A DANGEROUS

**FLASHPOINT** 

AS TRUMP PULLS BACK FROM VIRUS,

CONGRESS RACES TO FILL VOID

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# India's Covid growth 2nd highest India, China scuffle

### 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

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, where-

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 as the USA, France, Italy, 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 USÁ 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

Continued on Page 2 | control, officials said. The

# on Sikkim border

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

**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 dura-

tion face-offs between border

guarding troops do occur as

ooundaries 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.

Continued on Page 2

# PM to talk with CMs Covid lockdown road ahead today

#### Resumption of public transport, dilution of curbs likely on agenda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

week ahead of the sched-Auled 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 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 empow ered 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 videoconference around 3 pm.



"PM Narendra Modi to hold the 5th meeting via videoconference with state Chief

Ministers tomorrow (Monday) afternoon at 3 pm," PMO India tweeted Sources in the Government

said the focus of the meeting would be on boosting economic activities and pushing efforts to convert "red" zones with high Covid-19 case load into "orange" or "green" zones. Several States have recent-

ly relaxed labour laws to pump up industrial activities with staggered shifts or limited staff as a fresh spike in coro-navirus cases could undo the gains so far.

also discuss further relaxations as part of a graded exit from the lockdown but all restrictions are unlikely to be withdrawn in one go, the sources suggested.

Continued on Page 2

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

mid the rising coronavirus cases in the country, Cabinet A 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

# Select passenger trains from tomorrow

#### 15 pairs of trains from New Delhi to Dibrugarh, Patna, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Mumbai railway stations will remain

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,

Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Madgaon, Mumbai Central, Ahmedabad and Jammu Tawi. All passenger train ser-

vices 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

Secunderabad, Bengaluru, 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 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.

### ADMITTED TO AIIMS

**CAPSULE** 

New Delhi: Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was admitted to the AIIMS here on Sunday evening after he complained of uneasiness, sources said. Singh is under observation.

#### AJIT JOGI SLIPS INTO COMA: DOCTOR

Raipur: Former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Ajit Jogi, who was admitted in a private hospital here after suffering a cardiac arrest, has slipped into coma, a

# 4K new cases on Sun, Maha adds 50%

### **Total crosses 67K with 111 more deaths** 1,824 patients have recovered

PNS NEW DELHI

 $I_{4,000}^{
m ndia}$  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

State like Bihar and Ódisha 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 Kovembedu was declared a hotspot. More than 1,500 positive cases were found to be linked to the market. Of the

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



Continued on Page 2 Medics take sample from a woman for Covid-19 test in Moradabad on Sunday PTI

# and 23 deaths on Sunday.

Chased by leopard,

deer takes refuge

in Mumbai house

Continued on Page 2

# 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.

from Narsinghpur, Barwani, Sagar and Shajapur districts. Almost all the deceased

were travelling to Uttar Pradesh either from Maharashtra, Hyderabad or Karnataka

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

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.

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.

total cases in Tamil Nadu, 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

# **Ganga Ram Hospital**

**New Delhi:** Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in the national Capital will resume its OPD services in

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.

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

# the number of serious patients and deaths caused by the infection is "less". *PTI* 5 pilots who flew cargo to China test positive

Deaths 'very less' but 75%

cases asymptomatic: CM

Covid-19 cases in the city are asymptomatic

or showing mild symptoms, and asserted that

China, have tested positive for coronavirus during the preflight Covid-19 test, are currently asymptomatic and are based in Mumbai.

and a tow-tug operator/driver working with the Air India Engineering Services Limited (AIESL) at the aircraft hangar in Mumbai have also tested positive for the coronavirus on

tested positive for Covid-19. These pilots were tested one after one. We suspect it could be a case of faulty testing kit as well," sources said.

According to sources the five pilots had not operated any

flight in the last three weeks. "These pilots had operated 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

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.

Continued on Page 2

#### **Ujjain records** whopping 19% **Covid death rate** New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said 75 per cent of

PNS/PTI ■ INDORE

 $E^{\text{ven as Indore in Madhya}}_{\text{Pradesh continues to be}}$ among the country's most worrisome coronavirus hotpots, 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 Shivra 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. Continued on Page 2

#### TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI crash-landed into the one room house of one Mrs Sunita Singh The dwellers of a tiny hut-

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.

bolt from the blue, the deer

ment located off the IIT-

Bombay campus at Powai in In what virtually came as a

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

in Hanuman Tekdi slum colony

after being chased from a nearby hillock of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, and crashed into hutment through the roof. Continued on Page 2

The deaths were reported

amidst the coronavirusinduced lockdown. In Narsinghpur district, "While five labourers died

Thirteen others, who suffered injuries in the accident,

Continued on Page 2

to resume OPD services from today

a graded manner from Monday.

The hospital has created

# Pive Air India pilots, who had undertaken cargo flights to

In addition, a technician

May 7.

"Five Air India pilots have

"AIESL personnel are also

#### **CROSSING BORDER** •

# **Indian trucks entry may** up virus cases: Nepal

ing 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 pants before allowing them in," Sarawagi was quoted as say-

"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 Nepalis stranded in Indian borders from entering the country to prevent the transmission of the virus. But we are

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

People who do not have igh 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

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

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'.

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 removed they are "desperate" to go PTI

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,

# 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 (BMC) Corporation 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

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 With no let up in the Dome CCC Worli to assess

patients," the BMC stated in its medical bulletin issued on

Sunday evening.
"Till now around 3000 Xray 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.

**Ujjain records** 

whopping

19% Covid

death rate

From Page 1 Speaking to PTI, new Ujjain Collector Ashish Singh said, "We are trying to bring down

the death rate by improving health care facilities here. We

have launched several mea-

sures to identify people infect-

ed with the virus and to quar-

antine them. We are hopeful the

curve will flatten in a fort-

medical college-cum-hospital

(GMCH) and a private one —

RD Gardi Medical College and

Hospital, with 750 beds, has

been designated as a Covid-19

facility. A 100-bed hospital in

Indore has also been earmarked

Ujjain has no Government

# 5 pilots...

From Page 1

"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 and land Thiruvananthapuram around 10.45

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

### 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

"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

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

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

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 **PTI** up," he said.

### Man jumps quarantine to buy liquor, booked on wife's complaint

Hamirpur (HP): A case has been registered against a man in Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur district after his wife informed the police that he had jumped home quarantine to buy liquor, an official said on Sunday.

The junior basic trained (JBT) teacher and his brother had returned from Gujarat to Barsar area last Thursday, and both were kept under home quarantine as a precautionary measure against the novel coronavirus pandemic, the official said. A first information report

purchasing alcohol, according to the official. The case was registered under various sections of the India Penal Code and the Disaster Management Act, the spokesperson said. The man has now been kept under institutional quarantine and the matter referred to the Education Department for departmental action against him, the official added. PTI

(FIR) was lodged after the teacher's wife informed the

police that he had gone out by

jumping home quarantine for

#### Three yoga teachers held for sexually harassing Japanese woman in Rishikesh

**Rishikesh:** Three yoga teachers were arrested here on Sunday for allegedly sexually harassing a Japanese woman, police said.

The woman had lodged a complaint at the Muni ki Reti Police Station on Saturday accusing the trio working at a yoga school in Aam Bagh area here of pressurising her to have **PTI** sex with them, Kotwali Police Station in-charge Ritesh Shah The accused were arrested

the large deer.

from their residence on Sunday to treat COVID-19 patients on the basis of the complaint, from Ujjain, officials said. he said. They were identified as Harikishan (43) from Amritsar, Chandrakant (32) from Raiwala in Dehradun and Somraj (23) from Chamba in Himachal

The team later took it

The affected family said

away to Sanjay Gandhi

National Park's Rescue Centre

for further medical examina-

that the deer was lying in their

house quietly before the res-

cue team arrived to take it

"Though it appeared shocked,

composed all through. The

deer crash did not result in

any damage to household

articles like the fan, TV, gas,

cupboards, bed etc," Mrs

be seen in the context of the

fact that during the lock-down, the animals from the

wild like flocks of peacocks,

kingfishers, dolphins, deer,

foxes, mongoose, large snakes

are being seen in the human

Sunday's incident should

Singh said.

habitats.

back to the forest environs.

tion and rehabilitation.

#### With local leaders from both the ruling BJP and Congress claiming the facilities and treatment at RD Gardi Hospital were below par, and several videos on this making the rounds of social media, the state government has placed Additional Collector Sujan Singh Rawat as nodal officer of the private facility.

"We are bettering facilities at RD Gardi Hospital and issues concerning doctors and staff have been resolved," Rawat said. He said 70 per cent of the patients who died did so within 72 hours of admission in the hospital, suggesting that some of them may have been brought

Ujjain also had comorbidities, mostly ailments of the heart and lungs, he added.

reports also came in late which compounded the problem,

Meanwhile, Vikas Sharma, a priest at Mahakal Temple, said prayers were being offered daily to ensure the virus outbreak comes to an end. The temple has been shut for devotees since

# Most of the deceased in

Initial coronavirus test

some other health officials said.

# **India, China scuffle** on Sikkim border

In a similar incident on May 5 and May 6, about 250 troops engaged in scuffle and some Indian and Chinese soloff 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 since April 27 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 faceoff 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 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.

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.

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 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 state-

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

From Page 1

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

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.

### 11 migrants...

From Page 1

The deceased trio in Barwani aged between 42 to 55 years, an official said. A doctor at Sendhwa civil

hospital, where two of the three labourers were taken. said dehydration and fatigue due to scorching heat might led 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

### **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 just1.5-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 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

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

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

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,

said, "We have noticed that only 2.48

per cent of these Covid cases have

required ICU facility, only 1.94 per

Manipur, Odisha, Mizoram, Puducherry. Moreover, there are 4 States/ UTs - Daman & Diu, Sikkim, Nagaland & Lakshadweep.

of UP on a mini truck from Maharashtra when he took ill.

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

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 . Keiriwal 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-

This makes me feel that all the Governments and all the systems have failed."

he pioneer

"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 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

Šarvodaya 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.



# 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 ĥonorary 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." tory, these cases are advised



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 frontline 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 vesterday, we have attached five-star hotels with the Raijy Gandhi Super Specialty Hospitals, which has been declared as a dedicated Covid hospital. If any of our Covid warriors get affected by they wi those hotels. It is our responsibility to take care of them because they are working and taking care of the people all this

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.'

# It's our responsibility 2 drivers held for ferrying 100 workers 50 cases filed,

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he Delhi Police has arrest-}}_{\text{ed two truck drivers for}}$ 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

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-



registration were caught near Southeast Delhi's Kalindi Kunj picket for ferrying migrant

"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 vehithese labourers from their jhuggies in Delhi to their native place in Lakhisarai district of Bihar in lieu of money," said the

"While another truck dri-

Dharmendra Kumar Yadav, was also illegally transporting 34 labourers from Îndira Camp jhuggies to their native place in Madhubani dis-

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

"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.

# 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

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

However, on Sunday Delhi Police received over 700 calls on their 24x7 helpline number to resolve issues related to lockdown. Police said that total 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



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

"The food delivery network established in all 15 districts with involvement of nearly 400 NGOs/ RWAs/Good Śamaritans 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

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

### Girl used boy ID, provoked friend to test morality stopped further communica-

n a major turnaround, in the L'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 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

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

tion 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, includ-

## **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 nessages through a fictiona 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

ing 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, 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,"

"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

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

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

alleged Instagram have been 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.

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

Ranjan Dimri I Pioneer

# Sir Ganga Ram Hospital to resume OPD services today

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

 $S^{\text{ir Ganga Ram Hospital will}}_{\text{resume OPD (outpatient}}$ department) services in a graded manner from Monday. The hospital administration has created a proper infra- structure 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 administra-

tion 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.



**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he Jawaharlal Nehru}}_{\text{University (JNU) on}}$ 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

"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

"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

# 366 special trains ferried 4 lakh of migrant workers: Railways

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Railways has operatded 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 ministry 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 Bood, Browgeri, Chhara Khurda Road, Prayagraj, Chhapra, Balia, Gaya, Purnia, Varanasi, Darbhanga, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Jaunpur, Hatia, Basti, Katihar, Danapur, Muzzaffarpur, Saharsa

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

R eaching 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 The operation is being Sagar' and this effort is in line

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 India's role as the first

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.

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

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 bath-

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

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 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 pan-

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

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

highest number of positive cases followed by ITBP which has reported156 cases so far. In the CRPF, there are 233 active cases with two patients

The CRPF has the second

disease and a Sub Inspector succumbing to the viral infection. With 18 new positive cases,

from

Industrial Security Force (CISF) has 66 corona virus infected 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

personnel have contracted the infections most-

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 dis-

The Forces have under-scored 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

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 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 territories particularly in rural

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 differ-

ent 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 acknowleged 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

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



Playing a major role in the national effort to fight COVID-19, Hyderabad-based Defence Research and mier 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-

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 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



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 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 proviof the workers.

The guidelines say, "Factories need to maintain a sanitisation routine every twothree 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

T ok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Lon 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-



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 sched-

uled sitting on April 3.

### Restaurants, hotels urge State Govts to allow liquor sale

PNS NEW DELHI

Nacross the country have urged the State Governments to allow them to sell the liquor amid coronavirus lockdown. The move comes at a time when several state governments have allowed the sale of retail alcohol with some guidelines. In its appeal to the state governments, the Restaurants and hotels have stated that there is a stockpile of around ₹3,000 crore lying with them. Last week, the Supreme Court also advised the state governments to consider the online sale or non-direct contact and home delivery of the same.

National Restaurant Katriar said. Association of India (NRAI) 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,"

In similar vein, The Beer he said. 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 industry continues to be in limbo,

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

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

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

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

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 goofup attracted many Twitter users. "In Ladakh maximum temperature is -4 degree centigrade and minimum temperature is-1 degree centigrade," the tweet

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' tem-

"This is the result when

math teachers are part time sui-India correctly, even if they cide bombers and terrorists," intended to follow the country wrote one of tweeter user. "In #Ladakh, maximum

Pak army start preparing from today itself". One user pointed that the ople in Pakistan did not know the difference between the maximum and minimum. Another

One twitter user comment-

temperature is -4 degree centi-"India started Weather Forecast of Bangladesh in 1970 grade and minimum temperature is -1 degree centigrade," read & one year later East Pakistan became History & Bangladesh the tweet. Another tweeted "India started Weather Forecast was born. History will repeat itself in PoK & Gilgit Baltistan. of Bangladesh in 1970 & one year later East Pakistan became History & Bangladesh was born. History will repeat itself in PoK & Gilgit Baltistan. Pakarmy start

reparing from today itself'. One Twitter user said, "It's user advised Pakistan to follow 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 edu-

cation." "RIP common sense!!! -

4 max and - 1 min??? Kon se gole se Science padhe ho???" 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

The IMD move to include PoK, Gilgit and Baltistan and Muzaffrabad 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 is 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 Uttrakhand 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 northeastwards 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 dis-

continuity, 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 olains of northwest India mainly between May 10 and 14 with peak activities on May 10. The north eastern and eastern may also receive scattered rain-

erly 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,"

fall/strong winds/hailstorms in

the next four days due to con-

vergence of moist southwest-

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

tor, UP's first corona patient to get plasma therapy, died on Saturday night due to kidney infection

Dr Sunil Agarwal, the 58year-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 dia betic 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 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 Alpana 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 concorona

### 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 tak-ing 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 histoof 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. IANS

### Man found dead in Shramik Special train from Gujarat

**Lucknow:** A man was found dead in one of the Shramik Special trains com ing 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 Dhola 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

### Agra jail inmate's death from Covid causes concern

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

IANS 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 infec-

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

# 669 more infections in TN, total at 7,204

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

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 are quitting China to set up manufacturing plants in the State.



is working as an advisor to the State Governmet, 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 İndia 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

# Kerala's physicist makes safety handcuff

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Aphysicist 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 lock-

down 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 n 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 pathbreaking 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 opportunity to come out of the bid to escape from the quarisolation rooms much to the antine room, an alarm bell horror of the health officials will ring in the neighbouring

and the local population.

This may soon come to an end if the technology developed by Gireeshan is put into use. Gireeshan used a 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

If the person tries to unlock



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 possible for the policemen in the control room to detect any attempts by the quarantined Handcuffs?



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

Giresshan.

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 is sure to being down the prices. Any takers for Safety

### new coronavirus cases **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN** ■ KOCHI

 $K^{\mathrm{erala's}}$  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

The release stated that 26,

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

Kerala reports seven

India flight which was to bring back 181 expatriates from Doha was cancelled in the last minute. The flight was expected to land

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 c o l l e c t o r ,
Thiruvananathapuram.
"We do not know the rea-

sons for denial of permission for the Air India flight by the authorities in Qatar. But the passengers who had booked eir tickets in this flig be brought back on Tuesday," said Gopalakrishnan. Besides passengers from the southern districts of Kerala, many per sons hailing from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra had booked their tickets in this

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

Many private college buildings have been converted tions by modernizing and sanitizing them to receive the

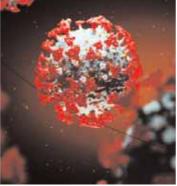
# AP corona tally at 1,980, 2 more districts cross 100 mark

ndhra Pradesh's see-saw battle Awith 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 morn-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 —

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

Maha council polls: Uddhav

any new cases in the last 24 hours.

The State's top Covid-19hotspots 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 crossed

to cross the 100-mark in terms of cumulative numbers. With the latest updates, six of the 13 districts have

 $A_{ ext{the spread of coronavirus}}$ at least in Jammu division, the Iammu Kashmir Government is fully geared up to receive stranded passengers via train services at Udhampur railway station from Monday.

Elaborate arrangements for screening and sampling have been made by the government authorities to ensure smooth disbursal of passengers heading to different destinations.

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. Out of five districts of Kashmir valley, Anantnag district alone accounted for 119 active

According to the daily Media Bulletin on novel coronavirus (Covid-19), out of 861 positive cases, 469 are Active Positive, 383 have recovered and 09 have died. One more patient, admitted in the GMC hospital tested positive late evening in Jammu. A close door neighbour of a family from Gurah Bakshi Nagar area also tested positive in Jammu. Meanwhile, health audit of Jammu district has been completed and a total number of 14.4 lac residents were surveyed by the different health department teams. A total number of 600 samples were collected and four members of a family including their driver

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

different temporary camps in Jammu also tested negative during the survey, official sources said, Moreover, 15 more Covid-

number of Rohingyas, screened

during the health audit across

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 immewas tested positive. Large

# 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 Aimer 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-

-- Kalaburagi (13) Chikkaballapura (4), Vijayapura (8) Belagavi, Gadag and Bagalkoe, 3 each and Myusuru 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, party would field two candidates Chintamani in Chikkaballapura and

a travel history to Ahmedabad, seven of announced its decision to withdraw whom are from Shikaripura, hometown one of the two candidates from the of Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

Davangere, 1 each.

Until Saturday, Shivamogga was a green zone without a case, but eight new dates for as many seat in the State cases in the past 24 hours made it an Council for which the biennial elecorange zone overnight. Shivamogga is tions are slated for May 21, the elec-312 km northwest of Bengaluru. All | tion of Uddhav and eight other can-Belagavi and Bagalkote cases had a trav- didates in the fray has become a foreel history to Ajmer. All Bhatkal cases | gone conclusion now. were contacts of earlier cases. IANS

## 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

A day after its state unit Balasaheb Thorat announced that the -Rajesh Godirao Rathod and Rajeshkisho alias Papa Modi – for the All eight men from Shivamogga had | May 21 Council polls, the Congress poll fray.

Since there are now nine candi-

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

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

tweeted in the evening.

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 sixmonth 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 Asssembly. The BJP is the biggest gainer

because of the Congress' decision to pull out one of its candidates from the 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.

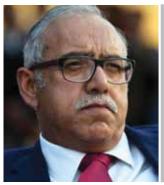
### J&K all set to receive stranded passengers via train at Udhampur

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## **Lockdown for clean air**

There is some merit in suggestions by ex-SC judge on rotational lockdowns in States to maintain green norms



s we enjoy clean, blue skies and bird song from the confines of our homes, a former Supreme Court judge has suggested that we not fritter away the environmental advantage we have gained during the 53-day-long shutdown. Justice Deepak Gupta has recommended that we reduce traffic and industrial effluents and impose a 15day lockdown in different parts of the country on a rotational basis each year as this will lead to cleaner air and water. And help us meet environment conservation benchmarks that

we have been dilly-dallying on. Or working on in a rather piecemeal manner. Justice Gupta was on the green bench of the apex court for three years before he retired on May 6. And he minced no words, saying that while in some cases, the Environment Ministry was proactive in implementing the orders of the Supreme Court, when there were clashes pertaining to big industries and issues of environmental clearances and permissions, there was a "lack of willingness on their part to implement our order" especially when "the governments want big industrial units to be set up in a particular region." At least COVID-19 has opened us up to the possibility of nurturing our environment while not compromising development. Indeed the pandemic achieved in less than a month what the Supreme Court could not do in the last 35 years. Reports by the European Space Agency reveal that by early February, levels of air pollution causing nitrogen dioxide (NO2) over cities and industrial areas in Asia and Europe were 40 per cent lower than in the same period last year. NASA measured a steep drop in China's NO2 emissions and said the NO2 pollution over New York and other major metropolitan areas in north-eastern USA was 30 per cent lower. In the UK, too, NO2 pollution in some cities fell by as much as 60 per cent. India saw similar advantages. A few weeks into the lockdown, cities like Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Lucknow saw their average Air Quality Index (AQI) staying below 50. In fact, in the first week of April, there were reports of residents of Jalandhar, Punjab being able to see the Dhauladhar mountain range nearly 213 kilometres away after decades. By the end of April, people in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, could see the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas from their rooftops. The Ganga and the Yamuna rivers have also benefitted and according to the Central Pollution Control Board, the average water quality of 27 points of the Ganga is now suitable for bathing and propagation of

So as we begin easing our lives post-pandemic, we have to ensure that we don't lose these environmental gains. Not just because of the climate change or pollution crisis but because clean air is our ally in fighting the Coronavirus. Pollution helps viruses do their job better as the dirty air damages our respiratory systems and makes us more susceptible. So, whether India Inc likes it or not, in order to reduce the spread of epidemics in the future, cutting down air pollution now will be a key conditionality. So, as India tries to get back on its feet economically, better implementation of the environmental, transport and industry regulations will have to be a priority to ease the detrimental impacts of human activity on the environment. The lockdown has showed us a way of workarounds. Or the possibilities that we wouldn't want to contemplate otherwise. Sustainable development is the only way forward because if we don't respect nature, we have to be ready to bear the consequences when it strikes back. As we are experiencing, it can be fiercely brutal.

# Some workers return

Web portals by Punjab and Haryana Governments, listing job and project sites, are helping reverse the migrant exodus



mid the doom and gloom of reverse migration and heart-breaking stories of Ithe long march home, there has been some hope. As migrant workers head back to their villages, about 1.09 lakh from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have applied on a Haryana government web portal to return to the State to work at plants and units located in Gurgaon, Faridabad, Panipat, Sonipat, Jhajjar, Yamunanagar and Rewari. And encouraged by the response, the Haryana Government is even planning to make

arrangements to bring them back. Even neighbouring Punjab has taken the lead in registering the migrants residing within the State on a portal, reaching out to them and facilitating their return to their home States should they want to or moving them to job sites should they decide to stay back. It is true that the migrants moving back home are just making the lesser hopeless choice. Having lost their jobs, daily wages and their shacks overnight, they chose to go back home and rely on the subsistence economy there. They hoped to get by with the Government increasing rations and some government project work at the local level. But at least they would be safe from the "big city" virus, not have to stay at the cramped encampments or be looked at with suspicion as virus carriers. In fact, Haryana's relatively lower Coronavirus numbers are a major factor in the workers seeking to return. Till Friday, Haryana had 647 positive cases, including 14 Italian nationals, and eight deaths. This has also helped the State open up businesses faster. In fact, some migrants had already left the State before the lockdown and not having found suitable rehabilitation or job opportunities back home are now keen to return. Besides, some of the returnees, because they have moved across States hit by the virus, have not been able to resume their lives at their homes as they have been guarantined and are being monitored to see if they were asymptomatic carriers. The long clearances are costing them important man days at work.

Both Punjab and Haryana have launched the migrant web portal soon enough, and the responses there are reason enough why there should be interstate coordination on mounting a national migrant database, along with labourers' location, health status and skill sets. This would not only help them find job sites but also coordinate their journey back home should they so desire. As India opens up in phases post-lockdown 3, workforce coordination would have to rely heavily on data analytics and digital platforms that should be adopted by both the Centre and State governments. Till May 8, while 1.46 lakh labourers had applied to return to Haryana, 7.95 lakh wanted to leave. Three-fourths of those who want to come back (74.5 per cent) are from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, while 82.55 per cent of those seeking to leave belong to the two states. So corresponding States should also synergise mapping. Besides, State Governments should also plan makeshift shelters at some work sites and hold counselling sessions for labourers before they make a rash decision. India needs its inter-city migrants to rebuild the economy, which is suffering a chronic shortage of labour, but it needs to make them feel valued.

# opanion

# A dangerous flashpoint

Unless the US administration develops a plan with the backing of claimant countries to normalise the situation in the South China Sea, China will continue to strengthen its grip in the region



**SUMIT JHA** 

t a time when the entire world is grappling with the Coronavirus pandemic, China has ramped up its aggressive expansionism in the South China Sea, raising concern not only among its smaller neighbours but in India as well A slew of decisions taken in recent times, like the establishment of two new districts of Xisha and Nansha to administer the contested Spratly and Paracel island chains, the naming of 80 islands and other geographical features in the South China Sea and some other immediate developments are all aimed to further consolidate claim and physical control over disputed areas. Experts see this as an attempt to impose Chinese domestic law. This, despite the protests from other claimants.

Certainly, with its rise as a military and economic power, China aims to establish full control over the waters of the South China Sea, reversing its commitment to peacefully resolve dispute in this area with other claimant countries, including Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines and Brunei. The Xi Jinping Government has already extensively militarised the South China Sea There has been increased patrolling by the Chinese Coast Guard and Navy forces, several man-made islands have been developed and anti-ship cruise missiles, anti-aircraft batteries and missile defences have been

But to assume that China's rise as a military and economic power alone enabled it to navigate an assertive action plan in the South China Sea would be wrong. Other factors have pushed the region to the current flashpoint. One that has given a boost to China's sinister move to make this region its exclusive zone is the complete absence of an effective and collective response from other claimant countries.

Not once did the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (Asean) issue a strong warning to China for trying to unilaterally alter the geographical dynamics of the South China Sea. Differences among the Asean members have always been persistent on containing the rise of China. More to the point, since Asean works on the basis of consensus. China has been successful in creating a divide among its member countries on the issue of the South China Sea by providing financial support to some.

Recall how Asean behaved as a dead institution when in 2016, China completely disregarded a verdict of the international tribunal, which concluded that there was to resources within the sea areas falling within the "nine-dash line" and accepted the claims of the Philippines. This regional grouping's record is also dismal as far as the development of a code of conduct with China is concerned. Consider the Philippines's act. Instead of aggressively making efforts to issue the implementation of the 2016 decision of the international tribunal against China, it decided to compromise with Beijing, with the intent to attract huge financial assistance. At the same time, institutions of global governance, too, failed in forcing China to behave as a normal and responsible State.

The US' incoherent policy is no less responsible for the current impasse in the region. Both former US President Barack Obama and the current one, Donald Trump, failed to develop a comprehensive policy to address the crisis in the South China Sea. Thus, while Obama's half-hearted policy of Pivot to Asia could not stop China from developing several artificial islands, Trump's trade war with China has consumed four years.

Consequently, his vision of promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific is still at the nascent stage. True, the Trump administration made efforts to boost Taiwan's military power, with the US Navy conducting more tions in the South China Sea than in the past. But these isolated efforts can hardly produce an effective deterrence against

This is amply clear from the fact that the Xi Jinping Government has consolidated



**INCOHERENT** POLICY IS NO LESS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT IMPASSE IN THE

REGION. BOTH FORMER US **PRESIDENT** BARACK OBAMA AND THE CURRENT ONE, DONALD TRUMP. FAILED TO **DEVELOP A** COMPREHENSIVE POLICY TO ADDRESS THE CRISIS IN



THE WATERS

its control over the strategic locations between the Indian and Pacific Oceans through which one-third of the global maritime trade passes every year. Beijing has purposefully followed the policy of not allowing other regional littoral countries to have free movement in the South China Sea to secure full access to huge oil and gas reservoirs in the region. It is also threatening outsider countries, including the US, to not enter the South China Sea. What is more, China is doing all these things with complete impunity.

Interestingly, the last few months have witnessed a remarkable change in the South China Sea region in the sense that a few countries — Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines — have become much more critical about Chinese activities in the region than ever before. In early April, a Chinese Coast Guard vessel reportedly sank a Vietnamese fishing boat off the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea and in a rare display supported Hanoi in its protest

In mid-April, a Chinese survey ship, Haiyang Dizhi 8, with Coast Guard and maritime militia escorts, moved into a region in the South China Sea — proximate to

Malaysia — to disrupt a gas drilling operation by a Malaysian oil company, leading to a protest by Kuala Lumpur.

Undoubtedly, while the recent collective move by these claimant countries to push China on the South China issue is encouraging, it is equally true that unless the US administration develops a clear plan with the backing of other claimant countries to normalise the situation in the South China Sea, China will continue to strengthen its grip over the region.

While Taiwan has indeed taken a pragmatic approach to deal with the current situation by appealing to all parties to resolve the dispute with peace-ful means, the Tsai Government also needs to explore all options to protect itself from China's aggression, especially when Beijing's increased involvement in the South China Sea has already posed a serious concern for Taiwan.

India is unlikely to be immune from China's belliger-5G competition as an example. It is, thus, imperative for the Narendra Modi Government to cooperate with others to push back Chinese tactics.

(The writer is ICSSR postdoctoral fellow, Pondicherry

#### NDBITE SOU

I hope people will stop speculating about my health and let me focus on my work and also pay attention to their own work.

**Union Minister** —Amit Shah



Budding scriptwriters should continue writing with more enthusiasm, especially during these times. Every filmmaker needs a good script.

Actor –Aamir Khan



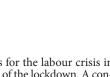
If we have to fight this Coronavirus pandemic, we need to be in this together. It's like a Test match. Cricket Test matches are of five days but this has been longer.

Former India captain —Anil Kumble



It's not enough to borrow more unless the amount is used to provide relief to the poor and restart the economy. We look forward to revised expenditure budget for 2020-21.

Congress leader –P Chidambaram



#### LETTERS THE EDITOR

#### **Alcohol spills troubles**

Sir — The Supreme Court's refusal to stay the sale of liquor is disappointing. Even during the initial days of the lockdown, when strict restrictions were in place, people did not follow the physical distancing norms stricty. Had the guidelines been followed as they were meant to be, the country would not have seen a multifold rise in the number of cases. With the opening of liquor shops, the situation has worsened. With people forming serpentine queues outside the shops, all social distancing norms were thrown out of the window. States, which had imposed prohibitory orders earlier, too, opened the shops after raising the price of the liquor, arguing that a price rise could serve as a deterrent. But the fact is that alcoholics would still buy the same.

The consumption of alcohol may also cause the pandemic to spread faster. With each passing day, the virus spread is not only not showing signs of abatement but also rising alarmingly. The worst affected, however, will be the women, especially in poor families. Besides meeting the

#### A case of gross negligence his refers to the editorial, "Memories of Bhopal" (May

8). Distressing visuals of people fainting and lying unconscious by the roadside emerged from Andhra Pradesh where a gas leak incident killed more than 10 people. Preliminary findings revealed that the leak occurred when styrene leaked out from two 5,000 tonne tanks that had been left unattended due to the lockdown. But gross negligence on the part of the factory owners cannot be denied. Mandatory safety audit by workers and consultation with technical expertise before the reopening of the plant could have averted the accident. Factory managers cannot cite the lockdown as an extenuating circumstance when the leakage was a consequence of negligence. The toxic gas has affected people living in nearby areas of the plant. Since the leakage occurred in the wee hours, most people were unaware of the cause of atmospheric contamination. Rescue teams went door to door and hospitalised those who needed medical help. Those who ran out of their homes in panic found no escape from inhaling the poisonous gas. Styrene is a gas used in the production of polystyrene

plastics and resins. It quickly spreads and stays in the air for a longer time. Exposure to styrene causes dizziness, disorientation and immobilisation, respiratory dif-



ficulties and build-up of fluids in the lungs. In severe cases, it causes "styrene sickness" or "central nervous system depression" and fatality. Those who inhaled the gas during the leak are now left to suffer its chronic effects for life. The paramountcy of ensuing occupational, public and environmental safety cannot be overemphasised. The Vizag gas tragedy must serve as a lesson for other industrial facilities to take all safety measures to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies. In the rush to reopen factories. caution should not be thrown to the winds **G** David Milton

Maruthancode

ever-growing demands from their Care for the workers spouses to part with their meagre savings, they would have to man-

age the drunken scenes and violence that may invariably follow. KV Seetharamaiah

Sir — Indian industries are heavily dependent on manpower. The exodus of migrant labourers from cities to their home States is an

enormous humanitarian crisis and an impending economic disaster in the making.

Clearly our system, the Government, NGOs and other social organisations failed to assess the problems and even

solutions for the labour crisis in the wake of the lockdown. A contingency plan at the national level is much needed to ensure that daily wagers stay at their place of work. COVID is, after all, a temporary crisis.

Rahul Jain

#### **Privacy concerns**

Sir — This refers to the article, "Corona's privacy concerns" (May 7) by Arun K Pujari. The response by the Aarogya Setu team to the claims made by a hacker, who pointed out major security flaws in the app, does not seem to be trustworthy. The truth about the app being used for surveillance is not known. What, however, is sure is that India does need to strengthen data protection and privacy laws. Already, fears were rife that like China, the Government may use this app for surveillance. The Government must not be allowed to take a step in that direction.

Priyanka Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

# analysis

#### FIRSTCOLUMN

## The cost of free expression

The absence of credible research for sustainable conclusions before being put out in the public domain can have its risks



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

ome day, when this pandemic is over and the world begins to heal from the Coronavirus' impact on the health and global economy, some researcher might seek to do a content analysis of the newspapers, magazines and journals being published in India and around the world. S/he might decide to discover the themes which captured the imagination of the world and received the maximum coverage at the end of 2019 and in 2020. Predictably, COVID-19 will dominate the word count, progressively rising from a limited percentage in December 2019 to almost a crescendo by mid-2020 and beyond. Every other theme in the world would have been edged out, almost as if nothing else existed during this period. The statistical tool box will be open and graphing, scaling, analysis by percentage and analysis by regions and much more, will follow.

However, there will be very little data available on how many people actually suffered due to the lack of adequate medical care because of an overwhelming preponderance of the COVID-19 theme. There will be negligible data available on people who suffered mental agony and fear because of this neglect and also false "flu" symptoms. One of the dominant themes in the subject area is the sheer ubiquitousness of "non-symptomatic" carriers. If anything was close to raising paranoia, the phenomena of "asymptomatic patients" is

Reportedly many are nursing anxieties if they could be the next victim of this dreaded pandemic because they are asymptomatic. To put it simply, anxiety and threat perception is hurting nearly as much as the actual disease itself. So long as the Corona virus continues to mutate in one or another manner, there can be no real hope of a vaccine. In the meanwhile, there are many claims afloat of the so-called effectiveness of the indigenous Indian healthcare systems or remedies originating from ayurveda and also from the alternate system of medicine, homeopathy. The allopath and the pharmacologist is quick to debunk these claims because s/he does not see adequate clinical trials/research to back up the claim.

To resolve these contradictory positions between scientific validation of solutions, and no action till evidence is produced, is difficult. Several wise men in the policy domain are conspicuously silent on this front, perhaps because there are no methods to resolve this kind of hiatus. The long and short of it is that the way forward is not

The current Chinese claim of having eliminated COVID-19 was dismissed by an internationally-acclaimed doctor with multiple fellowships in medical sciences from British institutions. When asked about the reported claims of the Chinese published in newspapers, he had a one-line reply, "Since when have you started taking seriously all that is said in the media?" Who can blame him for his circumspection when the news channels and social media are abuzz with multiple and at times mutual accusations of fake news and worse.

Amid this global obsession with the pandemic, one woke up on May 7 morning to the news of the terrible gas leak tragedy in Vishakapatnam. There was a muted reference in some news channels to the cause being rooted in the way issues and maintenance of the plant were handled during the lockdown period. If any responsibilities are in the process of being fixed, nothing significant has been shared in the public domain yet. There were tears shed and comparisons made to the Bhopal gas leak. What the learnings of the Bhopal gas tragedy were and the way it was handled by the then Government, both at the State and the Centre level, has over the last three decades become a non-issue.

We, as a country, never tire of flattering ourselves on how we are a free nation and how the freedom of expression is so central to our polity. It is a legitimate pride and clearly a cherished virtue. There is obviously a need for a study to assess the achievements of this free expression, the instruments that are used to deal with it and the social class which practises it. If any such study is available, it is one of the better-kept secrets of research institutions. Surely, every instrument must be assessed for its efficacy and for the price it extracts to keep it going.

This column began with some prognostics of possible future directions of research and meandering through the thoughts of the text, the relevance of valid analysis based on verifiable data, has kept reoccurring. The time has come to incorporate concerns of applied research as a policy tool without which the opinion of a dominant group in a system tends to transmute into a policy frame. It has its strengths, flaunted often as "quick action." It has its Achilles' heel where often excessive discretion and judgement is handed over to functionaries with little orientation and lesser knowledge of the consequences of their action over the lives of individuals who would not even know how to protect themselves. The absence of credible research for sustainable conclusions before being put in public domain can have its risks.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

#### POINTCOUNTERPOINT

WHILE THE CENTRE HAS FACILITATED MORE THAN TWO LAKH MIGRANTS TO RETURN HOME, IT IS NOT GETTING THE EXPECTED SUPPORT FROM WEST BENGAL.

—UNION HOME MINISTER





THE CENTRE IS LYING. THERE ARE EIGHT TRAINS READY TO FERRY MIGRANTS BACK TO BENGAL FROM DIFFERENT STATES.

—TMC MP **KAKOLI GHOSH DASTIDAR** 

# Time for spatial equality

India is going to get huge foreign investments in the coming days because of the changing geopolitical situation. We must use this opportunity to spread economic activities more evenly



ARIJIT DAS

→ he country is under lockdown since March 25 and all economic activity, especially industrial production, has halted since then. The Government has wisely extended some exemptions in this new phase of the lockdown to bring the economy back on track. The 733 districts of India are broadly divided into Red, Orange and Green Zones. This zone classification is dynamic and will determine the kind of restrictions placed on the

determine the kind of restrictions placed on the movement of people and goods.

However, the uneven growth pattern of India has hurt us like never before. About 70 per cent of the population of India now stays in relatively safe zones i.e. they are either located in the Green or Orange Zone but only 46 per cent of employment activity can start effectively. The rest 54 per cent employment is at risk due to different forms of restrictions. Like in Mumbai and Pune, factories are closed and may remain shut till the end of May. Closing factories in the Red Zone will affect production factories in the Red Zone will affect production capacities of Orange and Green Zone factories and production houses as MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) are dependent on locally-produced raw materials. Allowing factories to operate in Red Zones, even at a lower scale, is going to help but it runs under huge production risk and carries the risk of spreading the Coronavirus.

So what went wrong with our development strategy? Well spread out economic activity would have improved the employment figure by up to 65-70 per cent, which would mean more breathing space for MSMEs. Not only that, spatial inequality has resulted in other serious consequences. Due to uneven opportunity available at the local level, a massive number of people have to migrate for employment, education and living. The Economic Survey of India 2017 estimates that the magnitude of inter-State migration was close to nine million annually between 2011 and 2016, while census 2011 puts the number of internal migrants in the country (inter number of internal migrants in the country (inter and intra-State movement) at a staggering 139 million. Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar are the biggest source States, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The major destination States are Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. The industrial progress of a State, no

and Kerala. The industrial progress of a State, no doubt broadly depends on natural resources, ability of skilled human capital and existence of a potential market. All these factors cumulatively create a business environment that attracts new industry and investment. We have no control over the distribution of natural resources but an important observation is that endowed States hardly make their presence felt in the upper quartile of the growth table. Instead, medium-grade States, with a developed transport, logistic and law and order machinery,

The variation in industrialisation has existed in India since colonial times. States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, due to their proximity to resources and other factors, used to attract most of the investment and therefore industries. A major portion of the hinterland has remained neglected since then. Metropolis district data show that between 1953 and March 1961, of the 4,971 industrial licences granted in the country about 36 per cent went to the three industrial metropolises — Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Nearly 21.5



PROXIMITY TO RESOURCES AND OTHER FACTORS, USED TO ATTRACT MOST OF THE INVESTMENT AND, THEREFORE, INDUSTRIES. A MAJOR PORTION OF THE HINTERLAND HAS REMAINED NEGLECTED





per cent of all licences in India went to Bombay and 56 per cent of all licenses were given to firms located in the three leading States: Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

During the late 60s and 70s, a spurt in public sector investment took place to improve regional disparity. Several instruments to achieve balanced regional industrialisation were instituted. Industrial licencing was used to draw huge investments in areas lagging behind. Large public sector projects were located in backward States like Bihar, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. Industrial estates or growth centres were identified for infrastructure development. Incentives were also announced for private investments in backward districts. Several studies have shown that despite the widely-prevalent regional disparity in industrial development, apptial concentration has been ment, spatial concentration has been declining since 1970. After a gradual shift from the more regulated policy to the mar-ket-oriented neo-liberal economy, the tendency for this level of concentration to

More recently, the allotment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) tends to reflect the level of investment disparity. These SEZs are expected to create employment through backward and forward linkage effects and act as a stimulus for the backward regions of India. In 2004-05, the share of the four most industrialised States (Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat and Maharashtra) in total approvals was 49.5 per cent. While Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Haryana accounted for another 34.4 per cent of total approvals. Thus seven States accounted for 80.6 per cent of approvals. On the other hand, industrially-backward States of Bihar and the North-East did not have a single approval.

The allocation of active SEZs is still the same now. States like West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh had single-digit allocation in 2020, even after 15 years of the SEZ policy. SEZs could have been a tool to unshackle the growth potential of backward areas but failed to take off.

Economic disparity is visible at both, the State and district level. For example, in Maharashtra, industries/employment are typically concentrated in the Mumbai and Pune cluster; so are the SEZs. Mumbai, Thane and Pune constitute about 45 per cent, 52 per cent and 66 per cent of the total MSMEs, registered factories and SEZs respectively in Maharashtra. These figures inevitably suggest how bad other districts are in terms of economic activity and infrastructure. This shows simple negligence and incompetency at the local level.

the presence of natural resources may be God's gift but not physical and social infrastructure. The local administration and age-old hierarchical posting protocol should be blamed for this inefficiency.

Most inexperienced Government staff across all levels and all Government departments are sent to the most challenging district of every State. As soon as they are transferred to a better region. The result is that some districts have become informal training centres for our administration. This vicious circle needs to be broken and the most experienced employees in every department need to be posted to the most challenging areas.

The pandemic has revealed the vulnerabilities of the clustered development agenda. Huge resources are wasted sometimes restricting migrants or otherwise, trying to start factories in Red Zones. These could have been used for more productive purposes and things could have been much better if we were self-sufficient locally. Nevertheless, it is an opportunity to address the spatial variation among States and prepare a holistic development plan. We need to develop a sense of selfreliance not only for basic amenities or facilities but it should be the core of our lifestyle. In coming days, policymakers should think on these lines and prepare a comprehensive policy directive to allow equal access to all; irrespective of their geopolitical position.

India is going to get huge foreign investments in coming days because of the changing geopolitical situation. We must use this opportunity to spread economic activities more evenly. Central and State Governments must work together to urgently change their existing administrative protocols to allow wider access to

locals in decision-making.

Technology is a great way to remove locational barriers. Steps for setting up a new business should be mandatorily made online. This will ensure that decimade online. This will ensure that decisions will be independent of applicant and approver biases. Though this is the need of the hour because of social distancing but it should be the norm rather than a one-time measure. Set up a clearing house at the State and district level for a Single Window Clearance System, online applications. Window Clearance System, online application for electricity connection, digitisaservice for registration under various taxes and so on. These steps significantly cut the time required to start a business as well as implement Government infrastructure projects. Give more power to the local administrations and digitally-enable them. Services like land allocation, electricity and fire clearances should be time-bound in all districts. Land procurement is the single-most important barrier for setting up any business establishment; unless it's done through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). Land records need to be digitised, wellaccessed and clear. The local administration plays a critical role in this process and thus, needs to be evaluated regularly. Problem spots should be improved and must not be used as a punishment post-

(The writer is Fellow, India Development Foundation)

of our residents' committee."

where," he smiled back.

at DHA go?" I asked.

"Really?" I smiled widely, think-

"Boss, this area or that, what does

"How did the mosque meetings

"Didn't Yawar tell you?" he asked.

This is what happened:

Munawwar sold his house in DHA.

Since he had continued to insist on

including Anosh and Henry in the

meetings, some members of the

committee started to suspect he was

from a heretical sect, although he

wasn't. Munawwar was just a right-

thinking liberal hearted man. Even though these members were admon-

ished by others for saying such spite-

ful things, Munawwar left the area

"What about here? Are there no

ing he was joking. "Even in this area?"

it matter? People are the same every-

# Why can't we learn to love our neighbour?

### Religious bigotry can sometimes even unknowingly colour our sense of community and we end up alienating people



NADEEM PARACHA

n 2006, I was invited for lunch by a close relative, Yawar, at his spacious bungalow in Karachi's posh DHA area. When I arrived, I found him sitting with a dozen or so serious-looking gentlemen in his drawing room. After getting up to greet me, Yawar quietly apologised, saying that since he was the chairman of the area's residents committee, he could not decline a request by other mem-

bers for an urgent meeting. In fact, out of politeness and also to keep me occupied, he asked me to attend the meeting too.

The matter being discussed had to do with some members demanding that the monthly committee meetings be held at a fixed venue instead of at their homes as this inconvenienced the families of the

Various options were being aired in this regard. The Golf Club, the Creek Club, the Karachi Gymkhana and so on, until one Zahoor sahib suggested that the committee start holding its meetings at the area's mosque every third Friday of the month, after the jumma namaz (Friday prayer) was over.

Instantly a consensus was reached. Well, almost. Because three men remained conspicuously silent. Finally, one of them, Munawwar sahib, a man who owned a chain of utility stores across the country, spoke, "Friends, how do you plan to get Henry sahib and Anosh sahib into

the mosque?" Both Henry and Anosh, who were members of the committee, were non-Muslims. While Henry sahib was a Christian, Anosh sahib was a Parsi. That's why both the men

had kept quiet, too.

An awkward silence descended upon the room. My relative suddenly turned towards me and asked, Nadeem, what do you think? Would it be possible?"

Taken aback, I just shrugged my shoulders: "I'm not very good at these things, but since these two gentlemen are residents of the area and ...'

Zahoor sahib cut me off: "We can ask Imam sahib!"

Now, apparently, this "Imam sahib" was not the Imam of the mosque but an aged person who was treated as a religious scholar by the residents. He and his wife delivered religious lectures to the men and women of the area every three months or so.

"Friends, why are you complicating matters for Anosh sahib and Henry sahib? Why create an issue? We can meet somewhere else, unless we are looking to get some extra blessings from the Almighty by having our committee meetings at a sque," Munawwar said.

This did not go down well with Zahoor. "Munawwar, you hardly

come to the mosque. Maybe our meetings will be able to make you come and pray there more often..

There was laughter all round. But

none from Anosh or Henry. "If I may," I politely interrupted, "why not ask Henry sahib and Anosh

Munawar agreed: "Absolutely! They contribute to the funds of the committee as much as any one of us.

And they have a vote too." Unfortunately, this suggestion seemed to have made Henry sahib and Anosh sahib even more uncom-

"No, no, you do what you think is right ..." Anosh sahib said, evasive-

Then Henry sahib spoke: "You can have the meetings there (at the mosque) and can update us...

Thank you," said Zahoor, "so we all agree on this then?" Some quietly nodded their heads, and some softly said "yes."

But in came Munawwar again: "In that case, I suggest, the monthly maintenance bills of Anosh sahib and Henry sahib be slightly less than

"And why so?" asked one Danish sahib. "Because, if we use the mosque for our meetings, the maulvi (priest) will rightly ask us to contribute to the mosque's electricity bill. That would be added to our individual maintenance fee. Why should these two men pay additional charges if they are not even there?" said Munawwar.

"The mosque will charge us?" asked Danish, surprised. "But we already pay for its upkeep."

"We can ask Imam sahib," said Munawwar, sarcastically. I tried my best not to smile but no one else in the room treated Munawwar's comment as a sarcastic jab. Instead, they now began to discuss the topic of a mosque charging a fee from its funders. They shared relevant quotes from the holy book and quotes from Imam sahib's speeches, until Danish announced, "We already pay for the mosque! For its electricity, water,

"It has a gas connection too?"

someone asked. "Maulvi sahib and his family have to eat too, brother. So they cook

in the rooms where they live, connected to the mosque," Zahoor sahib

So it was agreed. They would meet at the mosque (and Anosh and Henry would have to pay as much maintenance fee as everyone else).

Years later, in 2017, I was driving through another posh locality of Karachi — Bath Island — when Í saw Munawwar walking briskly on a street. I stopped my car to say hello. "Munawwar sahib, do you recognise

"Yes, yes. I do. How are you?" he replied.

"What are you doing here in Bath Island?" I asked.

"I now live here," he said.

"Where are you walking to so hastily? Let me give you a lift." I offered.

"No, no, it's quite alright," he said. "I'm just going to that mosque over

"Munawwar I grew up in this area. Friday prayers ended an hour ago in that mosque", I said to him.

am going there to attend a meeting

He laughed: "No, little brother. I

Anosh or Henry sahibs here", I asked. "I'm sure there are," he replied "But I have learned to ignore them.

with his family.

I'm sure you can understand." Saying this, he bid me farewell, and walked away.

(Courtesy: Dawn)



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

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 com-

prehensive 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 warlike public health fund. A New Jersey freshman launched neighboring colleagues on a regional bipartisan task force to help guide Northeastern states "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

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.

the pioneer

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 decisionmaking 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

The White House coronavirus task force has abandoned daily briefings.

Encouraging the econom-rebound, Trump said Thursday he's looking forward to "getting on with it."
"When the nation is in the

middle of the major, historic

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 stayhome 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 lead-

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 10point strategy in testimony before a House Appropriations

"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 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 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 pushd since early March. "We can't reopen our country safely," she said, until tests are "are fast, free, and everywhere."

### 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

## Obama says Trump's response to Covid crisis has been 'absolute chaotic disaster'

Washington: President Donald Trump's handling of the coro-navirus pandemic has been "an absolute chaotic disaster" for America, Barack Obama has said, the starkest assessment yet from the former president about his successor's "anemic and spotty" response to the global health crisis.

Obama slammed Trump during a private call on Friday night with people who worked for him in the White House and across his administration, according to US media reports.

In a 30-minute conversation with members of the Obama Alumni Association, the former president, a Democrat, said the poor response to the coronavirus outbreak served as a critical reminder for why strong government leadership is needed during a global crisis.

During the call, Obama said his Republican successor's approach to government was partly to blame for the US response to coronavirus.

country has 1.2 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 both by far the highest in the Trump's approach to the

coronavirus pandemic has oscillated. In February he dismissed it, saying it would disappear, but by mid-March he acknowledged its severity.

"It would have been bad even with the best of government," Obama was quoted as saying in the call. "It has been an absolute

chaotic disaster when that mindset of 'what's in it for me' and 'to heck with everybody else, when that mindset

is operationalised in our government," Obama, who was US president

for two consecutive terms from 2009 to 2017, said.

The call was intended to encourage former Obama staffers to become

more engaged in ex-vice president Joe Biden's White

Over 78,000 people have now died in the US and the November presidential elec-November presidential elections, CNN reported.

'This election that's coming up -- on every level -- is so important because what we're going to be battling is not just a particular individual or a political party," Obama, who endorsed Biden officially last month, said.

"What we're fighting against is these long-term trends in which being selfish, being tribal, being divided, and seeing others as an enemy -that has become a stronger impulse in American life." Obama used the strongest

words for the Trump administration's handling of the coronavirus crisis and its worldview, CNN noted. "It's part of the reason why

the response to this global crisis has been so anemic and spotty," Obama commented.

The comments were first reported by Yahoo News, which obtained an audio recording of the call.

# 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 gov-ernment 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 pebsouthern England and many protective gear. PTI

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. Iohnson's Conservative Government has also faced wide criticism for being too slow to react to the pandemic and for not supplying

# 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-

ing 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

they were making progress in

efforts to secure the release of

a detained Navy veteran in

Iran. But they were also push-

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.

July 2018 while visiting a girl-friend in Iran. He was convicted of insulting Iran's supreme leader and posting prīvate 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 for-mer 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. Last week, US officials said California, was detained in reached that conclusion. AP total number of fatalities to 639. over to their country.

# 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 govern-ment 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 have recovered so far.

Punjab registered 11,093 cases, Sindh 10,771, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Balochistan 1,935, Islamabad 641, Gilgit-Baltistan 430 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir 86. The total number of infec-

tions 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 strict-ly 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

#### 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

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

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

HK police grapple with

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.

### **Chinese city bordering N Korea imposes martial law** after spike in Covid cases

Beijing: A Chinese city bordering North Korea on Sunday imposed the martial law after 11 people tested coronavirus positive, sparking fears of rebound of the deadly virus, official media here reported.

They were infected after coming in contact with a laundrywoman, state-run Global Times reported.

Shulan city should impose martial law in line with the requirements of highest-risk level prevention and control, Bayin Chaolu, the secretary of the Jilin Provincial Committee of the ruling Communist Party of China, said as he presided over an anti-epi-

demic meeting on Sunday, the paper reported.

Bayin said the clustered infections in Shulan pose great danger to the lives of the public and the situation is heart-breaking, exposing the shortfalls and loopholes in anti-epidemic work.

Those who failed to take action over the epidemic will be held responsible, the report said Shulan raised its epidemic-response on Sunday to the highest level, making it the only city in China to do so currently, after it reported 11 domestically transmitted COVID-19 cases, the report

# infections in the country.

### Taliban say they don't have missing US contractor

**AP** ■ ISLAMABAD

¬aliban 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 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 Frierchs' release during his meetings this week in the Middle Eastern State of Oatar 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 Frierchs. He arrived in Islamabad on Friday from Doha before heading next door to India in his pursuit of a lasting peace in Afghanistan.

#### pro-democracy protesters Hong Kong: Riot police in bers than the hundreds of Hong Kong grappled with prodemocracy 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

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

tually 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.

would criminalise disrespect of

China's national anthem. AP

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

# 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 lar period later this week.

be allowed outside for a simi-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

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

were lifted for seven provinces

distancing restrictions. Domestic and some international flights will resume at the end of May. After recording its first

salons open up under new social

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

fter the Government over Athe 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

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.

ing 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 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

According to him, the Centre should bring money from wherever possible and give to the states as loans at a ower 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

added. about fiscal prudence now will be suicidal "as the repercus-Rajan's comments on monetising deficit has came after the finance ministry on sions of not spending now will

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".

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

According to Rajan, the

E-commerce orders gradually scaling back to pre-lockdown level: Industry executives

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cales of non-essential items Son 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

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

Liquor makers, restaurants pitch for home delivery of booze

panies can still ship only essen-

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

### States for reviving economic activities in calibrated manner

IANS 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

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

IANS 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.

#### Suggest several models

years to return to normalcy".

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 econo-

my. She also expects a larger fis-

cal 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

should be a combination of

higher food and cash handouts

to the vulnerable, backstop for

MSMEs, shouldering part of

the wage burden for saller

enterprises, temporary relief to

taxpayers, amongst others," she

contain the borrowing costs of

the Centre and the states by

higher bond purchases which

will help quell bond yields, she

The Reserve Bank should

'The second package

the lockdown.

Singaporean lender DBS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he liquor industry along}}_{\text{with restaurants, bars as}}$ 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

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 Online food ordering plat-

forms 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 con-

sider institutionalising home delivery as a separate channel administered online. We will give all necessary assistance and

cooperate fully in this," Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) Director General Vinod Giri said. 'Currently, most

exercise related processes such as approval, licensing, registration, permits, EVCs etc are physical in nature needing human interaction. With today's technology, a lot of these can be easily made online thus cutting down human to human interface. Besides reducing virus transmission risks, it is also a good step forward against possible corruption," he added.

According to AIBA, COVID-19 has the potential to disrupt business for the rest of the year."Several epidemiologists predict that the pandemic will come in multiple waves. Given the threat of infection resurfacing in one part of the country or the other, this will lead to multiple lockdowns and disruptions for business. In this environment, it is imperative that the state excise departments introduce policies that facilitate home delivery of beer, wine and alcohol," it said.

reopening of liquor shops with the easing of some lockdown restrictions from May 4. However, many places saw heavy rush and flouting of social distancing norms, forcing authorities to close the outlets. Some states also imposed additional taxes of up to 75 per cent to control demand as well as shore up their depleted revenues.

Several states allowed

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The leasing of warehousing and industrial space has growth in e-commerce and activities from China to India, according to industry experts.

"Industrial and waresegment in India, which is

likely to emerge quickest and strongest post-COVID-19," property consultant Savills India said in a report. The slowed down because of the demand-supply of industrial nationwide lockdown but and warehousing space is COVID-19 with expected to previous estimates in the near to medium term due to possible shift of manufacturing coronavirus pandemic, the consultant said.

Higher supply contraction could lead to decrease in vacanhousing is the most resilient cies and optimum pricing, it

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 logisjection 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 compete with China and other 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 facturing 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 largelockdown. Everstone groupbacked 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-

'Vehicle scrappage policy to help generate demand

for new vehicles amid coronavirus pandemic'

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 cumstances," 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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $R^{\text{eversing their two-month}}_{\text{selling streak, overseas}}$ investors pumped in a net ₹ 15,958 crore in the Indian capital markets in the first week of

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 withdrawls. 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 sively, Srivastava said. 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 added. 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

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-

In addition to that, measures announced by the government and the RBI periodi-cally to revitalise the sagging economy would have also resonated well with investors, he

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 The growing fears of a

prolonged global economic

slowdown has triggered a risk-

averse environment with

investors taking flight to safe-

### 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 webbased 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.

### PTI ■ NEW DELHI The much-awaited vehicle scrappage policy would help in curbing air pollution, added.

reducing fuel consumption and curtailing fatalities in road accidents, while generating demand for new vehicles in the country amid the coronavirus pandemic, industry sources

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 of COVID 19 on the Indian lucrative and encourage people to scrap their old vehicles and replace them with new ones, he

When contacted over the matter, SIAM President Rajan Wadhera 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

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 auto sector, also could kickstart demand," he added.

A vehicle scrappage poli-

cy 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

that the scheme is likely to be finalised soon to boost the automobile sector. The proposed policy once approved, will be applicable on

Nitin Gadkari had said

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. Gadakri had earlier said that once the poli-

# Banks find new ways to amuse and inform during lockdown

Lockdown brings

change in buying

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 coronprompting 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?

#BreakFromBoredom! Unlock

your creativity during the lock-

HDFC Bank Fingage presents The Art Project, to give you a

avirus, and extended it twice. 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 Tritya with a promise that part of the money would go to PM Cares Fund.

This Akshaya Tritya, 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 with-drawal 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





#### **Teachers are** important: Taapsee

Actor TAAPSEE PANNU feels that her teachers have played an important role in shaping her per-

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 'karigars' 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



"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 tine, "I've been living with my sister (Dakota Fanning) and my family cooking and baking a lot. My sister

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 inbuilt 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

Wash away the Corona blues

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 auto-matically 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

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.)

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.

IN COMMUNION WITH GOA

'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 inspi-

ration 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 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,

# 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

Prancis Newton Souza, founding member of The Progressives, would have turned of 1 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 crit-

"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-

 $D_{\text{only drivers on the road at}}^{\text{istracted driving puts not}}$ 

risk but also passengers, cyclists

and pedestrians. In 2018, it led to the deaths of 2,841 people, accord-

ing to the most current data from

Holding a phone and texting

the National Highway Traffic

are two of the most common caus-

es, but eating, changing the radio

or anything else that causes you to

lose focus on the task of driving

can also be considered a distrac-

tion. The problem is so wide-

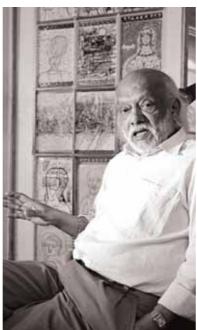
spread that NHTSA and the

Ĉenters for Disease Control have

addressed the issue on their web-

sure your eyes are up and on the

Safety Administration.



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!"

es priests and the eucharist table that sell in millions at auctions. From the symbolism of the priests, he created a riveting series. În 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-

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.

tent speak volumes about his deeper

#### **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 sembefore 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

### - T E C H

# PAY MORE ATTENTIC

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

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 WARN-

As any driving instructor will



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.

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

pop-up notification in a gauge cluster display or even a rumble in your seat.

lights in the instrument cluster, a

#### LANE KEEPING ASSIST

Often used as a companion to lane departure warning, lane keeping assist takes the extra step of recentering 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, recentering 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

gration systems come in nearly every new vehicle on sale today When you connect your Android or Apple phone to the vehicle, the 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

system will display many of your

smartphone's apps in your car's

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

While these systems may

infotainment system.

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 onscreen 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 extend-

you be a more focussed driver.

#### ed time. ANDROID AUTO AND APPLE **CARPLAY**

tell you, our hands tend to follow Essentially, these systems use

These two smartphone inte-

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

She said about her quarantine rou-

Automakers and technology companies are coming out with features aimed at reducing injuries and deaths related to distracted driving. Edmunds experts have selected five new car technologies designed to reduce distraction and help make you a safer driver. **DRIVER MONITORING SYS**has been doing

**TEMS** This is one of the latest technologies to start appearing in cars. BMW, Subaru and other paint by numbers. Everyone's embroiautomakers have installed cameras dering. We're getting and sensors inside vehicles that creative. I'm doing a use facial recognition technology to identify signs of driver distracjigsaw puzzle of Top Gun poster." tion or fatigue. Some can measure head and eye movements to make

# 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



nu, a 32-year old married nurse, was working regularly as a front-Aline 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

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 has to be quarantined (especially at 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

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.)

Somehow, there will be an

An hour later, she is in the

something that I, a northern

sure in the sunny day that follows.

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

to work outside the home? Who

is sick? Who's running out of

money? Who's fallen into the

darkness, and who has stayed

about being, at least so far, among

the lucky. But I know Nick would

tell me to count my blessings and

It's difficult not to feel guilty

Who else has no choice but

frontline medical workers.

there?

As my family posse bikes together, I think about those



# 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-chang-ing 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 puri-

ty 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 wordly 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 industrial by the series of eight and that at Themselves. be influenced by the sense of sight, smell and taste. They simply followed the basic equation of "As you eat, so your mind ecomes." 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 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 simultane-

. 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.

#### of this school year. Our own Slivers of hope 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 People search for the classroom with many of the kids she's known since preschool. sanity in tiny moments of joy party. Or something. "But it We meet for a memorial service by video conference won't be the same," she laments. It's hard to argue with that. because that's how it must be done these days. It feels strange, kitchen making crepes. Since but there also is comfort as I scan she was tiny, she has soothed herthe faces of the many colleagues self by cooking, as many of us are who've come to celebrate the life doing now. We awaken to spring snow of an editor and friend who succumbed to the Coronavirus. Among other things, his broth-Michigan girl, enjoy more than er tells us about a magazine most. But even I take more plea-

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

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

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

#### **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

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

#### **COGNITIVE THERAPY MAY TREAT AUTISTIC KIDS**

 $R^{\text{esearchers have found that cognitive behavioural}} \\ R^{\text{therapy and other psychosocial interventions are}}$ effective for treating anxiety in school-aged children with an autism spectrum disorder.

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

According to the



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

**Determine to live life with flair and laughter.** -Maya Angelou

#### TRIPAL ANTIVIRAL DRUG TO FIGHT COVID-19

two-week course of antiviral therapy that combines the Apower 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

CORONAVIRUS

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 "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

#### 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

vorries related to future economic difficulties (58 per cent) and any potential consequences on pregnancy (58 per cent) due to 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

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





# TEAM LACKS COMPLETE FIELDER: KAIF

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

The 39-year-old said that

dhe 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'



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-

Ravindra Jadeja is becoming better with age but India's slip catching has with age but indias sip calcining 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.

best fielders.

"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 Mumbaikar.

"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'

IANS 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

"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

"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 enter-tainment, fun and there is money and I'm all for the importance of money in a sport and for the

"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

 $F^{\rm ormer} \ {\rm Australia} \ {\rm captain} \ {\rm Ian} \ {\rm Chappell} \ {\rm has} \ {\rm proposed} \ {\rm radical} \ {\rm changes} \ {\rm in} \ {\rm the} \ {\rm LBW} \ {\rm laws}, \ {\rm stat}$ ing 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 sce-

"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 - particular-

ly 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 attack-

ing 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 tac-

tic 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 chal-

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

IANS 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 top four of not just ODI cricket, cool bloke with loads of experibut Test cricket as well. That

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



would indirectly mean semifinalists to say the least and you are perhaps two games away from the plum. There onwards, it's anybody's guess and if you do well on your day you could end up being World champs," said the 32-year

Sri Lanka lost a two-Test series in Pakistan before defeating Zimbabwe at home since Arthur's appointment. They are currently ranked fifth in the for-

In the ODIs, they are eighth a company."

but managed to beat West Indies 3-0 in their last series before the COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a standstill.

The boys and the respective squads are enjoying their cricket and that makes my job that much easier," he said of his role.

"If you like what you are doing and the environment to do so is conducive, the balance at this level of sport becomes that much more beneficial. I think its pretty similar to life or managing

# **Cricketers will have to live with dangers of COVID-19: Gambhir** Roland Garros could be helped doors

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

Though social distancing is possible in

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

"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

The French Tennis Federation (FFT) is L considering holding the 2020 French Open behind closed doors, according to federation President Bernard Giudicelli. The moving of the Grand Slam to September had created controversy with a number of players voicing concerns over playing a clay court tournament in the middle of the hard court

IANS PARIS

Since the postponement was announced in March, Wimbledon was cancelled for the first time since the Second World War while doubts remain on whether the US Open will be held.

behind closed doors

"We haven't ruled out any option," Guidicelli told the French weekly Journal du Dimanche.

"Roland Garros is first and foremost a story of matches and players. There is the tour-

nament taking place in the stadium, and the tournament on TV screens. "Millions of viewers around the world are

waiting. Organising it behind closed doors would allow part of the business model — telea third of the tournament's revenues) - to go ahead. This cannot be overlooked."

our ecosystem (260 million euros in revenue, or 80% of the turnover of the FFT)," he said.

## Women T20 WC became bigger than tournament itself: Perry

**PTI** ■ MELBOURNE

 $T^{
m his}$  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 allrounder 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 web-

"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

Mott) and the Australian staff could have replaced me with another player, but they let me stick around. That was pretty "As soon as our sights were set on filling the MCG for the

(Australia's coach Matthew

final, it felt like that and it promised to be that. And was iust 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."

vision rights (which account for more than "Roland Garros is the driving force of tennis in France, it is what feeds the players in

# I just want the IPL to get started: Carey

ustralia wicket-keeper-Abatsman 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



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

#### Shafaq banned for six years for involvement for corruption erwise to influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect

**PTI** KABUL

Shafiqullah Shafaq was on Sunday handed a sixyear ban from all forms of cricket by the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) after the wicket-keeper batsman accepted his involvement in corrupt activities during APLT20 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 any way" which also

"Shafaq was charged under breach of article 2.1.1



effort to fix or contrive in

includes deliberate under-

performance," the ACB said "fixing or contriving in any in a statement. way or otherwise influence ing improperly, or being a party to any agreement or accepting, offering or agree-

"The breach of article 2.1.3 relates to "seeking,

ing to accept any bribe or

other Reward to (a) fix or to

contrive in any way or oth-

corrupt approach to the anti-corruption unit. The 30-year-old Shafaq has played in 24 ODIs and 46 T20Is. His last interna-

of any Domestic Match ... ?

relate to failure to report

The other two charges

tional appearance was in a 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 stat-