomes. Communicating calmly will help them come out of this despair. You are a corona warrior shielding them from negativity and pessimism.

#IENGAGE

Constantly and actively engaging with the affected family member gives much required support to them. Positive affirmation, reassuring statements, compassionate communication, empathetic listening and active engagement forms road to mental health recovery. One may engage with the affected in innovative ways. It is advised to play non-contact games, have a conversation around memories of the past, go through old photo albums and relive joyous time spent together. One can also discuss non COVID related current events. Family that stays together is happy together.

These are various strategies one can use to help family member cope up with societal pressure and judgements. (The author is the head of Medical Services (Psychiatrist), Mpower-The Foundation, Mumbai.)



Cooked with love

To save ourselves from bodily disorders, we should follow a spiritual diet, that includes preparing food in a meditative state, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

In this 21st century, men and women are becoming extremely diet conscious, as a result of which, today we see every other individual following some or other kind of diet pattern, be it the most popular Atkins or vegan diet or the Mediterranean diet. The list goes on and on depending upon the goals people wish to achieve in terms of their weight loss and well-being.

In ancient times, people never worried about their dietary patterns but today one has to match with the ever-changing lifestyle where one always has to look fit and presentable. For this, there are various kinds of diets, some for losing weight, others for gaining weight, lowering cholesterol, for longevity and for healthy life. However, while we are busy consuming the new trends in our food patterns, none of us ever thought about a unique diet method — "Spiritual Diet". Yes, you heard it right. This is the method that's being followed since time immemorial and is suited to all seasons.

All of us forget an important fact, that, along with the general principles of nutrition, appeal and pleasure, food also has a spiritual component. The spiritual aspects of diet includes purchase, preparation, acceptance and eating. We must understand that food that is selected with care, prepared with love, accepted with gratitude and eaten with purity becomes medicine for both, our soul and the body. When one cooks food without any kind of earthly desires or lust, with pure love for almighty, then the food will carry a subtle power that energises the soul and the body. It is very important to be in a good state — clean, filled with love and in a state of earthly detachment. Only then, the food that we prepare will be purified, which in turn will also purify our body. As a result, our mind will be free from worldly desires. Nowadays, people also avoid eating onions, garlic and heavy dash of spices which act as unnecessary stimulants for the endocrine system and thus, destabilise our mind.

Research of the dietary patterns of sages of India reveal that their approach towards eating was very pure, *satvik* and simple as they consumed anything that was available in nature. This eating pattern was based on two main principles: Not causing suffering to any other living being and not destabilising the physiological systems affecting digestive, nervous and endocrine systems. That's why there were only certain types of food that the saints accepted and most importantly, they never over-indulged, nor allowed themselves to be influenced by the sense of sight, smell and taste. They simply followed the basic equation of "As you eat, so your mind becomes."

This is the fundamental tenet of a spiritual diet. Spirituality says that the type and quality of food as well as the manner of eating, affect the state of our mind directly. That is why food that has been prepared by slaughter of animals carries a *karmic* debt that becomes a burden on the human soul. Likewise, food or drink that have a stimulating effect on the body and food that is consumed under a state of tension, anxiety, depression, anger or fear carries a toxic load that gradually results in physical disorders like acidity, body ache, sleeplessness, hypertension, ulcer, arterial plaques, diabetes and gallstones. So, how does one save oneself from these miseries? The answer is, simply by following spiritual diet, that includes preparing food in a meditative state with feelings of love and detachment simultaneously.

An accurate spiritual diet says that it's good to accept food with gratitude and not become too focussed and choosy unless there are specific health requirements. Undoubtedly, any diet that aids in good health and awareness about environment is good, but if the person following a strict diet regime becomes too fanatical and creates stress for self and others, then the positive benefits of following the diet will automatically be lost. So the idea should be to lead a life with balanced diet regime without being too fussy and spofish.

Another important aspect of *satvik* food is sharing. Its always wonderful to share meal with others, because by sharing, we lose our sense of attachment to food and body and overcome greed. That is why it is often said that a family that eats together, stays together. The natural sustenance of food cooked with love is enhanced by the power of pure vibrations, thereby bringing benefits on a spiritual level. So, what are you waiting for? Start following the "Spiritual Diet" by cooking food in remembrance of almighty and by adding ingredients of love, bliss and power to live a happy, healthy and blissful life.



Slivers of hope

People search for sanity in tiny moments of joy

We meet for a memorial service by video conference because that's how it must be done these days. It feels strange, but there also is comfort as I scan the faces of the many colleagues who've come to celebrate the life of an editor and friend who succumbed to the Coronavirus. Among other things, his brother tells us about a magazine Nick created when they were kids. He called it "Ha Ha."

I imagine Nick's wry smile. Sometimes, amid unspeakable sorrow, there are slivers of joy.

I have clung to those moments, however fleeting, as this pandemic continues to test us. A friend, a former war correspondent who's seen more horror than I could imagine, tells me that's how it should be in times of crisis. Don't focus only on the losses, she advises, or you'll go crazy.

Obsessing about the story is a hazard of our trade. Even though I've tried to stop reading news a few hours before bedtime,



I'm often not sleeping well. I worry about the families of the sick and dead, about those who've lost jobs — about the world into which one member of my own extended family recently arrived, with another soon expected.

As a parent, I yank myself

from that rabbit hole often. I look for respite in the connection and community we're managing to create — at home and often from a distance — and even when the technology that makes some of it possible is wonky or draining.

I listen to my spouse, a teacher, taking Chicago school students on a virtual field trip to a national park in Alaska.

"Wow, look at that!" "What's down there?"

I stop what I'm doing and absorb this little victory. These

middle-schoolers, not always an easy crowd, are genuinely giddy to be doing this, some of them on Chromebooks provided by their school so everyone can attend.

Not long after, we get the news that Illinois schools will not have in-person classes for the rest

of this school year. Our own eighth-grader tears up and retreats to her room. When she and her sister abruptly left school several weeks ago, she didn't realise it would be her last day in the classroom with many of the kids she's known since preschool.

Somehow, there will be an eighth-grade graduation or a party. Or something. "But it won't be the same," she laments. It's hard to argue with that.

An hour later, she is in the kitchen making crepes. Since she was tiny, she has soothed herself by cooking, as many of us are doing now.

We awaken to spring snow — something that I, a northern Michigan girl, enjoy more than most. But even I take more pleasure in the sunny day that follows.

As my family posse bikes together, I think about those who live in each home we pass. White ribbons are tied around a row of maple, linden and ash trees as a show of support for frontline medical workers.

Who else has no choice but to work outside the home? Who is sick? Who's running out of money? Who's fallen into the darkness, and who has stayed there?

It's difficult not to feel guilty about being, at least so far, among the lucky. But I know Nick would tell me to count my blessings and keep moving. —AP

Determine to live life with flair and laughter.
—Maya Angelou

TRIPAL ANTIVIRAL DRUG TO FIGHT COVID-19

A two-week course of antiviral therapy that combines the power of three drugs has shown promise in treating hospitalised patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 in a carefully undertaken phase 2 clinical trial.

The results of the trial, published in the journal The Lancet, involved 127 adults from six public hospitals in Hong Kong.

The drug combination tested in the trial included — interferon beta-1b which was developed to treat multiple sclerosis (MS), lopinavir-ritonavir which is normally used to treat HIV and ribavirin, an oral hepatitis C virus drug.

The findings of the phase 2 trial provided evidence that early treatment with triple antiviral therapy alongside standard care is safe and shortens duration of viral shedding (when the virus is detectable and potentially transmissible) compared to lopinavir-ritonavir alone — average 7 days vs 12 days — in patients with mild to moderate COVID-19.



B'LURU CIVIC BODY TO DETECT COMORBIDITIES

Amid rising COVID-19 cases with comorbidities such as Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI), the city civic body has launched an initiative called *Pranavayu* to help people, an official said on Friday.

"Pranavayu is an initiative where Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) doctors at fever clinics will monitor patients using a pulse oximeter. This helps them track patients as they progress from ILI to SARI," said Commissioner BH Anil Kumar.

Kumar said the move is especially helpful to people with comorbidities and will also empower and educate citizens of self-monitoring on the development of SARI. He also said that measuring the oxygen saturation in blood and heart rate, with an oximeter helps in detecting respiratory diseases early.



WHY PEOPLE ARE LESS LIKELY TO CONCEIVE?

Over 80 per cent of people are not planning to conceive during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, perhaps putting to rest suggestions that the lockdown could lead to a rise in birth numbers, say researchers.

The main reasons that led people to this decision included worries related to future economic difficulties (58 per cent) and any potential consequences on pregnancy (58 per cent) due to the disease.

Looking at parenthood desires during the ongoing pandemic crisis in Italy, a team of experts, led by the University of Florence, carried out 1,482 online interviews.

Their results, published in the Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynecology, show that some 1,214 (81.9 per cent) did not intend to conceive during the pandemic crisis.

Moreover, of the 268 participants who were planning to have a child before the pandemic, over one-third (37.3 per cent) then abandoned the intention.

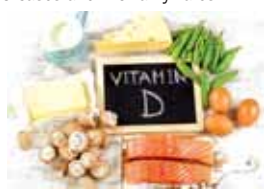


LOW VIT D LINKED TO HIGH COVID-19 DEATHS

In a growing list of studies on vitamin D and its link with COVID-19 disease, British researchers have found an association between low average levels of vitamin D and high numbers of COVID-19 cases and mortality rates across 20 European countries.

Previous observational studies have reported an association between low levels of vitamin D and susceptibility to acute respiratory tract infections. "We found a significant crude relationship between average vitamin D levels, number COVID-19 cases and particularly COVID-19 mortality rates, per head of population across the 20 European countries," said study researcher Dr Lee Smith from UK.

According to the researchers, Vitamin D modulates the response of white blood cells, preventing them from releasing too many inflammatory cytokines. The COVID-19 virus is known to cause an excess of pro-inflammatory cytokines.



COGNITIVE THERAPY MAY TREAT AUTISTIC KIDS

Researchers have found that cognitive behavioural therapy and other psychosocial interventions are effective for treating anxiety in school-aged children with an autism spectrum disorder.

According to the findings, published in the journal Campbell Systematic Reviews, a total of 931 children diagnosed with autism involved in 24 studies were analysed.

All of the studies were based in either the US, the UK, or Australia. They spanned between 2005 to 2018. Overall, the interventions showed a statistically significant moderate to high effectiveness for treating anxiety compared with treatment-as-usual.

"These are exciting results as they actually show evidence that some of the things that can be done at home or at school to reduce anxiety in school-aged children actually work," said co-author Petra Lietz from the Australian Council for Educational Research.



TEAM LACKS COMPLETE FIELDER: KAIF

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The current Indian team has good fielders but none of them is a “complete package” like Yuvraj Singh and he himself, reckons Mohammed Kaif.

The hero of India’s Natwest victory played more than 100 ODIs, primarily because of his superb fielding. The superior fielding skills prolonged his career even as his batting form declined steadily.

Asked about his take on Indian fielding compared to the times when Yuvraj Singh would man the point and he would stand at extra cover, Kaif outlined the lacking in the current set-up.

“To be a complete package, you need to be a good catcher, you should be able to hit the stumps often, you should be able to run fast, you should have the right technique to grab a moving ball,” Kaif said on YouTube channel ‘SportScreen’.

“When we were playing, me and Yuvraj

made our mark as good fielders. Today, you will find a lot of good fielders in the Indian team, but I think there is anyone who is a complete package as a fielder.

“A person who can catch in the slips, who can take a catch at short-
le g ,

can field in long-on boundary by running fast....That package I think is missing,” said Kaif, who has always been hailed as one of India’s best fielders.

The 39-year-old said that Ravindra Jadeja is becoming better with age but India’s slip catching has still left a lot to be desired.

“Ravindra Jadeja is a good fielder, in fact as he is adding on the years, his fielding is also improving. But

“TO BE A COMPLETE PACKAGE, YOU NEED TO BE A GOOD CATCHER, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO HIT THE STUMPS OFTEN, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO RUN FAST, YOU SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TECHNIQUE TO GRAB A MOVING BALL,”

India’s slip fielding isn’t up to scratch.”

In the debate between Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in white ball cricket, Kaif said that if he had to choose between the two had they been playing for different teams, he would prefer watching the stylish Mumbaiaikaar.

“If there are two matches happening in the same city simultaneously and Virat is playing in one and Rohit in another, then I will head to the match featuring Rohit Sharma.

“No doubt, Virat has an outstanding record in Tests and white ball cricket both, but Rohit has the elegance, so much time while facing a bowler. He is one batsman who can smash a bowler without the bowler even realising that he is under attack.”



‘Bumrah should not run after county cricket’

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan fast bowler Wasim Akram might have learnt a lot by playing County cricket, but he feels that someone like Jasprit Bumrah should give his body ample rest, whenever he can, rather than playing County cricket if such an opportunity does arise in the future.

Speaking with former India opener Aakash Chopra on AakashVani, Akram spoke about his journey in the County circuit and also said that times have changed and the Indian team plays round the year and it is important that someone like Bumrah rests his body so that he can return to action fresh and strong.

“Indian players play cricket round the year. Bumrah is currently India’s top bowler and one of the best in the world. I would also have advised him to take rest (when there is no international cricket).

“As far as I am concerned, I

used to play six months for Pakistan and six months for Lancashire. But due to time constraints it becomes difficult in today’s era,” he explained.

Akram, who holds the record for most Test wickets for Pakistan, also stated he doesn’t rate bowlers on their T20 performances but judges them on the basis of their performances in the longer formats.

He also urged youngsters to focus more on first-class cricket in order to make significant improvements to their game.

“In order to hone their skills further, young bowlers should play more first-class cricket,” Akram said.

“T20 is amazing, good entertainment, fun and there is money and I’m all for the importance of money in a sport and for the players.

“But I don’t judge bowlers on the basis of their T20 performance. I do that on the basis of seeing how they fare in longer formats,” he added.



‘Batsman should be given out LBW if ball hits the stumps’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell has proposed radical changes in the LBW laws, stating that a batsman should be given out leg before as long as the ball is hitting the stumps irrespective of the spot of its landing and impact.

Chappell also said captains should agree on one way of working up the ball which will encourage swing bowling, even as the ICC is considering the use of artificial substances to shine the ball instead of sweat and saliva in post COVID-19 scenario.

“The new lbw law should simply say: ‘Any delivery that strikes the pad without first hitting the bat and, in the umpire’s opinion, would go on to hit the stumps is out regardless of whether or not a shot is attempted,’” he wrote in a column for *ESPNCricinfo*.

“Forget where the ball pitches and whether it strikes the pad outside the line or not; if it’s going to hit the stumps, it’s out.”

The 76-year-old said the change in lbw law would attract expected criticism from the batsmen but it would make the game more fair.

“There will be screams of horror - particularly from pampered batsmen - but there are numerous positives this change would bring to the game. Most important is fairness.

“If a bowler is prepared to attack the stumps regularly, the batsman should only be able to protect his wicket with the bat. The pads are there to save the batsman from injury not dismissal.

“It would also force batsmen to seek an attacking method to combat a wristspinner pitching in the rough outside the right-hander’s leg stump,” said Chappell.

He cited Sachin Tendulkar’s example on how he negotiated Shane Warne’s round the wicket tactic during the 1997-98 Test series in India.

“Contrast Sachin Tendulkar’s aggressive and successful approach to Shane Warne coming round the wicket in Chennai in 1997-98 with a batsman who kicks away deliveries pitching in the rough and turning in toward the stumps. Which would you rather watch?

“The current law encourages “pad play” to balls pitching outside leg while this change would force them to use their bat. The change would reward bowlers who attack the stumps and decrease the need for negative wide deliveries to a packed off-side field,” he said.

Chappell said his proposed change to the lbw law would also cut down “frivolous” DRS challenges.

“This change to the lbw law would also simplify umpiring and result in fewer frivolous DRS challenges. Consequently, it would speed up a game that has slowed drastically in recent times.

“It would also make four-day Tests an even more viable proposition as mind-numbing huge first-innings totals would be virtually non-exis-

Aim is to reach top-4 in both ODIs & Tests: Karunaratne

FIANS ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne heaped praise on new coach Mickey Arthur on Sunday and stated the team’s aim is to reach the top four in ICC rankings for both ODIs and Test cricket. Arthur took over as Sri Lanka’s head coach on a two-year contract in December and Karunaratne said his results speak for themselves.

“Mickey is a no-nonsense cool bloke with loads of experi-

ence to back him and his brand. At the international level planning and role clarity is a norm. What is very important is the belief he has instilled among us in his own and subtle way. It sure helped and the results always speak for itself,” Karunaratne told Sri Lanka Cricket in a Q&A session on their official website cricket.lk.

“Rankings is the key word. I’d say Sri Lanka needs to be in the top four of not just ODI cricket, but Test cricket as well. That



Cricketers will have to live with dangers of COVID-19: Gambhir

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir doesn’t see major changes in the way cricket is played in the post COVID-19 scenario besides the ban on using

saliva on the ball.

The International Cricket Council is considering legalisation of the usage of artificial substances to shine the ball instead of saliva.

“I don’t think a lot of rules and regulations will

be changed, you can probably have an alternate for the usage of saliva - apart from that I don’t think so many changes will happen,” Gambhir told *Star Sports*.

“Players and everyone else need to live with

this virus; probably they have to get used to it that there is a virus and that it will be around. Players might end up catching it, and you got to live with it.”

Though social distancing is possible in

cricket to a certain extent, other sports will find it tougher when sporting action resumes, said the southpaw.

“Social distancing and other rules may not be easy for any sport to maintain. You can still

manage to do it with cricket, but how will you do it in football, hockey and other sports as well. So, I think you just have to live with it, probably the sooner you accept it, the better it is,” Gambhir said.

Women T20 WC became bigger than tournament itself: Perry

PTI ■ MELBOURNE



This year’s T20 World Cup was a seminal event in the women’s game as it touched a chord with one and all while attaining unprecedented heights in increasing popularity, feels star Australian all-rounder Ellyse Perry.

“Personally, it was poor timing and I would have loved to have played in the rest of the tournament, absolutely without a doubt. But at the same time, it’s not about me,” she told Cricket Australia website.

“Sometimes I think about

that tournament, and particularly about that final, and I don’t even think it was about our team. It was just about the event, the moment in women’s cricket that it created was just absolutely incredible. Hopefully, what it does for the sport has a flow-on effect.”

Perry insisted that it did not matter who played or who missed in the final because it was a huge moment for women’s cricket.

“And I think that was something the team was really quick to acknowledge. All the past players and all the effort that’s been put into

developing women’s cricket over the last little bit, it made that whole tournament so much bigger than just the tournament itself.

“It was more about the sport and women’s sport in Australia and around the world. We all felt like that, whether you were playing or not. This was so much bigger than just one game of cricket or one innings or one spell of bowling from any one individual. It was about the moment.”

“And to be part of that and still be amongst the group when that was all occurring, I feel very fortunate. Motty

(Australia’s coach Matthew Mott) and the Australian staff could have replaced me with another player, but they let me stick around. That was pretty cool.”

“As soon as our sights were set on filling the MCG for the final, it felt like that and it promised to be that. And was just about whether it was going to pan out like that or not.

“As the tournament went on and even in the lead-up to it in terms of the interest and scrutiny on the event, I think we all knew it was going to be something. We just didn’t know how big it was going to be.”

I just want the IPL to get started: Carey

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Australia wicket-keeper-batsman Alex Carey said that he can’t wait to join Delhi Capitals for the 2020 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL). Carey was bought by DC for Rs 2.4 crore at the auction prior to the 13th edition of the glitzy T20 league.

“I was really delighted to have been picked up by the Delhi Capitals during the IPL Auction. I was over the moon, and I couldn’t stop smiling for 24 hours when I heard the news,” said Carey in an Instagram Live video chat on the franchise’s official handle.

Carey revealed he had met the DC hierarchy earlier



and he also expressed his excitement over the prospect of playing in Delhi.

“I was fortunate enough to have met some of the staff from the team including our owner Parth Jindal. All the people I’ve met are amazing,

and it made me really excited coming over to Delhi, and playing some cricket,” said the 28-year-old.

“At this moment, I just want the IPL to get started, and I can’t wait for our team to build on last season’s result. I believe we have an amazing group of players in all departments and we will play some brilliant cricket when we get the chance,” Carey said.

IPL 2020 was originally slated to begin from March 29 but due to coronavirus pandemic, the start date was shifted to April 15. The tournament was subsequently postponed indefinitely by the BCCI as a precautionary measure against the spread of the virus.

Shafaq banned for six years for involvement for corruption

PTI ■ KABUL

Shafiqullah Shafaq was Son Sunday handed a six-year ban from all forms of cricket by the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) after the wicket-keeper batsman accepted his involvement in corrupt activities during the APLT20 and Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

Shafaq accepted four charges relating to breach of the ACB Anti-Corruption Code during the inaugural edition of the Afghanistan Premier League T20 in 2018 and the 2019 edition of the BPL.

“Shafaq was charged under breach of article 2.1.1



which is directly related to “fixing or contriving in any way or otherwise influencing improperly, or being a party to any agreement or effort to fix or contrive in any way” which also includes deliberate under-

performance,” the ACB said in a statement.

“The breach of article 2.1.3 relates to “seeking, accepting, offering or agreeing to accept any bribe or other Reward to (a) fix or to contrive in any way or oth-

erwise to influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of any Domestic Match ...”

The other two charges relate to failure to report corrupt approach to the anti-corruption unit.

The 30-year-old Shafaq has played in 24 ODIs and 46 T20Is. His last international appearance was in a T20 game against Bangladesh in September, 2019. “Under the provisions of the Code, Mr. Shafaq chose to admit the charges levied against him and agreed to the sanctions by ACB in lieu of an Anti-Corruption Tribunal hearing,” ACB press release stated.