



# Focus shifts to reviving economy

Modi seeks CMs' suggestion, says Covid assault blunted, efforts on to make India green zone

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

In his marathon meeting with Chief Ministers, his fifth one to review the pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday sought suggestions on reviving the battered economy and scaling up all efforts to bring more "red" zones with high Covid-19 case load into "orange" or "green" zones.

While the Prime Minister maintained that country has "largely succeeded" in controlling the pandemic, most of the Chief Ministers insisted on graded opening of the lockdown with at least five of them — Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh — even opposing the resumption of train services from Tuesday and asked the Centre to push it back, cautioning that it would make it harder to identify, isolate and test suspected coronavirus cases and could lead to chaos. It was decided to "redraw



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the Chief Ministers of various States via video conferencing to discuss Covid-19 situation in New Delhi on Monday

and narrow down" of the containment zones in different States. The States were asked by the Centre to submit their re-drawn maps of contain-

ment units showing areas of maximum coronavirus cases and the lowest ones by May 15, two days ahead of the last date of the extended lockdown.

While saying that people should stay wherever they are and be on "high alert", Modi said situation was "largely" under control. "There is glob-

## CONSULTATIONS

- PM maintained that country has "largely succeeded" in controlling the pandemic
- CMs insisted on graded opening of the lockdown even opposing resumption of trains
- All States have raised concerns about the crisis for thousands of migrants

al recognition for India's success in handling the Covid-19 pandemic and the Government of India appreciates the efforts made by all State Governments in this regard. Let us stay the course as we move forward together," he said in the beginning of the meet.

All States have raised concerns about the crisis for thousands of migrants, stranded because of the lockdown since March-end. Economic measures to help migrants, small and medium industries and to help revive consumption were

discussed. The Union Home Minister in intervention spoke about running special trains for the migrants.

Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa suggested discontinuing district-wise demarcation to contain pandemic. "We propose to do away with the district-wise demarcation into red, orange and green zones. Only containment zones should be identified and strictly cordoned. At least 50 to 100 meters around the known clusters may be declared as containment zones. Commercial activities including public transport should be allowed in non-containment zones," he said.

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Migrant people walk towards their native place in Uttar Pradesh amid ongoing Covid-19 lockdown near Ghazipur in New Delhi on Monday

## States see rise in Covid after migrants return

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Migrants are turning out to be nightmare for certain States which have somehow managed to contain the spread of coronavirus so far.

These States are now haunted by the homecoming of tens of thousands of workers who are potential carrier of the deadly virus. Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have begun to witness significant spike in Covid-19 cases after return of the migrants.

**Bihar, Odisha, UP J'hkhand, WB reporting significant spike in coronavirus cases**

Majority of these migrants were not tested for coronavirus before they set out for their native places. On return, they are sent to quarantine after mere thermal screening. The scope of them acting as corona spreaders remains a high probability.

The Centre in an affidavit in the Supreme Court had stated that almost a third of the migrants returning to their hometowns and villages could be infected with the novel coronavirus. But no efforts ever have been made to carry out bulk testing in case of migrants.

As per the data of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Odisha reported 154 cases till May 1 which has become more than double to 377 after the migrant workers from Gujarat and other States returned in a big number. Among the 377 who tested positive, 290 had come from Gujarat and West Bengal. So far infections have been reported in 21 of the 30 districts of the State.

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**Autorickshaws plying people from Mumbai crowd MP highway**

**Indore:** The National Highway Number 3, also called Mumbai-Agra Road that touches Indore in Madhya Pradesh through a bypass road, is seeing a steady stream of autorickshaws from the country's commercial capital as people move back to their native towns and villages amid the coronavirus-enforced lockdown that has rendered them jobless. Officials and eyewitnesses put the number of these three-wheelers from Mumbai crossing the Indore Bypass Road at 50 every hour.

## Mad rush to book train tickets crashes IRCTC website

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website crashed after booking for tickets reopened for as many as 15 pairs of special trains on Monday. The website crashed after a surge in user traffic at 4 pm and after a delay of over two hours, it was back up again to take bookings for passenger trains which will run from Tuesday.

The Ministry of Railways had announced to start operations of 15 special trains (30 return journeys) from May 12 in a graded manner. Other regular passenger services including all express, passenger and suburban services will remain cancelled until further order.

The decision to restart train services was taken in consultation with Ministry of



Railway employees take part in a drill at New Delhi railway station during the ongoing Covid-19 nationwide lockdown in New Delhi on Monday

Health and Family welfare (MoHFW) and Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Ministry said in a statement.

"These special trains which have been started presently will have only air conditioned classes i.e. first, second and

third AC. The fare structure for the "special trains" shall be as applicable for the regular time tabled Rajdhani trains (excluding catering charges)," it said.

Only online e-ticketing will be done through IRCTC website or through Mobile App and "Maximum Advance Reservation Period" (ARP) will be of maximum seven days, it added.

Only confirmed e-tickets shall be booked. Booking of RAC or waiting list ticket and on board booking by ticket checking staff shall not be permitted. Current booking, tatkal and premium tatkal booking shall not be permitted.

"No catering charges shall be included in the fare. Besides, provision for prepaid meal booking, e-catering shall be disabled.

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**100 Shramik trains to run daily for migrant workers**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to ferry migrants stranded in various parts of the country amid the nationwide lockdown due to coronavirus, 100 Shramik trains to run daily. Also, the Centre has asked States to assist migrants trudging back to their native places.

The Maharashtra Government too announced launch of free bus services up to the borders of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat for migrant labourers, days after 16 workers, who were walking back home to MP were mowed down by a goods train in Aurangabad after they fell asleep on railway tracks.

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## Covid count crosses 70K mark, death toll 2,220

**Large outbreaks in some particular locations need to be tackled: Govt**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India's confirmed cases of Covid-19 crossed 70,000 mark on Monday while the death toll topped the 2,220 mark, the Government said some relatively large outbreaks have been noticed in particular locations and it is important to focus on containment efforts to ensure that the country did not reach the community transmission stage.

With Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh high num-



A health worker takes samples for Covid-19 swab tests as others look on in Kolkata on Monday

bers, the total count reached 70,717 by 10.30 pm, a jump of 3,540 new cases during the day. This is the fifth day in a row when the country has seen new cases topping 30,000 mark.

Maharashtra continues to be the epicentre of the coronavirus spread with the State witnessing massive spike on daily basis. On Monday, the State added 1,230 cases and as many as 78 deaths. Maharashtra has

now 23,409 cases and 869 deaths. Mumbai, the financial Capital of the country, has become the hotbed of the coronavirus spread in the State where the number of cases has reached 14,521 and the death toll is over 500.

After reporting 669 new cases on Sunday, Tamil Nadu's march towards south continue on Monday also as it registered record 798 new cases to touch 8,002 confirmed cases.

Rajasthan reported 174 new cases of coronavirus and five deaths, taking the total number of cases and deaths to 3,988 and 113, respectively. Uttar Pradesh too reported 109 new infections, taking the tally to 3,573.

Gujarat reported 347 fresh cases of coronavirus in the last 24 hours, following which its total count reached 8,542. The

State also reported 20 deaths in the last 24 hours, after which its death toll mounted to 513.

Madhya Pradesh, which has seen exceptionally high death ratio, reported 171 new cases for a total of 3,785 and 228 deaths.

Kerala on Monday reported seven fresh cases of coronavirus which took its infection count to 519. Out of the total tally, 27 cases are currently active in the State. Of the new

**Commendable that India has been able to keep cases very low: WHO official**

**New Delhi:** WHO's Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan on Monday commended India for keeping the coronavirus cases and deaths very low compared to other countries and said it will play an important role in the development of a vaccine for Covid-19.

She said the whole world has to be prepared for the ongoing transmission of infection for "many many months and for perhaps years to come".

**3 Tihar jail inmates quarantined**

**New Delhi:** Three inmates of Tihar Jail have been put under quarantine after one of them, a rape accused, is suspected to have come in contact with a coronavirus-infected person, jail officials said on Monday.

They said the man was lodged in a separate cell in central jail number 2 of Tihar along with two other inmates in a rape case and did not show any symptoms for Covid-19.

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A migrant labourer reacts while talking to a relative over his mobile phone at Nizamuddin Bridge in New Delhi on Monday

**Single judge of SC to hear bail plea for offences up to 7 yrs jail**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Single-judge Bench of the Supreme Court would hear from May 13, appeals of bail and anticipatory bail matters in cases related to offences entailing jail term of up to seven years and application for transfer of cases.

It is for the first time since its inception that the top court has provided for sitting of a single-judge Bench to hear matters. The apex court till now normally used to sit in the combination of two or three judges, besides constitution benches.

To reduce huge pendency of the cases, the apex court had

## No post-mortem for coronavirus deaths

**New ICMR guidelines not to term such deaths as medico-legal cases**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The death of a patient in hospital due to Covid-19 will be considered as non-medico legal case and will not require post-mortem as it might leave the doctors and mortuary staff exposed to the virus in the body. At the same time, deaths of those with negative or inconclusive test results but with symptoms of the coronavirus disease will be recorded as probable Covid-19 deaths, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said in its recently released fresh guidelines on recording Covid-19 deaths.

The guidelines come in the wake of various queries from the doctors and hospitals treating the Covid-19 as well as symptomatic patients. So far over 2,000 people have succumbed to the deadly viral infection in the country.

In its guidance for appropriate recording of Covid-10 deaths in the country, the ICMR said deaths with inconclusive test results, but in which coronavirus symptoms are present will be recorded as "probable Covid-19" fatalities.

Covid-19 would be recorded as an "underlying cause of death" when leading to pneumonia, cardiac injury and clotting in the bloodstream, among others, said the document.

Explaining the public health significance of recording the cause of death in the Covid-19 pandemic, ICMR said that

Covid-19 is a new disease and is a pandemic affecting all communities and countries and a robust data is needed in India to measure the public health impact of the ailment and to plan for timely health interventions.

Deaths in which tests are awaited with the presence of symptoms will be recorded as suspected deaths, while those testing negative but have symptoms will be mentioned as clinically-epidemiologically diagnosed Covid-19, the guidance stated. It is likely that Covid-19 is the underlying cause of death (UCOD) that leads to pneumonia in most of the deaths due to Covid-19.

Patients may present with other pre-existing co-morbid conditions such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, ischemic heart disease, cancer and dia-



Medics and family members perform burial of a person who died of Covid-19, during the nationwide lockdown in New Delhi on Monday

betes mellitus. These conditions increase the risk of developing respiratory infections, and may lead to complications and severe disease in a Covid-19 positive patient.

"These conditions are not considered as underlying cause of death as they have not directly caused death due to Covid-19.

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## CAPSULE

**SCHOOLGIRL BURNT ALIVE IN TAMIL NADU**

**Chennai:** In a gruesome incident, a 14-year old schoolgirl was set on fire in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram district by two men connected to the ruling AIADMK party. The girl, who had suffered 95 per cent burns, died on Monday, police said.

**CRPF JAWAN KILLED IN NAXAL ENCOUNTER**

**New Delhi:** A CRPF jawan was killed in an encounter with Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Monday, officials said.

**NIRAV'S EXTRADITION TRIAL BEGINS IN UK**

**London:** Fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, fighting extradition to India on charges over the nearly \$2 billion PNB fraud and money laundering case, appeared via video link before a UK court.



PM-CMs MEET

Reopen all of Delhi barring hotspots: CM

New Delhi: Barring containment zones, economic activities should be allowed to resume in the national capital, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said during a video conference chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with CMs of different states on Monday.

The fresh round of consultation was held on ways to strengthen the Covid-19 containment strategy and stepping up of economic activities in a calibrated manner as the 54-day nationwide lockdown nears an end.

"During the interaction, the Chief Minister said economic activities should be allowed to resume in Delhi, except in COVID-19 containment zones," a source told PTI.

The Government has already demanded from the Centre that all 11 districts of Delhi be not treated as 'red zones' so that more economic activities are allowed in the national Capital, sources said.



They said that the Government wants that in Delhi 'red zones' be identified as per municipal wards instead of districts.

Recently, the Union Health Ministry classified the entire national capital, which has 11 districts, as red zone. The city has 272 wards.

During the video conference PM Modi told chief ministers that India will have to devise and implement a "bal-

anced strategy" to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, and the biggest challenge for the country will be to ensure that the infection does not spread to villages.

Appreciating the role played by the states in the fight against the pandemic, Modi said the entire world is of the view that India has been able to successfully protect itself from the pandemic, according to official sources. PTI

HIMACHAL  
Avalanche-hit farmer's body recovered after a month



Lahaul-Spiti (HP): The body of a farmer, who was buried under an avalanche in Himachal Pradesh's tribal district Lahaul-Spiti, was recovered after about a month, a district official said on Monday.

The 42-year-old farmer Rajendra's body was recovered at 4 pm on Monday by a search and rescue team comprising the police, Indo-Tibetan Border Police and local people, he added.

He had been buried under snow when the avalanche hit Bargul village in Lahaul's Moolding gram panchayat on April 13. He was removing fountain pipes in his field when the incident happened. Meanwhile, the body was taken to Keylong regional hospital for postmortem, he added. PTI

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Letter No.: 568/731/50  
Date.: 08.05.2020

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2. Bid Due Date - 15.05.2020

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1	2	3	4	5	6
1	06 1st Call C Class & Above	63484	BT Renewal Work under Sub Division Wadrafnagar on Ambikapur Dhanwar Varanashi Road (SH 2A) in Km. 79 & 82/6-10 = 1.60 Km., Pratappur Semersot Road (SH-12) in Km. 03 to 6/2-6 = 3.60 Km. and Wadrafnagar Janakpur Balangi Road (SH 3) in Km. 33 to 36/2-6 = 3.60 Km.	193.06	Ramanujganj

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer  
P.W.D. Ambikapur Circle Ambikapur

R.O. No.: 80534/5  
R.O. Date:- 08/05/2020

Non-payment of 3-month salary: Doctors of Delhi civic hospitals write to PM

New Delhi: An association of medics of civic hospitals in Delhi has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that doctors of the north corporation have not been paid salaries for the last three months.

The Municipal Corporation Doctor's Association (MCDA), set up during the time of the erstwhile unified municipal corporation of Delhi, sent the letter in an e-mail last week, officials said.

The association, in the letter has said that doctors are working in "highly stressful" condition due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"We have not been given salaries for the last three months (February-April), and

we know our duty as a doctor to serve the patients. We are not asking for anything more, but just our salaries," MCDA president Dr RR Gautam said.

There was no immediate reaction from the North Delhi Municipal Corporation authorities.

"We have been compelled to write to the PM, seeking his interference, as this issue needs to be resolved," Dr RR Gautam said.

Otherwise, only option left for the doctors would be to "resign en masse", the letter said.

Ten medical staff, including seven doctors of NDMC-run Hindu Rao Hospital have tested positive for Covid-19 in the past few weeks. PTI

Centre targeting West Bengal, Mamata tells...

From Page 1  
Asserting that this was not the time to play politics Banerjee told the Prime Minister that the Central Government was working according to a "script."

She raised the issue of the Inter-Ministerial Central Teams being sent to Bengal for a "hostile review" of the situations whereas the State Government was only following the rules made by the Centre.

She said that Bengal was a

border State with a high density of population and hence the policies on the State should be made with care and caution, sources said.

Wondering why the Centre was not clearing the State's dues she reportedly said that her Government had to bear huge burden of providing free ration to the entire population besides bearing the cost of treatment of the people.

She also said that no train fare should be extracted from the migrant workers who were returning from other States, sources said.

Earlier her nephew and TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee slammed the Centre for not consulting the Chief Ministers before the 'lockdown one'.

Single judge of SC to...

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made certain amendments to the Supreme Court Rules, 2013, in September last year which stated that single-judge bench would hear appeals in bail and anticipatory bail matters in offences entailing jail term of up to seven years.

As per a notice issued by the top court on its website on Monday, besides other amendments the competent authority has provided that certain categories of matters may be "heard and disposed of finally by a judge sitting singly nominated by the Chief Justice."

"Special Leave Petitions arising out of grant, dismissal or rejection of bail application or anticipatory bail application in the matters filed against the order passed under section 437, section 438 or section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) involving the offences punish-

able with sentence up to seven years imprisonment," the notice said. It further said that single judge would also hear application for transfer of cases under section 406 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and also application of urgent nature for transfer of cases under section 25 of the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC).

"Take further notice that the matters referred to above will be listed before judge sitting singly w.E.F May 13, 2020," the notice said. A gazette notification was issued on September 17 last year, through which the apex court had amended the Supreme Court Rules, 2013.

Earlier, as per Supreme Court Rules, 2013 and older rules, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) had the power to appoint one or more judges to hear all matters of an urgent nature dur-

Focus shifts to reviving...

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He further added, "All domestic and international travel should not be permitted at least till the end of May."

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray was of opinion that any order on lockdown should be taken cautiously as the threat of peak in coronavirus cases looms large.

"Cases are expected to peak in May, it may peak in June or July also. I've read Wuhan is witnessing a second wave of cases, even the WHO has warned about this. So, I suggest that any action on lockdown must be taken cautiously," he said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asked for opening up of economic activities in Delhi except in the containment zones.

Most of the States, including Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Punjab, wanted extension of the lockdown with a carefully-crafted strategy to revive economic activities across the country. States requested the Centre to re-schedule the debt saying they were in "massive debt".

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh pitched for continuing the lockdown but backed by fiscal and economic empowerment of the States,

to save lives and secure livelihood.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami wanted refinancing support of Rs 2,500 crore to the State Industrial Investment Corporation through IDBI and commercial banks.

Opposition-ruled States like Punjab, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal said that States needed to be given greater flexibility in micro-planning as part of a carefully planned exit strategy, encompassing both Covid-19 containment and a defined path of economic revival.

At least five CMs opposed running of passenger trains and resumption of flights. Raising objection to the operation of passenger trains from Tuesday, Telangana Chief Minister KC Rao backed Palaniswami's stance of not running trains until next month. The two Chief Ministers were further joined by Andhra CM Jagan Mohan Reddy and Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel in opposing the move.

Rao was of view that resuming train services would lead to a lot more chaos in terms of identifying people who've been infected, testing and quarantining. Tamil Nadu CM said trains should not be run to Chennai which has recently seen spurt in coronavirus cases.

Rao, along with others, urged Modi to reschedule the Centre's debt on the States and asked for more Special

DCW issues notice to DU over forcing NE students to vacate hostel

New Delhi: The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Monday issued a notice to the Registrar of Delhi University after female students from northeast India alleged that they were forced to vacate hostels and were facing racial discrimination.

The students complained to the DCW alleging that the university administration was putting pressure on them to vacate the hostel, the DCW said in a statement.

"It is learnt that taking cognizance of the matter a Union Minister had assured assistance, but on Monday a fresh complaint has been registered by the girl students to the Commission seeking intervention in the matter," the DCW said.

In the complaint, the students alleged that they were told to vacate the hostel.

"They also complained about the food being served to them in the mess," the DCW said. The DCW said the students have also complained about racist remarks being made against them.

"In view of the seriousness of the matter, the Delhi Commission for Women has issued a notice to the Registrar of Delhi University. The commission has also asked the University to provide an action taken report and has also asked it to provide all facilities to the students," the commission said.

"Due to the lockdown, they have no choice but to stay in the hostel. The students have also complained to the Commission about racist comments being made against them," DCW chief Swati Maliwal said.

Maliwal said that this was a very serious matter and in view

of this, the commission has issued a notice to the university, asking it to immediately take action in the matter.

"Any such discrimination won't be tolerated at all," she said.

The notice to the university said that there are 13 girls staying in the North-Eastern Students House for Women in Delhi University.

"It is alleged that the common facilities of the hostel, including the essential internet room, have been kept under lock and key by the Provost and she has threatened to close down the mess as well," Maliwal said in the notice.

She demanded a report by May 15 on the action taken on the complaint as well as the measures being taken to ensure safe and comfortable stay of the students in the hostel. IANS

Covid count crosses 70K...

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While Punjab reported 54 new cases to reach a total of 1,877 cases and 31 deaths, Haryana reported 27 cases to reach a total of 730 cases and 11 deaths.

However, on the positive side, recovery rate surged to 31.15 per cent with 20,917 Covid-19 patients cured till now. "The recovery rate stands at 31.14 per cent, which is a significant development over last Sunday's 26.59 per cent," said Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary with the Union Health Ministry at the press conference here.

Mad rush...

From Page 1  
However, the IRCTC shall make provision for limited eatables and packaged drinking water on payment basis. Information to this effect shall be made available to passengers during time of booking ticket," it said.

Passengers are encouraged to carry their own food and drinking water. Dry, ready-to-eat food and bottled water shall be provided on demand, inside the trains on payment basis, it said. "All passengers shall be compulsorily screened and only asymptomatic passengers are allowed to board the train," it added.

No post-mortem for coronavirus deaths

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Also, a patient may have many co-morbid conditions but only those that have contributed to death should be recorded," the guidance document stated.

The health research body has set up ICMR-NCIDIR e-Mortality (e-Mor) software for recording the cause of death.

In its final draft 'Standard Guidelines for Medico-legal autopsy in Covid-19 deaths in India,' the ICMR said that the invasive techniques should not be adopted for forensic autopsy in Covid-19 death cases as doctors and other mortuary staff are exposed to potentially dangerous health risks due to organ fluids and secretions.

Some of the cases of suspected Covid-19 death which are brought dead to hospitals are labelled by emergency doctors as MLC and the body

is sent to the mortuary and police are informed which may need post-mortem examination for clarity in the cause of death.

"The forensic autopsy of these cases may be waived off," the draft guidelines said.

Some of the cases are suicide, homicide or accident and may be positive or suspected case of the novel coronavirus infection. After the inquest procedure, if any crime is not suspected, police have the authority to waive off conduction of medico-legal autopsy, even though labelled as medico-legal case.

"The investigating police officer must proactively take steps to waive off unnecessary autopsies during such pandemic situation," the draft document said.

"The body must be taken to the burial/cremation ground in presence of law enforcing agencies, where not more than five relatives of the deceased should be allowed," it said.

and will send them to respective homes and ask them to home quarantine. The lockdown should be gradually opened and only economic activities should be allowed with strict protocol."

Though the number of

cases showed the biggest jump on Monday, India also has a significantly improved recovery rate of 31 per cent. On Monday the number of coronavirus patients is 67,152 with 4,213 new cases in the last 24 hours.

Kind Attention: Rail Passengers

**IMPORTANT PUBLIC NOTICE**

Special Train services will commence from New Delhi Railway Station on 12.05.2020 (Tuesday). It is notified for information of all the passengers holding confirmed reserved tickets for boarding these special trains, to New Delhi Railway Station from Paharganj Side Entry, Chelmsford Road, New Delhi, Repeat Paharganj Side only.

Entry for the passengers holding reserved tickets will not be permitted from Ajmeri Gate Side, Bhavbhuti Marg, New Delhi. Please take note of this to avoid any inconvenience.

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# Govt to give ₹5K aid to construction workers

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Government has announced that it will provide financial assistance of ₹5,000 again to the construction workers in the wake of the extended coronavirus lockdown.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Construction Workers' Welfare Board, chaired by Labour Minister Gopal Rai on Monday.

There are around 40,000 construction workers registered with the board. The Delhi Government has also decided to launch an online portal where construction workers can register themselves from May 15-25th. The Government had also given ₹5,000 recently to the construction workers due to the lockdown over the COVID-19 pandemic.

Soon after the board's decision, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted, "Delhi government will again give ₹5,000 to construction labourers."

"The Delhi Government in April had given one-time financial assistance to the construction workers registered with it. Close to 40,000 workers were given ₹5,000 each during the lockdown. But then the lockdown was extended, therefore, we have decided to give ₹5,000 again as financial assistance to the construction workers," said Rai.

"We had also received

reports regarding opening of registration for new labourers. The Delhi Government has decided to change the procedure for new registration. We have decided that from May 15-25 we will open online registration. The online website link will be shared with all. The labourers can register through that link and upload photocopies of their documents. After May 25 we will verify all these applications, thereafter, we will call the applicants to

the labour department, 50 per day to submit their original documents," he said.

"There are some doubts regarding who all can register themselves as construction workers. According to laws, carpenters, worker grinders, construction site guards, the people who work in concrete mixers, crane operator, electrician, comp operator, Mason (Raj Mistry), tiles stone fitters, welders, coolies and others can apply," Rai added.

## COVID: GOVT SEEKS SUGGESTIONS FROM STAKEHOLDERS ON REOPENING SCHOOLS

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

As corona has changed the way of life, the academicians also pitched a few updations in their study patterns in schools.

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia initiated dialogue with key stakeholders for school education in post Covid-19-induced lockdown.

In this regard, Sisodia invited students, parents, teachers and Principals to give their suggestions for school education in post Covid-19 induced lockdown. "We have faced challenges in the past, the difference this time is that the entire world is facing it together. Soon, we will learn to live with corona. Slowly, things will open up and so will the schools. However, this also

means that new ideas of schools and learning will have to be scripted," said Sisodia.

"For decades, schools had a set pattern, standardised classes, times, way of functioning, these need to be reimaged now", he added.

As per Directorate of Education (DoE) officials, as a first step to initiate this dialogue, an online suggestion form has been put on the website of the Directorate of Education, Govt. of Delhi www.edudel.nic.in. Students, teachers, principals and parents whose children are studying in school can give their inputs.

"Respondents submitting practical and out of the box suggestions will be invited to share their thoughts with the Education Minister of Delhi through online platform," said an official.

# Rape accused, 2 others quarantined

## Complainant tests positive

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Tihar jail authorities in the national Capital have put three inmates under quarantine after one of them, a rape accused, is suspected to have come in contact with a coronavirus-infected person. The authorities said they have taken this step as a precautionary measure after the woman, who is the complainant in the rape case, tested positive for Covid-19 on May 9 following which the police informed the authorities.

Tihar jail authorities said that the man was lodged in a separate cell in central jail number 2 of Tihar along with two other inmates in a rape case and did not show any

symptoms for Covid-19.

According to Sandeep Goel, Director General, Prisons, after they received information from police that the complainant had tested positive for coronavirus, the accused was also tested for Covid-19 on Sunday morning along with the two other inmates who were lodged in the same cell. "None of them showed any symptoms but their samples were sent for testing as a precautionary measure. We received their reports on Monday according to which all the three of them have been tested negative for the infection. But all of them have been quarantined for 14 days as a precaution," said the DG

"The officials have taken

several precautionary measures, including creation of isolation wards in each jail for suspected cases, restricting entry of new inmates only to two jails among others," he added.

According to jail officials, medical screening of everyone entering the jails including inmates, jail staff, security and medical staff are being conducted.

Repeated screening of all the existing inmates for any symptoms of COVID-19 are also being carried out regularly. Besides, court production of inmates and their family meetings have also been stopped while the inmate telephone call facility has been extended to all inmates 'free of cost,' they said.

Visits by outside agencies, including NGOs have also been

discontinued and referral and visits to outside hospital have been restricted to only emergency situations.

Movement of inmates outside the ward in all jails have also been restricted and sanitisation and disinfection of the lodgement areas of the inmates and residential complexes of staff are being done on regular basis, according to jail officials.

All new inmates are pre-screened before lodging in jail and regular awareness drives are being held among inmates as well as jail staff including security forces and other agencies in the jail through briefings and public announcements about the infection, the officials added.

The jail authorities said they have procured and distributed Personal Protective Equipment kits, masks, gloves

and and alcohol-based hand rubs and soaps for its front line staff.

SOP for transfer of suspected Covid-19 cases to referral hospital has been formulated and is being implemented and Special Task Force has been formed for contract tracing of suspected Covid-19 cases in all jails, according to jail officials.

Psychological screening of newly admitted inmates to properly manage mental health issues is also being done while arrangements have also been made for quarantine of jail staff, paramilitary, medical staff after their return from outstation leave.

Instructions have also been issued to screen all the inmates who are being released from jail for any COVID-19 symptoms, they said.



A view of New Delhi Railway Station during the ongoing Covid-19 nationwide lockdown in New Delhi on Monday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

# NDMC begins anti-larval ops

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW ELHI**

New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has strengthened their anti-larval measures and action to contain the vector borne diseases like Malaria, Dengue and Chikungunya in its area after being informed by National Vector Borne Disease Control Program (NVBDCP) about high chances of spreading the diseases.

The NDMC's health department has directed to its cross checking team to speed up anti-larval action to check the President House, Rail Bhavan Sardar Patel Bhavan, Shastri Bhavan, North and South Avenue and Talkatora Marg premises.

NDMC has deployed two vehicle mounted fogging machine, around 30 portable fogging machine and 130 knapsack sprayer machine for anti larval action, a senior NDMC official said, adding that field workers are already visiting the area premises to find out collection of water at the construction sites and other places.

The number of Dengue and Chikungunya cases are found 2.5 times more compared to the last year up to April this year, he said, adding that the civic body has taken all the steps to contain the disease from further spreading.

"NDMC is issuing 50000 SMS every week to residents regarding actions to be taken from their side to contain spread of mosquito breeding in their locality," he said.

There are around 162 Gang man for carrying out field activities in the area. Besides five sanitary inspectors have been posted to supervise the



field work of malaria in all the 14 sanitation circles of New Delhi area, he added.

"We have also as issued advisory letters to Presidents and Secretaries of Residents Welfare Associations (RWAs), 'markets trader's associations' (MTAs), SHO of police stations and the executive engineers of CPWD for carrying out the all efforts to not allow mosquito breeding in their jurisdiction area.

Keeping the view of covid-19 pandemic situation, NDMC is carrying Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities with social distancing norms through video conferencing or mobile to mobile with RWAs, MTAs and other officials to take action by themselves for containing mosquito breeding.

The official further said that this year due to covid19, instead of interactive sessions for schools students, RWAs, MTAs or other public activities for awareness, NDMC is focussing on SMS messages; calling on mobile phones, video conferencing, placing of hoardings and posters in public places.

# Malaria cases top 41, highest in 5 yrs

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The number of people infected with Malaria in the national Capital has reached to 41 this year which is highest reported in last five years till May.

According to the data released by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Monday two fresh cases of Malaria reported last week, taking the number of people suffering from malaria to 41 this year.

Also, one fresh case of dengue reported in the city taking the total count to 48 cases this year. Besides, no new cases of chikungunya reported this week.

According to the data out of these cases, 16 patients who diagnosed with the disease were from different states while five patients did not provide their address.

The malaria parasite is transmitted by female Anopheles mosquitoes, which bite mainly between dusk and dawn. According to World Health Organisation malaria is caused by the protozoan parasite Plasmodium. Human malaria is caused by four different species of Plasmodium: P. falciparum, P. malariae, P. ovale and P. vivax.

At least 1322 legal notices were served and 50 prosecutions were launched after vector-carrying mosquitoes were found breeding in 915 houses and building premises

The data further revealed that 'dengue breeding checkers' (DBC) have visited 3172896 houses for checking mosquito's conducive environment till May 4.

However, civic body officials said that preparations to



contain the disease have been started. Concerned over the spurt in cases, North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) had called a high-level review meeting on Wednesday to outline strategy in order to prevent and control such diseases in Delhi.

A senior SDMC official said that the civic body has started spraying insecticides in its areas besides the regarding officials are also planning to adopt a different approach to tackle VBD with Coronavirus. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan had chaired a high-level review meeting recently on prevention and control of VBD and stressed on the importance of innovative awareness drives, community participation and cooperation of all the stakeholders in changing the situation of Covid-19 to prevent such diseases.

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

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

## 66 cases registered, over 2,100 people detained in city

**New Delhi:** Over 60 cases were registered and 2,139 people detained in the national capital on Monday for violating government orders during the lockdown imposed to control the coronavirus outbreak, police said. According to the data shared by the police, 66 cases were registered under section 188 (for disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code till 5 pm. A total of 2,139 people were detained under section 65 and 98 vehicles impounded under section 66 of the Delhi Police Act, they stated. **PTI**

# Gym owner shot dead in front of kids in Gurugram

**PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM**

A 35-year-old Gym owner was allegedly shot dead by bike-borne unidentified assailants in a park located at Gurugram's Naurangpur village on Monday morning.

The incident took place when the victim was out for a morning walk along with his two kids.

Police suspect that the killing was a fallout of a monetary dispute.

The deceased had been arrested in 2011 for his alleged involvement in the prominent murder case of a toll collector at Kherki Daula but was acquitted by the court in 2016 for lack of evidence.

The deceased has been identified as Manjeet Pahlawan (35) a resident of village Nauranpur and originally hails from Delhi's Wazirpur.

The victim used to run a

gym in the village and also used to work as a newspaper vendor.

According to the police, the incident took place at around 5.30 am when Manjeet along with his two children - a 15-year daughter and an 8-year-old son - was out for a morning walk in the park located in Naurangpur village.

"Soon after three-four unidentified assailants arrived at the spot and pumped 14 bullets into the victim including chest, head, both hands and legs, due to which he died on the spot," said Preet Pal Sangwan, ACP (crime).

The Police said that the body has been handed over to the victim's family after an autopsy. "A police team of CIA Palam Vihar, Bilaspur have been formed to nab the criminals," Sangwan said.

However the police said that the reason behind the killing is yet to be known but preliminary probe suggests that

the same are imbued by the staff. The staff should be regularly counseled and advised to control any panic reaction or anxiety'c said the CP.

CP, Delhi reiterated that the staff deployed at high risk duties should not return to police stations and they should stay at designated guest houses and hotels. Further, the norms regarding social distancing and personal hygiene should be strictly adhered to by all.

"The facility shall be used for providing treatment to Covid-19 positive personnel in real emergency. The Station House Officer (SHO), Naraina police station is the model officer for this purpose," stated the order issued on Monday.

# Sharjeel Imam challenges order granting more time to police to complete probe under UAPA

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Former JNU student Sharjeel Imam, arrested in a case related to alleged inflammatory speeches during the protests against CAA and NRC, on Monday approached the Delhi High Court challenging a trial court order granting more time to police to conclude investigation.

The petition is likely to be listed for hearing on May 14.

The accused has challenged trial court's April 25 order by which the Delhi Police

was granted three more months, beyond statutory 90 days, to complete the investigation in the case under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Imam was arrested on January 28 in the case related to violent protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act near the Jamia Millia Islamia University in December last year. The statutory period of 90 days from the arrest was concluded on April 27.

He was arrested from Bihar's Jehanabad District.

He has also sought default bail in the matter on the ground that the investigation was not concluded within the statutory period of 90 days and when the police had filed an application for more time to complete the investigation, he was not given a notice as required under the law.

The trial court had recently dismissed the bail plea.

The trial court had said that the order extending period of investigation was passed before expiry of statutory time period of 90 days.

# Tata power-DDI consumers to get bills online

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

Tata Power-DDL consumers can instantly receive their latest duplicate bills now by just sending a message from their registered number on company's WhatsApp number 7303482071.

A senior Tata Power-DDL official said that this feature has been introduced with an aim to ensure consumer safety wherein they can avail e-bills instantly and smoothly amidst the lockdown.

"In order to get the duplicate bill, Tata Power-DDL consumers will have to save Tata Power-DDL's WhatsApp Number in their contacts and send a message from their registered contact number typing - BILL <SPACE> <11 DIGIT CA NUMBER> to WhatsApp Number - 7303482071," Tata Power-DDL said in a statement.

# Spl police vehicles for Covid suspected personnel

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Police on Monday launched special police vehicles to cater to the needs of transportation of infected or suspected personnel with Covid-19. The police on Monday also earmarked 25 beds in 'Army Base' in Delhi's Naraina area for its personnel.

According to a senior police official, to deal with Covid-19 while maintaining law and order, the Delhi Police has been proactive in taking measures to protect field functionaries from being infected by Covid-19.

"With coordination of Ministry of Ayush, special medical kits have been dis-



tributed to all staff to improve immune system. Government and private hospitals have been roped in to augment medical facilities for Police personnel. In continuation, selected police vehicles have also been modified to cater to need of transportation of infected/suspected personnel," said the senior police official.

"Special Commissioner of Police, Vigilance, S Sundari Nanda and Special CP Nuzhat Hassan are supervising these welfare measures. As a result, 35 Corona Warriors from Delhi Police have recovered from this deadly disease and have resumed duties," he said.

During a meeting with its officials, SN Shrivastva, the

Delhi Commissioner of Police, emphasised that the SOP for "Daily Health Monitoring of Delhi Police Personnel Due To Prevailing Covid-19 Infection" should be communicated to each and every personnel in the force.

"All senior officers should reach out to field formations and tell them again and again about the procedure and steps taken to deal with the disease in order to instill confidence and boost up their morale," he had ordered.

"The senior officers should also form Whatsapp groups and regularly pass on material on preventive measures to the staff. These procedures should be repeatedly conveyed so that

# Autorickshaw driver strangles wife to death, surrenders

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

A 33-year-old auto-rickshaw driver allegedly strangled his wife to death at his home in south Delhi and then surrendered. Police said that the incident occurred on the intervening night of Sunday-Monday after the man was enraged over his five-month pregnant wife talking to another man on the street.

The accused, identified as Vijay Kumar, a resident of Dakshinपुरi area, went to Ambedkar Nagar police station at 12:30 am on Sunday and confessed he had killed his wife earlier that night.

According to Atul Kumar

Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), south district, after returning home Saturday night Kumar did not find his wife at home in Dakshinपुरi and went to his in-laws residence nearby to look for her, but did not find her there as well. "Later, he saw her talking to a person on the street and got angry. The accused had an argument with his wife, which turned into a scuffle and then a murder. The woman's body was found on a bed. There was a strangulation mark on her neck," said the DCP. "The body has been preserved at AIIMS mortuary and a murder case has been registered against Kumar," said the DCP.



# Provide security, smooth movement of medical professionals, States told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Monday directed the States to provide security and ensure smooth movement of medical professionals and operation of establishments including private clinics. The Ministry also told the States to facilitate the smooth movement of the

trains carrying migrant labourers and prevent them from walking through the railway tracks.

Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, in a letter, told the State Chief Secretaries that private clinics and nursing homes must be allowed to open for the service of all kind of patients.

"MHA has written to all States/UTs pointing out that

unhindered movement of all medical professionals is essential for meeting public health requirements and saving precious human lives. Any restriction on the movement of medical professionals and para-medical staff can lead to severe constraints in rendering COVID and non-COVID medical services. In the view of above, the communication empha-

sises that all State/ UT Governments should ensure smooth movement of all medical professionals, nurses, para medical, sanitation personnel and ambulances.

"This would help in rendering all COVID and non-COVID medical services to patients without any constraint. It was also stated that the inter-State movement of all above mentioned profes-

sionals may be facilitated by the States/UTs. It has been further emphasised that all private clinics, nursing homes and labs, with all their medical professional and staff, be allowed to open.

This would facilitate in catering to all patients, COVID and non-COVID emergencies, without any hindrance and relieve the burden on hospitals," said

the MHA in statement.

On the migrant labourer, the MHA asked the states to prevent them from walking through the railway tracks and speedy facilitation of 'Shramik Express', the special trains for the migrant labourers.

The Centre also asked the States to co-operate for more trains for the transportation of the labour force.

# Centre: Aarogya Setu safe, data not compromised



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid privacy concerns raised by various quarters about Aarogya Setu, Government's digital platform to track Covid-19 patients, the Centre on Monday sought to allay fears saying that it is "completely safe" and it has been ensured that user data are not compromised.

Ajay Sahni, Chairman of Empowered Group 9, said at a press briefing here that "Aarogya Setu app has been downloaded in 9.8 crore smartphones so far. It will be available on Jio feature smartphones from tomorrow. We've worked a lot on data privacy of Aarogya Setu users & made sure that user data are not compromised."

Recently a French hacker had unearthed one too many privacy issues with the app, causing apprehension about citizens' privacy.

Countering the claims, Sahni said that the App has been developed to formulate health responses that "not only contain the epidemic but also protect the

health and safety of the community at large."

These health responses require data of individuals for the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, syndromic mapping, contact tracing, and communication between them.

"The Aarogya Setu is designated to carry out most of these responses and needs confidential information of individuals. The information includes travel history, device information, location data, contact data, demography, and self-assessment data, which is collected by the app only after the user has permitted it."

The officer said that no data would be retained beyond the period as deemed necessary to fulfil the purposes. At maximum, the contact, location, and self-assessment data should be "permanently" erased after 180 days from the day they were recorded by the app. However, the demographic data could still be retained by NIC for as long as the Protocol related to the covid-19 pandemic remains into effect.



A health worker screens stranded people from Ladakh before boarding bus to their native place, during the ongoing nationwide Covid-19 lockdown, in New Delhi on Monday PTI



Security personnel, wearing special protective shields, stand guard at Finance Ministry during the ongoing Covid-19 nationwide lockdown in New Delhi on Monday PTI



## Only passengers with e-ticket will be allowed to enter rly stations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday clarified that only passengers with e-ticket will be allowed access to railway stations and they will be medically screened and only asymptomatic persons would be allowed to board the train. This has been done to maintain social distancing.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued standard operating procedures saying passengers must adhere to social distancing and wear face masks.

"Movement of passengers to & fro and entry at the railway station would be permitted only on confirmed e-ticket. There would be compulsory medical screening of all passengers. Only asymptomatic persons would be allowed to board the train. During the travel and at the railway stations, strict adherence to Health/hygiene protocols and social distancing must be observed.

All passengers would be provided with hand sanitiser at entry and exit points at station and in coaches. Further, it would be ensured that all passengers wear face covers/masks at entry and during travel.

# India needs to become exporter of technology: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after asking the defence industries to be ready with a plan to ramp up production to the optimum level after the lockdown is lifted, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday stressed the need for India to become self-reliant and "net exporter of technology." He also lauded the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for coming out with at least 50 items in the ongoing fight against COVID-19.

Addressing the scientists of the DRDO on the National Technology Day (NTD) here through video conference, the minister stressed that there is no alternative to indigenous technology and indigenous manufacture. "We will be truly self-reliant only when India succeeds in becoming a net exporter instead of a net importer of technology," he said. The National Technology Day is observed to commemorate the nuclear tests conducted by India in 1998 that symbolized successful achievements of home grown technologies.

While calling upon the country's pool of experts to contribute to make India a technological powerhouse, Singh said the government and people fully support their future endeavours in this direction.

## Six new Covid-19 cases in BSF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BSF on Monday reported six new Covid-19 cases followed by four in the CRPF and one in ITBP, taking the tally of patients in the paramilitary forces to 764.

While the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) reported one positive case on Monday, one infected personnel recovered from the viral pandemic in the last 24 hours, an official spokesperson said, adding a total of 156 infected persons in its ranks are admitted at various hospitals.

As many as 26 personnel of ITBP are undergoing treatment at AIIMS, Jhajjar, Haryana, two patients are admitted at Safdarjung Hospital here and one at LNJP Hospital in the national capital.

Besides these cases, 127 ITBP personnel infected with



novel corona virus are undergoing treatment at CAPF Referral Hospital, Greater Noida. One ITBP infected person has recovered from the disease.

The CAPF Referral Hospital is also managing 28 patients of BSF followed by four infected persons from CRPF and one each from CISF and NSG apart from a civilian. Four family members of ITBP personnel are also admitted in the referral hospital.

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Monday reported a

total of six infected persons in its ranks-one each in Delhi and Tripura and four in Kolkata.

A BSF spokesperson said all the patents are undergoing treatment at designated Covid health care hospitals.

One patient from 126 Battalion in Delhi and admitted at AIIMS, Jhajjar, has recovered after treatment.

In the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), four new Covid-19 patients were reported and the tally of patients in the paramilitary is 240 out of which one had died and three have recovered after undergoing treatment.

One Covid patient of 39 Battalion who was admitted at Sharda Hospital in Noida has been discharged after recovery from the disease. Presently, the discharged patient has been under home quarantine, a CRPF official said.

## 177 new mandis integrated with e-NAM platform

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, as many as 177 new mandis from 10 States and Union Territories, including 26 in Punjab and 17 in Haryana, were integrated with the e-NAM platform for marketing of agricultural produce on Monday, taking the total number of mandis integrated with it to 962. The mandis integrated include those in Gujarat (17), Haryana (26), Jammu and Kashmir (1), Kerala (5), Maharashtra (54), Odisha (15), Punjab (17), Rajasthan (25), Tamil Nadu (13) and West Bengal (1).

Launching the new mandis through video conferencing, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said efforts should be made to

strengthen e-NAM further to benefit the farmers. Right now, farmers auction their agricultural produce at 6,900-odd APMC (Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees) mandis spread across the nation. Some agriculturists are also using online bidding through e-NAM platform.

Earlier, 785 mandis were integrated with eNAM across 17 States and 2 UTs, with a user base of 1.66 crore farmers, 1.30 lakh traders and 71,911 commission agents. According to the ministry, as many as 1.66 crore farmers, 1.30 lakh traders and 71,911 commission agents are using e-NAM platform.

Commodities, worth over ₹ 1 lakh crore, have been traded on the e-NAM as on May 9 this year. The volumes of trade stood at 3.43 crore tonnes and 37.93 lakh bamboo and

coconuts.

interact directly with distantly



That apart, digital payments worth ₹ 708 crore were made through the eNAM platform, benefitting more than 1.25 lakh farmers.

A total of 236 mandis participated in inter-mandi trade across 12 States, whereas 13 states/UTs have participated in the trade, allowing farmers to

located traders.

At present, 150 commodities, including foodgrains, oilseeds, fibers, vegetables and fruits, are being traded on eNAM. More than 1,005 FPOs have been registered on eNAM platform and have traded 2,900 tonnes of agri-produce worth ₹7.92 crores.

# Navy honours woman who delivered baby boy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a touching gesture, the Navy on Monday felicitated a young woman, one of the 698 Indian nationals evacuated from Maldives and brought to Kochi, Kerala on Sunday and who delivered a baby boy shortly after disembarkation.

The Indian Navy warship INS Jalashwa had brought the Indians from Male while another warship INS Magar on Monday docked at Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu with 200 more Indians evacuated from Maldives. Incidentally, the woman, a nurse by profession, returned on the 'Mother's Day' and was felicitated on the eve of the 'Nurses' Day. Moreover, she had undergone miscarriage on some earlier occasions.

Giving details about the felicitation, navy officials said the young mother Sonia Jacob was honoured by the Southern Naval Command (SNC) at Kinder Multispeciality

Hospital, Ernakulam. The SNC representative, Lieutenant Commander Remya Savy met Sonia's parents KA and Beena Jacob as the COVID protocols prevented physical contact with the passengers.

The Naval officer presented the parents with a floral bouquet and conveyed greetings and best wishes to the extended family on behalf of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief SNC on the much awaited new arrival into the family while expressing the happiness in the Navy being instrumental in bringing Sonia Jacob to the motherland on "Mother's Day" and into a long cherished Motherhood.

Remya subsequently also connected with Sonia and Shijo, her spouse, who are both under institutional quarantine, via videocall and congratulated the proud parents wishing the baby boy health, happiness and a long life. The

family members on their part conveyed the gratitude and appreciation of Sonia to the Navy for the care and comfort accorded to her on board the naval ship throughout the passage.

Later, Remya said it is indeed a proud moment for all personnel in the Navy, particularly the crew of INS Jalashwa to be associated with this special moment in the couple's life considering the number of miscarriages which occurred previously with Sonia. She highlighted the fact that it was also special for her to be able to wish Sonia who is a nurse by profession, on the eve of the "Nurse's day" in the backdrop of CoVID19 pandemic. Managing Director, Kinder Hospital Praveen Kumar Arjunan and Chief Operating Officer Narain Gunaseelan Pillai and other hospital staff members were also present on the occasion.

# Obesity may worsen corona symptoms: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Obesity is associated with a higher risk of developing severe symptoms and complications of coronavirus disease, independent of other illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease, according to researchers, who have alerted that it is a risk factor that needs attention.

In their article published in the latest journal of Current Science, the researchers said that obesity, a comorbidity not well documented in the Covid-19 pandemic, is now being identified as a risk factor for severe viral-19 infection, including in those less than 60 years of age.

"We suggest that weights and heights be recorded in all case-record forms and epidemiologic surveillance tools to assess the associations of body mass index with infection status and disease outcomes. Obese individuals should be closely monitored in view of the risk of increased severity of COVID-

19 infection," said Anurag Bhargava and Madhavi Bhargava, both from Yenepoya Medical College, Mangalore.

Mortality in Covid-19 infection has been related to age and the presence of comorbidities, among which hypertension, cardiovascular disease and diabetes are the most common.

A recent meta-analysis showed that the pooled prevalence of hypertension, cardiovascular disease and diabetes was 16.3 per cent, 12.1 per cent and 7.8 per cent respectively, in hospitalized patients, pointed out the researchers.

Obesity is one of the commonest underlying comorbidities worldwide. However, none of the studies in the systematic review mention the prevalence of obesity in the Covid-19 cases. Obesity is a potential confounder of the association between hypertension, diabetes and outcomes in Covid-19 infection, and should therefore be



Obesity is one of the commonest underlying comorbidities worldwide. However, none of the studies in the systematic review mention the prevalence of obesity in the Covid-19 cases. Obesity is a potential confounder of the association between hypertension, diabetes and outcomes in Covid-19 infection, and should therefore be assessed, they added.

The researchers' views came following observation that how obesity was identified as a novel risk factor for increased disease severity and mortality reported in the influenza A (H1N1) pandemic. "It is pertinent to note that obesity is also a risk factor for the severity of other viral infections like dengue fever in children."

In the case of influenza A (H1N1) infection, later work highlighted several other



implications of obesity which might be relevant to COVID-19 infection.

It would also be important to examine whether lower prevalence of obesity in countries like India is linked to lower mortality due to Covid-19 infection.

The database of patients with Covid-19 infection in India and other countries should have information on BMI. This will confirm the initial observations of obesity as a risk factor for severe Covid-19 infection in a larger number of patients.

It will also reveal whether a low BMI confers risk or protection against adverse outcomes in Covid-19 infection. Hence, obese individuals should be more careful about preventive measures during the pandemic, said the researchers.



# Schoolgirl burnt alive in TN

## Politicians demand severe punishment

**Chennai:** In a gruesome incident, a 14-year old schoolgirl was set on fire in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram district by two men connected to the ruling AIADMK party. The girl, who had suffered 95 per cent burns, died on Monday, police said.

According to police, Jayashree, daughter of small shop-owner Jayapal, had given a statement to the magistrate naming two persons - G. Murugan and K.Kaliaperumal - as the persons who had set her on fire.

The crime occurred on Sunday at Sirumadurai locality near Thiruvennainallur when the girl was alone at her house.

On hearing the girl's cries and the smoke coming out of

her house, neighbours rushed in and were shocked. They took the girl to the government hospital where she breathed her last.

Police told *IAN S* that Murugan and Kaliaperumal have been taken into custody and are being questioned.

According to a police official, there had been a previous enmity between the girl's father and the alleged killers.

Meanwhile, major opposition parties have demanded severe punishment to the killers.

Demanding quick and severe punishment to the two accused, including a former municipal councillor, opposition DMK's President M.K. Stalin on Monday claimed that



the duo tied the hands and legs of Jayashree, stuffed her mouth with a cloth, and set her afire.

The girl was admitted in a government hospital with 95 per cent burn injuries, and in her dying declaration to a magistrate, named the two AIADMK members as the culprits, he added.

According to Stalin, it is the second such crime of burning alive a student by AIADMK members. A bus was set ablaze in Dharmapuri, in which three

girl students of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University were burnt alive in 2000.

Stalin urged the police to act impartially and ensure the strictest punishment to the culprits.

Similarly, PMK Founder S.Ramadoss said whatever be the previous enmity, the gruesome act of burning alive a school girl cannot be permitted. Ramadoss, in a tweet, said the killers should be speedily punished in such a way that it remains as a lesson for such killers.

MDMK General Secretary Vaiko too demanded a speedy and severe punishment for the killers. Meanwhile the ruling AIADMK is silent on the issue. *IAN S*

Migrant workers will be sent back home in a week: Tamil Nadu CM

**Chennai:** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Monday said migrant workers living in the state will be sent back home in phases with the permission of the respective state governments.

In a statement issued here, Palaniswami said 9,000 migrant workers with the permission of the respective state governments have been sent back home in special trains.

The remaining migrant workers will be sent back home in a week's time with the permission of the respective state governments, he said.

He requested the migrant workers to remain in the camps till such time. *IAN S*

# Seven more +ve cases in Kerala, 27 under treatment

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

Expatriate workers who reached Kerala during the last two days brought with them more coronavirus patients to the State which had on last Thursday declared that the pandemic curve has been flattened.

According to a release by K K Shylaja, Kerala Minister of Health, seven persons have been tested positive for coronavirus in the State on Monday. Out of this, four persons had reached the State from Maharashtra, one person from Chennai and another from Kuwait. An individual in Wayanadu district who tested positive on Monday got it through a contact.

The Minister said that 27 persons are under treatment in various hospitals in the State for

the pandemic. "Till Sunday, 1,307 persons returned to the State from foreign countries. We have put 650 persons under home observation while 641 have been admitted to covid care centres and 16 to various hospitals for observation. There are 229 pregnant women among the expatriates who reached the State," said the minister's release.

The release further said that 27, 986 persons are under observation in the State. Out of this 27,545 are in their houses while 441 are in hospitals. 157 persons have been admitted to hospitals on Monday. There are 34 coronavirus hotspots in the State.

Earlier in the day, a woman who reached Kochi by INS Jal Ashwa from Male on Sunday gave birth to a baby boy in a

Kochi hospital. The young mother and her close relations thanked the Indian Navy for the help rendered by them during the journey. The ship ferried 698 passengers including 440 Keralaites from Male to Kochi. INS Magar, another ship has already reached Male to transport 200 more passengers to Kochi and is expected to arrive at Kochi in the next two days.

Meanwhile the Kerala Government on Monday issued a special order allowing the 3,595 toddy shops in the State to open from Wednesday. The shops would function from 9 am to 7 pm. Tipplers may have to buy the bottles and take it home because they are not allowed to consume the toddy in the shop. The business would be held as per the coronavirus norms and regulations,

# 18 new cases take J&K's tally to 879

## 1 more death takes toll to 10 in State

**Jammu:** A patient admitted in the Chest disease hospital died on Monday taking the total death toll due to Covid-19 in Jammu & Kashmir to 10. Four days ago, 32-year-old son of the patient too had died after he had contracted coronavirus infection while attending to his ailing father in the Super Specialty hospital.

Meanwhile, 18 new positive cases of coronavirus were detected, 12 from Kashmir division and 6 from Jammu division on Monday taking the total tally to 879 cases. Out of 12 new cases, 11 cases were detected positive from Kulgam district alone while 1 patient tested positive in Baramulla. In addition, 44 patients, all from Kashmir, were discharged from hospitals after complete recovery.

So far , more than 51,000 samples have been tested across Jammu & Kashmir and 427

patients have recovered.

According to Shailendra Mishra, SSP, Kathua, "3 more tested positive for covid at Billawar, taking the toll up to 05 in Kathua district. All 3 were already in quarantine and were identified at Lakhapur corridor. Let's keep our guard up."

Three cases were detected from Jammu. One of the patient from New Plot area of Jammu was already admitted in the GMC, Jammu and one each from Nagrota and Bhatindi, with a travel history to Ahmedabad tested positive during screening at the gateway of Jammu and Kashmir in Lakhapur.

On the other hand, Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam Monday visited Jammu railway station to review arrangements for stranded passengers, reaching here via special trains from Tuesday. *PNS*

# Mobile fever clinic to combat Covid-19 in Bengaluru

**Bengaluru:** Reinforcing Karnataka's Covid-19 combat efforts, a mobile fever clinic has been inaugurated. "Covid mobile fever clinic has been inaugurated," tweeted Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, here on Monday.

The makeshift clinic, set up in a remodelled KSRTC bus, was inaugurated by the Chief Minister at his home office Krishna.

Bengaluru South member of Parliament Tejasvi Surya said his office along with other entities developed the mobile fever clinic. "We have made available swab collection facilities for Covid, CBC, CRP and ESR tests in five such clinics," said Surya. The Karnataka Government has deployed a host of innovative solutions to combat Covid-19. *IAN S*

# MSME appeals to save sector from impending disaster

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

The coronavirus pandemic has put more than two million micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) employing 1.3 crore workers in a major crisis. The Tamil Nadu Small and Tiny Industry Association, the apex body of MSME units in the State has approached Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Union Minister for MSME, Nitin Gadkari with pleas to save the sector and the employees from an impending disaster.

The 45-day lockdown due to coronavirus pandemic has resulted in these units losing their orders from major industries and other clients. The migrant workers have gone back to their respective villages and all kinds of income sources has been dried up putting the entrepreneurs themselves in trouble.

S Anburajan, president, TANSTIA, reminded the

Centre and State Governments that it was Union Minister Gadkari who said that the MSME units are on the verge of collapse.

"In spite of repeated calls by various MSME associations in the State and in the country nothing constructive has been done to this sector," said Anburajan.

"Some of the Banks have deferred the equated monthly instalments (EMI) for three months with some condition which in turn will make the MSME to pay more at a later stage due to the accumulated interest added in the principal amount. Instead of relief this will increase financial pressure on MSME units," Anburajan told union finance minister in a memorandum he has sent.

The TANSTIA president told *The Pioneer* that the MSME units were willing to pay back all the loans availed by them but the Central Government and the Banks

should show some compassion. "What we are asking is that the Banks should defer the EMI payment by six months and the waiver of the interest for this period. We have also requested that the pending principal amount should be considered as separate loan and allowed to be paid back with 5 per cent interest in easy instalments," said Anburajan.

Banks should be advised to defer all the loans for a period of six months instead of three months which needs to be regulated by RBI instantly to save the MSME sector, the TANSTIA has demanded further.

The industrialists have demanded a hike of 25 per cent on all working capital loans. "As on date, the practice is that the Banks retain 25 percent of the loan amount in the form of our finished products which means that for every one lakh rupees of loan we avail, the Banks release only ₹75,000 and retain the remaining part as some

kind of surety for the loan. This practice has to go as we will return the loan promptly once the crisis is blown over," said S Vasudevan, an entrepreneur and joint secretary of TANSTIA.

The TANSTIA also demanded that the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act (SARFAESI Act) should not be imposed up to March 2021. By this Act the Banks were empowered to launch proceedings for seizure of property if the borrower delays to pay back the principal with interest within two months of the stipulated term. "We want the Government to exempt micro units which have borrowed up to ₹2 crore from the purview of this dreadful act," said

Vasudevan.

The grievances of TANSTIA found an echo in K Hari Thiagarajan, chairman, Confederation of Indian Industries (Tamil Nadu State Council).

"The MSME units should be protected by offering them all kind of concessions. The MSME sector, which is one of the largest employment providers, is facing severe crisis and this is the time to offer help in the form of waiving off bank loans and concessions in Goods and Services Tax. We expect lot of job losses and it is sure that 30 per cent of the MSMEs would have to shut down immediately if no help is forthcoming," said Hari Thiagarajan.

The plea by TANSTIA comes closely on the heels of the request sent by Tiruppur Exporters Association to Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a request to save the knitwear cotton industry from sinking.

# Maha council polls: Uddhav, 4 MVA candidates file papers

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

With his election to the Maharashtra Legislative Council having become a mere formality, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday filed nominations for the State Council poll scheduled for May 21.

Uddhav was accompanied by his wife Rashmi Thackeray, State Cabinet Minister-son Aaditya Thackeray and Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut when he went to file his papers for the State Legislative Council polls.

Monday was the last day for filing nominations. The nominations will be scrutinised on Tuesday, while the last date for withdrawal of papers is May 14.

The biennial elections to nine State Legislative Council seats 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.

Uddhav, who was sworn in as the Chief Minister on November 28 last year, is not a member of either of the Houses of the State Legislature. As pro-

vided under the Constitution, Uddhav will have to get elected to either of the Houses on or before May 27, the six-month deadline for his becoming a member of either of the Houses. Along with Uddhav, four candidates from the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) also filed their papers on the last day for filing their nominations.

The others who filed their nominations on Monday were: Shiv Sena's Neelam Gorhe, who is the current deputy chairperson of Maharashtra legislative Council, NCP's Shashikant Shinde, Amol Mitkari, Kiran Jagannath Pwaskar and Shivajirao Yeshwant Garje and Congress' Rajesh Rathod.

In addition to four BJP candidates who had filed nominations on May 8, two more candidates from the same party — Sandeep Lele and Ramesh Karad filed their nominations on Monday.

The four BJP candidates who had filed their papers earlier were: Praveen Dhatkte, Ranjitsinh Mohite-Patiol, Dr Ajit Gopchade and Gopichand Paralkar.

In addition, an independent candidate Shahbaz Allauddin

Rathod filed his papers.

There are in all 14 candidates in the fray. Of them, four are dummy candidates — two each from the NCP and BJP — who will withdraw from the contest, before the deadline for the withdrawals. The candidature of Independent candidate will in all likelihood be rejected.

As a result there will be only nine candidates for as many seats in the State Council for which the biennial elections are slated for May 21. Hence, the election of Uddhav and eight other candidates in the fray has become a foregone conclusion now.

However, the speculation that was making rounds in the state political circles on Monday was that the Congress' candidate Rajesh Rathod had filed only one set of nomination papers and that too his papers might not stand the test of scrutiny scheduled for Tuesday.

In such an event, the State Council poll schedule may stretch till May 14, the last date of withdrawal of nominations. The one seat gainer in the end will either be the NCP or the BJP.



BJP MP from Mathura Hema Malini met Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai on Monday and discussed the issue of safe transportation of workers from Maharashtra to Mathura and to other parts of Uttar Pradesh.

# Goa CM warns against illegal entry into State

**IAN S ■ PANAJI**

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant in a video message, here on Monday, urged villagers staying along the border not to help those trying to sneak into the state during the lockdown.

There entry was being facilitated by residents of border villages for as little ₹500-1,000, he said. "It has come to my notice that people are trying to smuggle in their relatives or workers, using shortcuts along the border. This should not be allowed. People are coming to Goa in taxis, motorcycles or using short cuts. It's wrong," Sawant said.

He urged people to not allow people to enter Goa without coronavirus tests. "If someone is caught, strict action will be taken under the National Disaster Management Act," Sawant said.

Goa, which shares borders with Maharashtra and Karnataka, has green zone status, with not a single active Covid-19 case. The State had seven Covid-19 patients, who tested negative after treatment.

# Dharavi: 57 more cases, total tally mounts to 916

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Mumbai's Dharavi slum Ruined once again on Monday, as 57 more persons tested positive for Covid-19, taking the total number of infected cases in Asia's biggest slum to 916.

A day after two more persons succumbed to coronavirus taking the total number of deaths to 29 and 26 others tested positive in Dharavi, 57 new infected cases were reported from various parts of this densely populated slum.

Matunga Labour camp, which has emerged as the most affected area, reported as many as eight Covid-19 positive cases on Monday. There was a seventeen- year-old among the seven newly infected persons, who comprised a 71-year-old man and others were in the age group of 31 years and 53 years. Six new infected cases had been reported from Matunga Labour camp on Sunday.

Dharavi Cross Road area was another where as many as six cases were reported on Monday.

Like in the previous days,

new infected cases were reported from most of the localities in this densely populated slum.

What is worrying the health authorities is that during the last 40 days since the outbreak of the pandemic in Dharavi, there have already been 29 deaths in this slum, while the infected cases have crossed the 900-mark (916).

Despite creating containment zones and isolating the "contacts", the authorities have so far not been able to arrest the spread of the pandemic in this slum.

Dharavi, a slum spread over 240 hectare area that is home to more than 4 lakh people, has been an area of concern for the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) ever since the first couple deaths and infected cases were reported from this slum in the first week of April.

That Dharavi is on the BMC's top agenda could be evidenced from the fact that Mumbai's new Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal visited this slum and

took stock of the situation hours after he assumed the office on Saturday.

During his visit to Dharavi, Chahal went around worst-affected localities of Mukund Nagar and Shastri Nagar and took stock of the situation there. He also visited a containment zone located near Tata Colony and interacted with the residents there.

Having apparently taken cognisance of the reports that public toilets in Dharavi have become a major source for the spread of Covid-19 in Dharavi, Chahal inspected a public toilet there.

Among other things, the new Municipal Commissioner advised the police personnel posted at Dharavi to enforce the lockdown norms sternly in the area in view of the rapid spread of the pandemic in the area.

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

# TN: Corona cases cross 8,000 mark

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

The number of coronavirus cases in Tamil Nadu crossed the 8,000 mark by Monday evening. According to the daily media release issued by the Tamil Nadu Government, 798 persons tested positive for coronavirus in the State till Monday evening. With this, the number of cases detected so far has reached 8,002 in the State.

Though the spurt in the number was mind boggling ( from 2,757 patients on May 2 to 8,002 on May 11 ), J Radhakrishnan , special nodal officer, Greater Chennai Corporation, has told the people on Sunday itself that the number of covid patients in the State in general and Chennai in particular would see an increase for a few more days and the general public need not panic.

The death toll in the State stood at 53 on Monday. But what shocked the people was that six persons succumbed to the pandemic on a single day. Out of the 53 fatalities, 32 are from Chennai.

Chennai registered 538 coronavirus positive cases out of the 798 cases registered on Monday. Till date 2, 051 persons have been discharged from hospitals , fully cured.

Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy, during the video conferencing with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday has asked that train and air services from and to the State should not be resumed till May 31 due to the prevailing conditions.

# 36 more deaths, 1,230 more +ve cases in Maha

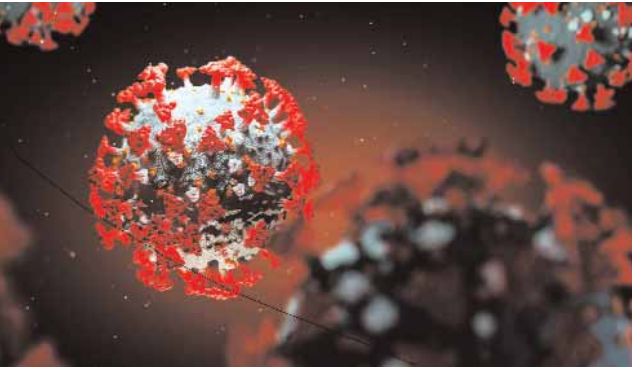
**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Coronavirus continued to rule the roost in Maharashtra on Monday, as it claimed 36 more lives and left an alarming 1230 others infected, causing considerable anxiety among the health officials battling the pandemic for nearly eight weeks now.

With the fresh fatalities, the total number of deaths in Maharashtra mounted to 868, while the total number of infected cases rose to a staggering 23,401.

Of the 36 deaths reported from across the state on Monday, Mumbai accounted for 20 deaths, while there five deaths in Solapur, three in Pune, two in Thane and one each in Amravati district, Aurangabad city, Nanded city, Ratnagiri and Wardha. Additionally, 1 death of an Uttar Pradesh resident was recorded in Mumbai.

Off the 36 dead, 23 were men while 13 were women. Seventeen of them aged above 60 years, 16 were from the age



group 40 to 59 years and 3 were aged below 40 years.

"Twenty seven out of the rest 36 patients (75%) had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease," the State health bulletin said in the evening.

With new 20 deaths, the total number of deaths in Mumbai rose to 528, while with 782 fresh cases the total number of infected cases went up to 14521.

Out of 2,18,914 laboratory samples, 1,93,457 tested negative,

while 23,401 tested positive for coronavirus until Monday.

There are 1256 active containment zones in the state currently. Total 12,027 surveillance squads worked on Monday across the state and surveillance of 53.71 lakh population was done.

Meanwhile, 4786 patients have been discharged till date after full recovery. Currently, 2,48,301 people are in home quarantine and 15,192 people are in institutional quarantine.

# BMC revises discharge policy

**Mumbai:** In a major revision in the Covid-19 patient discharge policy, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Monday announced that mild, very mild, pre-symptomatic cases admitted to a Covid Care Facility would be discharged after 10 days of the onset of symptoms and there was no fever in patients for three days.

On a day when fresh 20 deaths and 782 positive cases were reported in Mumbai, the BMC said that its decision to revise the Covid-19 patient discharge policy was in alignment with the guidelines on the 3 tier Covid facilities and the categorization of the patients based on clinical severity.

"There will be no need for testing prior to discharge. At the time of discharge, the patient will be advised to follow the home isolation for further 7 days as per guidelines available by govt. of India," the BMC announced in its daily medical bulletin.

"After discharge from the facility, if he/she again develops symptoms of fever, cough or breathing difficulty he will contact the Covid Care Centre or helpline no. 1916," the bulletin stated.

"Moderate cases & severe cases will be discharged as per clinical parameters & clinical opinion of treating doctors mention in guideline. For severe patients 1 single RT PCR test will be done after resolution of symptoms & patients will follow all guidelines as mentioned above after discharged," the bulletin added. *PNS*

# Kerala Govt doing PR work with eye on polls: Congress

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The Congress has alleged that the Pinarayi Vijayan Government in Kerala is engaged in only a PR exercise and is least bothered about bringing back people who are stranded in various parts of the country.

Speaking to the media here on Monday, Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said it has now surfaced that the Indian Railways has run more than 366 trains from various locations in the country.

"It's really unfortunate that not a single train came into Kerala when thousands of students, women and others have been stranded since the lockdown began in various states in the country. They are waiting to return to their home state," said Chennithala. *IAN S*



# Railways show the way

Inter-city AC trains resume to inject lifeblood in a nation’s public transport system and codify how to live with the virus



The prolonged lockdown and the slowly peaking disease spiral have extracted a ransom beyond our capacity. Public health continues to be a concern in States as the fatigue and desperation of a lockdown mean there are more violations and people are getting out. And with the economy in stasis, now there is no option but to open it up and risk a percentage swell in disease figures than have thousands die because of joblessness and zero revenues. In essence, the Government is counting on a dual strategy. One is to facilitate the economy by allowing movement of labour and people and restart projects and production. Second, with a better depth of testing, hopefully it can identify the disease early enough and tame the virus even if there is a surge of cases. But the most important communication strategy to citizens is that they have to now live responsibly with the virus, follow norms strictly as the Government moves away from the role of enforcer of discipline to being a facilitator of governance and the economy. So in a carefully graded manner, the Government is opening up the public transportation system, beginning with long distance AC trains and linking destinations regardless of the colour coding. Till now only freight services to transport essential goods and ‘Special Shramik’ trains were operational. The idea of inter-city AC coach travel is clearly aimed at boosting revenue and facilitating need-based travel for business and family matters. There’s an emotional component that everybody has neglected, that of the right of far-flung people wanting to be with their family in the nation’s darkest hour. In fact, the newly-formatted train travel will change the way we access India’s other mass transport systems. There will be e-bookings and tickets, possibly some QR codes going forward. There will be no counter tickets or even platform tickets, so no more seeing off rituals. Passengers will have to report 90 minutes before the departure of the train, undergo screening drills and wear face masks at all times. Of course, there will be limits to passenger numbers to maintain social distancing norms. One has to carry one’s own food and linens as no blankets or food involving touch will be distributed. The 15 pairs of trains running from New Delhi will connect the far reaches of the country but are just a drop in the ocean. The Railways ran more than 20,000 passenger trains daily, on both long-distance and suburban routes, from 7,349 stations across India. But this is just a start. They will roll out more trains over the coming weeks once ‘Shramik Special’ trains, carrying thousands of internal migrants back, as well as the coaches for quarantine centres, are accounted for. The Railways have been preparing the drill weeks ahead at most stations as the new normal means more public wardens, railway police and a logistics systems to restrict overcrowding in platforms and ensure people comply with behavioural discipline. Besides, considering the virus thrives in enclosed and conditioned spaces, sanitisation and disinfection of compartments, particularly filtering the air ducts, will be a time-consuming drill.

India’s transportation system is its lifeblood. Running trains, buses and planes is a prerequisite for the country to get moving again. It also demonstrates our resolve to begin the long march to some semblance of normalcy. Local buses and trains might start functioning in green and even orange zones. Unfortunately most large cities across India are COVID-19 hotspots, so it might be a while before a substantial public transport system gets going here. Also some movement might be accelerated in contiguous safe stretches, creating micro-zones. Even the aviation sector is set to open with drills and assessments in place. To begin with, flights will operate in just 25 per cent of sectors with less than two hours of travel and would not provide catering services. Flyers have to compulsorily download the Aarogya Setu app, developed to track COVID-19 patients. However, the same app would be voluntary for train passengers, keeping in mind the general and second class travellers may not have smartphones. Countries across the world are gradually easing lockdown provisions and restrictions on domestic long-distance travel. It might be months before nations open their borders to businessmen and tourists but getting trains and planes running is essential towards the resumption of the economy that’s congealing rapidly. This has been an unexpected and devastating situation and getting out will take a lot of effort from governments, bureaucrats and the public at large. We should not even pretend it will be easy and applaud the Railways for their move. That said, we should not at any time let our guard down, we have already paid a terrible price for this virus, millions of shattered lives and a destroyed economy. Let’s not lose what we’ve gained from the lockdown.

## Pincer attack

Both Pakistan and China have kept the borders hot, taking advantage of the unprecedented challenge posed by COVID-19



Just when one thought that the devastation caused by the Coronavirus would unite the world in taming it and lead to a broader humanitarian spirit, geopolitics has inevitably come in play. In the middle of its toughest battle against the disease, India is facing a diplomatic standoff with its neighbours, namely Pakistan and China. Looks like the two all-weather friends have timed a pincer grip on India at its weakest moment to stare down at us diplomatically. Relations with Pakistan have gone further downhill during the pandemic as our western neighbour has not let up on exporting terrorism and escalating skirmishes along the borders. In fact, there has been an upward spike in cross-border infiltration since last year. According to Indian Army data, there were 411 ceasefire violations by Pakistan’s military in March, the highest number in a single month since 2018. This year itself, in 127 days, as many as 55 terrorists have been killed, which means roughly one encounter every two days. Besides, Pakistan-backed militants are making sustained attempts to infiltrate into India via the international border in the Jammu region, Punjab and the long coastline of Gujarat. With India busy tackling the pandemic, masterminds across the border have been using its preoccupation as an opportune time to divert us. Yesterday, top intelligence sources reported that the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba had joined hands with Pakistan-based don Dawood Ibrahim to repeat an attack similar to the 26/11 Mumbai terror strike. Encounters, too, have seen a steep rise. There have been reports of the Pakistan Army smuggling weapons from across the borders with the use of drones. With all trading activities suspended along the Line of Control, its tried and tested formula of using the narco-terror model to raise funds for terrorists is now futile. Other developments, like the US’ move to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, has emboldened it, too, as it sees itself as a strategic counterweight in our backyard. Of course, we weren’t caught off guard. The gunning down of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Riyaz Naikoo came as a big blow to militancy in Kashmir and was yet another example of how misguided youths in the Valley continue to be used to fulfil the Pakistani agenda.

Although India has not been aggressive in its public stance against China despite the global flak the latter has drawn over the virus and the faulty test kits that it shipped here, China has not taken kindly to the Government’s rightful move of preventing takeovers of our companies by its corporations during the low economic troughs. So it has resorted to its old trope of renewing border hostilities at Ladakh and Sikkim and claiming rights over undisputed territories. Though both sides simmered down, the scuffles between the two nations’ armies have deepened the general distrust of China. Our preparedness has to be taut regardless of what ails us.

# opinion

## Get going

Amid the pandemic scare that has laid unprecedented challenges before nations across the world, some Indian States show the way to attract investments



SANDHYA JAIN

As the Coronavirus moves remorselessly across the world and medical experts surmise that it could be with us for another two to three years, its lasting legacy will be painful for those at the bottom rung of society, those marginally above and those in the middle. With three successive lockdowns, India has managed to keep mortalities low but now, as tentative moves are made to reopen the economy, the anticipated spike in cases has begun.

Civil society across the nation rose as one to ensure that no one went hungry in the cities; at least two nutritious meals were provided daily in every cluster where unemployed labour resided; those with facilities to cook themselves were given dry rations as State agencies chipped in. Without the Herculean efforts of ordinary middle class men and women, it would have been impossible to avert starvation deaths in such a large country but India did it.

Events of the last few days, however, show that India’s poor, the migrant and daily wage earners got tired of standing in lines for food amid growing uncertainty over employment. It is one thing to line up for food cooked for a religious occasion as community sharing is deeply ingrained in Indian tradition but these hard-working souls felt their self-respect undermined when the lockdown was extended, twice. Ironically, State transport to their distant homes arrived almost simultaneously with the resumption of some economic activity. Sadly, some felt so homesick that they began walking; 16 migrants fell asleep on a railway track in Maharashtra and were mowed down by a freight train at night. It was nobody’s fault but the incident added to the national anguish.

Overall, the economic forecast is grim. Understandably, many small businesses and small manufacturers could not sustain without income but many well-off organisations also announced lay-offs. Amid the gloom, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat announced major reforms to attract investments to their States.

In Bhopal, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made major changes in the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) to put the producer-farmer on top of the trade, rather than the middleman or APMC that have traditionally pocketed their profits. Henceforth, farmers can sell their crops to any buyer if they can negotiate higher prices than the Government-stipulated minimum support price (MSP), or go to the *mandi* for MSP. This will benefit farmers with higher quality crops.



Madhya Pradesh has also permitted private *mandis* with trading facilities, yards and even cold storage chains; they can operate throughout the State on a single licence. These *mandis* will charge a single fee for a transaction and won’t pay commissions for crops purchased at non-base locations. The prevailing prices in all *mandis* will be made public. While *mandi* tax rates remain and farmers will have to bear some cost of sales, the new rules help promote Farmer Produce Organisations (FPOs). An electronic retail facility will allow farmers to find buyers outside the State, on the lines of the e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) launched by the Prime Minister in 2016.

Simultaneously, Chouhan has tweaked labour laws for the next three years to attract industry to the State. He has put an end to “inspector raj” by relaxing departmental inspections and paperwork and allowed factories to structure shifts to maximise productivity. The Madhya Pradesh Industrial Employment (Permanent Order) Act, 1961, is being modified to exempt factories employing up to 100 workers from the provisions of the Act. All new factories will be exempted from vexatious provisions in the Factories Act, 1948.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, too, is aggressively wooing investments, suspending the Uttar Pradesh Temporary Exemption from Labour Laws Ordinance for three years. This will impact both existing and new industrial units. The State hopes to attract indus-

“GUJARAT HAS ALREADY EARMARKED AROUND 33,000 HECTARES OF LAND AT KHORAJ, SANAND, DAHEJ SEZ, DHOLERA SEZ AND OTHER PRIVATE SEZs. IT HAS REDUCED THE PAPER WORK TO A SINGLE ANNUAL RETURN SCHEME FOR FACTORIES”

try that may withdraw from China in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and revive its flagging economy. However, it has clarified that it is retaining important legislations such as the Bonded Labour Act of 1976, Employee Compensation Act of 1923, Building and Other Construction Workers’ Act of 1996, Maternity Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Child Labour Act and Section 5 of the Payment of Wages Act. But the enforcement wing will not be permitted to raid factories on minor grounds.

Gujarat has avoided the Rajasthan route that permits factories with less than 300 workers to retrench workers at will, though it allows units in special economic zones (SEZs) to lay off workers without Government sanction, regardless of the number of workers; however, in 2015, it increased the wages due to retrenched workers from 45 days to 60 days. Gujarat also amended the definition of “employer” under the Minimum Wages Act to cover outsourcing agencies and contractors, among others, who will have to pay minimum wages to contractual workers.

The State is racing to woo new investments by announcing a 1,200-day holiday from labour laws (barring Minimum Wages Act, Industrial Safety Rules and The Employee Compensation Act) for new units. Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has made approvals for setting up new industries completely online, to be granted within 15 days and land allotted within seven days. The idea is to attract industries

and multinational companies from Japan, the US, Korea and Europe that may want to relocate from China.

Gujarat has already earmarked around 33,000 hectares of land at Khoraj, Sanand, Dahej SEZ, Dholera SEZ and other private SEZs. It has reduced the paperwork to a single annual return scheme for factories. Further, it has permitted compounding of offences under the Industrial Disputes Act, Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Bonus Act, Contract Labour Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, Motor Transport Workers Act, Equal Remuneration Act and Beedi Cigar Workers Act, to allow time-saving out-of-court settlements at higher fines.

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) and other labour unions are concerned that States are using the need to empower industries to snatch away the rights of the workers. They warn that at a time when over 100 million people are jobless, such measures may not bring economic revival as lack of employee welfare systems and in the absence of dispute settlement mechanisms, labour productivity could be impacted. The Centre, however, is enthusiastically backing the reform measures as the industry has long been demanding labour reforms. In fact, the Confederation of Indian Industry was quick to welcome the moves, though only time will tell if these measures can kickstart the economy.

(The author is a senior journalist. Views expressed are personal)

## SOUNDBITE

We are fighting together against Corona[virus], but this cannot be an excuse to trample human rights, exploit workers and suppress their voices.

Congress leader  
—Rahul Gandhi



I see a lot of positives on social media these days. People are not pulling each other down anymore. This crisis has made social media a kinder place and made us more compassionate.

Actor  
—Mallika Sherawat



China and India stay in close communication and coordination concerning our border affairs within existing channels. Both nations should jointly uphold peace.

Chinese spokesperson  
—Zhao Lijian



The Centre should not play politics in this crucial time. We are surrounded by international borders and other bigger States and have challenges to deal with.

West Bengal CM  
—Mamata Banerjee



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Beyond the economy

Sir — To open up the economy or keep it shut for an uncertain time is a question that many nations are forced to reckon with in Corona times. The US is not wanting in COVID-19 testing infrastructure but has got into a needless political wrangle in a crucial election year.

While US President Donald Trump retains a unique prerogative to allocate funds to the States, his greater fixation on the economy is pitting him against those concerned about the humanitarian aspect. Here, he seems to be progressively losing grip. Back home in India, we are handicapped both by our lack of massive testing and an economy that is fragile. Though the Centre and State Governments have largely found common purpose till now, a delay in reviving the economy can bring in differences. That will affect not only the economy but governance, too. The Government’s decision to resume limited operation of passenger trains is a step in the right direction.

R Narayanan  
Navi Mumbai

### Fuel prices on fire

Yet again, excise duty and road cess on diesel have been hiked. This time, the raise has been steep — ₹13 per litre for diesel and ₹10 per litre for petrol. In the six years of saffron rule, excise duty levied on diesel has undergone frequent revisions to touch ₹31.83 per litre in May this year. Little wonder, the Government collected ₹17 lakh crore by levying duties on petroleum products in the last six years. In April, the market price of crude oil without ocean freight was just \$25 per barrel. According to the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), the “ready to send to petrol pump” cost of diesel worked out to be ₹18.78 per litre but after including excise duty (₹31.83), dealer commission (₹2.52) and VAT (₹16.26), it is priced at ₹69.39 for consumers. In May 2014, when the Government came to power, crude oil price of was hovering at around \$100 per barrel, which is four times the current price. The Government claims that the common man is not being asked to pay anything more on account of this hike. The question is: Has the profit margin been exorbitantly high all along? Or has the Government pushed the OMCs into the corner? Even if the OMCs have taken a beating or have foregone a slice of the margin, the opaqueness in pricing gives them the liberty to raise prices daily and redeem the loss quietly.



Earlier, pricing in the oil sector used to be controlled at four different stages under the Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM). Subsequently, APM was dismantled and market-driven product pricing became the norm. It is by now clear that the “ready to send to petrol pumps” cost or final retail prices are not exactly market-driven. Prices get routinely tweaked to replenish emptied coffers. The APM system was ended only to be replaced by a nondescript “adjust the price at will method.” Cheap crude oil prices have helped the Government fill its coffers regularly and stem the fiscal deficits. There was hardly any direct benefit for the common man.

Haridasan Rajan  
Kozhikode

### An ill-conceived plan

Sir — In a rather belated move, the Government has allowed migrant workers, students,

tourists and pilgrims to return to their homes amid the growing Coronavirus crisis. Why had they not been allowed to go home at a time when the country had only a few hundred

cases? Would that not have been better than to allow movement now, when the number of cases has crossed 67,000? Why was a nationwide lockdown imposed without giving stranded people

enough time to go back to their hometowns or villages?

The number of shocking incidents in which migrant workers are victims has grown exponentially of late. The death of 16 migrant workers, who were crushed under the wheels of a train, was horrible. They must have been truly exhausted to fall asleep on rail tracks. If the lockdown had been properly planned, such horrifying incidents could have been avoided.

Ibne Giasuddin  
Mumbai

### Oblivious to woes

Sir — The death of the 16 labourers in Maharashtra happened solely due to the sudden announcement of a lockdown and the denial of transport to them for weeks. It is a pity that while no one was ready to give them even ₹5 when they were alive, after their death, the Government has immediately announced ₹5 lakh as grant.

Shruti  
Via email

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)



# Restart or re-stop? Countries reopen amid 2nd wave fears

AP ■ PARIS

Plastic spacing barriers and millions of masks appeared on the streets of Europe's newly reopened cities Monday, as France and Belgium emerged from lockdowns, the Netherlands sent children back to school and Spain let people eat outdoors.

All faced the delicate balance of trying to restart battered economies without causing a second wave of coronavirus infections.

Fears of infection spikes in countries that eased their restrictions have been borne out over the past few days in Germany, where new clusters were linked to three slaughterhouses; in Wuhan, the Chinese city where the virus started; and in South Korea, where one nightclub customer was linked to a 85 new cases.

Health officials in the US will be watching closely in the coming days for any resurgence of the virus two weeks after states began gradually reopening.

Authorities have warned that the scourge could come back with a vengeance without widespread testing and tracing of infected people's contacts, and efforts to assemble contact-tracing teams are underway in Europe and the US.

While some countries such

as Germany have established robust tracing abilities, other countries are far behind. Britain abandoned an initial effort in mid-March when the virus's rapid spread made it impossible. Now it is recruiting 18,000 people to do the legwork of tracking contacts.

Britain and other countries are also developing contact-tracing cellphone apps that can show whether someone has crossed paths with an infected person.

In the hardest-hit corner of the US, contact tracers in New York began online training Monday. A May 15 goal for reopening parts of the state hinges on the ability to track the spread of the virus.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo set a requirement of 30 contact tracers per 100,000 residents for areas to reopen. That translates to about 6,000 workers statewide.

Contract tracing across the rest of the US is a patchwork of approaches and readiness levels.

In loosening up the country's lockdown, German authorities have spelled out a specific level of infection that could lead to the reimposition of restrictions in local areas. Other countries — and US states — have been vague about what would be enough to trigger another clampdown.

With Monday's partial

reopening, the French did not have to carry forms allowing them to leave their homes. Crowds formed at some metro stations in Paris, but the city's notorious traffic jams were absent. Only half the stores on the Champs-Elysees were open.

Parisian hairdressers planned to charge a fee for the disposable protective gear they will have to give customers. Walk-ins will be a thing of the past, said Brigitte L'Hoste, manager of the Hair de Beauté salon.

"The face of beauty will change, meaning clients won't come here to relax. Clients will come because they need to," said Aurelie Bollini, a beautician at the salon. "They will come and aim at getting the maximum done in the shortest time possible."

In South Korea, the government clamped down again, halting school reopenings planned for this week and reimposing restrictions on nightclubs and bars. It is trying to track down 5,500 patrons of a Seoul nightlife district by checking credit-card transactions, cellphone records and security camera footage.

In China, Shanghai Disneyland reopened but with limited visitors who had to wear face masks and have their temperatures checked.

Roughly half of Spain's 47 million people shifted into



looser restrictions, beginning to socialize, shop in small stores and sit outdoors at restaurants. Its biggest cities, Madrid and Barcelona, remained under lockdown.

Spanish hotels were allowed

to open with precautions, but their financial prospects were bleak with people not allowed to travel outside their provinces and few flights from overseas.

"Unfortunately this year's business is lost already. It's going

to be catastrophic," said Manuel Domínguez, manager at Seville's Doña Maria Hotel.

In Belgium, Brussels' City2 shopping mall reopened, and "everyone was impatient to open their shops, see their

customers, so it is a relief despite the tremendous work they did to adapt their shops, to create paths with entries and exits for customers," said manager Jurgen De Gelas.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a modest easing of the country's lockdown but urged citizens not to squander the progress made. Some people, however, were confused as the government shifted its slogan from "Stay at Home" to "Stay Alert." Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland stuck with the old motto.

At the risk of more confusion, the British government did an about-face on masks Monday, telling people to cover their mouth and nose in stores and on buses and subways.

People in jobs that cannot be done at home "should be actively encouraged to go to work" this week, Johnson said. He also set a goal of June 1 to begin reopening schools and shops if Britain can control new infections. Johnson himself is the only world leader to suffer a serious bout of COVID-19.

At London's Waterloo train station, not everyone was convinced. "I am nervous about going back, because I have a family and they have been isolating since the start. I feel like I am now putting them at risk," said Peter Osu, 45, who was returning to work at a construction site.

In the US, Trump administration officials spoke optimistically about a relatively quick economic rebound from the pandemic — but then announced that Vice President Mike Pence is "self-isolating" after an aide tested positive.

The US has seen 1.3 million confirmed infections and about 80,000 deaths, the most in the world by far, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide, 4 million people have been reported infected and more than 2,80,000 have died, over 150,000 of them in Europe. Health experts believe all those numbers understate the true toll of the outbreak.

Dr Christopher Murray, director of the University of Washington institute that has created a widely cited model projecting the course of the outbreak, said that moves by states to reopen businesses "will translate into more cases and deaths in 10 days from now." Infections and deaths are going up more than expected in Illinois, Arizona, Florida and California, he said. In South Africa, authorities in Cape Town and the surrounding province considered reimposing a stricter lockdown as the area became the country's coronavirus hotspot. The province accounts for about half of South Africa's 200 virus deaths.

## US says Chinese hacking vaccine research: Reports

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation and cybersecurity experts believe Chinese hackers are trying to steal research on developing a vaccine against coronavirus, two newspapers reported Monday.

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security are planning to release a warning about the Chinese hacking as governments and private firms race to develop a vaccine for Covid-19, the Wall Street Journal and New York Times reported. The hackers are also targeting information and intellectual property on treatments and testing for Covid-19.

US officials alleged that the hackers are linked to the Chinese Government, the reports say. The official warning could come within days.

In Beijing Foreign Affairs ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian rejected the allegation, saying China firmly opposes all cyber attacks. "We are leading the world in Covid-19 treatment and vaccine research. It is immoral to target China with rumors and slanders in the absence of any evidence," Zhao said. The warning would add to a series of alerts and reports accusing government-backed hackers in Iran, North Korea, Russia and China of malicious activity related to the pandemic, from pumping out false news to targeting workers and scientists.

The New York Times said it could be a prelude to officially-sanctioned counterattacks by US agencies involved in cyber warfare, including the Pentagon's Cyber Command and the National Security Agency. Last week in a joint message Britain and the United States warned of a rise in cyber attacks against health professionals involved in the coronavirus response by organised criminals "often linked with other state actors."

<b>GLOBAL CASES:</b>
<b>4,232,351</b>
<b>GLOBAL DEATHS:</b>
<b>2,85,743</b>

COUNTRY	TOTAL CASES	TOTAL DEATHS
USA	1,376,317	81,157
Spain	2,68,143	26,744
Italy	2,19,814	30,739
UK	2,11,364	31,241
France	1,77,423	26,643
Germany	1,69,901	7,404
Russia	2,21,344	2,009
Turkey	1,35,569	3,689

- White House recommends coronavirus testing of more than 1 million nursing home residents and staff in next 2 weeks
- French defence minister acknowledges "mistakes" in handling of outbreak on carrier
- Foreign tourists won't have to quarantine once they're allowed back to Italy
- Cape Town becomes South Africa's virus hotspot

## Int'l tourism may decline by 60-80% in 2020 due to Covid-19: UN body

**United Nations:** International tourism could shrink by a whopping 60-80 per cent in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in the revenue loss of \$910 billion to \$1.2 trillion and placing millions of livelihoods at risk, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The pandemic, spread across every country on the planet, has so far infected 4.1 million people and killed 282,719 people. The US has been the worst-affected country with 1.3 million confirmed coronavirus cases and nearly 80,000 deaths.

The global international agency said the pandemic has already caused a 22 per cent fall in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020. According to the UN's specialised agency, the global health crisis could lead to an annual tourism decline between 60 per cent and 80 per cent when compared with the 2019 figures.

"This places millions of livelihoods at risk and threatens to roll back progress made in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals," it said.

"The world is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis. Tourism has been

hit hard, with millions of jobs at risk in one of the most labour-intensive sectors of the economy," UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said. Available data reported by destinations point to a 22 per cent decline in arrivals in the first three months of the year, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

Arrivals in March dropped sharply by 57 per cent following the start of a lockdown in many countries, as well as the widespread introduction of travel restrictions and the closure of airports and national borders.

## For 5th day Italy's COVID-19 infections decline

**ROME:** For a fifth straight day on Monday, Italy's daily number of new COVID-19 infections has declined. According to Italian Health Ministry data, there were 744 confirmed new cases registered since Sunday. That number is lower than daily caseloads when contagion containment measures went into effect nationwide in early March. The country where Europe's outbreak began now has 219,814 cases, a tally that experts say is surely significantly lower than actual infections, since many with mild or moderate coronavirus symptoms didn't get hospitalized or tested.

## Russia confirms record 11,656 cases in 24 hrs

**Moscow:** Russia has reported a record 11,656 new COVID-19 cases over the past 24 hours, raising the total number of infections to 221,344, the country's coronavirus response centre said on Monday.

The more than 10,000 single-day increase has now entered the ninth day, Xinhua news agency.

The death toll grew by 94 to 2,009, while 39,801 people have recovered, including a record of 5,495 over the last 24 hours, the statement said.

Moscow, the country's worst-hit region, confirmed 6,169 new cases in the past 24 hours, taking its total to 115,909.

Russia's consumer rights and human well-being watchdog said on Monday that 247,842 people were under medical observation as of Sunday.

## Pak's Opp accuses Imran Khan Govt of mishandling crisis as cases rise to 31,684

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Opposition parties on Monday accused Prime Minister Imran Khan's Government of mishandling the coronavirus crisis, as the total number of the Covid-19 patients in the country rose to 31,684.

During a National Assembly session convened after a gap of nearly two months, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former Defence Minister Khawaja Asif led the criticism.

Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri chaired the session in the absence of Speaker Asad Qaiser who is recovering from the coronavirus.

The meeting is the first since the outbreak of Covid-19



in the country. Asif said that the federal government was confused over the issue of how to handle the coronavirus crisis.

"The current situation that we are in is due to the approximately two months-long neg-

ligence showed by the Government. When we had fewer deaths, the entire country was completely shut down. Now that we are seeing a dangerous spike in cases, they are easing lockdown restrictions," he said.

## Cheetah-inspired fastest soft robots yet developed

**Washington:** Inspired by the cheetah, scientists have developed a new type of soft robot that can move over three times faster on solid surfaces or in the water than previous generations of such machines.

The new soft robots are also capable of grabbing objects delicately — or with sufficient strength to lift heavy objects, according to the research published in the journal Science Advances. Cheetahs are the fastest creatures on land, and they derive their speed and power from the flexing of their spines, said Jie Yin, an assistant professor at North Carolina State University in the US.

"We were inspired by the

cheetah to create a type of soft robot that has a spring-powered, 'bistable' spine, meaning that the robot has two stable states. We can switch between these stable states rapidly by pumping air into channels that line the soft, silicone robot," Yin said.

"Switching between the two states releases a significant amount of energy, allowing the robot to quickly exert force against the ground. This enables the robot to gallop across the surface, meaning that its feet leave the ground," said Yin. Previous soft robots, the researchers said, were crawlers, remaining in contact with the ground at all times, which limits their speed.

They said the fastest soft robots until now could move at speeds of up to 0.8 body lengths per second on flat, solid surfaces.

The new class of soft robots, which are called "Leveraging Elastic Instabilities for Amplified Performance" (LEAP), are able to reach speeds of up to 2.7 body lengths per second — more than three times faster — at a low actuation frequency of about 3 Hertz, according to the researchers.

These new robots are also capable of running up steep inclines, which can be challenging or impossible for soft robots that exert less force against the ground, they said.

## Four back-to-back bomb blasts rock Kabul: Police

AFP ■ KABUL

Four back-to-back roadside bombs exploded in a northern district of Afghanistan's capital Kabul on Monday, wounding four civilians including a child, police said.

Kabul police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz said a clearance team was at the site of the attacks.

Terrorists have carried out several roadside bombings and rocket attacks in Kabul and other parts of the country in recent weeks, but Monday's four consecutive explosions appeared to be the first coordinated effort for some months.

**The Taliban has not carried out any large attacks in the city since they signed a landmark withdrawal deal with the US in February, meant to pave the way for peace in the country**

The Taliban has not carried out any large attacks in the city since they signed a landmark withdrawal deal with the US in February, meant to pave the way for peace in the country.

No group has claimed the attacks. The explosions come as authorities are trying to impose a lockdown in the capital to curb the spread of coronavirus in the country.

## Iranian Navy friendly fire incident kills 19 amid US tension

**Tehran:** A missile fired during an Iranian training exercise mistakenly struck a naval vessel instead of its intended target in waters near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, killing 19 sailors and wounding 15 others, Iranian authorities said on Monday.

The bungled training exercises took place on Sunday and raised new questions about the readiness of the Islamic Republic's armed forces amid heightened tensions with US, just months after they accidentally shot down a Ukrainian jetliner near Tehran, killing 176 passengers.

It also comes soon after a tense naval encounter between Iranian and US forces in the nearby Persian Gulf. President Donald Trump

withdrew the US from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers two years ago, launching a maximum pressure campaign against Iran that has pushed the archrivals to the verge of conflict repeatedly.

Analysts have warned regional tensions likely will increase again. This week also marks the one-year anniversary of attacks on oil tankers near the strait that the US blamed on Iran.

Sunday's friendly fire incident struck the Iranian navy vessel Konarak near the port of Jask, some 1,270 kilometers (790 miles) southeast of Tehran in the Gulf of Oman, the Iranian army said in a statement.

Iran's regular Navy typically patrols those waters, while ves-

sels from the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard usually patrol the Persian Gulf.

The Konarak, a Hendijan-class support ship taking part in the exercise, came too close to a target and the missile struck it, state TV said. Authorities did not identify the ship that fired the missile, though semiofficial media in Iran identified it as the Iranian destroyer Jamaran.

The Konarak had been putting targets out for other ships to target, state TV said. Initially, officials said only one sailor had been killed. That number quickly changed to 19. A local hospital admitted 12 sailors and treated another three with slight wounds, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

## Around the Globe

- Illinois Gov JB Pritzker's office said a senior staff member has tested positive for Covid-19, but the governor has tested negative. The first-term Democrat's office released a statement Monday saying all employees, including Pritzker, will work from home "for an appropriate isolation period." The statement didn't specify how long that would last.
- The German Government is making available 750 million euros to speed up the production and development of a vaccine against the new coronavirus. Science minister Anja Karliczek said on Monday that about 500 million euros will go into scientific studies and vaccine trials, while 250 million euros will go into expanding production capacities in Germany.
- Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini has added his voice to the calls for South Africans to adhere to the coronavirus-linked national lockdown regulations as the Covid-19 cases in South Africa crossed the 10,000 mark.
- US Vice President Mike Pence is not in quarantine and has tested negative to COVID-19, his spokesman said Sunday, after a close aide was confirmed to have been infected. Pence would go to work at the White House on Monday, spokesman Devin O'Malley said in a statement following some US media reports that Pence would be self-isolating.
- Shanghai Disneyland reopened on Monday following a more than three-month coronavirus shutdown as China moves nearer to normality and Walt Disney Co. seeks to plug the flow of red ink caused by the pandemic. The theme park in China's most populous city is the first of the entertainment conglomerate's six main Disney resorts around the world to reopen, but does so under the shadow of the coronavirus.



## EXTRA BORROWING

# FY21 fiscal deficit likely at 5.8%

## Growth to slip to 0.5%: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

After the Government's move to raise its market borrowing programme for the current financial year by ₹ 4.2 lakh crore, a foreign brokerage on Monday estimated the fiscal deficit to come at 5.8 per cent of the GDP in FY21 as against the budget target of 3.5 per cent.

In a report, analysts at Bank of America also revised down their GDP growth estimate to 0.5 per cent for the current fiscal year, as against the earlier estimate of 1.5 per cent adding that they fear that the lockdown may extend beyond May.

It can be noted that due to the heavy dip in growth - it was supposed to hit a decadal low

of 5 per cent in FY20 as per official estimates - the Government is forced to spend the extra to help restrict the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the economy.

Even though a wider fiscal deficit raises concerns on macroeconomic stability, many experts have backed the move to spend more.

"We now forecast the center's fiscal deficit at 5.8 per cent of GDP (from 4.8 per cent earlier) versus 3.5 per cent as budgeted for FY21, with growth likely to slip to 0.5 per cent (from 1.5 per cent) with the lockdown set to extend beyond May," the analysts pencilled. The brokerage said the states will also have fiscal slippages ranging from 0.50 to 1 per centage point of their budgeted targets for the current financial year.

On likely routes of funding the fiscal deficit, it said the options before policymakers

may include open market operations by the Reserve Bank (RBI) with a new calendar being put out by Governor Shaktikanta Das to comfort markets, a direct monetisation where RBI can directly subscribe to Government debt or incentivising banks to put their surplus in money markets, it said.

From a revenue generation perspective, it suggested a 5 per cent COVID-19 cess for those earning above ₹5 lakh, which can yield the exchequer ₹20,000 crore. Moreover, the higher taxes on oil will deliver ₹1 lakh crore, it estimated.

It said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman may soon announce a second round of fiscal stimulus which may cost 0.75 per cent of the GDP, as against the first one of ₹1.70 lakh crore which was 0.35 per cent of the GDP.

The focus of the new package will be on small businesses, real estate and the

banking sector, it said, adding that this is after assuming a slip in growth to 0.5 per cent, the brokerage said.

## Rupee drops by 19p to 1-wk low against dollar on fiscal deficit concerns

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee on Monday declined by 19 paise to close at a one-week low of 75.73 against the US dollar due to fiscal deficit concerns as the government raised its market borrowing programme for 2020-21 in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

Forex traders said while positive domestic equities supported the local unit, market

# Sensex ends 81 points lower

## Financial stocks drag

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex gave up all its early gains to end 81

points lower on Monday, dragged by losses in financial stocks as lenders beefing up provisions against COVID-19 risks stoked slippages worry.

Besides, spiking COVID-19 cases in the country and tepid cues from global markets weighed on investor sentiment.

After gyrating over 800 points during the day, the 30-share index settled 81.48 pts or 0.26 per cent lower at 31,561.22. Similarly, NSE Nifty fell 12.30 pts, or 0.13 per cent, to 9,239.20. ICICI Bank was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, cracking over 5 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, HUL, HDFC, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank and Nestle India.

On the other hand, Hero MotoCorp, Bajaj Auto, Maruti, TCS and HCL Tech were among the gainers.

Joining peers, ICICI Bank made COVID-19 related provisions of Rs 2,725 crore to further strengthen the balance sheet -- causing worries on fiscal slippages front. "Indian market opened on a positive note following global cues as trade-war fears receded and



more countries announced plans to ease their lockdown restrictions amid hopes of global economies reopening," said Narendra Solanki, Head-Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand Rathi.

The traders also took note of Prime Minister Modi's meeting with chief ministers of all states which is expected to discuss the plan for exit from the ongoing nationwide lock-

down to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

However, the market couldn't hold the strength during the day as selling pressure was witnessed in heavy index weighing sectors like financial and bank stocks, erasing majority of gains in afternoon session as COVID-19 related one time provision were seen undercutting the earnings on the financial companies, he added.

## Expect financial package from Govt in 2-3 days: Gadkari to industry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday said he expects the Centre to unveil a financial package in two-three days, observing that the situation "was very bad" despite the three-month moratorium on loan repayments announced by the RBI. The Minister for MSME, and Road Transport and Highways said the Govt stands with the industry but it also needs to understand the Govt's limitations. "We are trying our level best on how we can protect everybody," Gadkari said, adding that while Japan and the US Govts have announced mega packages, their economies are bigger than India's.

## Central trade unions may approach ILO on labour laws suspension in some States

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ten central trade unions on Monday said they are considering approaching the International Labour Organisation (ILO) against suspension of major labour laws in some States.

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath last week gave nod to 'Uttar Pradesh Temporary Exemption from Certain Labour Laws Ordinance, 2020' to exempt factories, business establishments and industries from the purview of all, except three labour laws and one provision of another law, for three years.

The Madhya Pradesh Government has also sus-

pending some labour laws and as per media reports, Gujarat too is following suit.

In a joint statement issued on Monday, the central trade unions also threatened to give a call for nationwide agitation to protest against such moves by State Governments.

"The CTUs consider these moves as gross violation of the Right to Freedom of Association (ILO Convention 87), Rights to Collective Bargaining (ILO Convention 98) and also the internationally accepted norm of eight hour working day," espoused by Core Conventions of ILO," the statement said.

It also noted that the ILO Convention 144 with regard to tripartism has been undermined by the Governments.

## Tobacco farmers seek rescue package

**Crop worth ₹4,400cr lying unsold**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers body FAIFA on Monday urged the Government to provide a rescue package for tobacco growers, saying the crop worth ₹4,400 crore is lying unsold in the fields due to the coronavirus pandemic. FAIFA, which claims to represent farmers and farm workers of commercial crops across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat, said demand for tobacco has weakened due to declining volumes of cigarettes and other tobacco products as a result of prolonged lockdown.

## Asia's largest spice mart loses flavour amid lockdown

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The centuries old wholesale spice market, Khari Bawli, a paradise for spice connoisseurs and dealers, and nightmare for those who dread crowd, wore a deserted look on Monday with barely 10-12 shops open and no buyers around.

In normal days, business continues amid chaos caused by carriages parked in the middle of road, shops extending to the footpath, and thousands trying to elbow each other in this market, known for spices and dry fruits.

"We have enough stock of red chillies and other spices, like coriander powder, black pepper, cardamom (elaichi) and cumin (jeera). But there are only few buyers. We have Patna and Kashmiri chillies. But hardly anyone to sell to," said Krishna Mittal, a shop owner in the market, who opened the outlet as soon as the government relaxed lockdown norms.

There were only one white van and a couple of personal vehicles on the road in the market where finding parking space in normal days is next to impossible. Few carriages were parked and locked outside shut shops. Majority of the labour employment to 25 lakh people, is staring at a huge financial crisis with dimming hopes of a revival from coronavirus-induced lockdown, it said. A Gujarat-based trader who did not wish to be named said around 100 containers of scrap metal imported by him are lying at Gujarat's Mundra Port.



silence has replaced that. Such is the situation that chirping of birds could be heard.

A shop owner, who opened his outlet only to take out some necessary documents, told IANS, most outstation traders were not coming as Delhi was a red zone.

"They used to buy in bulk. Moreover, no hotels and catering companies are buying ingredients either," said Shiv Parshad, a trader.

Khari Bawli is not only the largest spice market of Asia but also an important and busy commercial district catering to the North, West and Central India.

## Global stocks mixed amid hopes for recovery from virus slump

AP ■ BEIJING

Global stocks were mixed Monday as investors looked past dismal American jobs and other data toward hopes for a global recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

European markets opened down while most Asian markets advanced. Wall Street futures swung between gains and losses. US shares gained despite a government report that American employers cut a record-setting 20.5 million jobs in April.

Investor optimism is gaining as China and some other countries begin to revive their economies. But with infection numbers still rising in the United States, Brazil and some other countries, analysts warn a global recovery might be some way off. "While the argument that forward-looking market hopes of recovery should override backward looking economic gloom may not be groundless, it inevitably understates inherent

fragilities and risks," Riki Ogawa of Mizuho Bank said in a report.

In early trading, London's FTSE 100 was off 6 points at 5,929.72 and Germany's DAX lost 0.2% to 10,876.78. France's CAC 40 declined 0.6% to 4,521.51. On Wall Street, the future for the benchmark S&P 500 Index was down 0.3% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.2%. Both were positive earlier in the day.

On Friday, the S&P 500 Index rose 1.7% and the Dow added 1.9%. The Nasdaq composite rose 1.6%.

Investors expect a week filled with data announcements including European factory output and trade, U.S. Unemployment claims and retail sales and Australian jobs. Markets got a jolt Sunday when one of Latin America's largest airlines, Chile's Avianca, asked a New York City bankruptcy court for protection from creditors while the carrier reorganizes amid a travel slump it said has cut revenue 80%.

## Trair advises public to check applicable rates before dialling into online conferencing platforms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The telecom regulator on Monday asked public to exercise due caution while joining online conference platforms via audio calls by first checking applicable rates for dialling such numbers and their helplines.

The advice by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trair) comes in the wake of instances where users experienced "bill shocks" after inadvertently dialling internation-

al numbers to get onto online conferencing.

The regulator said it is also aware of cases where the customer care centres of service providers are either premium numbers or international numbers. "Obviously, the members of public who use such services inadvertently may have to pay higher rates applicable to premium numbers or international numbers which would imply application of ISD tariffs," the telecom sector watchdog said in a statement.

## Recycle industry at verge of bankruptcy as shipments stuck at ports, charges build up

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Once-booming material recycling industry has come to a standstill after the lockdown, bringing thousands of traders to the brink of bankruptcy as they face mounting levies from shipping liners and freight stations for stuck containers despite the Govt giving waivers, an industry body said. Around 2.5 lakh containers containing imported scrap are lying at various ports of the

country waiting for clearances ever since the lockdown began, says material recycle producers body MRAL. The industry that gives direct and indirect employment to 25 lakh people, is staring at a huge financial crisis with dimming hopes of a revival from coronavirus-induced lockdown, it said. A Gujarat-based trader who did not wish to be named said around 100 containers of scrap metal imported by him are lying at Gujarat's Mundra Port.

## Ratan Tata hopes entrepreneurs will create new benchmarks of tomorrow

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran industrialist Ratan Tata on Monday said the coronavirus pandemic will force entrepreneurs to adapt, create and find ways to enable new or modified enterprises that would be benchmarks of tomorrow.

While seeking not to "downplay the challenges and the difficulties embedded in these

current times" the Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons - the holding firm of Tata Group said, "It can all start on a clean sheet of paper that looks at ways of doing things that were never thought of before." In a post on social media platform Instagram, Tata hoped that entrepreneurs will find a better way to run their operations following the pandemic that has severely disrupted economic activity.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Information is given to general public at large that my client Smt. Moni Goswami owner of Freehold property bearing no. C-44/217, area measuring 28½ Sq. Yards i.e. 22.15 Sq. Meters, out of Khassa no. 602, situated in the village Ghonda Gurjan Khadar in the abadi of C Block, Gali No. 16, Sudampuri Garmi Extn, Ilaga Shahdara, Delhi-110053. BY virtue of Sale deed dated 24.05.2019, As Doc No. 932, Book No. 1, Vol. No. 5028, Pages 63-74, dated 24.05.2019, SR-IV, Seelampur, New Delhi. Initial Title documents not available in favour of Smt. Kamla Devi Wilo Shri Ramesh Chand Sharma and same property sold to be Smt. Priyanka Prajapati Shri Harman Dass and same property is going to be financed by Unmeed Housing Finance Pvt. Ltd. Branch Jarak Pur New Delhi. If any person(s) have any objection (s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property then contact us within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone.  
Naveen Kumar Verma, Advocate  
F-211, Sector-3, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010, Mobile: 09958871432

**INDO COTSPIN LTD**  
REGD. OFFICE : Delhi mile stone, 78 K.M, G.T. Road, N.H. 1, Post Box No. 3, Post Office Samalkha, Village Jhatipour, Panipat-132103, (Haryana), India

**NOTICE**

NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to Regulation 29 of the Securities Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, a meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Saturday, 30th May, 2020 at the registered office of the company, inter alia to consider & approve and take on record audited financial results of the Company for the quarter/year ended on 31st March, 2020. Further, in terms of the Company's Code of Conduct for Trading by Insiders, The Trading Window for dealing in the securities of the Company will remain closed for all directors, officers, designated employees and connected persons of the Company from 22nd May, 2020 to 2nd June, 2020 (both days inclusive).

CIN:-L17111MH1995PLC0202541  
EMAIL:-rajpalaggarwal2000@yahoo.com  
info@indocotspin.com  
www.indocotspin.com

**FOR INDO COTSPIN LTD**  
Date : 11.05.2020  
Place : Panipat  
Rajpal Aggarwal  
DIRECTOR  
DIN:00456189

## CLW built WAP-7 loco completes 20 years

**Chittaranjan:** Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) built "NAVKIRAN", first WAP-7 electric loco of 6000HP bearing serial no 30201 was flagged off from CLW on May 10, 2000, exactly 20 yrs back for the service to Indian Railways and the performance of this loco is quite very encouraging.

With change of electric traction technology world over, the GTO based technology which was used initially was later changed and upgraded to latest Insulated Gate Bi Polar transistor (IGBT) based converter technology which is more energy efficient world over. Recently, Hotel load technology was introduced and



this loco is presently hauling prestigious Rajdhani & Shatabdi express trains over IR. With further improvements, this WAP-7 HS loco has successfully passed the trial run at 180kmph and clearance was given to run at 160kmph over IR. CLW is also working for upgrading the existing 6000HP loco of WAP-7 series



to 9000HP and the work in going on.

It is to mention here that CLW got certification from LIMCA BOOK OF RECORDS for creating WORLD RECORD by producing 402 locos in FY 2018-19 and in the FY 2019-20, CLW surpassed its own record by producing 431 locomotives.

**UJVN Limited**  
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephone: 0135-2763808, Fax No.: 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com

**DATE EXTENSION NOTICE-I**  
Due to unavoidable reasons date of submission and opening of bids against Tender no. : CH(Maint.-) 01/2020-21: & CH(Maint.-) 02/2020-21 are extended as given here below:-  
Last date of downloading tender : May 19, 2020, 12:00 Hrs.  
Last date of submission of tender : May 19, 2020, 14:00 Hrs.  
Date & Time of opening of tender : May 21, 2020, 11:00 Hrs  
For downloading tender documents and other details, kindly visit Nigam's website "www.ujvn.com".  
**Executive Engineer (Maint.)**  
281/UJVN/Advt.I Dated 11.05.2020 "Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

**UJVN Limited**  
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Tele/Fax: 0135-2763508, 2763808 & Fax: 0135-2763507  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 | www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com

**Time Extension Notice-II**  
In reference to e-Tender No. 13/E.E.(Gen)/RPS/Klg/2019-20 invited by this office it is to inform that time extension notice has been uploaded on e-procurement portal. Please quote your bids accordingly. For further details kindly log on to <http://uktenders.gov.in>. All other terms & conditions of tender shall remain unchanged.

- Last Date/Time for receipt of bid in the portal : 22-05-2020 up to 16:00 Hrs.
- Last date of submission of original documents : 23-05-2020 up to 17:00 Hrs
- Date of opening of bid on the website : 26-05-2020 at 11:00 Hrs  
Executive Engineer (Generation)  
पत्रांक: 287 री 11.05.2020  
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

**UJVN Limited**  
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Tele/Fax: 0135-2763508, 2763808 & Fax: 0135-2763507  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 | www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com

**Tender Notice**  
The office of Executive Engineer (Maintenance), Maneri Bhai Stage-II, Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) invites sealed tenders from interested parties for following work:  
**NIT-15/EE(M)/MB-II/20-21:** Repair of two numbers TGB housing of 76 MW Turbine at Dharasu Power House, Uttarkashi.

**Approx. value of Tender** : Rs 693000.00 only (taxes extra)  
**Earnest Money** : Rs 21000/- only.  
**Tender Cost** : Rs s 590/- only.

**Last date of downloading the tender** : 03.06.2020 up to 15:30 Hrs.  
**Last date of submitting the tender** : 03.06.2020 up to 15:30 Hrs.  
**Due date for opening the tender** : 05.06.2020 at 11:00 Hrs.

For Eligibility Criteria and full details kindly visit our website "www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com" Bidders are advised to regularly visit our website for tender notice. Tender can only be downloaded from our website & their cost has to be paid at the time of submission.  
पत्रांक: 282 री 11.05.2020  
**Executive Engineer, (Maintenance)**  
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

## SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Sapna** D/o Shyam Lal, R/o H.No. B-5/282, Nand Nagri, Delhi, Age : 22 yrs., Height : 5'11", Complexion : **Shallow**, Face : **Round**, Build : **Medium**, Wearing : **Chocolate Colour Top, Blue Colour Jeans and Blue Colour Cloths Shoes in Feet**, has been missing / kidnapped since **07.03.2020** from her house. In this regard a case **DD No. 42-A dated 08.03.2020** has been lodged at PS. Nand Nagri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far. if anyone have any information about this missing / kidnapped girl please inform undersigned  
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in), Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641, Fax: 011-24368639  
**SHO**  
**PS. Nand Nagri, Delhi**  
**DP/74/NE/2020.**  
Ph.: 011-22585985, 8750870733

## SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General public is here by informed that this girl namely **Fauziya** D/o Md. Saleem R/o H.No. 351/3A, Gali No. 22, Shiv Vihar, Delhi, **Age** : About 24 years, **Complexion** : Fair, **Height** : 5'2", **Build** : Thin, **Face** : Round, wearing Badami colour suit, Jamuni colour Palajo, and Rubber chappal in feet, has been missing since 03.03.2020 from her Idgah Road, Rahat Tent House. In this regard DD No. 42A dated 05.03.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Dayal Pur, Delhi.


Any person having any information or clue about this kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following:-  
**E-mail:** [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
**Website:** <http://cbi.nic.in>  
**Fax:** 24368639,  
**Tel.:** 24368638/24368641  
**SHO - P.S. Dyal Pur, Delhi**  
**Tel. No. : 011-22800216, 22800218**  
DP/82/NE20



**DOCYARD**

DR VIKAS GOSWAMI

Senior Consultant  
Medical Oncologist  
MAX HOSPITAL, VAISHALI,  
NEW DELHI



# Cancer patients need extra care

The spread of COVID-19 across the world is constantly increasing. India is home to over 25 lakh cancer patients, with roughly eight lakh new cases added up every year. Nearly six lakh people die of the disease. Cancer patients are more susceptible to COVID-19 than individuals without the disease because of their compromised immune system and various other factors like anti-cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy.

Not everyone will get sick. But like the flu virus, there are definitely people who are more at risk. People who are older (particularly over 60) and people with underlying health conditions, such as chronic lung disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease and cancer appear to be at higher risk for major complications. That includes admission to intensive care and even death.

The early data from China, and reports from the ground in other countries of local transmission is that our cancer patients are going to be at increased risk, infact cancer patients recorded a 40 per cent mortality rate much higher than any other sample groups. So we're taking all these factors into consideration while treating cancer patients now.

Patients with hematologic (blood) malignancies we believe will have the biggest risk. Also, patients who are in active chemotherapy and those who have undergone bone marrow transplants. Those are the ones with the most profound immune deficits.

Immunosuppressed and cancer patients should be extra cautious and treat this like a bad flu season. There is also a concern among of patients of what happens if one stops, delays or switches the cancer treatment. There is a need to do various tests to assess their condition and progress of the disease, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, every week, especially for aggressive types of cancer.

Cancer patients with scheduled appointments should keep them, unless they're experiencing coronavirus symptoms. Those with symptoms are asked to wear a mask, which decreases the spread of viruses and bacteria.

If you develop symptoms of coronavirus such as high fever, a deep dry cough, fatigue and shortness of breath, the first and foremost step is to let someone know, call your provider and tell them if you have respiratory symptoms. Sometimes, they may advise you to stay home or can provide guidelines and protect you when you walk in the door depends on your symptoms and condition. And if the symptoms are minor just stay home. Remember, it's still flu and cold season.

Your family is important and you don't want to avoid them, but if someone in your household gets sick, use some social distancing. Wear gloves, have them sleep in a different room if you can, make sure you wipe down areas with some sort of bleach wipes and keep washing your hands regularly. That's really important.

It's also crucial not to bring a sick family member into your cancer treatment center. We need less people who are ill, not more, You don't want someone going in with you even if they only have minor symptoms. It's important to bring just one caregiver with you to treatment, not your entire family.

There is an importance of sleep in recharging the immune system. Sleep deprivation is one of the most potent ways of suppressing the immune system. Everybody has a different threshold but if you're not getting a minimum of six or seven or, ideally, eight hours of sleep a night, there's demonstrable scientific evidence that the immune system may be compromised.

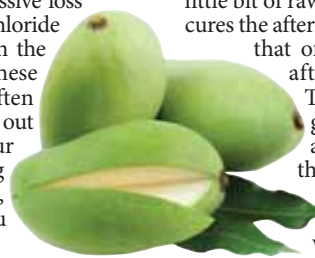
Also try doing light exercises, preferably something aerobic, like walking or jogging, which will get the heart pumping. Take a walk in the fresh air may be in your balcony or garden since you cannot go out due to lockdown.

## SUMMER COOLERS

**RAW MANGO:** *Kachchi kairi*, or raw mango, is etched in all of our summer memories, as strongly as are the scorching winds, the uncomfortable heat and the relentless sun. Drinking juice of raw mango during summers is more than a mere exercise in palate pleasing. The drink reduces the effects of intense heat and prevents dehydration, by stopping excessive loss of sodium chloride and iron from the body. These minerals often tend to leach out into your sweat, during summers, making you dehydrated.

Raw mango is also consumed for its action against gastrointestinal disorders, which tend to go up during the summers. It is often prescribed to people with morning sickness, constipation, diarrhoea, chronic dyspepsia and indigestion.

Raw mangoes are great for the liver, and are believed to treat liver ailments. Having a little bit of raw mango powder cures the afternoon drowsiness that often takes effect after your meals. This is because it gives your body an energy boost that wakes you up and helps you perform well.



# NO FAT CHANCE

Doctors say that obesity can be an additional risk for COVID-19. DR ANIMESH ARYA shares tips to boost immunity and stay safe

As the time is passing by, entire world is witnessing new insights in regard to novel corona virus and its effects on human body almost every day. Considering COVID-19 to be a respiratory disease, initially the major focus is on lungs and their functioning but it has also been found that other pre-existing diseases pose an additional risk of getting infection. People with, pre-existing diseases like Diabetes Mellitus, hypertension, bronchial asthma, on chemotherapy for cancer, on dialysis and with lower immunity are at much higher risk than normal individuals of getting COVID-19 disease with serious consequences. In recent times new insights have suggested obesity an additional risk factor in this regard.

CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) now lists severe obesity as a risk factor for severe COVID-19; it states that BMI (Body Mass Index) of 40 or above is a risk factor for COVID-19. Now the mere fact that incountries like USA, a significant population is already suffering from severe obesity and getting infected at the same time, which thus might be leading to this observation and consequent hypothesis but still it should beof major concern.

What really makes obesity a risk factor for COVID-19, and how it can be dealt with let's have a glimpse into the explanation:

Obese people have lower level of immunity due to inflammation driven by certain cells in the fat tissue

, they start experiencing breathlessness even after doing minor physical work, as the process of oxygen supply to the various parts of the body is compromised. As a result they are at the higher risk of a number of diseases, and COVID-19 is one of them as well. In the present scenario during lockdown more than normal eating and no physical activity can add to this risk of gaining weight and subsequent consequences.

Change your approach: First and foremost thing to be kept in mind is that an obese person is already at a major risk of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, high blood pressure, arthritis even cancer. While getting infected with novel corona virus entirely depends upon coming in contact with an infected person and fomites, an obese person is at higher risk of Covid infection, due to these coexisting diseases Obesity being one of them .

Time has come when obesity should also be dealt as a challenge in a country where in some cases obese people are culturally called healthy or *khaatey peetey ghar ke*. This is particularly important especially among children as obesity is notably on a rise and this is a section of population along with the elderly is already vulnerable to the infection.

It's more about overall wellbeing than only about COVID-19: This pandemic has increased awareness and made people serious about their health. So should be the case

THE PANDEMIC HAS INCREASED AWARENESS AMONG PEOPLE AND THEY HAVE STARTED TAKING THEIR HEALTH SERIOUSLY. THIS SHOULD BE THE CASE WITH OBESE PEOPLE AS WELL. THEY SHOULD BECOME MORE RESPONSIBLE AND FOCUS ON FOLLOWING AN IMPROVED LIFESTYLE

with obese people as well. They should be more responsible towards their own health and not become a part of the chain of covid-19 dissemination and start accepting a healthy life style from today itself. Following are few points to be kept in mind: ■ Follow the rules of lockdown, stay

at home and take extra precautions in maintaining basic hygiene.

■ Add immunity boosters to your meals like *tulsi*, ginger, turmeric and take Vitamin C.

■ Follow a healthy diet plan. Consult a dietician or nutritionist if need be and make a balanced diet chart accordingly which leaves little scope of weight gain. Increase your water intake if allowed as per your health or pre-existing ailment.

■ It may well be a starting point during this lockdown to lose weight and improve your health quotient.

■ Start with mild exercise or simple yoga *asanas* at home and then slowly speed up the process. There are a number of exercises which can be done at home without extra equipment and lesser space, for that purpose you can take help of social media or follow some fitness expert on YouTube.

■ Keep in contact with your concerned doctor if already suffering from any disease or have been following some medication.

These times convey a strong message to be followed that COVID-19 is not merely about precautions rather now it's more about people's entire wellbeing and future health. Always remember we cannot defeat this pandemic merely with treatment rather with healthy lifestyle and positive attitude in life will bring significant change in the world to fight COVID-19 better.

The writer is Senior Consultant in Respiratory Medicine, allergy and Sleep disorders, Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute

## ALTERNATE ROUTE TO WELLNESS



Practising yoga not only helps in managing stress but can also boost immunity by enhancing mind-body awareness, says SAT BIR SINGH KHALSA

Yoga has proved to be instrumental in the improvement of immune function. One clear mechanism for this efficacy has been the evolution of the new field of psychoneuroimmunology, which has provided very strong evidence for the role of psychological state on the immune system. While chronic stress and negative mood states such as anger, anxiety and depression have a significant effect in compromising immune function; many research studies have shown that yoga practices are an effective stress management strategy.

Another way that yoga may enhance our immune function indirectly is by enhancing mind-body awareness. It improves healthy behaviors such as getting adequate sleep, exercise and nutrition, which are contributors to proper immune functioning. Whether yoga works by some mechanism to directly stimulate immune function apart from the indirect pathways is yet to be determined.

Given its positive potential, there is a high possibility that yoga practices can act as preventive techniques against infectious diseases, and more specifically, of respiratory-related infectious diseases such as upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs). With outbreaks and pandemics of coronaviruses, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), and COVID-19, which are the leading cause of morbidity and mortality from infectious disease internationally, yoga can extend a helping hand.

A well-known ancient ancillary yoga practice called *jala neti kriya*, referred to as nasal saline irrigation (NSI), involves flushing of the nasal passages with a salt water solution using a *neti* pot. It has been recognised within Western medicine since the late 1800's as an effective therapy for treatment of nasal and sinus congestion due to allergens or URTIs. It is hypothesised to function by thinning mucous, improving mucociliary clearance, decreasing edema, and reducing antigens in the nasal and sinus cavities and thereby enhancing the nasal mucosa's ability to resist the effects of infectious agents, inflammatory mediators and irritants. NSIs are now commonly prescribed in everyday clinical practice as a URTI treatment.

Taken together, the research on potential efficacy of contemplative mind-body interventions on prevention of URTIs is encouraging. Along with enhancement of immune function by removing the inhibitory effect of mood impairment and stress on the immune system; yoga and meditation practices have a direct effect in enhancing hygienic preventive behaviors. Though the latter is a valuable indirect strategy, application of *jala neti* could be considered to be a direct-acting preventive behavioral strategy for URTIs. Though there are more researches going on to prove the direct impact of yoga on mind, body and soul, time will prove the positive impact of yoga on healthy individuals as well as more susceptible population such as the elderly.

The writer is PhD, Director of Research, Kundalini Yoga Research Institute & Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School

# Don't over sanitise

Hand sanitisers are good for killing germs and thereby keeping infections at bay. But at the same time, it's overuse can lead to several skin problems, says DR BL JANGID

To be precise, keeping your hands clean was amongst the first few recommendations that the global organizations suggested to the world-wide people, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The measure was specifically suggested to fight and break the chain of the coronavirus transmission that was occurring worldwide. Covering the mouth and nose were other recommendations that the world adhered to for eradicating this virus.

But as the market demand for hand sanitisers surged drastically, people also raised the question about its usefulness and effectiveness. The common question being, are hand sanitisers really safe to use? Realising the need to debunk the query, we thought of taking an initiative of highlighting several pointers related to the effectiveness of the hand sanitisers.

## GO FOR ALCOHOL-BASED SANITIZERS

Citing the medical reports, it's stated that the alcohol-based hand sanitisers are compelling as compared



to the ordinary ones. But here's a catch that needs to be addressed by all of us. A lot of people have also claimed that the over usage of such hand sanitisers can lead to an issue like hand dermatitis.

So it's good to stay protected, but just assure not to overdo it as it can

give birth to some other disease, raising your concern towards your overall health.

## OVER USAGE CAN BE AN ISSUE

If you believe that overdoing things can always work in your favor,

then you might need to rethink this. Hand sanitisers have the potential to kill the germs up to an extent. But overusing it can lead to several skin-based issues like psoriasis, dryness of the skin, rashes, eczema, dry eczema, and dermatitis.

So if you are using sanitisers, consider using it in a fixed proportion rather than overdoing it. Otherwise, it might take a toll on your healthy skin which can turn out to be a matter of concern.

## SOAP: A GOOD ALTERNATIVE

One can simply switch to using normal soaps for washing hands if you are having any doubt about the effectiveness of hand sanitisers. Consider using an antiseptic soap especially amid this pandemic. Though remember that even soaps absorb the skin's moisture, making it dry and itchy in some situations. Thus it's suggested to always use a good moisturiser after washing your hands, be both sanitisers or soaps.

The writer is Dermatologist and Hair Transplant Surgeon, SkinQure Clinic

## SLIMLINE

Concerned about the novel Coronavirus spread in the country, fitness expert and nutritionist Gurpreet Singh Batra, who runs academy fitness programmes says that the use of steroids should be avoided in the fitness industry as they do more harm than good.

"I want to make India to make steroid-free as it harms people a lot. These days, many people are using steroids to build good physique but they are unaware about its life threatening effects," Batra, who has been running a fitness programme since 15 years, tells you.

Good physique is only for a short span of time but eventually the use of steroids lead to testicle shrinkage, steroid aggression, acne, hair loss and gynaecomastia to name a few. Regular usage of steroids means that you are dependent on them and they have become an addiction. It can be because you are enjoying the feel of that pump it gives and therefore it becomes difficult for you to get rid of it in future.

Hence, it is advisable for people to overcome the addiction gradually and focus on body building by improving diet and following a proper and healthy lifestyle.



## Trend Blazer

### 'Ishaqzaade gave me self-belief'

Ishaqzaade marked **ARJUN KAPOOR**'s debut, and also shot Parineeti Chopra into prominence with her first solo heroine role.

Looking back at his debut release, Arjun says doing the film gave him "self-belief" that, given the right opportunities, he could continue being a mainstream commercial hero.

"On the first-day of shooting, I told myself this can be the first day for the rest of my life if I get this right. And that's what I just tried to do — work my hardest and take each day as it came and just deliver what Habib Sir wanted me to," said he.



**'I am sure there are some pros and cons of being a star. The lack of anonymity is a big price to pay. You can't just go about your thing without people knowing what you're doing, what you're buying, what you're eating or who you're dating. So, that's a little annoying for me because I just wanted to be an actor.'**  
—Richa Chadha

Amid the lockdown, Bollywood actor **SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRA** is glad that she is getting to spend time with her children, but says keeping her kids entertained through the day is an uphill task.



"Owing to my erratic working hours, I am grateful that the lockdown has given me more time to spend with my family, especially my kids, so I can't complain," Shilpa said.

"But, I do agree that sometimes it is an uphill task to manage two kids and keep my seven-year-old entertained through the day," added the actor, who has a son Viaan and daughter Samisha.

### Tom determined to shoot in Italy

Hollywood star **TOM CRUISE** is looking forward to getting back to Venice to finish shooting of *Mission: Impossible 7* as soon as the restrictions imposed due to the Coronavirus pandemic eases.

According to a source, the 57-year-old will not change the location, and is determined to complete shoot in Venice.

"Tom is refusing to film anywhere else as he wants to pump his millions back into one of the worst-hit areas of COVID-19 to help it recover," said the source.



# ART OF LEARNING

SUMEDHA KHOICHE and SHIREEN SULTANA believe that parents can use the Montessori methods of teaching to devise activities for children using things easily available at home

The almost shutting down of the world and the restrictions around us has made not just adults but even children miss being outdoors. Staying at home all day can become tiresome for these active energy bundles and we need to think creatively to make staying at home fun for them. The Montessori teaching method fits in perfectly at this time and can be used to devise activities with things that are easily available at home. Children can learn important skills in a fun way and stay happily engaged.

Core Montessori ideas are supported by a strong body of evidence in developmental psychology. Dr Montessori was a physician and brought an observation-based, practical and holistic approach to the learning and development. Though over 100 years old, its concepts are extremely relevant in an age where children are exposed to screens even before getting their first tooth. Here are a few simple activity ideas that you can be done at home without any fancy equipment. A single activity can apply to more than one concept and can be tweaked to suit any situation.

#### LEARN BY DOING

Children learn best with hands-on experience. Research has shown that we are more likely to remember a concept and understand it clearly when we do it on our own, rather than reading or simply hearing about it. ♦Involve them in simple chores with clear and precise step-by-step instructions and appropriate child-sized tools. Let them keep toys back on shelves or stack books by size. Putting clothes in the laundry basket, sorting clothes by colour or texture, placing cut-

lery in the correct shelves or folding small clothes helps build cognitive skills and logical thinking. Older children can help set and clear the table or wipe surfaces. This also instills a sense of discipline, confidence and accomplishment.

♦Learning new words and spelling can become a fun activity by enacting the words through charades and forming letters using body parts.

♦Science is best understood with experiments. Seeds like coriander and fenugreek planted in discarded containers are perfect opportunities to observe stages of plant growth. Growing sprouts can demonstrate germination and double up as a healthy snack. Experiments with baking in the kitchen can yield delicious outcomes.

♦Water play can be used to understand measurement, volume and gravity right from an early age when a child scoops and pours water into different containers.

#### LET CHILDREN DECIDE

The Montessori methods are largely self-motivated as kids learn better when they are interested in a subject. They are free to choose what and how they want to learn with reasonable boundaries set by the parent.

♦Encourage storytelling where children are free to build a story according to their imagination and modify vocabulary learning activities as per the theme. Open ended discussion gives the child more opportunity to think creatively and share thoughts.

♦If a child is interested in buildings and bridges, let them use blocks to build a tower. Ask them to make the base in different materials and size to understand its



impact.

♦Don't give away the answers but just enough information to pique interest. This encourages children to think and challenge their brain.

#### SENSORY TOOLS

Most Montessori materials are designed to engage all the senses. These can be easily replicated at home with everyday items.

♦Tactile development is believed to lead to cognitive thinking. A child's sense of touch is highly developed right from birth. Play dough can be made easily at home and used for kneading, pinching and shaping to home fine motor skills. Shapes and alphabets cut out of sandpaper or textured material make learning fun.

♦Different surfaces throughout the house can be a great sensory experience for the child. Let them explore rough and smooth floors, textures of wood and stone and

reflective mirrors.

♦Create a set that activates the sense of smell. Toddlers will react differently to the aroma of cinnamon, lemon, cloves or mild perfume.

♦Playing with a rattle is a favourite activity for infants. Move the rattle to vary the volume and direction of the sound or use bells or drum on the table with a spoon. The child also understands spatial context and a sense of direction through this simple activity.

#### ATTENTION AND FOCUS

Faced with so many options, children tend to get distracted at times. Enabling them to direct their attention in a certain direction improves concentration.

♦Goal-oriented activities help channel effort and focus. For babies, this could mean kicking a ball or grasping a favourite toy.

♦Use a mat or tray to place objects that relate to a certain activity. This directs focus on

what is in front rather than all over the place. Similar to a work desk for adults, this defines a workspace and increases concentration.

♦Children get confused with if they are faced with too many choices and will feel empowered when allowed to make simple decisions. Limit the number of toys that a child plays with to avoid over-stimulation and boredom within a short period of time.

♦Schedules and routines give a sense of order and familiarity. Follow a set time for meals, naps and bedtime with activities that can be associated with them. Reading a bedtime story, dimming lights and a massage are signals of bedtime.

#### MOVEMENT ENHANCES LEARNING

Moving the limbs help the brain cells build a connection between a specific movement and its outcome.

♦For infants, grasping objects like a toy kept just out of reach encourages movement, dexterity and development of fine motor skills.

♦The benefits of tummy time are immense. Activities done by a baby while s/he is on his/her belly build core strength, neck and upper arm muscles. Let the baby crawl and explore, without worrying about dirty knees and legs.

♦Use coloured tape or chalk to draw zigzag lines on the floor with arrows or create a simple obstacle course using shoes or soft toys. Children will enjoy navigating the path with additional rules of jumping, skipping or running at different points of the course. Cushions can become landing points and a rolled up

rug could work as a balance beam.

#### DO THINGS TOGETHER

Children love to act like adults and doing things that they see their parents do. Activities designed around this make them feel like grown-ups and are perfect opportunities for you to bond with your child.

♦Age appropriate tasks like carrying a jug and watering the plants are simple things that kids will enjoy doing.

♦Working and learning together can be more fun at times. Set up a play desk or a pretend desk where your child can work with you. A simple jigsaw puzzle, a favourite book or colours can keep them busy while you work.

♦Set things that they may require within reach. Providing a stool in the bathroom for easy access to the sink, fixing the towel hook at a lower height, child-safe scissors or plastic knives for them to cut parboiled vegetables and fruit gives the child a chance to become independent.

#### HANDLING TANTRUMS

When children misbehave, taking a deep breath before reacting is sometimes all it takes to restore calm.

♦Respond to the child's feelings and needs in a sensitive manner. Asking why they did something helps them share their thoughts through open communication.

♦While being strict on rules, be willing to discuss the reasons and alter them if needed.

♦Consider taking away the freedom to choose for a while, while still allowing them to do certain activities. This instills the importance of following rules and the value of freedom of choice.

(The authors are the co-founders of KinderPass.)

## 'Overwhelming to see so much love'

In the midst of people practising self-isolation, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, filmmaker Shirish Kunder's *Mrs Serial Killer* is streaming on Netflix and continues to be a trend on the platform.

What emerges as the highlight of the OTT film is Manoj Bajpayee's performance. The actor essays the role of Dr Mrityunjay Mukherjee, who is a gynaecologist and a suspected serial killer whose wife is determined to prove his innocence by copying the impugned crime.

Shirish's whodunnit captures Bajpayee in his element with his performances and characteristic quirks in the film. When asked about landing the role, the actor said, "Shirish came to me at the last minute and I somehow realised that even if the role is not so lengthy, I will have a great time shooting with him. He has got a great way and style of telling the story without losing its mainstream elements."

With rave reviews for his performance and his latest OTT venture being appreciated by many, Bajpayee is grateful to the viewers. He expresses, "It is overwhelming to see so much love

and adoration that I have got. I will always be thankful to them. And will think twice before choosing anything and shall always keep them in mind that they're waiting for something new and unique from me."

The actor who has been loved for his previous digital outings is very much in favour of OTT platforms. He says, "Whatever content was made and scheduled for this time is getting released accordingly. The shows and films take a lot of time to be made, so you can't just release it just because there is a lockdown. To make a film or show, there are certain stages for its completion.

Once the lockdown is over, all the OTT platforms and content are going to be in demand."



## Time for virtual cheers

Shattered after her graduate recital was cancelled amid Coronavirus scare, Brooke Mead nearly gave up. Faced with recording the concert alone, at home, the 23-year-old viola student stopped practicing altogether.

But then, the music took an amazing turn. After seeking out advice in an online question-and-answer session with the Philadelphia Orchestra, she was invited to perform her recital on the renowned body's live webcast as the lead-in to a rebroadcast of one of its performances.

That allowed her to reach hundreds of classical music fans around the world who otherwise wouldn't have got a chance to hear her play, had her performance gone on as originally planned at Temple University's Philadelphia campus.

"It's been a bit of a roller coaster emotionally, just thinking about going from a packed hall to no hall, to having possibly to record yourself, to then having this virtual audience," Mead said.

In the online session, Mead asked the orchestra's assistant principal cellist, Yumi Kendall, how she should deal with her disappointment. Mead had done intern-level work for the orchestra from September to March, and Kendall recognised her name.

"Instinctively, I just raised my hand," Kendall said. "I said, 'Oh, OK. I'll be there. You have an audience of at least one and I'll definitely be there.'"

People watching the discus-



A big-city orchestra salvages a young musician's cancelled recital

sion chimed in: They wanted to be a part of Mead's audience, too. The orchestra's president and CEO, Matias Tarnopolsky, decided then and there to incorporate Mead's recital into the organisation's online platform.

Mead felt re-energised. Her apartment became her stage. Her in-person audience was limited to just roommates and a dog (the cats were too noisy to let into the room where she performed).

Mead and Kendall, who served as master of ceremonies for the online recital, ran through the program ahead of time to work out logistical kinks. The live show — pieces by German composers Johann Sebastian Bach

and Jean Paul Hindemith, and American folk musician Jay Ungar's *Ashokan Farewell* — went off without a hitch.

When the university cancelled gatherings in mid-March, spurred by widespread social distancing measures, Mead didn't really think she was entitled to be disappointed.

Coronavirus was killing people, among them was also her partner's percussion instructor, longtime Philadelphia Orchestra musician Alan Abel, who died the day after her performance at age 91. Doctors and nurses were risking their health to save others. And here she was, mourning the loss of a concert.

But music has been Mead's life. She fell in love with it around when she was two, when her college professor mother took her to children's music classes on her campus in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She started playing the viola in third grade.

Now, as she looks to a career as an orchestra performer or administrator, she has a moment to inspire her — a printout to remind her of all the wonderful feedback she received during her recital, virtual cheers and scores of emojis — clapping hands, smiling faces and lots of fire.

"I get to read the real-time reactions to my performance for the rest of my life," Mead said.

—AP



# India should tour Aus, says Gambhir

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir feels the BCCI should behave like a statesman amid the current crisis and he would have a lot more respect for the richest cricket body if the national team tours Australia later this year.

Gambhir was reacting to BCCI treasurer Arun Dhimal's statement that if required, the Indian team could go into quarantine upon their arrival Down Under for the scheduled tour in the Australian summer.

However, the need for two weeks quarantine will only arise if the preceding T20 World Cup doesn't take place in Australia.

"Good on BCCI, fabulous. Good on them. This is a very very positive sign, because I think they are looking at a far bigger picture, that it will change the mood of the entire country as well.

"It is not only about winning series in Australia, which is very very important. But it will change the mood of both the countries as well, not only India, but probably for Australia as well," Gambhir said on *Star Sports show Cricket Connected*.

India are scheduled to play four Tests Down Under and if the tour doesn't take place, Cricket Australia could lose as much as 300 million A\$.

"And then you have got to be statesman as well, when BCCI, they are probably the richest board and probably the most powerful board in the world, so



Indian captain Virat Kohli reacts during India's tour of Australia in 2018-19

cricket.com.au/Twitter

they need to look at a bigger picture as well and that is what probably they have done.

"If India look to tour Australia, I have got a lot of respect then for BCCI...", added the southpaw.

The 38-year-old Gambhir, who played 58 Tests and 147 ODIs, also took a jibe at world body ICC on the recent Test rankings, where Australia

dethroned India to be the number one side. India slipped to the third spot.

"No, I am not surprised, because I don't believe in all these rankings, points system, probably the worst was the points system what was there in World Test Championship, you get same points if you win a Test match away from home, that's ridiculous..." said Gambhir, who is

known for his straight talk.

Questioning Australia's rise to the top, Gambhir said the team was particularly pathetic in sub-continent conditions.

"If you have to see from the overall impact point of view, yes India has lost a Test series away from home, they have won in Australia, but they have been the most competitive side, hands down, they won a Test match in

## Dhoni was an unbiased captain: RP

NEW DELHI: "MS Dhoni is what he is because of his unbiased opinions," said former India player R P Singh, recalling a selection controversy in 2008 when the pacer lost his place in the team to Irfan Pathan.

A media report in 2008 had claimed that Dhoni wanted RP Singh instead of Pathan for a part of the home ODI series against England. Without acknowledging the claims of the report, the then Indian captain had called the selection meeting leak as "disgusting and disrespectful".

Looking back at that incident and his career of 14 Tests, 58 ODIs and 10 T20s, RP Singh said he had no hard feelings over his axing.

"I don't think I was affected by the leak. The England series we are talking about, I didn't get a wicket in Indore. Obviously people think they will get 2 or 3 more chances. But it was not meant to be. Some get 5 chances, some get 10 chances the lucky ones," the 34-year-old, whose last game for India came in 2011, told *Sports Tak*.

"But many times it has happened to me, whenever my performance dipped, I was

directly sent to play domestic cricket. Sometimes, people tend to stay with the team even if their performance dips and get good quality practice. The moment you go to domestic cricket, you won't get that quality competition."

He said Dhoni was a fair captain and their friendship never affected the wicketkeeper batsman's decisions for the team.

"We (Dhoni and I) had a discussion about where I could improve, what I can do to get better. I know MS Dhoni. Friendship is a different thing, but leading the country is different altogether. At that moment, I think he pushed the ones who he thought were better. I think he pushed people whom he thought would follow the plans better.

"This is why MS Dhoni is MS Dhoni today. His unbiased opinions on cricket and decision making. I didn't play as much as I should have because maybe my speed dipped and my swing dipped. Everything else is secondary. If I had improved then, I would have played more. But I am happy with whatever I achieved." *PTI*

South Africa, they won a Test match in England and probably not many other countries have done that.

"...Because Australia, I have serious serious doubts, on what

front you have you given Australia the number one Test ranking, because they have been pathetic away from home, especially in sub-continent..." signed off Gambhir.

## Challenge is to pick-up from where I left: Shakib

FIANS ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh all-rounder BShakib Al Hasan said it will be challenging for him to pick-up the game from where he left off when he finally returns to the field after serving his suspension.

Shakib was banned from all forms of the game for two years, one year of that suspended, in October 2019 for breaching ICC's Anti-corruption Code.

He can finally return to the game on October 29 this year and according to Shakib, the biggest challenge for him will be to reach the lofty standards he had set for himself before the enforced break.

Shakib was at his absolute best in the 2019 World Cup as he slammed 606 runs in 8 innings and also picked up 11 wickets. He slammed two centuries and five half-centuries during the group stage but failed to power the team into the knockouts.

"First of all, I want to return to the game. I will return to the game after 4-5 months," Shakib was quoted as saying by *DW Bangla* as per *Cricbuzz*.

"No other decision will be taken before that. The biggest challenge is to be able to start again from where I had stopped, that is what I'm expecting from myself.

"Wish I can start from where I ended up. That is the challenge for me, nothing else," he added.



Shakib Al Hasan hugs teammate after taking wicket during 2019 World Cup

Shakib was suspended for failing to report corrupt approaches and he said one has to sometimes pay for being ignorant. He also revealed his mental health took a beating during his time away from the game.

"I have realized that there are certain things that you just cannot take lightly due to ignorance and probably that is the biggest lesson I learnt during this time," Shakib said.

"It is very difficult time for me because at the back of the mind you always think that I am not playing or not being able to play.

For me making sure that I am not depressed is extremely important as I am locked down in my house."

## Pak could play more Tests in tour of Eng

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan might play more Test matches during their tour of England if it goes ahead as scheduled in July after the Windies pulled out of an assignment there in June owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Pakistan Cricket Board and the England Cricket Board officials are due to have a video conference on May 18 to discuss how they should proceed with the tour given the situation because of the pandemic.

"At present we have to play three Tests and three T20Is but the number of Tests could be increased and the tour could start a bit early in July," a PCB source said.

The source said that the ECB could offer to organise a four or five Test series against Pakistan if the West Indies tour didn't go ahead.

Issues that are likely to be discussed in the May 18 meet are a quarantine period for Pakistani players when they arrive in

England in July and limiting the venues for the matches and playing before empty stadiums.

PCB CEO Wasim Khan confirmed the video conference but said so far, the ECB has not spoken to them on increasing the number of matches on the tour which is scheduled between July and September.

"Things will be clear after the meeting but whatever decision we take we will consult our captains and head coaches before giving any confirmation," Khan said.

The PCB has so far kept mum on the chances of the series taking place in England because of the Covid-19 situation.

But with the British Government announcement to ease the lockdown in the country, it appears Pakistan could be touring on schedule.

Pakistan is also scheduled to play an ODI series against Ireland while in UK but that series could be rescheduled and also be held in England.

## Rauf credits Maxi for meteoric rise in BBL

FIANS ■ LAHORE

Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf heaped praise on Melbourne Stars' skipper Glenn Maxwell and stated the Australian helped in building his confidence that eventually led to the pacer shining in the last edition of the Big Bash League (BBL).

He revealed that Maxwell went out of the way to support him right through the course of the tournament and that led to him picking 20 wickets in his maiden BBL campaign.

"I feel that coach David Hussey and captain Glenn Maxwell's confidence in my abilities was the key factor in my excellent performances in the BBL," Rauf was quoted as saying by *PakPassion.net*.

"Maxwell had extra-



Haris Rauf in action during BBL

ordinary confidence in my ability to bowl and used me where I was of most use to the team.

"He went out of his way to support me whilst we were on the field and for my part, I repaid him by bowling to the plan and to the fields he set for me," he added.

Rauf also spoke about his admiration for South Africa speedster Dale Steyn, with

whom he shared the dressing room in the BBL last term. He spoke about the things that Steyn taught him during their brief stint together and how it helped him better his game.

"Dale Steyn has been my role model ever since I started to play cricket and to be in the same team as him at the BBL was absolutely thrilling," Rauf said.

"I was very happy to meet him, and I can tell you that he is a wonderful teacher. He gave me tips in the nets and gave me a lot of advice about how to go about my game and what attitude to adopt.

"In particular, he told me about the aggression that I need to have as a fast bowler and since then I have tried to adopt that attitude for myself," he added.

## Kohli in Cook's list of 5 all-time greats



LONDON: Former England captain Alastair Cook has included current India skipper Virat Kohli in his list of batsmen who came close to matching genius of legendary West Indies batter Brian Lara.

Lara, who is the only batsman to score 400 in a Test inning, had retired after scoring 11,953 runs in 131 Tests and 10,505 runs in 299 ODIs.

During a Q&A session with the *Sunday Times*, Cook recalled a 2004 tour game where the legendary West Indies batsman had scored a century in a session to leave him awestruck.

"I was part of an MCC team that played West Indies at Arundel in the first match of their 2004 tour," Cook said.

"We had a decent bowling attack — Simon Jones, Matthew Hoggard and Min Patel, all of whom were England players.

"Brian Lara scored a century between Lunch and Tea which made me realise I was witnessing another level of batsmanship altogether. It was genius at work," he added.

Apart from Kohli, the other players who found spot in Cook's list were Ricky Ponting, Jacques Kallis and Kumar Sangakkara.

According to the former left-handed England opener, Kohli finds a spot in the list because of his sheer ability to score runs freely across formats.

"Now you would have to put Virat Kohli in that group, especially for his ability to score so freely in all three formats," Cook said. *FIANS*



## Real return to training

MADRID: Real Madrid's players returned to work at the club's training ground on Monday ahead of the planned resumption of La Liga next month.

After finding no positive cases from tests for coronavirus last week, Madrid players arrived at Valdebebas to train for the first time in two months.

Madrid were one of the first clubs to go into quarantine after a basketball player tested positive for coronavirus on March 12, the same day La Liga suspended all competitive fixtures.

But after almost nine weeks training at home, Zinedine Zidane's players initiated the first phase of La Liga's training programme, that includes players working individually, with a maximum of six on a pitch at once.

"Divided into two rotations and on various pitches, Real Madrid footballers carried out their first individual exercises with and without the ball," the club said in a statement, with several photographs of the players in action.

Eden Hazard was among those pictured running, the Belgian returning after undergoing surgery on his right foot in the United States on March 5.

Thibaut Courtois, Gareth Bale and Marcelo were also training alone while Zidane wore a mask as he gave out instructions.

Madrid preferred to wait until Monday to begin training again, after other clubs like Barcelona, Sevilla and Villarreal resumed on Friday.

Barcelona are two points ahead of Real Madrid at the top of the table.

La Liga's plan is for players to progress through a staggered schedule that will see them train alone, in small groups and then finally in larger team sessions.

The league's president Javier Tebas told Movistar on Sunday night he hopes games might be able to restart behind closed doors on June 12.

Tebas said the remaining 11 rounds of La Liga matches would be played over 35 days, with fixtures on every day over that period. *AFP*

## Ministry grants recognition to 54 NSFs till Sep 2020

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry on Monday granted recognition to 54 national federations till September this year, leaving out the governing bodies of archery, golf, gymnastics and paralympics among others.

In the revised list, the ministry granted fresh recognition to the All India Carrom Federation.

The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), Rowing Federation of India (RFI) and School Games Federation of India (SGFI) were the ones denied affiliation.

While the PCI initially found a place in the 2019 annual recognition list, it was de-recognised by the ministry in September last year for violating the National Sports Code.

PCI Secretary General Gursharan Singh said that the PCI could not submit some important documents to the sports ministry due to the lockdown and that was why it was not given recognition.

Just like PCI, the RFI and the Sushil Kumar-led SGFI too were part of 2019 list but were de-recognised earlier this year for violating the 2011 National Sports Code and mismanagement respectively.

The ministry also continued to deny recognition to the Archery Association of India (AAI), the Indian Golf Union (IGU), the Gymnastics Federation of India (GFI) and the Taekwondo Federation of India.

While recognition to NSFs is usually annual, this time the ministry has decided to offer it only till September this year, prompting questions from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president Narinder Batra.

"Why September 2020 and why not till December 2020," Batra questioned.

Sports Ministry officials did not immediately respond to calls for an explanation on the matter.



NEW DELHI: Tennis ace Sania Mirza on Monday became the first Indian to win the Fed Cup Heart Award for her successful return to the court post motherhood.

Sania won the award for Asia/Oceania zone after securing a whopping 10,000 plus votes out of the

## Sania wins Fed Cup Heart Award

## Donates prize money to CM's Relief Fund

total 16,985 cast for this year's three regional Group I nominees.

The Fed Cup Heart Award winners were determined via online voting by fans which went on for a week starting from May 1.

Sania's vote share of over 60 per cent of the total votes is a testimony to the global popularity of the Indian star at the Fed Cup competition.

"It's an honour to win the Fed Cup Heart Award as the first Indian. I dedicate this award to the entire country and

to all my fans and thank everyone for voting for me. I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement issued by the All India Tennis Association (AITA).

Sania made a comeback to Fed Cup after four years and helped India qualify for the play-offs for the first time in history.

After giving birth to her son, Izhaan in October 2018, Sania returned to the court in January this year and instantly achieved success by clinching the

women's doubles title at Hobart International alongside Nadiia Kichenok.

Former world number one in doubles and six-time Grand Slam champion Sania beat Indonesia's 16-year-old Priska Madelyn Nugroho for the award in Asia/Oceania regional category.

The winners from each category received \$2000 as prize money, which the 33-year-old Hyderabad decided to donate to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. *PTI*

## Pique pessimistic over Davis Cup finals

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona football star Gerard Pique on Sunday said he was "pessimistic" that the Davis Cup Finals, which his company finances, would be held in Madrid this year.

Pique's *Kosmos* investment group has a 25-year deal worth \$3 billion with the International Tennis Federation.

However, he believes that the November 23-29 finals in the Spanish capital could fall victim to the coronavirus.

"There is a lot of uncertainty, we try to be aware of what the Government says regarding sports and to whether we can put spectators inside the Caja Magica," Pique told

Movistar television.

"I would say I am a bit pessimistic, because a Davis Cup without fans is difficult.

"I think that nobody at the moment has the certainty that we can put fans in or if it will have to be behind closed doors. As the days go by, I suppose we will have a little more clarity."

Spain, one of the worst-affected countries by the pandemic, started a four-phase plan last week to relax the strict confinement rules applied since mid-March.

In the more advanced phases of the plan, a maximum of 400 people will be allowed to attend open-air events and just 50 if they are held indoors.

Spain won the first edition of the new-look Davis Cup in 2019, beating Canada 2-0 in the final in Madrid.

## Have more tourneys at one venue: Gopi to BWF

NEW DELHI: India's national badminton coach Pulella Gopichand wants BWF to come up with "radical" solutions to restart the sport smoothly in a post Covid-19 world, suggesting that conducting more tournaments at a single venue could be the way forward.

The coronavirus outbreak, which has so far infected over 41 lakh people worldwide, forced the Badminton World Federation to suspend all events, including the Olympic qualifiers, till end of July.

"BWF should talk to health people and revise the format itself, the tournament structure itself and do whatever is required," Gopichand said.

"My view is if something radical needs to be done, then let's do it and let's go ahead with the sport," he said.

In a bid to salvage the international circuit, the governing body had postponed important events such as the Thomas and Uber Cup Final (October 3-11),



besides asking for fresh slots from respective countries, including India, to conduct the suspended Olympic qualifiers.

"My concern is that, you are trying to shift the dates, probably there needs to be a change in thinking. If the same thing continues, and the whole entourage is travelling again to different

countries then it is again risking players," Gopichand said.

Shuttlers travel almost every week to a new tournament during the badminton season. Gopichand said this should change.

"I would say, planning of the tournaments has to be such that players can actually stay at one place and play more number of tournaments. It could be the next normal," he said.

There is speculation that the sport might initially return without fans in the wake of the global health crisis.

Gopichand believes one way of going about things is to segregate the players on the basis of their respective formats — men's singles, women's singles and doubles — and then conducting tournaments in three different countries simultaneously.

"If there are no spectators, and it is a TV and internet sport then how does it matter whether you are conducting it in three differ-

ent places, just lock the players in one place for three weeks.

"Instead of doing the tournaments say Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in three different places, do it in one place," he said.

Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore were scheduled to host three crucial Olympic qualifiers along with India before all the events had to be suspended.

"You give men's singles to one country, give women's singles to one country and doubles to one country. So parallelly three tournament can happen. In this way, players will not have to travel so much, they can be quarantined," he said.

"If it is a draw of 32, it is only 16 matches per day. We can operate just two courts maximum, so that you don't have to mix with many players.

"So basically, if you really have to move, you probably have to look at a radical change in format," he explained. *PTI*