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NEW DELHI, SATURDAY MAY 16, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



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## India beats China count

### In 52 days of lockdown, India has 86K +ve

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With a Covid-19 tally of nearly 86,000 cases, India on Friday surpassed neighbouring China where the coronavirus first originated. China had 81,440 cases on March 25 when India with merely 500 cases had announced first lockdown. Now, in 52 days of lockdown and 106 days after reporting the first case, India tally is more than China's.

Over 30,000 people have recovered and 2,753 people have died from the coronavirus disease in India, compared to China's death count of 4,633. The US, Spain and Russia are the worst affected countries in terms of +ve cases.

Seven States in India which includes — Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh — have reported the maximum number of cases.

Maharashtra, which is the worst-hit State in the country, reported 1,576 cases in the last 24 hours, pushing the total count to 29,100 whereas Tamil Nadu reported 434 with total 10,108 cases and Delhi registered 425 cases taking the total to 8,895.

Gujarat too registered spike in cases at 340 pushing the tally to 9,932. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh too continued their march reporting 4,595 cases, 4,747 cases and 4,057 cases respectively. West Bengal reported 84 new cases which led to increase

**Covid-19**

**TOTAL CASES: 85,766**

**DEATHS: 2,753**

**RECOVERED: 30,245**

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	29,100	1,068	6,564
Tamil Nadu	10,108	71	2,599
Gujarat	9,932	606	4,035
Delhi	8,895	123	3,518
Rajasthan	4,747	125	2,729
Madhya Pradesh	4,595	239	2,283
Uttar Pradesh	4,057	95	2,165
West Bengal	2,461	225	829
Andhra Pradesh	2,307	48	1,252
Punjab	1,932	32	305

in total number to 2,461 cases.

In Bihar and Karnataka, the tally crossed 1,000 mark. The total number in Bihar inched to 1,005 with 6 new cases reported on Friday whereas Karnataka tally rose to 1,032 after 45 new cases were reported in the State.

Of 97 total deaths registered in India on Friday, Maharashtra at 49 fatalities, Gujarat (20), Delhi (9), and West Bengal (8) recorded the highest number of deaths due to coronavirus in India in the past 24 hours.

Goa which was one of the first States to become coronavirus in India also reported 7 new cases on Friday which again brings back the State to the red zone from green zone. The total number of cases in Goa now inched to 14. Similarly, in Manipur a fresh case emerged after 26 days, taking the total tally in this North-East State to three so far.

The country's doubling rate of coronavirus infection cases



Children of migrant workers from other States wait outside a railway station to catch a train to return to their homes in Mumbai on Friday

has slowed down to 13.9 days, said Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, referring to the time it takes for the number of cases to double.

An ICMR official said the number of RT-PCR tests for detection of Covid-19 crossed the two million-mark in India on Friday. "A total of 20,39,952

samples were tested in the country as on Friday 9 am, with 92,911 tests being conducted since Thursday 9 am, Dr Rajnikant Srivastava, the head of the Department of Research Management, Policy Planning and Communication at the ICMR said.

*Continued on Page 2*

## ₹1.63L cr fillip to farm sectors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to ease agriculture sectors and support farmers, who were hit during the nationwide coronavirus lockdown, the Modi Government has announced the third tranche of economic stimulus package of ₹1.63 lakh crore for agriculture and allied sectors aimed at strengthening infrastructure, logistics and capacity building at farm gate.

To bring reforms in agriculture sector and to help farmers earn better prices, the Government has also rolled out sweeping reforms to amend the Essential Commodities Act 1955, removing cereals, edible oils, pulses, onions and potatoes out of its purview and a new Central Act on Agriculture Produces Marketing Committee to allow farmers to sell their product freely. Besides, schemes for micro food enterprises, cattle vaccination, dairy sector, herbal plantation, beekeeping, and fruits and vegetables were also announced.

Announcing the third tranche of economic stimulus package, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said a package of ₹1 lakh crore for strengthening Agri infrastructure fund for farm-gate infrastructure for farmers; ₹10,000 crore scheme



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addresses a Press conference in New Delhi on Friday



for the formalisation of Micro Food Enterprises (MFE); ₹20,000 crore Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for development of marine and inland fisheries; ₹15,000 crore for Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development fund and ₹4,000 crore allocated for promotion of herbal cultivation.

The Minister said in the last two months of lockdown,

several measures have been taken to support farmers that including minimum support price purchases of ₹74,300 crore, ₹18,700 crore transferred to PM-KISAN and ₹6,400 crore on payment of claims under PMFBY during the lockdown.

The Government will provide ₹1 lakh crore for aggregators, farmers producers organisations (FPOs), primary agri cooperative societies, agri entrepreneurs and startups under the agri infrastructure fund. The fund will be used for setting up cold chains and post-harvest management infrastructure.

The Government will also launch ₹20,000 crore Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for the development of marine and

**Essential Commodities Act to be amended to remove inter-State trade barriers, to help farmers earn more**

### 3RD TRANCHE OF STIMULUS

- Setting up of ₹1 lakh crore agriculture fund for farm-gate infrastructure
- ₹4,000 crore for herbal cultivation in India
- ₹10,000 crore scheme for formalisation of micro food enterprises (MFE)
- ₹20,000cr for fishermen through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana
- Agriculture marketing reforms to provide marketing choices to farmers
- Extension of 'Operation Infrastructure Development fund Greens' to all fruits and worth ₹15,000 crore vegetables
- ₹500 crore scheme for Legal framework to help infrastructure development farmers fix their own price for related to bee-keeping products
- Launch of National Animal Commodities Act to enable Disease Control Programme for better price realisation for foot and mouth disease with farmers outlay of ₹13,343 crore

inland fisheries.

The Minister also announced ₹10,000 crore scheme for formalisation of micro food enterprises, (MFEs) to implement Modi's vision of 'Vocal for Local with Global outreach'.

*Continued on Page 2*

## States to adopt different strategies in lockdown-4

**Some to focus on revival of economy in 'green zones' and re-starting mass transport**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Depending on their share of coronavirus and the rate of its growth, States want to adopt different strategies in the lockdown-4 post-May 17 with focus on the revival of economy in "green zones" and re-starting mass transport, including the metro services.

The containment "red zones" will have complete curfew-like enforcement of lockdown and stress would be to help convert them in the "green units" before the end of the next-phase of the lockdown.

Adopting contrasting strategies Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam and Odisha have sought strict continuation of lockdown in all zones with some



A view of Lajpat Nagar Market wearing a deserted look during ongoing Covid-19 lockdown in New Delhi on Friday

relaxations for economic activities, but States like Gujarat do not favour the extension of the lockdown despite high spurt of cases in the State.

Congress governed Rajasthan wants economic activity to begin in the "green zone". Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has demanded from the PM that the zone determination for the lockdown be at the State level so that economic activities can be started.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Oxford's Covid vaccine test on monkeys shows promise

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK's biggest Covid-19 vaccine project, currently being tested by the University of Oxford, has shown some promising results in a small study with monkeys. Researchers involved with the trials said the vaccine had shown signs of priming the rhesus macaque monkeys' immune systems to fend off the deadly virus and showed no indications of adverse effects.

According to the study, which is yet to be peer-reviewed, a single vaccination dose was effective in preventing damage to the lungs, which is primary target of the virus.

"We observed a significantly reduced viral load in bronchoalveolar lavage fluid and respiratory tract tissue of vaccinated animals challenged with SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) compared with control animals, and no pneumonia was observed in vaccinated rhesus macaques," they said.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Can't monitor movement of migrants: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said it is impossible for courts to monitor or stop the movement of migrant workers across the country and it is for the Government to take necessary action in this regard.

The Centre told the top court that migrant workers across the country were being provided transportation by the Government to their destinations but they have to wait for their turn rather than starting walking on foot amid the coronavirus pandemic.

A Bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao refused to entertain an application seeking a direction to the Centre to ask all District Magistrates to identify stranded migrant workers and provide shelter, food to them before ensuring their free transportation to native places in view of the recent incident at Aurangabad in which 16 workers were mowed down by a goods train recently.

*Continued on Page 2*

## SC stays Gujarat HC order that nullified election win of Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the Gujarat High Court order nullifying State Minister and BJP leader Bhupendrasinh Chudasama's 2017 election on the ground of malpractice and manipulation.

A Bench of Justices M. Shantanagoudar and R. Subhas Reddy, conducting the hearing through video conferencing, issued notice on Chudasama's plea and sought response from his rival Congress candidate Ashwin Rathod, among others.

In the HC, Rathod had challenged his BJP rival's victory from Dholka by a margin of mere 327 votes in the 2017 Gujarat Assembly polls.

During the hearing, senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul, appearing for Chudasama, said that election of his client was set aside by the high court on ground of corrupt practice as 429 postal votes was not counted and which were more than the victory margin.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Army chief hints at China for Nepal's protest against Mansarovar road

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of Nepal objecting to the newly constructed road in Uttarakhand to shorten the travel time for Indian pilgrims going to Kailash-Mansarovar yatra, Army Chief General MM Naravane, said here on Friday the Himalayan neighbour was raising the issue "at the behest of someone else".

His observation, which is seen as an apparent reference to China, came against the backdrop of recent face-offs between Indian and Chinese Armies in Ladakh and Sikkim with troops from both sides indulging in fisticuffs.

Rejecting Kathmandu's reservations on the 80-km road inaugurated last week by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Naravane said there is no "contradiction at all" in the new road constructed via Lipulekh pass. He said Nepal may have raised the issue "at the behest of someone else" without naming any country.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Myanmar hands over 22 wanted ultras to India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Myanmar Government on Friday handed over 22 wanted insurgents from Manipur and Assam to India on latter's request. These insurgents were hiding and clandestinely operating from that country against Indian interests.

The move has come as a major boost to counter-insurgency operations in the Northeast, source in the security agencies said.

Out of the 22 insurgents, 12 are from Manipur and represent banned groups like United National Liberation Front (UNLF), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL).

The remaining 10 are functionaries of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB-S) and Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO). The insurgents were brought in a secret plane that had a stopover in Imphal.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Monsoon may miss its date with Kerala by 4 days: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday said the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala is likely to be delayed by four days this year, adding that the expected date now is June 5 as against the normal date of June 1.

On the other hand, private forecaster Skymet has assessed that monsoon may arrive over Kerala around May 28 (with a margin of error of +/- two days). Skymet has said the onset date has no bearing on its further advancement to other parts of the country.

According to the IMD, the onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala is likely to be slightly delayed as compared to normal date of onset.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Parvesh Verma shares old video of namaz, Delhi Police raps MP for rumour mongering

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after BJP MP Parvesh Verma tweeted a video of a group of men offering namaz on the roadside, with a message that the congregation took place during the Covid lockdown, the Delhi Police on Friday called him out openly for indulging in a false rumour-mongering.

The East Delhi DCP said, "This is totally false. An old video is being used with a malicious intent to spread the rumour."

The Delhi Police also suggested the MP be cautious in future and verify the content before posting it publicly on social media in order to curb the spread of rumours.

Soon after the police response, the MP deleted the tweet without any further clarification.

## Some people treat me as enemy: Ex-Justice Thipsay

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

Former judge of the Mumbai High Court Abhay Thipsay has defended his role in giving a legal opinion in the Nirav Modi case as a witness before a UK court and feels that Law Minister Ravishankar Prasad has targeted him apparently because he refused to "compromise" despite pressure and persuasions from different quarters in some sensitive cases.

Speaking to *The Pioneer* on phone, Justice (ret'd) Thipsay explained that the entire controversy has two parts. First, to do with his legal opinion in the extant case; the other one with his past judgments.

"Let me first deal with the first part," he said, "I simply gave a legal opinion as a witness. I was not defending Nirav Modi or anyone. Some people are trying to project this as a case of my collusion with an anti-national. This is not done." Justice (ret'd) Thipsay, who



Former judge of the Mumbai High Court Abhay Thipsay

is elder brother of former national chess champion and Grandmaster Pravin Thipsay, said that in his legal opinion as a witness he merely explained that under the Indian law no offence has been defined as a "financial fraud" and as such the Nirav Modi case is being treated as a case of cheating. "I explained that since the bank officials were themselves

involved in issuing the Letter of Undertakings, how the bank can pretend to be a victim?"

"Under the Indian law, for cheating there has to be a conspirator and a victim — a deceiver and a deceived. The person who has been deceived can initiate legal action against the deceiver. But the bank is not an individual with its own mind. It's represented by cer-

tain officials and there action alone can come under legal scrutiny. The bank as an entity cannot pretend to be a victim under the definition of law."

"But were not shareholders and depositors ended up becoming victims of the financial fraud?"

"As I said before in the India law, there is nothing defined as financial fraud. So we've to see this under the law of cheating. If the depositors and shareholders had filed complaints and the case was based on it, it would have been a different situation. That was not the case before me. Here PNB has been presented as a victim."

"The Law Minister has accused that you were acting at the behest of the Congress party, which you joined in 2018, as part of a bigger game plan to bail out Nirav Modi."

"Well, let me make it very clear that my opinions have nothing to do with the Congress. Don't people in my

position in other parties discharge their professional duty independent of the party's views or position? My opinion is not a secret document. I gave it to the Government of India long back, and they replied to that also. I don't know, why they are suddenly upset," he said.

Thipsay went on to remind Ravishankar Prasad that before Nirav Modi fled India, and even after the IT conducted raid on him, former Law Minister Arun Jaitley's daughter was his advocate.

"I've nothing against her or Jaitley. She was doing a professional job. Just like I'm doing my job. I can name dozens of advocates with political associations who appeared in several sensitive cases and defended highly controversial accused persons. It's the job of an advocate to do this. I've merely appeared as witness to expound on a law point. Why make such a hue and cry over it?"

*Continued on Page 2*

## CAPSULE

### TRADE UNIONS TO STRIKE AGAINST LAWS DILUTION

**New Delhi:** Ten central trade unions on Friday gave a call for a nationwide strike on May 22 to protest against the suspension of labour laws by some States during the lockdown period, and also decided to take the matter to International Labour Organization (ILO).

### WORLD BANK OK'S \$1 BN LOAN TO SUPPORT INDIA

**New Delhi:** The World Bank on Friday approved a \$1 billion loan to support India's efforts for providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households.

### HARYANA OPENS BORDERS FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES

**Gurugram:** After the direction of Delhi High Court, Haryana has opened all borders with Delhi for essential services and people with e-passes. Amit Khatri, district magistrate of Gurugram said that he has been following court order and accordingly given direction.



**LABOUR LAWS' SUSPENSION**

# Trade unions to go on strike on May 22

**New Delhi:** Ten central trade unions on Friday gave a call for a nationwide strike on May 22 to protest against the suspension of labour laws by some states during the lockdown period, and also decided to take the matter to International Labour Organization (ILO).

"The joint platform of Central Trade Unions (CTUs) in their meeting held on May 14, 2020 took note of the critical situation for the working people in the country during the lockdown period and decided to enhance united actions to meet the challenge," a joint statement by 10 CTUs said.

"The joint platform...Has decided to observe nationwide protest day against the anti-worker and anti-people onslaughts of the government on May 22, 2020," it added.

While Uttar Pradesh has suspended major labour laws, Madhya Pradesh has tweaked

some rules amid the lockdown to spur economic activities. As per media reports, Gujarat, Tripura and many other states are following suit.

The CTUs have also decided to send joint representation to ILO in this regard. They said that suspension of labour laws violates international commitments on labour standards and human rights.

"Uttar Pradesh government has brought a draconian ordinance titled "Uttar Pradesh Temporary Exemption for certain labour laws ordinance 2020" under the guise of facilitating economic activities," it said.

With one stroke, 38 laws were made defunct in UP for 1,000 days, and only section 5 of Payment of Wages Act 1934, Construction Workers Act 1996, Compensation Act 1993 and Bonded Labour Act 1976 remain functional, it added.

The laws that have been

suspended include Trade Union Act, Industrial Disputes Act, Act on Occupational Safety and Health, Contract Labour Act, Interstate Migrant Labour Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Maternity Benefit Act etc, it said.

According to the statement, Madhya Pradesh government has tweaked labour laws while Gujarat government has decided to increase working hours to 12 from 8 hours.

Assam, Tripura and several other states have been actively preparing to take the same route, they added.

The move came after 8 states — Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Odisha, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar and Punjab — increased the daily working hours to 12 from 8 earlier through executive order in violation of the Factories Act, taking advantage of the lockdown situation, they said. *PTI*

## Army chief hints at China for Nepal's protest against Mansarovar road

**From Page 1**

Soon after the opening of the Lipulekh-Dharchula road at a height of more than 15,000 feet, Nepal protested and urged India to "refrain from carrying out any activity inside the territory of Nepal."

There were street protests also against the new road in Nepal. On Saturday last week, Nepal also said the "unilateral act" was against the understanding reached between the

two countries on resolving border issues. It also served a diplomatic note to the Indian envoy in Kathmandu.

Surprised at the neighbouring country's reaction, Naravane said the area East of the Kali river belongs to Nepal. "There is no dispute in that whatsoever. The road which we made is in fact to the West of the river. So, I don't know what they are agitating about," he said in a seminar. Stating there have never been any problems on this in the past, he said, "There is reason to believe that they might have raised the issue at the behest of someone else and that is very much a possibility."

The road built by the

Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in Pithoragarh is from Ghatiabgarh to Lipulekh just five kms short of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China. This road will reduce the Kailash Mansarovar yatra by 10 to 12 days.

Elaborating upon the issue, Naravane said "There are little issues as we go ahead as to exactly where the tri-junction (India-China-Nepal) should be." He also stressed that these incidents and the face-offs that occurred last week in Eastern Ladakh and North Sikkim were not related. He also said, "We are dealing with them on a case-by-case basis. I have not seen any concerted design into the face-offs." On Thursday, he had also said the two countries resolve such issues through mutually agreed redressal mechanism and strategic guidelines given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping in two informal summits.

On Friday, he brushed aside any larger Chinese ploy and said such face-offs are very common and it is "business as usual".

## Monsoon may miss its date with Kerala by...

**From Page 1**

"The monsoon onset over Kerala this year is likely to be on June 5 with a model error of four days. But the monsoon is likely to arrive over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands four days in advance, in the next 48 hours", IMD said.

Normally, the southwest monsoon sets over Kerala on June 1 with a standard deviation of about seven days. Last year, the monsoon onset over Kerala was delayed by seven days. In the last 10 years, the earliest arrival was on May 23 in 2009 and the most delayed on June 8, 2016.

IMD officials attributed to several factors for delay in arrival of monsoon over Kerala that can make the advancement of rains slightly sluggish, including an abnormally high number of western disturbances affecting the western Himalayan region.

In its initial predictions, the IMD on April 15 had said the country is likely to receive "normal monsoon" this year with an error of five per cent. It has predicted "below normal" rainfall during June, long dry spells in July and "excess rainfall" during August and September - almost similar to last year's pattern. The IMD will, however, come out with month-wise and spatial forecasts of monsoon rainfall in last week of this month or in the first week of June.

On the status of the 2020 southwest monsoon and its advance over the Andaman sea, the IMD said a well-marked low-pressure area currently lies over southeast Bay of Bengal and its neighbourhood. It is likely to concentrate into a depression over the same region during next the 12 hours and further intensify into cyclonic storm Amphan over central parts of south Bay of Bengal by May 16.

## Oxford's Covid vaccine test on monkeys...

**From Page 1**

The researchers found that after being exposed to high levels of the novel coronavirus, none of the six monkeys that were given the vaccine developed viral pneumonia. Also, there was no sign that the vaccine had made the animals more vulnerable.

The development has been welcomed as encouraging signs for a vaccine currently undergoing human trials but experts warn that it remains to be seen if it is as effective in humans.

"These results support the ongoing clinical trial of the vaccine in humans, the results of which are eagerly awaited," said Dr Penny Ward, visiting professor in pharmaceutical medicine at King's College London.

Sarah Gilbert, professor of vaccinology at the University of Oxford's Jenner Institute who is leading the research, has previously said she has a "high degree of confidence" in the vaccine. "Of course, we have to test it and get data from humans. We have to demonstrate it actually works and stops people getting infected with coronavirus before using the vaccine in the wider population," she said. British drugs giant AstraZeneca has struck up a "landmark partnership" with the Oxford University team and said that 100 million doses could be made by the end of the year if the trials prove successful.

"We're now starting to wait for an advocacy signal to see whether people who've been vaccinated don't get the disease, so that's the next step," said John Bell, professor of medicine at the University of Oxford.

## India beats...

**From Page 1**

According to officials, testing for Covid-19 has been scaled up significantly over the last two months and the capacity has increased to around one lakh tests per day. "To promote Make in India and facilitate domestic manufacturers to get their Covid-19 diagnostics kits validated, the number of ICMR-approved validation centres and laboratories has been increased from

five to 14," Srivastava said.

Experts have said no vaccine is expected to be ready for use until at least 2021, as they must be widely tested in humans before being administered to hundreds of millions, if not billions, of people to prevent infection.

Globally, 4,527,811 people have been infected by coronavirus so far, and the total number of deaths from the disease now stands at 303,418.

## Can't monitor...

**From Page 1**

The bench, which also comprised Justices SK Kaul and BR Gavai, asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta whether there was any way to stop these migrants workers from walking on the roads. Mehta said states are providing interstate transport to the migrant workers but if the people start walking on foot instead of waiting for transportation, then nothing can be done.

He said authorities can only request these people not

to start walking on foot as using any force to stop them would be counter-productive.

The bench, which said it was not inclined to hear the plea, observed that it is impossible for the court to monitor who is walking and who is not walking. Srivastava had filed the plea soon after the Aurangabad incident in which 16 migrant workers, who were returning to Madhya Pradesh and had slept on railway tracks, were mowed down by a goods train.

## SC stays Gujarat HC order that nullified...

**From Page 1**

He said the returning officer rejected the postal votes.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, also appearing for Chudasama, joined the arguments after his video link was established and said that one of the fundamental principles is to find out which way were the votes going.

He said the election petition was filed by his rival candidate on presumptions and assumptions as the returning officer did not counted 429 votes. He contended that the high court should have called for the 429 votes and seen if they were rightly rejected under the law as one has to see, if results were materially affected due to this move. Salve said there was no link between the minister and the returning officer nor any link or collusion to establish material benefit.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Rathod,

said that complete facts were not presented and there are illegalities and manipulation as counting of votes started with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and postal ballots were not even brought till the final round of counting.

He said there is a form 20 A signed by returning officer, which says 429 postal ballot rejected but returning officer tells poll observer that no ballot was rejected. Sibal pointed out that Election Commission of India directions are that postal ballots are to be counted if victory margin is less and in this case it was just 327 votes while postal ballots were 429.

He said that there was collusion between the returning officer and the winning candidate as postal ballots were not counted even though the victory margin was less. The bench said that says returning officer has given reasons for rejecting the postal ballots.

Sibal said that the Election Commission of India's instructions are that you have to recount the votes, if postal ballots are rejected.

## ₹1.63L cr...

**From Page 1**

A fund of ₹10,000 crore has been set aside for Micro Food Enterprises, with a cluster-based approach of promoting State-wise produce for instance, makhana from Bihar, Kesar in Jammu & Kashmir, mango in Uttar Pradesh, bamboo shoots in North-East, chilli in Andhra Pradesh, tapioca in Tamil Nadu and turmeric from Andhra

Pradesh.

The Government also allocated ₹13,343 for foot and mouth disease and ₹15,000 crore animal husbandry fund in dairy processing.

The Government has launched ₹4,000 crore fund to promote herbal cultivation in about 10 lakh hectare, she said, adding that the scheme will help generate Rs 5,000 crore income for farmers. Along the bank of Ganga, a corridor of medicinal plants will be devel-

oped over 800 hectare. Another Rs 500 crore has been earmarked for beekeeping initiatives, helping 2 lakh beekeepers. The Government extended Operation Greens from tomato, onion and potato to all fruits and vegetables by providing an additional fund of ₹500 crore.

This money would go into providing subsidy on transportation from surplus to deficient markets as well as on storages including cold storages.

## Some people...

**From Page 1**

On asked why such hostile reaction from the Law Minister, Justice Thipsay said, "All I can say that some people nurture grudge against me since I was all along an uncompromising judge. I know some of my judgment, especially in the infamous Best Bakery case, made some people very unhappy. But I've always been true to my conscience."

"Was there any pressure on you in the Best Bakery case to acquit the accused persons?"

"See this was a very controversial case. It was transferred out of Gujarat by the Supreme Court. The nation's eyes were on this case and the Gujarat Government was obviously extremely concerned about its outcome. I was honoured to be nominated as judge to deal with the case. There were both pressure and persuasions from different quarters - including floods of threatening letter and pleas that as a Hindu I should side with the

accused persons --- but I did what a judge should have done. Of course, my judgment had upset some people and they found difficult to forget it. That's why they treat me as an enemy." Justice Thipsay pointed out that during thirty years of his judicial career mostly the Congress was in power both at the Centre and in the State, so majority of his judgments went against the executive decision of the Government.

"In fact, I was accused to be pro-BJP for several of my judgments including quashing a defamation case against Nitin Gadkari when he was Leader of the Opposition in Maharashtra Assembly and giving bills to two accused of the Malegaon blast case. "My judgments were based on principled enshrined in the Constitution. But today, everything is being viewed from the prison of communalism, and social media trolls are let loose against judges who differ with the Government. This is a very sad situation -- and it poses serious danger to our democracy," he said.

## Myanmar hands over 22 wanted...

**From Page 1**

After handing over the 12 rebels from the state to the police in Imphal, the aircraft went to Guwahati.

According to reports, Assam Director General of Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta confirmed that the special plane reached Guwahati where the 10 rebels wanted in Assam were handed over to the State police.

The ultras brought back from Myanmar include NDFB (S) self-styled home secretary Rajen Daimary, Sanatomba Ningthoujam of UNLF, and Pashurang Laishram of PREPAK.

The handing of the insurgents by Myanmar to India could be the result of the ties between the two countries wherein New Delhi has steadfastly backed Naypyitaw on the Rohingya issue, sources in the security establishment said.

## States to...

**From Page 1**

The Prime Minster has hinted that the lockdown-4 could be of "complete new colour" for the purpose of re-activation of economy. States were asked to submit their respective unit maps depicting red, orange and green areas with Prime Minister's office by Friday. The current lockdown - the third since it was enforced on March 25 - is scheduled to end on Sunday.

As the Centre prepares to draw a blueprint for the gradual exit from the national lockdown, a number of States are wanting that public transportation, including metro services and flights and restarting of reasonable economic activity in non-containment zones be allowed to bring back the sliding economy back on the rails.

In line with the PM's advice that nation will have to "learn to live with the coronavirus," a few States, despite the scare of coronavirus, are for immediate lifting of restrictions on economic activities.

Andhra, for example, has proposed resuming all economic and public activities in non-containment areas. The southern state has 2,137 COVID-19 cases according to Home Ministry data and 11,422 people in quarantine.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, said after receiving feedback from resi-

dents, he thought some economic activities should be allowed in Delhi except in containment zones. He called for the lifting of more curbs in Delhi - all of which has been designated a "red zone" to suggest a high-concentration of cases. He also reportedly wants resumption of taxi, auto and metro services.

Kerala, a State that relies heavily on tourism for revenue, wants metro services, local trains, domestic flights, restaurants and hotels to be reopened.

Karnataka, which has also done well to contain the viral outbreak, has asked the Centre for permission to re-open restaurants, hotels and gymnasiums - public spaces closed weeks ago to encourage social distancing and check the virus' spread.

Tamil Nadu has also asked for economic activity to be restarted except in containment zones. The request is likely to be viewed with caution, given the State has registered a massive surge in Covid-19 cases over the past few days.

Gujarat, which has 9,591 cases and has reported 586 deaths, wants to resume all economic activity in all major urban centres.

Maharashtra - the State most badly affected - is reluctant to open up too much of the economy or too many offices.

Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha have gone the other way, with all three States asking for the strict lockdown to



**Unknown**

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**


General public is hereby informed that one unknown male name & address unknown, Age: 35 Yrs., Height: 5'4", Shallow Complexion. He was found dead at Sarvodhya School, Sector-21, Rohini Delhi on 29.04.2020.

In this regard a DD No. 02A dated 29.04.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this deceased may kindly inform the following.

**S.H.O,**  
**P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-27581223, 27581812**

DP/133/RD/2020



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STC/PUR/20-21/17/0300 dt. 12.05.2020	Work under Baroda D/c under O & M Dn. Sheopur South	11.72	14.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	20.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	1314/-
STC/PUR/20-21/18/0301 dt. 12.05.2020	Work under Baroda D/c under O & M Dn. Sheopur South	11.72	14.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	20.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	1314/-
STC/PUR/20-21/19/0302 dt. 12.05.2020	Work under Baroda D/c under O & M Dn. Sheopur South	11.72	14.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	20.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	1314/-
STC/PUR/20-21/20/0303 dt. 12.05.2020	Work under Baroda D/c under O & M Dn. Sheopur South	14.33	14.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	20.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	1606/-
STC/PUR/20-21/21/0304 dt. 12.05.2020	Work under Pandola D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur.	7.50	14.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	20.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	840/-
STC/PUR/20-21/22/0305 dt. 12.05.2020	Work under Pandola D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur	1.84	14.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	20.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	206/-
STC/PUR/20-21/23/0306 dt. 12.05.2020	Work under Sheopur R D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur	2.85	14.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	20.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	319/-
STC/PUR/20-21/24/0307 dt. 12.05.2020	Work under Sheopur R D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur.	2.62	14.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	20.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	293/-
STC/PUR/20-21/25/0486 dt. 14.05.2020	Work under Sheopur R D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur.	2.03	15.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	21.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	227/-
STC/PUR/20-21/26/0487 dt. 14.05.2020	Work under Pandola D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur.	4.62	15.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	21.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	519/-
STC/PUR/20-21/27/0488 dt. 14.05.2020	Under Pandola D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur.	6.98	15.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	21.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	782/-
STC/PUR/20-21/28/0489 dt. 14.05.2020	Under Baroda D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur	8.49	15.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	21.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	951/-
STC/PUR/20-21/29/0490 dt. 14.05.2020	Work under Baroda D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur.	2.43	15.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	21.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	273/-
STC/PUR/20-21/30/0491 dt. 14.05.2020	Work under Baroda D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur.	5.63	15.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	21.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	632/-
STC/PUR/20-21/31/0492 dt. 14.05.2020	Work under Baroda D/c under O & M Dn. South Sheopur.	9.29	15.05.20 16:00 Hrs.	21.05.20 up to 14:00 Hrs.	1042/-

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**DIY. GENERAL MANAGER (STC)**



# Portal for construction workers launched

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Friday launched a website—edistrict.delhigovt.nic.in/—for the new registration and renewal of registration of the construction workers in Delhi. The Delhi Government this Monday also decided to 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 Mr Gopal Rai. There are around 40,000 construction workers registered with the board. Development Minister of Delhi Mr Gopal Rai launched this website today. "There are many unregistered construction labourers

in Delhi along with construction labourers whose renewal of registration is pending. In a bid to solve this registration and renewal related issues, today we have launched a website <http://www.edistrict.delhigovt.nic.in/>. From tomorrow here the construction labourers can register for a new application or renewal," said Rai. He added, "In this registration process first, the person needs to register by filing a login form online. The website will have several options but for the new registration or renewal, the person will be needed to select either option no 62 (renewal) or option no 63 (for new registration)." "In this process the following information will be required: Name, address, contact details, date of birth, self-declaration,

address proof, bank account proof, proof of birth and certificate of 90 days of work from employer or union. Following the submission of these details, an OTP will be sent to the person's mobile no. The person will also get a date on which he or she will be needed to physically visit a designated centre to submit original documents. Thereafter the person will get the labour card and can avail all the facilities," Rai added. "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," said Rai.

# Shramik to ferry 4 L stranded migrant workers daily: Railways

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Railways is all set to run 300 "Shramik Special" trains to transport more than four lakh stranded people per day in a mission mode. More than 12 lakh passengers have been ferried by these special trains back to their home states till now. Starting from just four trains on May 1, Indian Railways managed to operationalise more than 1,000 such Shram Shakti trains in last 15 days. In a remarkable achievement, a total 145 "Shramik Special" trains were operationalised from various States carrying more than 2.10 lakh passengers back to their home states on 14th May. "This is for the first time that on a single day, passenger count on Shramik trains



Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

crossed the two lakh mark. These trains began operations with just around 5,000 passengers on 1st May," the Ministry said in a statement. These trains were terminated in various States like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Telangana, Tripura,

Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal. The Ministry further said that these trains are being run by Railways only after concurrence is given both by the State which is sending the passengers and the state which is receiving them. "Proper screening of passengers is ensured before boarding the train. During the journey, passengers are given free meals and water," it said.

## AMID COVID FIGHT

# Need to set about economic activities: Jain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amidst Covid-19 spread in the national Capital claiming more than 100 lives, Delhi Health Minister Satyender Jain on Friday said that there should be a balance between the fight against Covid and economic activities. As per health bulletin, corona patients' number is likely to cross 9,000 by Saturday while corona cases are increasing where as the containment zones are decreasing with latest number 78. Briefing media, Jain said, "I want to repeat that in the last two months we have learned various lessons from the Covid-19. If we wear mask, maintain social distancing and wash hands regularly then people

will be 90-95 per cent safer." "There was a time when we all thought that this pandemic will be over by May 1 due to summer. But now we have seen that in the Latin American countries also the pandemic is increasing. The temperature of these countries is very high. This shows that we have to learn to live with Covid-19," Jain added. Citing Covid -19 health report, Jain said that on Thursday, in India, the growth rate of Covid was 5 per cent and earlier there was a time when the growth rate was 20 per cent. I believe that the numbers should be seen in terms of the percentage increase. "We are fighting against the Covid-19 with full effort but now we have to start the eco-

omic activities, therefore, the measures should be followed," "When the lockdown was imposed at that time we were not prepared to fight this pandemic but now we have prepared ourself to fight this pandemic," Jain added. On migrants' issue, Jain said, "I will say that there are two kinds of situation. One is the migrant labourers of Delhi and second is the migrant labourer of other states who are passing through Delhi. For the migrants, the Government has arranged stay and food across Delhi." "Any such person you meet can be sent to the nearby shelter of the Delhi Government. We are providing lunch and dinner to nearly 10 lakh poor people every day," he added.

# Govt suggests ways to Centre for easing curbs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has sent suggestions to the Central Government regarding the relaxation of the lockdown. According to Delhi Government, the key suggestions from the people are that every person should wear mask at the public places and social distancing should be maintained all the time. People have also suggested that public transportation should start for example buses and metros with limited capacity.



"Regarding malls, people have suggested that in the limited capacity of either 25 per cent or 50 per cent the malls of the city should be opened. They have also suggested that the markets should be opened following either odd-even rules or only three days a week," the Health Minister Satyender Jain said.

# Register daily diaries online, cops directed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava has urged its department to adopt newer technology and register daily diaries (DDs) online. According to the order, since the daily diaries are being received online, except for special reason, hard copies may not be got printed. "All may view the daily diaries online and take necessary action. We may adopt to newer technology and save the paper. All concerned need to be briefed accordingly," the order reads. The order was signed on Thursday and marked to all Special Commissioners of Police and Joint Commissioners of Police. A daily diary entry is made when any kind of complaint is lodged and when police believe that there is some prima facie evidence of a cognisable offense being committed, it is registered as an FIR. Making daily dairy paperless is an another move towards digitisation, police said. Meanwhile on Friday, the Northern Range of Delhi Police conducted briefing sessions for their police staff in all the police stations. According to Manish Kumar Agrawal, the Joint Commissioner of Police, Northern range, the sessions were conducted by the prominent doctors of their areas, to educate about the safety precautions and to instill a sense of confidence among the police personnel.

# ₹376 cr for reviving 155 water bodies


CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

A number of dying lakes in the national Capital will come to life soon as Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has taken up the initiative to rejuvenate existing 155 water bodies with the total cost of ₹376 crore. The civic body has already issued tenders for 59 water bodies in which works awarded to rejuvenate 22 lakes and work is presently in progress at eight sites which are likely to be completed in six months in a phased manner, a senior DJB official said. The official said that the DJB is also creating new lakes at Dwarka, Timarpur oxidation pond, Rohini, Nilothi, Pappan Kalan and Satpula. "The lakes at Dwarka, Rohini, Nilothi and Pappan Kalan are being developed by using the treated effluent which was further polished to the standards as mentioned by 'National Green Tribunal' (NGT) for water quality in lakes," he said. The lakes at Timarpur and Satpula are being created by using raw sewage which will be treated to the standards as mentioned by NGT for water quality in lakes, he said, adding that the rejuvenation of water bodies



and creation of lakes will help in enhancement of ground water recharge and will contribute to fight scarcity of water. Vice Chairman of DJB Raghav Chadha said, "Rejuvenation of water bodies is pivotal as only through creation of lakes, ground water recharge will enhance which will contribute towards eradicating scarcity of water." The plan prepared on the premise of bringing incredible innovations in water technology, which will help in conserving water, Chadha said. "Our commitment is to ensure access to potable clean drinking water and sanitation for all, both as a human right and as a critical element

to protect human health during health crisis. The summer action plan prepared this year with an aim to meet summer water demand," he added. "DJB will work towards maintaining the water treatment plants, increasing the water supply in water-deficient areas, improving efficiency and faster disposal of complaints," he said. It may be noted that Delhi Park and Garden Society earmarked 1061 water bodies that existed in Delhi. Some of these water bodies dried up due to non-availability of water source and due to change in runoff of catchment and some got contaminated due to inflow of sewage in these water bodies.



## अपील

वैश्विक महामारी कोरोना के संकट से उबरने के लिए पूरा देश माननीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी जी के नेतृत्व में एकजुट होकर कार्य कर रहा है।

उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार, अन्य राज्य सरकारों से समन्वय स्थापित कर प्रदेश के सभी प्रवासी कामगारों, श्रमिकों एवं युवाओं की सुरक्षित घर वापसी के लिए युद्धस्तर पर कार्य कर रही है।

अभी तक, उत्तर प्रदेश के 13.5 लाख से अधिक प्रवासी कामगारों, श्रमिकों एवं अन्य लोगों को स्पेशल श्रमिक ट्रेन एवं उत्तर प्रदेश परिवहन निगम की बसों द्वारा उनके घरों तक पहुंचाया जा चुका है।

प्रवासी एवं प्रदेश में रह रहे कामगारों एवं श्रमिक भाई-बहनों से मेरी विनम्र अपील है - "घर वापसी के लिए पैदल न चलें। साइकिल, दोपहिया वाहनों/ट्रकों से भी यात्रा न करें। ज्यादा लम्बी दूरी चलने से शरीर में पानी की कमी (डिहाइड्रेशन) हो सकती है और आपके स्वास्थ्य और सुरक्षा को खतरा हो सकता है।

आप जहां हैं, धैर्यपूर्वक वहीं रहें। उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार ने आप सभी की वापसी के लिए निःशुल्क ट्रेनों की व्यवस्था की है, इसकी विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए आप जिस राज्य में हैं, वहां के स्थानीय प्रशासन/नोडल अधिकारी से सम्पर्क करें, ताकि इन ट्रेनों के माध्यम से आपकी सुरक्षित घर वापसी हो सके।"

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# Recovered cases more than active cases in some States

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid all the negativity about coronavirus pandemic that has created havoc across India as well as the world, there's good news from some States here where the number of recovered Covid-19 patients has surpassed the number of active cases.

Active Covid-19 cases are the number of total coronavirus cases after deducting the number of recovered/discharged patients and fatalities count. Nationally too, the recovery rate is increasing steadily. About 32.63 per cent patients have recovered so far from coronavirus.

According to the Health Ministry's website, more than 70 per cent of the deaths are due to comorbidities.

The Southern State of Kerala has shown the best performance in managing the

virus since day one. As on Friday, there are 64 active cases, while 493 people have been sent home after getting treated for the viral infection. It was Kerala where the first Covid-19 case in India was reported on January 30.

Haryana has registered 368 cases against 439 recovered cases while in Telangana 428 positive cases have been reported and 952 people have recovered.

Ditto in Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh and a few other States and Union Territories.

In fact, in the last few days, India has seen more coronavirus recoveries than the rise in active covid cases. On Thursday, 1,849 patients were cured of Covid-19 while active cases went up by 1,739. The death toll from coronavirus complications rose by

134 to 2,549.

Overall, the total number of coronavirus cases in India climbed to 78,003, after registering new 3,722 cases in last 24 hours.

In Jammu Kashmir, 589 people were discharged and 469 are still under treatment while in Andhra Pradesh 1,252 have been recovered. Atleast 1,007 are still infected with the viral. 48 people have died so far in the State.

Similarly, Madhya Pradesh has reported 2,073 active cases against 2,283 treated cases. In Rajasthan, there are 1,886 active cases while 2,677 have gone home, according to the data.

In a pandemic with a low mortality rate like COVID-19, the number of recovered cases must steadily exceed the number of active cases at some stage, provided the exponential growth of new cases is stopped, as per health experts.

## Another soldier tests corona +ve at Army HQ

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a precautionary measure, a portion of the Army Headquarters or Sena Bhawan here, is closed for sanitation and disinfection after a soldier posted there was tested positive for Covid-19. Following the laid down process, the army authorities are following the medical protocol like contact-tracing of the affected soldier, quarantine and related drill. There is another suspect case of the pandemic there.

Giving this information here on Friday, sources said a floor of the Sena Bhawan was shutdown for fumigation and sanitization drive. With this case, the total number of



personnel in the Army testing positive has crossed the 40 mark. They include 25 patients

undergoing treatment in the cancer department of the Army's Research and Referral(RR)Hospital and 14 others in different parts of the country.

The 24 patients including serving and retired personnel were shifted to another army hospital nearby on May 4. However, no staff was affected by the coronavirus, they clarified.

Similarly, 38 personnel of the Navy tested positive in Mumbai last month and 12 of them were later discharged after due treatment and isolation process while the remaining 26 are still undergoing treatment, sources said.

## Cong slams Govt over third tranche of economic package

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday lashed out at the Centre's announcement of the third tranche of the economic package.

Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged that the package worth Rs.20 lakh crore had proved to be an example of 'voodoo economics'.

He claimed that the Union government had disappointed the entire country by failing to translate their promises into reality. Maintaining that farmers and labourers were facing a lot of difficulties, Surjewala accused the Centre of pushing them into a debt trap.

Moreover, he complained that the farmers had not been provided with any financial help.

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said that Friday's announcements were already present in the Union Budget even as he requested Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to reveal the revised expenditure figure for the fiscal year 2020-21.

The Congress accused the government of being "insensitive" towards farmers and demanded that the prime minister and the finance minister apologise for neglecting them in the COVID-19 economic package.

## Rahul criticises Niti for failed corona prediction



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday took a swipe at Niti Aayog, the Government's think tank, for predicting that there would be no Covid-19 cases after May 16. The think tank had said the government's lockdown strategy to control the virus will

enable that. "The geniuses at Niti Aayog have done it again. I'd like to remind you of their graph predicting the Govt's national lockdown strategy would ensure no fresh Covid cases from tomorrow, May the 16th," Rahul tweeted. The graph, as seen in the picture shared by him, shows the curve predicting new cases peaking around last week of April and then sloping downwards to zero on May 16.

However, there has been no let up in the cases even as the third phase of nationwide lockdown ends this Sunday.

Surjewala said the government has not put a single penny in the pocket of farmers or farm labourers through the package and claimed that farmers have lost over Rs 50,000 crore this Rabi season.

"One thing is absolutely clear that the so-called Rs 20-lakh crore economic package has proved to be a juma package. It reflects the 'voodoo' economics being followed by the prime minister and the finance minister," Surjewala said at a press conference through video-con-

## APMC Act to help farmers earn better during Covid-19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to help farmers earn better prices for their products in times of Covid-19 crisis, the Modi Government has rolled out sweeping reforms for the farm sector including a central law (Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee -APMC Act) to allow farmers to sell their produce freely and amendment to the six-and-a-half-decade-old Essential Commodities Act (ECA) 1955 moving cereals, edible oils, pulses, onions and potatoes out of its purview.

BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat have already made amendments to the APMC Act to remove restrictions on where the farmer would be able to sell his produce and get better prices by eliminating the middlemen.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the reforms while detailing the third tranche of financial package. The ECA amendment, besides deregulating production and sale of food products, will provide for no stock limit to be imposed on any produce. A stock limit will be imposed only under very exceptional circumstances like national calamities, famine with a surge in prices. Also, no stock limit shall apply to processors or value chain participants.

The EC Act is considered a major impediment in the growth of agriculture sector as traders are scared to buy more on the fear of imposition of stock holding limits anytime.

According to EC Act, if the central government is of opinion that it is necessary for maintaining or increasing supplies of any essential commodity, securing their equitable distribution and availability at fair prices or securing any essential commodity for the defence of India, it may provide for regulating or prohibiting the production, supply and distribution and trade and commerce therein.

Sitharaman also announced that a central law will be formulated to provide adequate choices to the farmers to sell produce at an attractive price, barrier-free interstate trade and framework for e-trading of agricultural produce. Farmers are currently bound to sell their produce only to licensees in the APMC, said the minister. This restriction does not exist for any other industrial produce.

This, she said, resulted in stalling the free flow of agricultural produce and fragmentation of markets and supply chain. Also it entailed less price to the farmers. The Centre has also been urging the states to encourage the adoption of National Agriculture Market or e-NAM, an electronic platform that links all mandis to create a unified nationwide market to help farmers secure better prices for their produce.

According to agriculture ministry, the e-NAM platform now has a total number of 1000 mandis across.

This apart, Operation Greens will be extended from tomato, onion and potato to all fruits and vegetables by providing 50 per cent subsidy on transportation and storage of these commodities, she said.

## Scientists develop 2 mobile indoor disinfection sprayers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Covid-19 is likely to become a part of life, focus is now on daily cleaning and disinfecting frequently-touched surfaces such as tables, door-knobs, light switches and handles among others. In this direction, scientists at CSIR-CMERI, Durgapur, have developed two mobile indoor disinfection sprayer units to be used for effectively cleaning and disinfecting pathogenic micro-organisms present on doors, knobs, hospital wards, hospital beds, surfaces, rooms, halls, building corridors among others.

The aim is to minimise the risk of transmitting Coronavirus to people who inadvertently come in contact with these surfaces.

"The mobile sprayers are BPDS (Battery-Powered Disinfectant Sprayer) and POMID (Pneumatically Operated Mobile Indoor Disinfection). Both the sprayer systems are designed with two stage spraying units and separate storage tanks to clean and disinfect the indoor areas by the numbers of fixed and flexible nozzles set in the lower & the upper tiers. There is also an industrial variant of the disinfectant sprayer which has utility for heavy usage and larger span of coverage," said Prof. Harish Hirani, Director, CSIR-CMERI, Durgapur.

He explained that most of the disinfectant sprayers in the market are based either on cleaning or disinfecting using a single chamber storage for the liquid and are pump-based. The droplets produced by a

## German researchers identify potential cellular targets for treating virus that causes Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Offering hope for treatment of the coronavirus infection that has caused havoc across the world, a team of German researchers has identified potential cellular targets for treating the virus that causes Covid-19.

A team of biochemists and virologists at Goethe University and the Frankfurt University Hospital in Germany tested a series of compounds in laboratory models and found some which slowed down or stopped virus reproduction.

According to the researchers, these results now enable the search for an active substance to be narrowed down to a small number of already approved drugs.

Researchers from

both institutions were together able to show how a SARS-CoV-2 infection changes the human host cells. They used a particular form of mass spectrometry called the mePROD method, which they had developed only a few months previously. This method makes it possible to determine the amount and synthesis rate of thousands of proteins within a cell, according to the findings published in the journal Nature.

"Thanks to the mePROD-technology we developed, we were for the first time able to trace the cellular changes upon infection over time and with high detail in our laboratory. We were obviously aware of the potential scope of our findings," said study lead author Christian Munch from Goethe

University.

"However, they are based on a cell culture system and require further testing," Munch added.

The findings show a picture of the progression of a SARS-CoV-2 infection: whilst many viruses shut down the host's protein production to the benefit of viral proteins, SARS-CoV-2 only slightly influences the protein production of the host cell, with the viral proteins appearing to be produced in competition to host cell proteins.

Instead, a SARS-CoV-2 infection leads to an increased protein synthesis machinery in the cell.

The researchers suspected this was a weak spot of the virus and were indeed able to significantly

reduce virus reproduction using something known as translation inhibitors, which shut down protein production.

Twenty-four hours after infection, the virus causes distinct changes to the composition of the host proteome: while cholesterol metabolism is reduced, activities in carbohydrate metabolism and in the modification of RNA as protein precursors increase.

In line with this, the scientists were successful in stopping virus reproduction in cultivated cells by applying inhibitors of these processes.

Similar success was achieved by using a substance that inhibits the production of building blocks for the viral genome.

## Packages to poor nothing but cruel hoax: CPM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming the Government's packages to migrant labourers, farmers and poor a "cruel hoax", the CPI (M) Politburo on Friday said that the one nation-one ration card will be active only in mid-2021 and pointed out that the NDA regime had canceled many ration cards in the name of corruption, which ultimately made the poor suffer.

In a detailed statement, the polit bureau pointed out that on Thursday Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman assessed only eight crore as migrant workers, while earlier in Parliament she had said that there are more than 10 crore migrant workers in many cities across the

country. "The only direct benefit is a package of ₹3,500 crores for extension of the provision of free foodgrains. Having cancelled crores of ration cards in the name of corruption making the poor suffer, the FM now makes a grand gesture that all families without ration cards will also get 5kg foodgrains and 1kg pulses free. Repackaging schemes like one nation-one ration card that will see the light of the day only by mid-2021, is of little consequence to the sufferings that crores of people face today," the CPI(M) said.

The Left party accused the Finance Minister of misleading the country by claiming that there was a 40 to 50 per cent increase in MNREGA workdays generated.

"Not a single paisa is being transferred from the Government to any of the worst-affected sections of our people, specifically migrant workers, street vendors, domestic workers, fishing workers etc. This package is mainly provision of loans."

"The only direct benefit is

a package of ₹3,500 crores for extension of the provision of free foodgrains. Having cancelled crores of ration cards in the name of corruption making the poor suffer, the FM now makes a grand gesture that all families without ration cards will also get 5kg foodgrains and 1kg pulses free. Repackaging schemes like one nation-one ration card that will see the light of the day only by mid-2021, is of little consequence to the sufferings that crores of people face today," the CPI(M) said.

The Left party accused the Finance Minister of misleading the country by claiming that there was a 40 to 50 per cent increase in MNREGA workdays generated.

The CPI (M) also said that the Central Government has no right to give any instructions regarding the use of CAMPA funds.

It is for State Governments in coordination with local communities, mainly tribal, who are affected by projects to decide how the funds are to be spent.

## SC postpones summer vacation by five-weeks, to function till June 19



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, which has been hearing urgent matters through video-conferencing from March 25 due to COVID-19 pandemic, on Friday decided to postpone its summer vacation by five weeks and declared that it would remain functional from May 18 to June 19.

As per the October 14 notification, the summer vacation would have started from May 18 and concluded on July 5 (both days inclusive) in the apex court.

"In partial modification of Notification of even number dated October 14, 2019 notifying the list of Supreme Court holidays, 2020 and the summer vacation of the court, it is hereby notified that the five-week period from May 18, 2020 to June 19 (both days inclusive) of the summer vacation of the SC calendar 2020 has been rescheduled and declared as period of functioning of the court," the apex court notification said.

It said that the earlier notification on the list of holidays would remain unchanged.

The decision has been taken by the judges of the apex court in its virtual full court meeting and it has also been resolved that Chief Justice of India (CJI) S A Bobde will keep an eye on developing situation.

The decision to shorten the summer vacation has been hailed by SCBA (Supreme Court Bar Association) President Dushant Dave who also said that the apex court should take all steps to help poor citizens in the present crisis.

The apex court, since March 25, has been holding courts through video conferencing due to the nation-wide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and had suspended the entry of advocates and other staff into the high security zone on the basis of their proximity cards, till further orders.

The SCBA, on April 11, had appealed to the CJI and his companion judges to declare cancellation of summer vacation and treat it as working period of apex court in the larger interest of the litigants and interest of justice in view of ongoing nationwide lockdown.

## Apprise us of accommodation quarantine docs near hospitals: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday asked the Centre to apprise it about steps taken for quarantining doctors and medical staff engaged in fight against coronavirus in accommodations near the hospitals itself.

A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao, Sanjay Kishan Kaul and B R Gavai, which took up the matter through video conferencing asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, to take instructions and apprise it by next week.

During the hearing, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for doctor-petitioner Arushi Jain, said that resident doctors in Government hospitals, after completing 7/14 days on duty, are supposed to

be quarantined.

He said these doctors are quarantined in places where they have to share rooms, bathrooms but it should be done in places, where social distancing can be maintained.

Rohatgi said this type of arrangements would defeat the purpose of quarantining and corona warriors will fall down.

He said the Government should requisition such hotels and guest houses where proper facilities are available and social distancing could be maintained.

He said he was not seeking any adversarial order but is only asking for suitable accommodation with necessary facilities near the hospital for the doctors and medical staffs, who are in forefront of dealing with Covid-19 pandemic.

## SC stays Madras HC order asking TN Govt to close liquor shops

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday stayed the Madras High Court order which had asked the Tamil Nadu government to close state-run liquor vends on the ground that there was violation of guidelines meant to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the stay on the high court order by the apex court the state-owned liquor shops may reopen in the state.

A bench comprising Justices

L Nageswara Rao, S K Kaul and B R Gavai stayed the May 8 order of the High Court after taking note of the appeal of Government firm Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) which sells alcoholic beverages in the State. Lawyer Yogesh Kanna, appearing for the State Government, said the top court issued notices to those who had filed the pleas in the high court seeking closure of the liquor outlets in the State.

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED**

**See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Md. Shahrukh, S/o Lt. Md. Parvez, R/o H.No. 2056, Gali Gajmir Khan, Chandni Mahal, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 64/16 u/s 379/34 IPC, P.S. Kotwali, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Md. Shahrukh** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Md. Shahrukh** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Md. Shahrukh of FIR No. 64/16 u/s 379/34 IPC, P.S. Kotwali, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **29.06.2020**.

By order  
**Ms. Prigya Gupta,**  
**Metropolitan Magistrate-08,**  
**Room No. 272,**  
**Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi**

DP/205/N/2020(Court Matter)



# Cong, TMC slam FM’s relief package

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

Congress and the Trinamool Congress have questioned the potency of Union Finance Minister’s Friday declarations comparing it with a budgetary speech that will not only fail to provide immediate relief to the vast cross-section of the poor and migrant workers but also fall short of boosting consumers’ purchasing capacity.

“The Government has been talking of huge packages but it failed to appreciate the fact that the so-called package should have found its way into the pockets of the crores of migrant workers. Where is that relief? The biggest package should have first taken care of their hunger and plight that force them to walk hundreds of miles back home. Where is that relief?” Congress leader of Lok

Sabha Adhir Chowdhury said adding the Finance Minister’s declaration resembled a budgetary speech.

“Whatever reforms she spoke about was already in the pipeline and was being discussed for the past several years. We all know that there is an issue with food processing and only small percentage of our products go into food processing. Discussions were already on to give a fillip to the industry which will in ultimate run help the farmers... There is nothing new about these reforms ... but they will yield result 2-3 years from now...”

“In the present context will these reforms provide cash to the poor and the marginal people? What will happen to the migrant workers who are walking back home hundreds of miles? What will happen to

**Cong MP Pradip Chatterjee said ‘we are not only disgusted but also angry with FM’s nonsensical act. The BJP leaders are trying to befool people with their mathematical jugglery that will make people dream of ₹20 lakh crore’**

the people who are starving? “The Government should have transferred some money from its so-called into the pockets of the marginal people. That will be the biggest package. The Government seems to be boosting the supply line but is not taking measures to strengthen the demand line. If demands do not increase, then the whole measure will fall flat.”

Congress MP Pradip Chatterjee said “we are not only disgusted but also angry with FM’s nonsensical act. The BJP leaders are trying to befool people with their mathematical

jugglery that will make people dream of ₹20 lakh crore. But the question is will it help the crisis to blow over now? Amit Shah said that the steps will bear results in 5 years when we will become self sufficient. But what will happen till then?

How will we handle the crisis and starvation now? The Government is silent.”

TMC MP Saugato Roy said, “the first need of the hour was to provide cash to people to increase their purchasing their purchasing power. That the Government would not do despite repeated requests. Whatever the FM has said will continue to hover as a budget assurances much like it has been happening for years.”

Pro-Trinamool Congress economist Aviroop Sarkar too questioned the efficacy of the

package saying it had the trap-pings of a budget speech. “The reforms notwithstanding, there was a need to provide immediate relief to the people provisions of which do not seem to contain in the Finance Minister’s announcement. It does not seem to carry any immediate relief to ward off the crisis.”

He said “the Government should have taken steps to strengthen the purchasing power of the common people to sustain the reforms that it is initiating now. It should have provided cash to the people to increase demand in the market. Without increasing demand boosting production and supply line will perhaps not yield the desired result.

It will not pull the people out of the crisis they are in due to the corona pandemic.”

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala, lambasted the Narendra Modi Government for its indifference to the woes faced by the State following the coronavirus pandemic.

Addressing his daily durbar convened to brief about the number of new pandemic cases in the State on Friday, Vijayan said whatever financial assistance the Centre claims to have given as part of the Covid-19 package was what the State would have received even if there was no pandemic.

“The State has received a portion of financial assistance due to us from the National Disaster Relief Fund which Kerala would have got even of there was no coronavirus pandemic. The claim being made by the Centre is this regard is

wrong,” Vijayan announced during the press meet. He said the Centre’s attitude towards the States have to change.

He said 16 new Covid-19 cases were confirmed in Kerala on Friday. “Out of the 16 cases, seven persons were those who reached the State from abroad while four were from Chennai and two from Mumbai,” said the Chief Minister.

As on Friday, there were 576 coronavirus positive cases in Kerala. 80 persons are undergoing treatment in various hospitals. On Friday, 122 persons have been admitted to various hospitals in the State,” said Vijayan.

Out of the 576 persons tested positive for coronavirus, 311 were those who reached the State from foreign countries and 70 from other States in the country.

The Chief Minister said

187 persons were infected through contacts .

“We are worried about the increase in the number of coronavirus cases in the State. The possibilities for community transmission have become strong in Kerala. As part of strengthening the preventive measures , we will deploy Motor Cycle Brigade to scan the entire areas in districts where the coronavirus positive cases have been notified,” said the Chief Minister.

He said police officials will undertake rounds in these areas to check whether those ordered to undergo quarantine restrict themselves to their homes. Vijayan disclosed that 3,732 expatriates have returned to the State by 17 aircraft and three Indian Navy ships. Migrant workers numbering 33,000 have left Kerala by 29 trains.

## Will take all precautions while preparing road map for Lockdown-4: Maha CM

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:**

Ruling out the possibility of reopening of intra-district borders in the State after May 17, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said here on Friday that since the coronavirus crisis was far over in the estate, the State Government would take all precautions while preparing road map for the Lockdown-4 beginning from May 18.

After reviewing the coronavirus situation in the state with the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) colleagues in the state, the Chief Minister said: “Without reopening the intra-district borders, we will have to take all precautions while preparing road map for the lockdown-4 beginning on May 18. The Coronavirus crisis is not over yet in the state. We will have to seek the help of doctors and members of Task Force in dealing with the situation in the

Post-May 18 period”.

At the meeting attended among others by NCP chief Sharad Pawar, State Cabinet ministers and senior bureaucrats, the chief minister reviewed the situation that prevailed during the last 55 days of lockdown enforced in three phases.

During the meeting, the issues like the current health situation in the state, the manner in which the health authorities were combating it, law and order, arrangements made by the State Government in sending back the migrant workers to their respective states and the difficulties faced by the state authorities in handing the transportation of migrant workers.

Briefing those present at the meeting, the Chief Minister said that industrial activity had begun in the state after the government relaxed the lockdown norms in green and orange zones on April 20.

“After the relaxation of norms in green and orange norms, we had permitted 65 000 industrial units to resume production. Of them, 35000 units had resumed operation and nearly 9 lakh workers had reported to duty. In effect, we have resumed 50 per cent industrial activity in the state. After the return of migrant workers to their respective states, we have set up an employment bureau to train and provide skilled and non-skilled labourers to the industries,” the Chief Minister said.

While reviewing the health situation in the state, those present at the meeting discussed the issues like the need for purchase of medical equipment, filling up of vacant posts in Government hospitals and how to relax the norms in the red and containment zones during the lockdown-4 period even while adhering to the prescribed norms.

## Communal riots in Hooghly: 129 held

**PNS ■ KOLKATA**

The police have arrested 129 people in connection to the communal flare-up leading to clashes and large-scale arson in the Telinipara region of Hooghly district, Chandannagore Commissioner of Police Humayun Kabir said on Friday.

“The police taking strong action. We have reports of people going around inciting communal violence. We are trying to zero in on them and have arrested 129 people. We will soon arrest the masterminds,” Kabir said drawing strong criticism from local BJP MP Locket Chatterjee who condemned the Police Commissioner for “playing a partisan game.”

She alleged, “the BJP MPs are trying to meet the CP for the past few days but he is not meeting us where as he is meeting the Trinamool Congress MLAs. The Government is giving free hand to the communal forces to destroy, loot and burn the houses of the local people here.”

## 434 test +ve in TN, total reaches 10,108

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

There are 10,108 persons all over Tamil Nadu who had tested positive for coronavirus as on Friday. The release issued by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine on Friday evening stated that 434 tested positive for coronavirus all over the State taking the total number of Covid-19 cases to 10,108.

Five persons succumbed to the pandemic on Friday taking the total fatalities in Tamil Nadu to 71. There is some news which offers succor to the people and that is the number of persons discharged from hospitals on a single day. A record number of 359 patients who were cured of the pandemic left hospitals on Friday and this is the highest number to be discharged on a single day in the State, said the release.

Chennai continued to be the epicentre of covid pandemic in the

State. The Greater Chennai Municipal Corporation registered 309 coronavirus positive cases out of the 434 cases tested positive all over the State. The capital city has 5,946 coronavirus patients as on Friday.

An important point to be noted is that the number of coronavirus patients got doubled in a single week. On May 8, Tamil Nadu had 5,409 covid patients which breached the 10,000 mark by May 15. The number of persons tested positive for coronavirus has come down (though negligibly) in the last three days. While May 11 saw 798 persons testing positive on a single day, the number came down to 716 on May 12. The next day saw a further decrease as the numbers stood at 509 on May 13.

May 14, the number of covid cases were 447 while May 15 (Friday)saw the numbers coming further down to 434.

## Manipur takes back 185 nurses working in Bengal

**PNS ■ KOLKATA**

What could cause a grave health crisis during pandemic situation the Manipur Government has reportedly taken back at least 185 trained nurses working in various private hospitals in Kolkata and other cities, sources said.

These nurses were working in big medical facilities like RN Tagore Hospital, Appollo Gleneagles Hospital. AMRI Hospital, EEDF Hospital and Fortis Hospital sources said adding “most of the nurses have either resigned their posts and left or simply left after they were taken back by the Manipur Government.

Sources at AMRI Hospital said nurses from Odisha and Tripura were also likely to be taken away by the respective Governments. A large number of nurses from Kerala, Bihar, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and other places come to Bengal.

Meanwhile, Bengal on Friday recorded 10 new deaths taking the total number of deaths to 225. This apart the State saw 84 new cases taking the total number of infections to 2461. Out of these 1460 are active cases. About 829 people have recovered from infection, Health Department sources said adding the containment zones in Kolkata was slightly reduced from 339 early this week to 286 on Friday.

## K’taka announces 3rd relief package worth ₹512 crore

**KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU**

In a major initiative to help crisis ridden Imaize farmers, BS Yediyurappa led BJP Government in Karnataka has announced a third economic package worth ₹512 crore rupees. In a press conference on Friday, Chief Minister Yediyurappa announced ₹512 crore third economic package giving relief to maize farmers and incentivising ASHA workers, at the forefront in the fight against Covid-19.

Yediyurappa said While around 10 lakh maize farmers will get ₹5,000 each, the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers would get an incentive of ₹3,000 each through cooperative institutions.

“About 10 lakh maize farmers are suffering as they are not getting proper price, that is why I have decided to give ₹5,000 relief to each farmer, it is about ₹500 crore commitment,” he told reporters.

He said there were about 40,250 ASHA workers in the State and each would get ₹3,000 each, which will add up to about ₹12.50 crore.

“Despite the State financial condition being not good we have already announced financial packages for those in distress. First one was ₹1,610 crore, second was ₹162 core, this is the third one,” he added.

## One more dies, 69 fresh cases in K’taka, tally 1,056

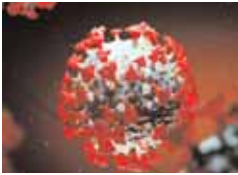
**Bengaluru:** A 52-year-old man succumbed to novel coronavirus in Karnataka even as the highest single-day rise of 69 new positive cases was reported, raising the state’s tally to 1,056, an official said on Friday.

The deceased male was resident of Chitaguppa town in Bidar had died on Tuesday but his test report on his positive status came on Friday. The deceased had a travel history to Hyderabad and also suffered from Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI).

Chitaguppa is 709 km north of Bengaluru.

The new cases were reported from 5 pm on Thursday to 5 pm on Friday,” the health official said.

Out of the 1,056 cases, 539 are still active, 480 patients have been discharged, and 36 others



have died.

In the past 24 hours, Covid cases spiked in Dakshina Kannada, Bengaluru Urban, Mandya, Hassan, and Udupi.

Of the new cases, Dakshina Kannada reported 15 cases, followed by Bengaluru Urban and Mandya 13 each, Hassan and Bidar 7 each, Udupi five, Kalaburagi 3, Chitradurga two and Kolar, Bagalkote, Uttara Kannada and Shivamogga one each.

Kolar, Chitradurga, Hassan, Mandya and Shivamogga cases had a travel history to Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. **IANS**

## Visakhapatnam espionage case: NIA arrests key conspirator

**New Delhi:** The NIA on Friday arrested the key conspirator Mohammed Haroon Hazi Abdul Rehman Lakdawala in Visakhapatnam espionage case from Mumbai.

The case relates to a Pakistan-based international espionage racket which recruitment people in India to collect information on naval movements and submarines besides other defence establishment.

Lakdawala, 49, is a resident of Mumbai and one of the key conspirators in the case originally registered at CI Cell, Vijayawada police station, Andhra Pradesh various sections of the Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Official Secrets Act.

The case involved individuals based in Pakistan and at different locations in India. Pakistan-based spies recruited agents in India for collecting sensitive and classified information regarding locations/movements of Indian Naval Ships and Submarines, and other defence establishments, the NIA said in a statement.

“Investigation revealed that few navy personnel came in contact with Pakistani nationals through various social media platforms such as Facebook, Whatsapp etc, and were involved in sharing classified information in lieu of monetary gains. The money was deposited into the bank accounts of the navy personnel through Indian associates having business interests in Pakistan,” the NIA said.

During the course of probe so far, 14 accused persons have been arrested including 11 Navy personnel and one Pakistani born Indian national Shaista Qaiser. **PNS**

## 30 more cases, J&K tally at over 1,000

**Jammu:** The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir Friday joined the club of States with more than 1,000 cases of coronavirus. With 30 fresh cases, the final tally touched 1,013 cases.

According to the daily Media Bulletin on novel Coronavirus (Covid-19), out of 1013 positive cases, 489 are Active Positive, 513 have recovered and 11 have died. Out of 489 active cases, 438 are from Kashmir and 51 from Jammu division.

According to official sources, “21 fresh cases were detected across Kashmir division while 9 cases were reported positive from Jammu division”. In addition, 28 patients recovered fully and were discharged from different hospitals on Friday.

Meanwhile, aggressive testing of all incoming stranded passengers was going on at the gateway of Jammu & Kashmir in Lakhampur and at Jammu railway station. After mandatory screening these stranded passengers are being accommodated in administrative quarantine centres till receipt of their confirmatory test reports.

Moreover, 28 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals of Kashmir Division. The Bulletin further said that out of 70,306 test results available, 69,293 samples have tested as negative till May 15, 2020.

Out of 21 fresh cases, Srinagar district reported 11 cases from Kashmir division.

Bandipora, which was earlier labelled as hot spot has shown impressive improvement as a total number of 122 cases have recovered so far and only 12 active cases are under observation in hospitals. **PNS**

## CBI probe demanded over nun’s death in Thiruvalla

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

The death of Divya P John, a final year novitiate trainee at Baselian Convent at Thiruvalla in Kerala on May 7 has become a controversy with a global collective of Keralaites demanding a CBI probe into the incident.

Divya (21) was found dead under mysterious conditions in the well of the convent on May 7 around 11 am and the officials of the Church term it as a case of suicide. But members of JSL, (Justice for Sister Lucy) a global organisation fighting against the Church officials who excommunicated Sister Lucy Kalapurackal from the religious congregation for her uncompromising stance against exploitation of nuns by some of the vicars and bishops of the Church, expressed their reservation over the attitude of the Church superiors who they allege jumped into the conclusion that Divya had committed suicide.

“Divya is the 22nd nun

trainee who was found dead under mysterious conditions. During the last 28 years, we have seen 22 nuns losing their lives under mysterious conditions.

The dead include Sister Abhaya of Pius X Convent, Kottayam. She was found dead under similar conditions in the well of the convent on March 27, 1992 and the Church authorities claimed that it too was a case of suicide,” said Luckose Chullikkara, a devote Catholic from Kasaragod who is an office bearer of the JSL.

The JSL in a representation to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, a copy of which is with The Pioneer has demanded that the probe into the ‘alleged suicide’ by Sr Divya should be handed over to the CBI for an impartial and judicious investigation.

The sped with which the Church officials and the management of the Convent ruled that Divya committed suicide itself evokes suspicion.

## BSNL terminates activist Fathima

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

Rehana Fathima of Kerala, who created a furore all over the country in 2018 for her attempt to enter the Sabarimala Temple following the Supreme Court verdict has been terminated from service by her employer BSNL.

The activist, a regular feature in all anti-establishment agitations in the State and popularly known as Telephone Fathima, courted controversy through her postings in the social media which the believers allege hurt the public sentiments. Her semi-nude pictures had created a sensation in the Kerala society.

The 35 year old technician working in one of the telephone exchanges in Ernakulam city has been asked to go on compulsory retirement by her employers. Fathima was arrested by the Kerala Police in May 2018 on charges of fomenting communal hatred in the State through her words and actions and she has been suspended by the BSNL since then.

PRESS E-TENDER NOTICE							
The Executive Engineer, Civil Division No.- VII, Irrigation & Flood Control Deptt., Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Sector-15, Rohini, Delhi invites online Item rate E-tenders on behalf of the President of India from approved and eligible contractors of I&FC Deptt. The contractors who are registered with other Departments but granted provisional permission by the Chief Engineer (I&FC) are also eligible for participation of e-tendering for the following works:-							
Sr. No	NIT No.	Name of Work	Head of Account	Estimate Cost (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time Allowed	Tender ID No.
							Last date & time for submission on of Price Bid
1.	EE/CD-VII/NIT/2020-21/14	Cleaning of Jungle and maintains of Sub Minor 1 to 5 of CTP Network at Burari.	2702 Revenue	6,89,283/-	13,786/-	45 Days	2020_IFC_190632_1
2.	EE/CD-VII/NIT/2020-21/15	Maintenance & removal of obstruction from Main channel, Saleempur Minor. and Jhroda Minor of CPT Network.	2702 Revenue	11,69,105/-	23,382/-	45 Days	2020_IFC_190635_1
3.	EE/CD-VII/NIT/2020-21/16	Maintenance & removal of obstruction from Mukundpur Minor.	2702 Revenue	6,89,283/-	13,786/-	45 Days	2020_IFC_190636_1
1. The enlistment of the contractors should be valid on the last date of opening of tenders. In the case, the last date of opening of tender is extended, the enlistment of contractor should be valid on the original date of opening of tenders. 2. The details of above mentioned work(s) can be seen and downloaded from the website <a href="http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in">http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in</a> 3. The agencies who do not fulfill eligibility criteria, their tenders shall be rejected summarily at technical bid stage. 4. Tenders submitted through e-procurement portal shall only be considered and no manual tender shall be accepted. 5. Intending tenderers participating in tendering process in EE CD-VII, I&FC shall uploaded scanned copy of earnest money, Registration of enlistment, Copy of ESI & EPF registration, Copy of Pan Card and Copy of GST registration on the website <a href="http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in">http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in</a> while bidding.							
<b>EXECUTIVE ENGINEER</b> Civil Division - VII <b>DIP/Shabdarth/0036/20-21</b>							

WESTERN RAILWAY		
CANCELLATION NOTICE		
Cancellation Notice is issued for the following Tenders		
Sr. No.	Tender Notice No. & Date	Name of Work
1.	BCT/19-20/426, DTD. 09-03-2020, DOP. 20-05-2020	STC-VR Section: Repairs to DN take pipe. cross drainage & valley gutter in connection with monsoon work.
2.	BCT/19-20/422, DTD. 06-03-2020, DOP. 20-05-2020	CCG-VR Sec: Dewatering during monsoon' 2020 in various section of Mumbai division.
3.	BCT/19-20/443, DTD. 17-03-2020, DOP. 22-05-2020	Santacruz-Virar: Repairs to COP between COP & FOB gaps.
4.	BCT/19-20/423, DTD. 06-03-2020, DOP. 22-05-2020	Vasai Road, Naigaon, & Bhayander: Supply of potable drinking watery tanker to Vasai Road colony, stations, service building, Naigaon colony along with newly constructed quarters at Bhayander & Bhayander Rest house for a period of two years
5.	BCT/19-20/442, DTD. 17-03-2020, DOP. 22-05-2020	Andheri, Jogeshwari, Ram Mandir. Goregaon and Borivali: Painting of platform covering in the jurisdiction of SSE (W-11) BVI.
6.	BCT/20-21/15, DTD. 06-04-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	(Zone 7A-1): Santacruz-Virar Sec: General repairs & Painting,white washing, colour washing, distempering polishing etc for Kandivali and Virar crashed in the jurisdiction of SSE(W)Borival
7.	BCT/19-20/451, DTD. 19-03-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Zone 3A-1: New works & all ordinary repairs works in Marine Lines-Khar Section in the jurisdiction of SSE (W-11) Mumbai Central under ADEN(W/S)BA
8.	BCT/19-20/452, DTD. 19-03-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Zone 3A-2: New works & all ordinary repairs in the jurisdiction of SSE (W)Barry under ADEN(W/S)BA
9.	BCT/19-20/453, DTD. 19-03-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Zone 4A: New works & all ordinary repairs works in the jurisdiction of SSE (W-11)Lower Parel, SSE(W-1) PL & SSE(W)Malunga Road under ADEN (Est/S) Lower Parel
10.	BCT/ 19-20/454, DTD. 19-03-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Zone 4A-1: New works & all ordinary repairs works in the jurisdiction of SSE (W)-Pali hill under ADEN(W/S) BA.
11.	BCT/19-20/455, DTD. 19-03-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Zone 5: New works & all ordinary repairs works in the jurisdiction of SSE (W)-Lower Parel under ADEN (W/S)BA.
12.	BCT/20-21/16, DTD. 06-04-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Mel-Khar Sec: Supply of Potable Drinking Water by tankers on Railway Station for a period of two years for Mumbai Central Laundry at PDGR and on Railway Station on Marine Lines-Khar Road Section.
13.	BCT/20-21/149, DTD. 27-04-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Mahalaxmi (workshop):- Supply of potable drinking water by tankers for a period of two year at Mahalaxmi (sports ground), Mahalaxmi (EMU shop), Mahalaxmi (store), Mahalaxmi (RPF colony)
14.	BCT/20-21/36, DTD. 20-04-2020, DOP-26-05-2020	Zone-C -Churchgate-Virar section -General repairs including painting in the jurisdiction of SSE (W-1) Mumbai Central which includes Mumbai Central station (Main), J.R.Hospital, Quarters in J.R.Hospital, Agrpada colony, Skyscraper, 14 officers flat, Reservation Office buildings, DRM's office and all service buildings in Mumbai Central.
15.	BCT/20-21/34, DTD. 20-04-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Zone-A-: Churchgate - Virar Section -General repairs in the jurisdiction of SE(W) Badhwar Park section at Badhwar Park colony, including all Railway Offices flats / quarters, all Recreational buildings etc., at Badhwar Park area in Colaba.
16.	BCT/20-21/35, DTD. 20-04-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Zone-B :-CCG-VR sec. General repairs in the jurisdiction of SE(W) Churchgate in section from CCG, (incl) to Marine Lines (excl) &(incl) CCG Station complex with all Railway Offices therein, Western Railway HQ. Offices, Service bldgs. including Churchgate Rly. Qtrs. In Churchgate
17.	BCT/20-21/37, DTD. 20-04-2020, DOP. 26-05-2020	Horticulture Zone - Churchgate -Virar section - Development of gardens of supply of fertilizers, manure seeds, plants, flower pots, garden equipment and accessories.
Due to technical reasons the above tenders should be treated as cancelled		
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Around the Globe

- **Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan** on Friday said over 150 million Pakistanis have been affected due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown as he urged the provinces to allow public transport to resume operations, reiterating that the country could not afford an indefinite shutdown. Addressing media with his core team to highlight the steps taken to tackle the coronavirus pandemic in the country, Khan said Pakistan cannot impose lockdown like the US, Europe and China. He said that already the lockdown has badly impacted the economic situation in the country, especially the vulnerable segments, including 25 million people who lived on daily or weekly wages.
- **Without wearing a face mask himself, President Donald Trump** toured a mask distribution centre in Pennsylvania on Thursday and announced plans to replenish the US strategic stockpile of medical equipment depleted by the coronavirus outbreak. Trump, a Republican who is running for re-election in November, has resisted wearing a mask in public despite his administration's guidance to Americans to wear them and new White House rules requiring that staff wear them at work.
- **Moscow authorities on Friday began free coronavirus testing for all residents.** Under the programme announced by Mayor Sergei Sobyanin, tests for coronavirus antibodies, a marker of infection, will be conducted at 30 clinics throughout the city. The programme will allow officials "to know precisely how many Muscovites had coronavirus and developed immunity, how many people are infected or are suspected to have coronavirus," the mayor said in a blog post on Thursday.
- **French doctors faced off with President Emmanuel Macron** at a leading Paris hospital Friday, demanding more investment and a rethink of the country's once-renowned public health system that found itself quickly overwhelmed by tens of thousands of virus patients. Macron acknowledged mistakes in reforming the national hospital system, which has faced years of cost cuts, leaving medical facilities in one of the world's richest countries short of staff, masks and breathing machines needed to fight the virus crisis.
- **Taiwanese computer chip giant TSMC announced on Friday it will spend \$12 billion on a state-of-the-art semiconductor foundry in the United States, creating thousands of jobs.** The announcement is a win for President Donald Trump who has pushed for major chipmakers to set up shop inside the US. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, the world's largest contract microchip maker, produces the processors that provide the computing muscle for everything from iPhones, laptops and games consoles to servers and critical internet infrastructure. Construction for the facility in Arizona is set to start in 2021 with production of 5-nanometre chips — the smallest and fastest on the market — beginning in 2024, TSMC said.
- **China has reported 15 new Covid-19 cases,** including 11 asymptomatic ones, taking the total number of coronavirus infections in the country to 82,933, health authorities said on Friday.

# Europe relaxes virus restrictions

## But cases flare elsewhere

AP ■ BERLIN

Several European countries where coronavirus infections have slowed moved ahead Friday with relaxing border restrictions, while the US reported a record drop in retail sales that threatened stores and weighed down the sinking economy. **Infection flare-ups in Mexico** and elsewhere served as a reminder the pandemic is far from over.

**Slovenia**, which has been gradually easing strict lockdown measures, declared that the spread of the virus is now under control and that European Union residents could now enter from Austria, Italy and Hungary.

**Germany** prepared to open its border with Luxembourg at midnight and to increase the number of crossings open from France, Switzerland and Austria. Travelers will still need to demonstrate a "valid reason" to enter Germany, and there will be spot checks, but the goal is to restore free travel by June 15.

In the US, retail sales tumbled by a record 16.4% from March to April as business shutdowns caused by the coronavirus kept shoppers away from stores. The Commerce Department's report Friday on retail purchases showed a sector that has collapsed so quickly that sales over the past 12 months are down a crippling 21.6%.

## Chinese city quarantines thousands over new cluster

AFP ■ BEIJING

A major city in northeast China has quarantined over 7,500 people after it discovered three new coronavirus cases in the past five days as the region sees a surge in infections.

China has largely brought the virus under control after months of lockdowns and curbs on travel, but fears of a second wave have risen as clusters have emerged in northeast provinces and in the central city of Wuhan.

Shenyang, a city of around 7.5 million, reported its first new local case in 89 days on Monday, and a further two new local cases on Thursday.

Its Government confirmed Thursday that the new cases were linked to a cluster in the city of Shulan, nearly 500 kilometres away in neighbouring Jilin province.

## Desperate Venezuelans turn to cow blood soup amid lockdown

AGENCY ■ SAN CRISTOBAL/CARACAS

Since Venezuela went into its coronavirus lockdown, dozens of needy people have been lining up at a slaughterhouse in the western town of San Cristobal to pick up the only protein they can find for free: cattle blood.

Mechanic Aleyair Romero, 20, goes twice a week. He lost his job at a local garage and says boxes of subsidised food from the Government of President Nicolas Maduro

COUNTRY	TOTAL CASES	TOTAL DEATHS
USA	1,465,259	87,303
Spain	2,74,367	27,459
Russia	2,62,843	2,418
UK	2,36,711	33,998
Italy	2,23,885	31,610
Brazil	2,08,031	14,267
Germany	1,75,223	7,933
Turkey	1,46,457	4,055

The sharpest drops from March to April were at clothiers, electronics stores, furniture stores and restaurants. A long-standing migration of consumers toward online purchases is accelerating.

Elsewhere in the U.S., the Grand Canyon National Park was scheduled to reopen Friday to allow visitors in for day trips but not overnight. Some regions in New York were also expected to reopen.

Back in Germany, states agreed to drop a mandatory 14-day quarantine for travelers entering from the EU and several other European countries, including Britain, said Armin Laschet, the governor of the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

In **northern Europe**, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania removed travel restrictions between the Baltic nations, which Estonian Prime Minister Juri Ratas called "another step toward normal life."

**Austria and Switzerland** also moved ahead with easing some border restrictions, and Austria reopened all cafes and restaurants.

## Ireland to start easing lockdown restrictions

AP ■ LONDON

Ireland's Prime Minister, Leo Varadkar, has confirmed that the lockdown restrictions in his country will start to be eased from Monday.

Varadkar said in a tweet that it is "safe to proceed" with the first stage in the Government's plan to ease the restrictions.

Earlier this month, the Irish Government set out a road map of how to reopen society. Each one of the five stages will be staggered three weeks apart.

From Monday, groups of up to four people, who can be family or friends, may meet outdoors within 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) of home. And some workers, such as those in construction, can return to their jobs, while the rules on exercise have been relaxed. And garden centers, as well as other primarily outdoor retail businesses, will be able to reopen. Social distancing rules have to be observed in all cases.

## COVID-19 OUTBREAK



Around 3,05,672 people have died globally from Covid-19. Almost 4,581,519 infections have been confirmed worldwide. More than 1,735,775 people have recovered to date

Restaurants were reopening in more German states as well, and the country was to resume professional soccer on Saturday after a two-month hiatus.

In **Australia**, many Sydney cafes and restaurants opened again as New South Wales, the country's most populous state, granted permission for them, as well as places of worship, to reopen with up to 10 people so long as distancing rules are in place.

Many Catholic churches across the state opened for private prayer, confession and small-scale Masses.

In **Japan**, some schools, restaurants and other businesses started to reopen after the country lifted its national coronavirus emergency, while keeping in place restrictions in limited urban areas like Tokyo where risks remain.

The **head of the World Health Organization's** Europe office, Dr Hans Kluge, warned

that distancing guidance and other protective measures were more important than ever.

"It's very important to remind everyone that as long as there is no vaccine and effective treatment, there is no return to normal," he said on French radio Europe-1.

"This virus won't simply disappear, so the personal behavior of each of us will determine the behavior of the virus. Governments have done a lot, and now the responsibility is on the people."

**Worldwide**, there have been more than 4.4 million coronavirus infections reported and more than 3,00,000 deaths, while nearly 1.6 million people have recovered.

Ahead of **Mexico's** plan to partially reopen key industries such as mining, construction and auto plants on May 18, authorities sounded a note of concern as the country reported its largest one-day rise in

coronavirus case numbers.

There were 2,409 new Covid-19 test confirmations Thursday, the first time that number has exceeded 2,000 in one day. Deaths have neared 4,500, and there were signs that hospital capacity was nearing its limit in Mexico City, the hardest-hit area. The Health Department reported that 73% percent of the city's general-care hospital beds were full. The percentage was lower for intensive-care beds, but that was partly because of the expansion of improvised ICU units at hospitals and other venues.

In **Brazil**, news website G1 reported that 900 people in Rio de Janeiro were waiting for an intensive-care bed in one of the state's overwhelmed units. President Jair Bolsonaro warned of looming "chaos" as he once again lambasted governors and mayors who introduced lockdowns in cities to limit spread of the new virus.

## Teenagers get brief respite from lockdown in Turkey

AP ■ ANKARA

Teenagers left their homes for the first time in 42 days, taking their turn for a few hours of respite from Turkey's coronavirus lockdowns.

People over 65 and younger than 20 have been under curfew for the past several weeks. This week, the government began allowing them to go outdoors for a few hours as part of a program of reduced controls.

Youth filled parks and main streets and outside malls Friday as the curfew was lifted between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Some played basketball or soccer or flew kites in parks, HaberTurk television reported.

Senior citizens were permitted out Sunday and young children 14 and below left homes Wednesday.

The Government has announced a "normalisation plan" as the number of coronavirus cases dropped last week. However, it also warned of tougher measures if infections increase.

## FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

## China asks US to 'meet halfway'

## BEIJING REACTS AFTER TRUMP'S THREAT TO CUT OFF TIES

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Friday reacted guardedly to US President Donald Trump's threat to "cut off" the bilateral relationship between the world's top two economies and asked America to meet it halfway in the fight against the coronavirus.

Relations between the two countries nosedived after the coronavirus outbreak, which originated from the central Chinese city of Wuhan, and spread to other parts of the world.

The pandemic has claimed over 85,000 lives in the US, the highest in the world.

Trump, who has been pressing China to agree for an inquiry into the origin of the virus, including the allegation that it emerged from a bio-lab in Wuhan, further hardened his rhetoric on Thursday by threatening to cut off US ties with Beijing.

Reacting to Trump's threat, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian reacted guardedly, saying that the relationship is in the fundamental interest of the two countries. "To maintain the steady development of China-US relations is in the fundamental interests of the people

in both countries, and is conducive to world peace and stability," Zhao said.

"At present, China and the US should continue to strengthen cooperation against the epidemic, defeat the epidemic as soon as possible, treat patients, and restore economy and production. But it requires the US to meet halfway with China," Zhao said.

There has been increasing pressure on Trump from American lawmakers to take action against China.

"There are many things we could do ... We could cut off the whole relationship," Trump said on Thursday in an interview with Fox Business News. "You'd save USD 500 billion if you cut off the whole relationship." Trump said that his relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping is "very good" but added: "right now I just don't want to speak to him". Trump's threat followed after China on Tuesday released a new list of US products which will be exempted from the second round of additional tariffs on American products.

Trump launched a trade war with China in 2018, demanding Beijing to reduce a massive trade deficit of over USD 539 billion.

## AROUND THE WORLD IN PICTURES



Workers in protective gear sanitize beneath the baroque sculpted bronze canopy of St. Peter's Baldachin inside St. Peter's Basilica, at the Vatican, Friday, May 15, 2020. Churches in Italy are preparing to reopen to the public for masses from May 18 after Italy partially lifted restrictions last week following a two-month lockdown due to Covid-19



Passengers arrive at the Barcelona airport, Spain, on Friday. Travellers arriving in Spain from overseas start from Friday going into a 14-day confinement as the country takes timid steps toward re-opening borders with eyes set on reactivating the crucial tourism industry



Grave diggers wearing protective suits bury a Covid-19 victim as relatives and friends stand at a safe distance, in the section of a cemetery reserved for coronavirus victims in Kolpino, outside St.Petersburg, Russia, on Friday

## US on track to pull troops from Af despite turmoil

**Washington:** The United States is on track to meet its commitment to the Taliban to withdraw several thousand troops from Afghanistan by summer, even as violence flares, the peace process is stalled, and Kabul struggles in political deadlock.

US officials said they will reduce to 8,600 troops by July 15 and abandon five bases. And by next spring all foreign forces are suppose to withdraw, ending America's longest war. Yet the outlook for peace is cloudy at best. In the absence of Afghan peace talks, the Trump administration may face the prospect of fully withdrawing even as the Taliban remains at war with the government.

That has concerned some lawmakers, including Rep. Liz Cheney, a Wyoming Republican and member of the House

Armed Services Committee. She says the United States needs to keep a military and intelligence presence in Afghanistan to prevent extremist groups like al-Qaida and the Islamic State's Afghan affiliate from forming havens from which to attack the US.

"Withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan won't end the war — it will just let the terrorists win," she told The Associated Press.

Some question whether the US-Taliban agreement signed in Doha, Qatar, on Feb. 29, which the Trump administration billed as "a decisive step to achieve a negotiated peace," was instead mainly a withdrawal agreement. President Donald Trump had campaigned on bringing troops home from foreign wars. **AP**

## US sees 'convincing case' to name Cuba as sponsor of terrorism: Report

**Washington:** The US is considering returning Cuba to its list of state sponsors of terrorism, a senior Trump administration official told Reuters on Thursday, a move that would mark another major blow to increasingly tense relations between Washington and Havana.

There is a "convincing case" that Cuba should be placed back on the US blacklist, in part because of its continued backing for socialist Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and the refuge it gives to leaders of Colombia's ELN rebel group, the official said.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, the official did not rule out that a decision on Cuba's re-listing could come by the end of the year. **Agency**

## Biden says he would not pardon Trump or block probes

AP ■ ATLANTA

Democratic candidate Joe Biden said that if he wins the presidency he would not use his power to pardon Donald Trump or stop any investigations of Trump and his associates.

"It is not something the president is entitled to do, to direct a prosecution or decide to drop a case," Biden said Thursday on MSNBC. "It's a dereliction of duty."

The former vice president made his statement in response to a voter who asked him on Lawrence O'Donnell's show, "The Last Word," whether he would "commit to not pulling a Gerald Ford in giving Donald

Trump a pardon under the pretense of healing the nation."

Biden responded, "I commit," before offering a more lengthy explanation of his view that the president must allow the Justice Department to operate without interference.

Ford became president in 1974 when Richard Nixon resigned under the threat of impeachment.

Ford later pardoned his predecessor before any criminal charges related to the Watergate burglary could be filed. Ford went on to lose the 1976 presidential election.

The House impeached Trump in December on charges related to his effort to

withhold congressionally appropriated funds from Ukraine in exchange for officials there assisting Trump in sullyng Biden. The Senate acquitted him in February on a nearly party line vote.

Biden also said on O'Donnell's show that voters who believe the former Senate staffer who has accused him of sexually assaulting her in the early 1990s probably shouldn't cast their ballots for him in November.

"I think they should vote their heart, and if they believe Tara Reade they probably shouldn't vote for me," Biden told O'Donnell. "I wouldn't vote for me if I believed Tara Reade."

## Hong Kong shop offers 'tear gas' flavor ice cream

AP ■ HONG KONG

Tear gas is among the new flavors at a Hong Kong ice cream shop.

The main ingredient is black peppercorns, a reminder of the pungent, peppery rounds fired by police on the streets of the semi-autonomous Chinese city during months of demonstrations last year.

"It tastes like tear gas. It feels difficult to breathe at first, and it's really pungent and irritating. It makes me want to drink a lot of water immediately," said customer Anita Wong, who experienced tear gas at a protest. "I think it's a flashback that reminds me of how painful I felt in the movement, and that I should-

n't forget."

The flavor is a sign of support for the pro-democracy movement, which is seeking to regain its momentum during the coronavirus pandemic, the shop's owner said.

He spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid repercussions from the pro-Beijing government.

"We would like to make a flavor that reminds people that they still have to persist in the protest movement and don't lose their passion," he said. He tried different ingredients, including wasabi and mustard, in an effort to replicate the taste of tear gas. Black pepper, he said, came closest to tear gas with its throat-irritating effects.



INDIA'S FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

World Bank approves \$1 bn loan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The World Bank on Friday approved a USD 1 billion loan to support India's efforts for providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The "Accelerating India's Covid-19 Social Protection Response Program" will support the government's efforts towards a more consolidated delivery platform - accessible to both rural and urban populations across state boundaries. This takes the total commitment from the World Bank towards emergency Covid-19 response in India to USD 2 billion. A USD 1 billion support was announced last month towards immediate support to

India's health sector.

The multilateral lending agency is also in discussions with the government to provide assistance to India's micro, small and medium enterprises, said World Bank Country Director in India Junaid Ahmad in a webinar with media. The response to the Covid-19 pandemic around the world has required governments to introduce social distancing and lockdowns in unprecedented ways, he said. These measures, intended to slowdown the spread of the virus have, however, impacted economies and jobs - especially in the informal sector. India with the world's largest lockdown has not been an exception to this trend. Of the USD 1 billion commitment, USD 550 million will

be financed by a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) — the World Bank's concessional lending arm and USD 200 million will be a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), with a final maturity of 18.5 years including a grace period of five years. The remaining USD 250 million will be made available after June 30, 2020. The programme will be implemented by the Union Ministry of Finance. In a release, the World Bank said the new support will be funded in two phases - an immediate allocation of USD 750 million for fiscal year 2020 (fiscal year starting July 1, 2020) and a USD 250 million second tranche that will be

made available for fiscal year 2021. Ahmad added the Covid-19 pandemic has also put the spotlight on some of the gaps in the existing social protection systems. This platform draws on the country's existing architecture of safety nets - the PDS, the digital and banking infrastructure, and Aadhaar — while positioning the overall social protection system for the needs of a 21st century India. "What Covid-19 had done is that it has actually gotten the government to create linkages between the system and begin to move the social protection system of India, what I think will be the 21st century system. "It is in this context we have put in USD 1 billion following USD 1 billion in health

and in anticipation of a third programme which will be around the small and small enterprises...," he said. Ahmad added the World Bank was in the process of discussing a MSMEs programme with the Government. He said liquidity has come into the market through the monetary and fiscal policies and "the challenge now is to take that liquidity and bring it into the hands of the MSMEs... We will be coming in to support that. Where exactly and how much is something that we are in discussion with the Government". Replying to a query on the Rs 20-lakh-crore package announced by the government, Ahmad said it is a "very important statement by the Government".

Road Min seeks suggestions on MVA amendment on emission, noise

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has invited suggestions and comments from all stakeholders, including general public on the proposed amendment in the Motor Vehicle Rules, regarding compliance to Emission and Noise Standards. A notification to this effect has been issued. The draft notification is regarding revision of form 22, Road worthiness Certificate for compliance to Emission and Noise Standards, issued by the manufacturer or importer or registered E-rickshaw or E-cart association in case of E-rickshaw or E- cart. "This form has amalgamated the existing two tables to a single table for the sake of simplicity and added some pollutant parameters in line with next stage emission norms," said the official. Earlier too, the Centre had invited suggestions and comments for the proposed amendment of Rule 115 to mandate BS VI level emission norms for Quadricycle with effect from April 1, 2020. The proposed emission norms (Tail pipe emission, OBD) are in line with European norms. Existing BS IV mass emission limits are in line with Euro 4 mass mission limits for L7e-C category vehicles (equivalent to Quadricycle). The proposed emission limits as BS VI are in line with Euro 5 mass emission limits which will be applicable from 01-01-2020 in Europe. Threshold limits for emission pollutants, conformity of production (CoP) frequency and sampling plan have been proposed.

Rajnath approves setting up of testing facilities for domestic Defence industry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the objective of giving a boost to the domestic defence and aerospace manufacturing capabilities, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday approved the launch of Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS) with an outlay of Rs 400 crore. This allocation will enable creating state of the art testing infrastructure for this sector. Giving details of the project, officials said here the Scheme would run for the duration of five years and envisages to set up six to eight new test facilities in partnership with private industry. This will facilitate indigenous defence production, consequently reduce imports of military equipment and help make the country self-reliant. The projects under the Scheme will be provided with up to 75 per cent government funding in the form of 'Grant-in-Aid'. The remaining 25 per cent of the project cost will have to be borne by the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) whose constituents will be Indian private entities and State Governments. The SPVs under the Scheme will be registered under Companies Act 2013 and shall also operate and maintain all assets under the Scheme, in a self-sustainable manner by collecting user charges. The equipment/systems tested will be certified as per appropriate accreditation. While majority of test facilities are expected to come up in the two Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs), the Scheme

is not limited to setting up Test Facilities in the DICs only, they said.

Rajnath Singh commissions Coast Guard ship, two interceptor boats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday commissioned through video conference here a ship and two Interceptor Boats (IB) into the Indian Coast Guard in Goa. With the latest inductions, the Coast Guard now has 150 ships and boats and 62 aircraft. The ships, on joining the fleet, will be deployed extensively for Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance, coastal security and other duties as enshrined in the Coast Guard charter of duties, to safeguard the maritime interests of the nation, the Coast Guard said here. The ship 'Sachee' is the first in the series of five off-shore patrol vessels (OPVs) being built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL). The IBs C-450 and C-451 are indigenously designed and built by Larsen & Toubro Shipyard Hazira. The two 30 metre long boats are capable of achieving speeds in excess of 45 knots and designed for high speed interception, close coast patrol and low intensity maritime operations.

Markets end marginally lower Bank stocks slide; post weekly loss

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark BSE Sensex ended marginally lower after a choppy session on Friday as investors weighed the fiscal impact of the government's economic stimulus. According to market experts, participants fear that the Rs 20 lakh crore package may not result in direct and immediate boost to demand, raising doubts over the country's economic revival in the near term. After slumping over 350 points during the day, the 30-share index pared most losses to settle 25.16 points or 0.08 per cent lower at 31,097.73. Similarly, NSE Nifty slipped 5.90 points, or 0.06 per cent, to close at 9,136.85. M&M was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, cracking 4.70 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, Hero MotoCorp, Sun Pharma and ICICI Bank. On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, Asian Paints, Tata Steel, NTPC, HUL and Reliance spurted up to 2.68 per cent.



grains for migrant workers, Rs 2 lakh crore concessional credit to farmers and working capital for street vendors in a bid to help those hit hard by the nationwide lockdown. Announcing the third tranche of the stimulus package post market hours on Friday, she said the measures will focus on giving relief to agriculture and allied industries. Sectorally, BSE realty, bankex, auto, finance, IT, healthcare and capital goods indices fell up to 1.42 per cent, while telecom, metal, energy, power, oil and gas, basic materials and FMCG rose up to 1.81 per cent. Broader midcap and smallcap indices fell up to 0.31 per cent. World equities ticked higher as investors focused on graded resumption of economic activities. Bourses in Tokyo and Seoul closed with gains, while Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a positive note in early deals. On the currency front, the rupee provisionally settled 2 paise lower at 75.58 against the US dollar.

Gadkari expresses displeasure over delays in according green nod to projects

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday expressed displeasure over inordinate delays in according environmental clearances to projects, saying it causes hindrances in execution of works. Observing that files seeking environment and forest clearances are sometimes stuck for as long as two years, Gadkari said "by then the bank (sanctioning the loan) runs away and the account turns NPA (non-performing asset)". The union MSME minister said there was "no time clause" for according time-bound clearances, causing delays in giving no-objection certificate to projects. Addressing a webinar on higher education organised by industry body Ficci, Gadkari — who also holds road transport and highways portfolio — exhorted Indian educational institutions to forge industrial tie-ups and collaborate with foreign universities to attract overseas students for increasing their economic viability and mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on them. Gadkari also highlighted government plans to form joint ventures in micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, upgrade technologically and attract foreign investment. Stating that there are 1.5 lakh deaths in 5 lakh road accidents in the country every year, the minister also proposed that students from IITs and other engineering institutes could be engaged in carrying out road audits to identify "black spots" through assessing various defects in road designing including curves and traffic density.

Top 10 States account for 80% of under-construction NH projects hit due to Covid

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Top 10 States, including Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh account for 80 per cent of the under-construction national highway projects hit due to the Covid-19 outbreak, Crisil Research said on Friday. Construction of national highways came to a grinding halt with the nationwide lockdown imposed on March 25 to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. However, to the relief of developers, the Government allowed resumption of construction from April 20, subject to clearances from district administrations, it said. But activity remains stalled due to severe shortage of labour and raw material, and difficulty in securing requisite clearances, it said in a statement. "What's more, the Centre has divided districts into red, orange and green zones based on the extent of contagion. Only insitu construction is allowed in red zones until the next announcement. CRISIL Research's analysis of over 270 under-construction national highways indicates the Top 10 states account for 80 per cent of the projects," it said. Projects are most at risk in four of these states — Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh — that account for over a third of the projects, it said.

WESTERN RAILWAY						
VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION WORKS						
Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer, (Construction) Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara invites E-tender as per details given below:-						
Sr. No.	Tender Notice No & Date	Work & Location	Approx. Cost of Work in ₹	EMD in ₹	Date of Submission	Date of Opening/ Extended
1	TR-C-4-2020RI DId:-14.05.20	Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV AC OHE between Dabhoi - Badoli Section on Vadodara Division of Western Railway in connection with Electrification of Existing BG line Between Dabhoi - Chhota Udepur Section.	₹17,58,36,818.00	₹10,29,200/-	14.05.2020	05.08.2020
2	TR-C-7-2020RI DId:-14.05.20	Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV AC OHE between Ankleshwar Rajpipla Section on Vadodara Division of Western Railway in connection with Electrification of Existing BG line.	₹19,74,31,489.35	₹11,37,200/-	14.05.2020	08.06.2020
3	TR-C-9-2020RI DId:-14.05.20	Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of SCADA between PARTN-DB-CTD.MYG-SMLA,DB-CDD-KEVADIVA section on BRC Divn of Western Railway.	₹4,70,47,859.60	₹3,85,200/-	14.05.2020	08.06.2020
4	TR-C-10-2020RI DId:-14.05.20	Modification of HT overhead power line of MGVL, Railway track crossing between Anand - Khambhat, Vasad - Kathana, AKV - Raj and KBRV - VDTL Section in connection with execution of RE work of WR. Sanction in budget 18-19 from CORE to WR.	₹1,85,80,140.60	₹2,42,900/-	14.05.2020	05.08.2020
Regarding detailed nature of work, containing cost of the tender document (non refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions, please visit <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> Manual offers will not be considered.						
Like us on <a href="https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly">facebook.com/WesternRly</a> Follows us on <a href="https://www.twitter.com/WesternRly">twitter.com/WesternRly</a>						

हरीयाना सरकार						
TENDER NOTICE						
SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HSAM BOARD, KAITHAL.	CONSTRUCTION OF MINI SOIL TESTING LABORATORY IN NGM PUNDRI (M.C. PUNDRI) (DEPOSIT WORK OF AGRICULTURE DEPTT.) + 2 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 09.06.2020	16.11 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01746-222374 xenkaithal1.hsamb@gmail.com
2	HARYANA SEED DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED	E-TENDER AUCTION FOR DISPOSAL OF CONDEMNED/SWEEPING OF VARIOUS CROPS	14.05.2020 27.05.2020	1 LAKH	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9416315354 mohsdccl@gmail.com
3	MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BAHADURGARH	PROVIDING AND FIXING OF SOLAR LIGHT IN WARD NO. 05 IN BAHADURGARH CITY + 4 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 03.06.2020	91.22 LACS	ETENDERS.HRY.NIC.IN	9350496582 NAVEENDHANKHAR@GMAIL.COM
4	THE BALLABGARH. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS' UNION LTD	SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF PUF PANEL INSULATION AS PER SPECIFICATION	15.05.2020 04.06.2020	20000/-	<a href="http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in">http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in</a> <a href="http://www.vitaindia.org.in">www.vitaindia.org.in</a>	9968604725 vitabtp@gmail.com
5	H.S.A.M. BOARD, PANCHKULA.	PDG. CONNECTIVITY OF SYNCHRONIZING PUMP WITH 2NOS. D.G. SET 500 KVA IN AGRO SHOPPING MALL SEC-20 AT PANCHKULA	15.05.2020 28.05.2020	6.07 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	9812100311 xenelectcpd2019@yahoo.com
6	HVPNL, ROHTAK	CONST. OF AC KIOSK, 132KV BREAKER, 33KV BREAKER AND CAPACITOR BANK FOUNDATION AT 132KV S/STN MACHHROULLI	CLOSING DATE 27.05.2020	7.75 LACS	<a href="https://www.hvpng.org.in">https://www.hvpng.org.in</a>	0172-2583789 pro@hvpng.org.in
7	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION PANCHKULA	PROVIDING MINI HIGH MAST IN THE PARK NEAR H.NO. 871, SEC-7, PKL, UNDER MUNICIPAL CORPORATION PANCHKULA. (RECALL) 14 OTHER WORKS	15.05.2020 26.05.2020	47.06 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION kindly visit : <a href="http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in">www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in</a> or <a href="http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in">www.etenders.hry.nic.in</a> RO NO. 80903						

हरीयाना सरकार						
TENDER NOTICE						
SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD (B&R) JHAJJAR	RENEWAL COAT BY PROVIDING 20MM THICK PC ON DIGHAL RAILWAY STATION ROAD IN JHAJJAR DISTRICT (ROAD ID 10028) + 1 OTHER WORKS	14.05.2020 28.05.2020	25.95 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01251-252085
2	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGG. DIVISION NO.1 KARNAL	ESTIMATE FOR PROVIDING ESTATE HEALTH SERVICES IN NEW BUS STAND, TARAORI TOWN DISTT. KARNAL. PROVIDING & INSTALLING 1 NO. TUBE WELL (250 MM X 200 MM I/D) UP TO DEPTH 152 MTR. IN NEW BUS STAND TARAORI TOWN DISTT. KARNAL AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERE TO. + 1 OTHER WORKS	14.05.2020 21.05.2020	46.91 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0184-2266603 ee1karnal@phedharyana.gov.in
3	PWD (B&R) CHANDIGARH	PROTECTION WORK OVER SUKHNA BRIDGE X-ING PINJORE TO KALKA ROAD IN PANCHKULA DISTT. ( AT KM. 3.00 ) + 6 OTHER WORKS	11.05.2020 01.06.2020	2.76 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
4	PWD (B&R) NARNAUL	UP-GRADATION OF 100 TO 200 BEDED CIVIL HOSPITAL AT NARNAUL IN MOHINDERGARH DISTRICT (CM ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 20561 DATED 13.11.2017)	CLOSING DATE 03.06.2020	2109.86 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01282-251267 pwd-eeep-narnaaul@hry.nic.in
5	DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, JHAJJAR	ENGAGING THE PLACEMENT AGENCY FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR DEPLOYMENT OF UN-SKILLED, SEMI-SKILLED, SKILLED AND HIGHLY SKILLED CATEGORIES ON OUTSOURCING/ CONTRACT BASIS	14.05.2020 26.05.2020	50000/-	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01251-257258 dfojjar@rediffmail.com
6	PWD (B&R) GURUGRAM	CONSTRUCTION OF EXCISE AND TAXATION DEPARTMENT BUILDING SECTOR 32 AT GURGAON PDG. FIRE ALARM WITH P.A. SYSTEM + 24 OTHER WORKS	14.05.2020 25.05.2020	EMD 3.82 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01282-2320874 Pwd-eeed-gurgaon@hry.nic.in
7	DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, YAMUNA NAGAR	NEW WORK IN PLANTATION IN KALESAR BLOCK OF KALESAR RANGE + 18 OTHER WORKS	14.05.2020 20.05.2020	3.15 CRORE	<a href="http://www.haryanaforest.gov.in">www.haryanaforest.gov.in</a>	dfo-ynr-hry@nic.in
8	PANCHAYATI RAJ PANIPAT	CONST. OF PHIRNI WITH IPBL AT VILLAGE NARA, BLOCK MADLOUDA IN DISTRICT PANIPAT + 16 OTHER WORKS	19.05.2020 26.05.2020	347.25 LACS	<a href="https://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a>	8607592650
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION kindly visit : <a href="http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in">www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in</a> or <a href="http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in">www.etenders.hry.nic.in</a> RO NO. 80898						


Mobile phone firms write to Shipping, Aviation Ministries for waiver of demurrage charges

New Delhi: Mobile phone companies have approached shipping and civil aviation ministries seeking waiver of demurrage charges for cargo which could not be lifted during the lockdown period. While the shipping ministry had waived entire demurrage charges due to lockdown restrictions, Civil Aviation Ministry had given waiver for half of the charges during the period. Mobile devices industry body India Cellular and Electronics Association said despite the order of the ministry, some of the ports, container freight stations and shipping companies are not waiving the charges. ICEA said the Government has taken several decisions to help industry, which includes 100% waiver of demurrage charges during lockdown.


NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const., Northern Railway, Shakurbasti, Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under SINGLE PACKET system for the under noted work:-	
1. Name of work and location	"Plantation of 2310 no of plants, transplantation of 70 no's trees and maintenance of plants/trees on land of Railway in Delhi area Delhi Rohtak Section
2. Completion period of the work	04 MONTHS
3. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 72.31 LAKH
4. Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)	Rs. 144630/-
5. Sale /availability of tender document on Railway Web site	Tender documents will be available on IREPS web site i.e <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 22.05.2020 to 05.06.2020 upto 11:30 hrs.
6. Last date/Time of upload of tenders	05.06.2020 upto 11.30 hrs. Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS web site w.e.f 22.05.2020 to 05.06.2020
7. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	05.06.2020 at 11:30 hours (immediately after closed of uploading of tender (D2). In case of two packet system. Financial bid of the eligible tenderer would be opened subsequently on the date and time to be notified later: on.
8. Opening of tender	05.06.2020 at 11.30 hours (immediately after closed of uploading of tender
Tender Notice No.370-ACS-C-SSB Dated: 05.05.2020	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

GOVT. OF MAHARASHTRA	
Public Works Division, Pune - 411 001	
Phone No. 020/26122485 & 26122414 Fax No. 020/26122485	
Web:- <a href="http://www.mahapwd.com">www.mahapwd.com</a> & e-mail:- <a href="mailto:pune.ee@mahapwd.com">pune.ee@mahapwd.com</a>	
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 1 FOR 2020-2021 (Short Period)	
Corrigendum No. 2	
This office e-Tender Notice No. 1 For 2020-2021 and Corrigendum No. 1 Published in Daily New Paper and any technical reasons Please read the changes for Work Name, Estimated Cost and Tender time schedule as mentioned below for Work No. 4.	
Name of Work	:- Providing, Supplying, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of CCTV, LAN, Telephone, Wireless, Fire Fighting & Fire Detection services in addition to Installation of Tensile Fabric roof and Miscellaneous civil works in G+11 Multistoried Building and Mortuary Building at Sassoon General Hospital and B.J. Medical College, Pune
Estimate Cost	:- Rs. 7.25,58,500/-
Last Date of Sale of Tender Document	:- Dt. 30/05/2020 @ 18.00 hrs.
Pre-bid Meeting.	:- Dt. 26/05/2020 @ 11.00 hrs. In the Office of The Chief Engineer, P.W. Region, New Central Building, Pune -1.
Last Date of online Submission of Tender	:- Dt. 30/05/2020 @ 18.00 hrs.
Period of online Tender opening	:- Dt. 02/06/2020 @ 10.00 hrs. (If Possible)
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Public Work Division, Pune 411001.	






**SHRADDHA KAPOOR**  
A lot of us are feeling anxious and caged during this lockdown. Imagine being taken away from your home and being locked for your entire life? Animals have feelings just like us. They get depressed when separated from their natural habitats. Why should we believe that we have the right to take away their freedom?




**BHUMI PEDNEKAR**  
I wanted to learn Kathak for a long time as my mother is a trained Kathak dancer. So for about an hour in evening this is what me and my mom do. She is quite enjoying it and I'm loving learning it from her. I am also using my time to read something at a stretch and making full use of the time at hand.



**CELINA JAITLEY**  
When I gave birth to my first set of twins, I realised that after delivery a woman's body becomes very weak and we need to take special care of ourselves. I was low on vitamins, energy, bone density, and calcium. I would feel extremely weak. Weight training helped me a lot post-pregnancy.



**RICHA CHADHA**  
I made videos on my phone and just forwarded them to my staff because I want them to be safe and healthy through this period. Obviously, taking care of them financially is my duty but I also wanted them to know the proper guidelines to follow social distancing when they step out to buy their groceries and other essentials.



**PAUL RUDD**  
One of the fun thing was to play as Scott. He is regular person who has been thrust into this world. So I think when you watch him in *Civil War* and even in the *Ant-Man* films, you try to process everything you know of.

DIALOGUE 60 MINUTES

# BRAVE NEW WORLD

There is no going back to business as usual when we emerge from the pandemic. AMITABH TANEJA, chairman of SCAI, PUSHPA BECTOR, executive director of DLF Shopping Malls, RAJNEESH MAHAJAN, CEO of Inorbit Malls, RASHMI SEN, Group COO — Malls of The Phoenix Mills Ltd, PANKAJ RENJHEN, COO of Virtuous Retail and MUKESH KUMAR, CEO of Infiniti Malls, describe how we shop, eat and spend our leisure at malls is all set to change. By AYUSHI SHARMA

You enter the mall parking area and are waived away by the attendant that there is no space. Deciding to subvert the inconvenience, you park in the nearby area and walk towards the mall, where you are halted at the entrance and asked to wait as the number of people inside is already one customer per 75 sqft Gross Leasable Area (GLA). After more than 45 minutes, you enter the mall but not before thermal checks and passing through a sanitisation tunnel. Once inside, distance markers indicate where to stand. Deciding to pick up clothes? You can take assistance of the virtual mirror, which will show you how a garment looks on you without trying it on. If you want to grab a quick bite, be prepared for plexi sheets in front of the Quick Service Restaurants in the food court. And yes, if you want to head to the washroom, you might have to wait there, too, as only the alternate urinals are in use. Welcome to the new normal.

Earlier, a plan to pick up shoes, clothes and grocery would inevitably mean a trip to any of the malls that dot the city's landscape. Whether we picked up the things that we had set out to or not was always debatable but what we did end up doing was venturing out, socialising and eating — rituals that we took for granted. It was a part of the normal, as we knew it, before a microscopic virus turned the idea on its head.

Amid the life of absolute uncertainty, fear and concern, the Coronavirus pandemic has left nothing untouched and thus, severely impacted every business. It is not easy to imagine the post-pandemic scenario, however, experts say that it will take a long time for retail to return to normal.

The Shopping Centres Association of India (SCAI) recently hosted the third of SCAI Mondays, a series aimed at redressing the unprecedented challenges posed to the Indian shopping centre development ecosystem by the pandemic. Many retail leaders feel that the idea of opening shopping malls can actually help accelerate the economy, of course, keeping a stringent and comprehensive set of measures to ensure a safe and hygienic environment.

The virtual roundtable, titled *Retail and Shopping Centres: 2020-21 and Beyond*, was moderated by S Raghunandhan, president-commercial, Bhartiya City Developers. The panelists included — Pushpa Bector, executive director of DLF Shopping Malls, Rajneesh Mahajan, CEO of Inorbit Malls, Rashmi Sen, Group COO-Malls of The Phoenix Mills Ltd and Pankaj Renjhen, COO of Virtuous Retail.

Going by the news that the situation will take some time to return to normal, it will be quite interesting to see how shopping malls would welcome consumers post-lockdown. On the other side of the spectrum, as per the surveys and research conducted by DLF Shopping Malls, it was found out that there will be two categories of consumers post-lockdown — first being those who desperately want to get back to pre-pandemic life and the second category would be of those who will be more cautious of visiting malls.



democ life and the second category would be of those who will be more cautious of visiting malls.

Pushpa Bector, executive director of DLF Shopping Malls, shared that it appears that people's anxieties won't settle anytime soon. But that does not mean that the consumer will not return to malls. In fact, according to a recent survey done by NFX for SCAI, approximately 70 per cent of consumers are willing to return to malls within a fortnight of their opening up. Shopping priorities might change and preference may be given to essentials, but the activity will definitely take place. "We also see interest in segments like electronics and beauty, which could attract a large part of the consumers visiting malls after these open up. The fact remains that there is pent up demand, consumers are looking at ways to release their energy and what better place than malls?," said she.

One change that Pushpa predicts in consumer behaviour is a rise in nationalism where 'Made in India' brands would be preferred more in the first three months.

In the larger context, one must also understand that people visited malls not only for shopping. "It was a place for socialising, getting together and spending time with family. Malls are a social infrastructure. We must give people some time before they return. We are ready and plans are in place to make sure that the consumers get a safe and hygienic experience when they return," she added.

As far as the retailers are concerned, Pushpa told us that they are very eager to open their stores. Some are little skeptical and worried, while others are confident of coming out stronger once the lockdown ends. She said, "Currently, they are also concerned about their inventory. Despite having so much stuff, their spring and the summer collections are lying in stores, untouched and unsold. We need to sort this out together by helping them ease it out. Marketing in the coming days will become one-to-one in nature, with lots of data exchange. A lot of digital marketing along with hyperlocal marketing will come into action."

Now, the question arises if the lockdown phase would affect the Indian retail consumption growth rate? Rashmi Sen, Group COO — Malls of The Phoenix Mills Ltd, believes that India is the most attractive retail market of the world today and its consumption story is very strong. "I don't think two months of lockdown can dent the consumption growth rate of India. We have seen that during demonetisation too, the sales rate picked up by the end of the year," said she.

"If you look at the Indian economy, agriculture and Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS) are large components of the

GDP. If these two sectors continue to run strong, I think the recovery will be fast," added Rajneesh Mahajan, CEO of Inorbit Malls.

Rashmi feels that the challenge is similar worldwide. It is not only India. Be it forthcoming malls or established ones, this phase of slow or almost zero growth will be short-lived. "For us, the safety and the confidence of consumers are priorities as we will be initiating strong protocol measures for our retailers and consumers. I would not be worried about whether the consumers will be coming or not but our main concern, in the initial period, would be restricting footfalls actually. The shopping behaviour in the short-run will be very subjective and necessity-led rather than leisure-led," she said. Moreover, there would be people concerned about venturing out into crowded places initially. In order to overcome this, Rashmi explained, "The focus would be on inculcating confidence in consumers that malls are a safe place for shopping."

Phoenix's marketing budget earlier was huge with many activities and events — which would not take place now. For the next three months, they won't organise any outdoor activity. The focus will be on the loyalty programmes to stay connected with the consumers so that they can get real-time information.

Similarly, communication would be Virtuous Retail's first strategy. "The first bit of marketing will be giving out a message emphasising on developing comfort and confidence of the customers to visit the shopping mall. We will also be highlighting the steps and measures that we would be taking to ensure their safety and making the consumers aware of

them. Moving forward, we know we cannot go with the traditional marketing strategy which we had in the past. I think this is going to be a much more focused approach," shared Pankaj Renjhen, COO, Virtuous Retail.

Asked about the steps mall developers are planning to adopt for ensuring the safety and sanitisation of the place and people, Amitabh Taneja, chairman of SCAI, shared that the organisation has developed a stringent and comprehensive set of SOPs. These guidelines have been developed after several consultations with captains of the industry and taking references from global best practices implemented by countries like Singapore, Germany and China, where the malls have started opening slowly. For instance, he pointed out, "Thermal screening of every customer will be done before s/he enters the malls. There will be controlled entry and exit. Malls will be operational from 12 pm to 9 pm on all days initially. At any given point, we would have only one customer per 75 sqft Gross Leasable Area (GLA), which is the amount of floor space available to be rented in a commercial property."

However, the checks would not end here. Anyone entering the mall including staff, visitors, contractors would have to undergo mandated temperature screening and checks. Distance markers will be installed at the entry points, cash counters and help desk. There would also be category-wise opening in various phases in accordance with government directives. The first phase will be dedicated to essential services and products in super market, infant clothing's, eyewear, WFH electronics, apparel, personal care, salon and spa

with 50 per cent of capacity and prior appointments only. The second phase will be dedicated to food court and F&B outlets. The last to open would be multiplex and entertainment centres. In case of dine-in outlets, the seating arrangements would be reduced to 50 per cent, where contact less menus and digital invoices will be encouraged. There would be repeated sanitisation and cleaning of all the common areas of the mall premises including toilets, lifts and entrance areas every 30 to 60 minutes. To restrict the entry, only 50 per cent of total parking capacity would be operational. The number of customers allowed in the washrooms would be restricted according to the size and only alternate urinals would be allowed to be used. Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) would have plexi sheets (transparent sheets) at front areas with separate cash and serving windows to minimise physical contact. "These are some of the recommendations and top-line measures I have highlighted. A detailed 48-page SOP is in place and circulated across the industry for implementation," he said.

Major portion of any mall is dedicated personal shopping — clothes, shoes or accessories. And trying before buying has always been the norm when readymade garments are being purchased. Here comes in the aspect of touch and feel. So in a situation, where maintaining distance is the only solution, how will customers ensure that the outfit or the accessories they are trying out is safe? Mukesh Kumar, CEO of Infiniti Malls, has a solution for this, too. He said, "We don't really see a big challenge for top wear, which can be purchased without even trying.

That completely depends on the customers. However, for bottom wear, one usually prefers the concept of 'try and buy'. To tackle this issue, retailers are working on a model where customers can take two to three garments home and return those which don't fit. Then those tried pieces will have to be sent back to the manufacturing unit to be sanitised. Meanwhile, the fresh stock can be used for trials. This is pertaining to the size. Disinfecting of all such goods will become a normal and routine procedure for each and every other shop, be it footwear, apparel or jewellery. Here, trust on the brand you are purchasing from will become very important.

"Also, there are technology available where buyer can just place the garment on them and see in the mirror how it looks. It's know as virtual fitting rooms," added he.

COVID-19 has changed everything, right from the way we travel to how we shop. So will there be a rise in online shopping as well? And can virtual reality, a welcome escape from the pandemic, ever be a substitute for the real thing? Well, there is no denying that online shopping has seen quite a surge. But that is also owing to limited options in the brick and mortar space when the lockdown was first announced, feels Amitabh. He said, "We must understand that online is yet another channel for retailing and it will always co-exist with the traditional ones. Some categories could work better online, while some would be preferred in the brick and mortar format. We are still a country that believes in touch and feel. This is a phase that will pass with time. More and more people will perhaps start looking at online for shopping for essentials, medicines, home furnishing products, women's accessories and more."

Malls have experiential offerings like cafes, theatres, entertainment zones and a few other things. However, these would not attract visitors now as these were the first casualties of social distancing and public health protocols. It is likely that these would be the last to emerge from the lockdown as well, feels Mukesh. "But if we will go by the guidelines that the government finally sets out for the opening of malls, it could be the other way round. As part of the exhaustive SOPs we created, abundant precaution has been taken to ensure safety, social distancing guidelines are adhered to and reopening will need to be done in a calibrated manner," said he.

From a consumer's perspective, it seems like the next six to seven months are all about surviving and reviving. Rajneesh concluded the webinar saying, "I think we would be able to see the consumption level going higher from what we had in FY2019. On the shopping centre supply side, I see a slowdown and most of the malls which were ready to open now may have to delay a little. Their progress will be derailed due to this lockdown."

Normal, the word, is all set to be redefined when it comes to all our experiences.



**We must understand that online is yet another channel for retailing and it will always co-exist with the traditional ones. Some categories could work better online, while some would be preferred in the brick and mortar format. We are still a country that believes in touch and feel.**  
—AMITABH TANEJA



**According to a recent survey done by NFX for SCAI, approximately 70 per cent of consumers are willing to return to malls within a fortnight of opening up. We are ready and plans are in place to make sure that the consumers get a safe and hygienic experience when they return.**  
—PUSHPA BECTOR



**If you look at the Indian economy, agriculture and Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS) are large components of the GDP. If these two sectors continue to run strong, we would be able to see the consumption level going higher from what we had in FY2019.**  
—RAJNEESH MAHAJAN



**India is the most attractive retail market in the world today and its consumption story is very strong. Two months of lockdown can't dent the consumption growth rate of the country. We have seen that during demonetisation too, the sales rate picked up by the end of the year.**  
—RASHMI SEN



**The first bit of marketing will be giving out a message emphasising on developing comfort and confidence of the customers to visit the shopping mall. We know we cannot go with the traditional marketing strategy which we had in the past. I think this is going to be a much more focused approach.**  
—PANKAJ RENJHEN



**Retailers are working on a model where customers can take two to three garments home and return those which don't fit. Then those tried pieces will have to be sent back to the manufacturing unit to be sanitised. Meanwhile, the fresh stock can be used for trials. Trust on the brand will become very important.**  
—MUKESH KUMAR



DEBATE 60 MINUTES

# THE STAND-OFF

Film theatres being shut indefinitely has forced producers to release their films on OTT platforms. Shoojit Sircar’s Amitabh Bachchan and Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer *Gulabo Sitabo* and Anu Menon’s *Shakuntala Devi* with Vidya Balan in the lead are some of the big ticket releases that will be streamed on Amazon Prime Video. Not surprisingly, a war of words between the cinema halls’ association and the multiplexes ensued. Here is what the key players have to say



## The first salvo fired...

The pandemic has forced many producers to release their films on OTT platforms. However, the mutiplexes had anticipated the release of all these films throughout the year. They believe it would dilute the essence of theatres and affect their profits too.

Kamal Gianchandani, CEO, PVR Pictures said: “As PVR, we believe that the theatrical release is the best way for audience to

experience the labour and creative genius of our filmmakers. This has been so for decades and not just in India but globally. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has caused an unfortunate shutdown of cinemas. We are confident, once we get to the other side of this crisis, there would be enough and more pent up demand from cine-goers who have been cooped up at homes for the last many weeks. We are likely to see

demand by force on a sustained basis, once we reopen. Needless to say, we are disappointed with some of our producers deciding to go straight to the streaming platform/s. We were hoping that they would accede to our request to hold back their film’s release till cinemas reopen. That said, this is not the first time films are being premiered on a streaming platform/s. Cinema exhibition has regularly

faced competition from new emerging distribution platforms over the last many years, and it has continued to enjoy cine-goers patronage and affinity. I would also like to use this opportunity to express our appreciation for all the producers who have publicly voiced their support for the theatrical platform and have decided to reschedule their releases to accommodate the reopening of cinemas.”

## ...AND THE REPLY

The Producers Guild of India defended their decision through a letter which said; We are in unprecedented times, facing one of the greatest public health and economic emergencies of our lifetimes. This is a time for the entire film industry to come together with empathy and support for the difficult predicament that each of our constituents finds themselves in — from producers, distributors, exhibitors, daily wage earners and technicians, to the thousands of people whose lives and livelihoods are in some way dependent on our industry.

Hence at a time like this, it is disappointing to see abrasive and unconstructive messaging from some of our colleagues in the exhibition sector. Statements that call for “retributive measures” against producers who decide to take their films direct to OTT platforms — especially at a time when cinemas are unfortunately closed for the foreseeable future - do not lend themselves to a constructive or collaborative dialogue on the way forward for the industry.

The production sector (just like the exhibition sector) is suffering hundreds of crores of losses on a daily basis-  
Elaborate and expensive sets erected for under-production films have had to be taken down due to no date in sight for shoots to resume, with the sunk cost of the set and studio rentals to be borne completely by producers — as insurers refuse to cover the cost. Shoot schedules have had to be abruptly cancelled due to the lockdown, with huge cancellation charges being borne completely by the producer — again with no support from insurers.  
Interest costs are mounting on amounts raised to fund films, with producers having to bear this additional burden with no date in sight for



cinemas to re-open; in fact with the knowledge that cinemas may be one of the last sectors of the service sector likely to be given permission to re-open.  
Re-opening of cinemas is bound to be staggered across the country, with each state government rightly making its own decision on the appropriate time to re-open cinemas in their state, depending on the intensity of the outbreak there. Producers of Hindi film will have to wait for cinemas across the entire country to re-open, as the economics of the business require an All India release. For cinemas to be open across the entire country, it is clear we are sometime away.  
Even when cinemas re-open across India, there is no guarantee that the Overseas theatrical market (which is a key component of the economics of Hindi films) will have resumed. Even if it has in some countries, it might not have in others, hence leading to additional loss of revenue for a producer.

When cinemas re-open, we should be prepared for lower occupancies. One, because of the social distancing norms that will be both mandated and necessary for public safety. Secondly, because of the inevitable concern that cinema-goers will have about venturing back into public spaces.  
In addition to this, there will be a huge backlog of releases, and the smaller and medium scale films especially will suffer from sub-optimal showcasing in addition to all the concerns above. Given this combination of factors, it is only natural that producers who have already invested heavily in their films with theatrical revenue assumptions that are no longer feasible, will seek out all avenues available to recover their investment and to stay in business. At a time like this, it is important that each stakeholder understands and empathises with the predicament of the other, rather than adopting an adversarial stance which is

counter-productive for the entire value chain.  
The Producers Guild would like to emphasise that we are unequivocally and passionately supportive of the theatrical release of films, and a theatrical release will always be the preference for movies that were conceptualised as cinematic experiences. But these are unprecedented times for all the reasons mentioned above, and it is imperative to see things in that context. For producers to continue to keep “producing” the films that light up our cinema screens, they need to continue to be in business in the first place.  
The production fraternity would like to work collaboratively with the exhibition sector to ensure that once cinemas do re-open across the country, we do all we can to bring audience back in large numbers to experience our films in the way they were always meant to be enjoyed at the theatres.  
(Statement from Producers Guild of India.)

STUDIO CHAT 30 MINUTES

# An unmatched passion

JASMINE JORDDAN shares what it was like growing up as the daughter of MICHAEL, his legacy and what can turn one of the most intimidating basketball players into putty

Jasmine Jordan is getting an intimate look into the psyche of her heralded father, Michael, just like the rest of the world. The 27-year-old wasn’t born when her dad won the first two of his six championships with the Chicago Bulls, so like many watching *The Last Dance*, there are some things she’s learning for the first time.

“I’m definitely texting him nonstop. I think there hasn’t been an episode, a Sunday where I haven’t been like, “This happened — let me know your thoughts,” says the youngest and only daughter of his three adult children with Juanita Vanoy. (Jordan has 6-year-old twin girls with current wife Yvette Prieto Jordan.) “I was super young, so I’m really taking this in as a fan.”

The 10-part docuseries, airing on ESPN in the United States and on Netflix elsewhere, details the 1998 Bulls’ season, Jordan’s final year with the team and the organisation’s last championship. While it focuses on the challenges and triumphs of Jordan’s illustrious basketball career, it also delves into personal tragedies, such as the murder of his father, and scandal, such as his public gambling habits.

Jasmine Jordan shared about growing up as his child, his legacy, and what can turn one of the most intimidating players in the history of basketball turn into silly putty.

Everybody’s been going crazy over *The Last Dance*. What’s been your perspective?

It’s been incredible to watch.



You know, I didn’t get any previews or anything like that, so I’m watching it real time with everyone else and really just taking it in as a fan, essentially. So it’s been really eye opening. I think if you remove the basketball aspect and all the accolades he achieved for obvious reasons, I think I’m definitely learning that my dad was really trying to take in the pressures and the expectations and not allowing it to weigh on him and really manifesting it to his own. ...I’ve definitely been seeing him really take on that role and embracing that role and not

running from it and really becoming the greatest player to ever play the game. That’s because he always wanted to do that.

When you see some of those like emotional moments, do you recognise that person as your dad?

Some of them, yes. Some of them I do. I know when it comes to the game, his passion is unmatched. His energy’s unmatched. So when he’s going at Steve Kerr or checking Scottie and trying to get that fire and tenacity out of them, I’m like, ‘Oh, yeah,

that’s Dad.’ I mean, he’ll do that to me just so I can get an A out of a test or two. (laughs) And I’m just trying to pass school, I’m not even winning championships. So that is definitely totally him.

What type of father was he to you?

I was definitely a daddy’s girl growing up. And, you know, he still calls me ‘Princess’ to this day and I’m almost 30. ...He definitely wanted to coddle and protect and nurture and baby me as much as he can. But you also knew the harsh reality of the burden that I was going to have to endure the older I got. So he wanted to make sure I had tough skin. And I understood that, hey, there’s going to be a target on my back.

How did your relationship, or did it, change after your dad retired?

When he was playing, he did his best to be as involved as he could be while I was growing up. He made sure to take me to school when he could or go to my recitals and dance and things like that that I was a part of. So once he retired, it definitely was a change in gears, and it was something that he and I really had a conversation about. It’s like, “Okay, you’re done. So how do we work on the relationship? How do we even make it stronger than what it was like?” So we definitely really worked hard and put forth that effort because obviously once you take something you love away from somebody, it’s that hole — it’s a void. So do you fill it or do

you just adjust? He definitely adjusted versus trying to find something else to fill it, and that’s something I appreciated. ... That’s how we’re so close today.

What type of grandfather has he been to your son?

He’s silly putty. My son has him wrapped around his fingers already. He’s been very hands on and very involved in my son, even during these crazy times. He FaceTimes everyday or Zoom or something just so that way, that relationship can continue to cultivate and bond and grow. But no, my dad would probably let my son get away with murder at this point. ...It’s an incredible relationship to see them develop.

I’m surprised your dad has been this open, just being a fan. So are you surprised at his candor and his openness?

Absolutely. It’s definitely surprising because my father is very private. He doesn’t like to comment on social matters or he doesn’t like to respond to things when people want him to. He definitely likes to move methodically on his terms and on his time. And then with saying that, seeing the documentary unfold and he’s getting emotional and he’s sharing his insight and perspective, it’s been incredible to really see. And I love it because it gives him that human nature that I think people forget. You know, he is this incredible phenom, and he’s the G.O.A.T., and everything along those lines. But he’s also human.

—AP



# T20 WC may shift to 2022

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The option of shifting the upcoming T20 World Cup to 2022 is expected to be put on the table when the ICC Board meets on May 28, a member of world governing body's influential Board said on Friday.

A cloud of uncertainty hangs over the T20 World Cup in the wake of coronavirus pandemic and shifting it may find favours with Cricket Australia, feels the Board member.

The ICC flagship event is scheduled in Australia from October 18 to November 15.

The ICC Board Meeting will be preceded by the Cricket Committee meeting to discuss playing conditions including applying sweat and saliva on the ball.

It is expected that ICC's Events Committee headed by Chris Tetley will present multiple options.

"We are expecting three options from the ICC Events Committee. First option is having World T20 as per schedule with 14-day quarantine with crowd being allowed. The back-up for this option could be tournament in-front of empty stadium. The third option could be shifting the tournament to 2022," a Board

member privy to development said.

The Board meeting will also discuss two-month extension for Chairman Shashank Manohar but primarily the focus will be on deciding the fate of T20 World Cup.

Of late, Cricket Australia and their top players including present and former, have been aggressively campaigning for the Test Series against India to go as scheduled in November-December.

The series is crucial to Cricket Australia's financial health.

"CA wouldn't be too unhappy if the World T20 is shifted to 2022. At the end of the day,



ICC is made up of members. If members decide that bilateral series are more important, you can't discount that.

"Also ICC might find its cash flow being hampered but it's a short-term problem. If the tournament happens in

## 5 Tests against Aus not possible: Ganguly

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President Sourav Ganguly feels the five-Test series, proposed by Cricket Australia against the traditional four-match rubber, will not be feasible later this year.

Cricket Australia CEO Kevin Roberts had earlier expressed the board's desire to host a five-Test series against India but citing quarantine

guidelines amid the coronavirus pandemic, Ganguly has stated it seems a difficult task to squeeze in an additional match considering time constraints.

"I don't think it will be possible for India to participate in five Tests. There will be limited-overs games and plus we have to consider the 14-day quarantine guidelines. All this will extend the tour," Ganguly was quoted as saying by *Mid-day*.

2022, the parent body doesn't lose anything because it's deferment not postponement," the board member said.

The deferment will also mean that the cash-rich Indian Premier League, which is a parallel industry in itself, will get the much-needed window if the Covid-19 pandemic is under control by then. The Indian team can travel to Australia after the IPL.

The Board member also cited a few problems which

may lead to deferment of T20 World Cup.

"The costs of quarantine arrangements for 16 teams with support staff plus TV crew will be huge. Add to that if in some of the countries, normalcy doesn't return, whether travelling will be safe by then," he added.

"So it can't be postponed by a few months, say February-March, 2021. It's not a great idea as we have Women's ODI World Cup and the two ICC events should not clash. The Women's World Cup is a much safer bet, there will only be eight teams."

## Coming back won't be easy, but ready for challenge: Iyer



Shreyas Iyer plays shot against Kiwis AP

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Shreyas Iyer's last three ODI knocks before the coronavirus outbreak brought the world to a standstill read 103, 52 and 62. Interestingly, all the knocks not just came on New Zealand soil, but also at the much-talked about No 4 position in the Indian batting line-up. But the *Mumbaikar* doesn't wish to sit on past laurels and is already thinking of the route he will take to continue from where he left when live action resumes.

While Shreyas says he cannot wait to get back to start, he also accepts that the road back to the international stage will not be easy and it will require a

few sessions at the nets to not just bring back muscle memory, but also to get into the zone.

"Yes, we will need a few net sessions for sure to get the timing back (as a batsman) and also to get the muscle memory working. Will be holding the bat after a while also to have players standing around as you face bowlers bowling at 140kph, it will not be easy to come back into that zone and it will need a few training sessions as also the mental memory to settle down completely.

"It is not going to be easy, but at the same time we are professionals and we have played for so many years to reach this stage, so it will not take us very long. It will be a good challenge for us to overcome and get started with cricket," he explains.

Shreyas also feels that Live cricket will also help the Indian public look forward to life in a positive way as cricket is a religion in this country and if we go out and play and it is there for people to view on television, it will be a huge positive as things will start moving towards normal and people will also be entertained," he pointed.

## Don't reduce women domestic games to cut costs: Healy to CA

MELBOURNE: A cash-strapped Cricket Australia must not sacrifice the number of matches for women to cut costs when it restructures the domestic schedule, feels star wicketkeeper-batter Alyssa Healy.

A shortened season is being speculated with CA struggling to stay afloat in the wake of the coronavirus break.

The women matches in the domestic women competition Marsh Sheffield Shield and the Women Big Bash League are not lucrative compared to the men's cricket but hosting them still burns a hole in Cricket Australia pocket. However,

Healy says cutting the games for women would not be prudent.

"(Playing less games) obviously doesn't sit great. We don't want to lose any cricket. It'd be a real shame," Healy, who is a board director of the Australian Cricketers Association (ACA), told *The Unplayable Podcast*.

"Especially the WBBL, it's such a great tournament for us and it's the bulk of the cricket we get to play. We don't get to play much 50-over cricket in our domestic competition and that's something that we as a playing group have been really pushing for in the last few years, that the WNCL

competition is looked after."

Healy also said that with women 50-over World Cup scheduled in February, losing games could affect players' performance.

"We don't want to lose any cricket. I don't feel our domestic players get to play enough as it is.

"We'll have to wait and see what sort of decisions are made.

Healy said investment in women cricket must not be stopped.

"It's such a shame that this (pandemic) has happened and we've potentially lost a bit of momentum, but I think we can pick that up pretty quickly once we get back rolling and (by) making sure we invest properly in the women's game and make sure it thrives in the future. PTI

## Women's IPL will be great for Indian cricket: Mandhana



Smriti Mandhana in action during T20 WC

NEW DELHI: Swashbuckling India opener Smriti Mandhana feels a full-fledged women's Indian Premier League can make a difference in tapping the talent which would help the national team do well at the global level.

The 23-year-old opener also acknowledged the efforts BCCI is putting in to make it a reality.

"The BCCI has put in a lot of effort, first we had an exhibition match kind of women's IPL two years ago then there was a very successful IPL with three teams. And this year it was supposed to be four teams," Mandhana said on the *BBC* podcast *The Doosra*.

"I'm sure a lot of IPL style matches will take place for a year or two. A five or six-team IPL for women will be great for Indian women's cricket specially for the World Cups," she added.

The southpaw hopes the gap between the domestic and international cricket that exists in women's cricket in the country right now will be bridged soon.

"Women's cricket in Indian is growing massively, specially the domestic circuit. But there's still a lot of gap between competition between international and domestic circuit which I think will be bridged in 2-3 years."

The Indian women's team has taken huge strides since entering final of a World Cup in 2017 and coach WV Raman feels the side has the potential to become the best in three years. Asked if she feels the same Mandhana said "We've grown a lot as a team specially after the 2017 WC. T20 format is not one of our strengths before but we have done reasonably well in the last two World Cups."

"Not just this one in Australia, but the one we played in West Indies was a very good World Cup unfortunately we lost to England. What Raman sir said will happen. But I can't say in how many years maybe next year or in 3-4 years or 5 years but I'm certain it will happen," she added. PTI

## SLC requests BCCI not to cancel scheduled Lanka tour

PTI ■ COLOMBO

With uncertainty hovering over India's limited over tour of Sri Lanka due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the country's cricket board (SLC) has requested BCCI to seriously consider touring the island nation for their scheduled series in July.

India is scheduled to visit Sri Lanka for three one-dayers and as many T20Is in June-July, which is currently under threat due to the global health crisis.

According to a report published in *The Island*, SLC has indicated its willingness to play the limited over series in late July in an e-mail and are awaiting a reply from BCCI.

"Sri Lanka Cricket has sent an e-mail to their counterparts at Board of Control for Cricket in India requesting the possibility of resuming bilateral cricket later in July," the report said.

According to the report, an official said that "they would have to follow strict quarantine rules and the series might take place behind closed doors considering the safety of fans."

However the BCCI brass is clear that unless there are clear directives from the Government and proper travel advisories in place, they won't be able to commit anything at the moment.

## Jamieson gets Kiwi contract

CHRISTCHURCH: Pace sensation Kyle Jamieson's "outstanding" performance against India in his debut Test series early this year on Friday earned him a central contract from New Zealand Cricket for the 2020-21 season.

The 25-year-old Jamieson earned the Man of the Match award in his ODI debut against India, before grabbing the Player of the Match award for taking a five wicket haul in the second Test at Hagley Oval. Overall, Jamieson grabbed nine wickets and averaged 46 with the bat in the two Tests against Virat Kohli's men.

"Kyle's performances against the might of India were nothing short of outstanding and at 25 years of age he's certainly got a big future," selection manager Gavin Larsen said.



Kyle Jamieson plays shot against India AP

Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel and South African-born batsman Devon Conway were also offered contracts for the first time for the next year.

The contracts will officially commence from August 1 and players have until May 22 to accept or decline the offer.

"It's really exciting to offer contracts to Kyle, Ajaz and Devon who have all impressed over the past 12 months."

Conway, who had migrated from South Africa in 2017, will become eligible for national selection in August this year. The 28-year-old had a topped the domestic batting charts in the last two seasons.

Patel, who also has a solid first-class record, has been in the mix in Tests for the past one and a half years.

Among the players to miss out were batting duo of Colin Munro and Jeet Raval and spinner Todd Astle, who retired from red-ball cricket in January.

Jimmy Neesham, Will Young and Tom Blundell have all retained their contracts after being added to the list last season. PTI

## USTA planning for New York US Open

AFF ■ LOS ANGELES



The United States Tennis Association is pressing ahead with preparations to stage the US Open in New York this year but is "aggressively" drafting alternative plans for the tournament, a spokesman said.

With New York the epicentre of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States, the US Open's apparently precarious place on the sporting calendar has faced increased speculation in recent weeks.

Multiple reports have suggested that USTA officials are mulling a possible switch of the August 31-September 13 tournament to either Indian Wells or Orlando in an effort to evade the clutches of Covid-19.

However, USTA spokesman Chris Widmaier said in an e-mail on Thursday that the organisation's sights remained firmly set on staging the Open at its regular venue and date.

"The USTA's goal is to hold the 2020 US Open in New York on its currently scheduled dates," Widmaier said, describing planning for the tournament as "ongoing."

"We understand that there is a great deal of speculation regarding the USTA's planning for the 2020 US Open," he added.

"We would like to clarify that while we are exploring every possibility around the US Open, the potential to shift the event location or date is not at the forefront at this point in time."

Widmaier added, however, that because of the "uncertain and rapidly-changing environment" caused by Covid-19, the USTA had been "aggressively modeling many other contingencies, including scenarios with no fans."

## Silverstone to stage two GP

LONDON: Britain's Silverstone racetrack will stage two grands prix during the Formula One season, subject to UK Government approval, circuit chiefs said on Friday.

Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle told the *BBC* that an agreement in principle had been reached with Formula One to hold the races at the central England circuit, immediately after the

season begins in Austria.

"I am delighted to confirm that Silverstone and Formula One have reached an agreement in principle to host two races behind closed doors this summer," he said.

"However these races will be subject to Government approval, as our priority is the safety of all involved and strict compliance with Covid-19 regulations. AFP



Robert Lewandowski stretches during Bayern Munich's training session FCB/Twitter

## Flick doubts Bayern's fitness

BERLIN: Bayern Munich boss Hansi Flick admitted on Friday that he is unsure whether his players are match fit ahead of the Bundesliga restart this weekend.

Defending champions Bayern hold a four-point lead ahead of Sunday's game at Union Berlin.

Bayern, like Germany's other clubs, only received the go-ahead to resume full team training last week. "We don't know if the team can hold out over 90 minutes," said Flick. "We have trained well and played three matches of 20 minutes each last Sunday.

"They were played at a very high intensity, but we don't know clearly where we stand.

"We have to just deal with the situation."

Flick welcomed the decision by the German league to approve plans to allow five substitutions instead of the usual three, but hopes teams do not abuse the temporary rule change.

"I have two more options, so I'm very happy, especially in this situation," Flick said. "I only hope it is not used to waste time.

"We will use it to replace a tired player. In the weeks with a lot of games it's great."

Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge claims the Bundesliga will have a global audience of "billions around the world" this weekend, with the English, Spanish and Italian leagues still suspended.

"More than 200 countries will be watching," Flick said. "So we have an enormously large audience and we want to deliver a top performance.

"The whole world will be looking at Germany, to see how we get it done.

"If we manage to ensure that the season continues, it will send a signal to all leagues."

Flick also said that his players have the chance to sit out games, but only the injured trio of Philippe Coutinho, Corentin Tolisso and Niklas Sule are unavailable for Sunday.

"If a player had doubts, he could have decided not to play — without consequences. But they are all in, except for those who are injured." AFP

## Messi accepts 'risk' of possible La Liga return

AFF ■ BARCELONA

Lionel Messi says he is comfortable with footballers returning to play again as La Liga prepares to restart the season in Spain next month.

La Liga president Javier Tebas has circled June 12 as the ideal date for matches to resume.

Barcelona sit top of the table, two points ahead of Real Madrid.

Players in Spain have started working individually at training grounds as part of a strict and staggered programme, with five players already put into quarantine after testing positive for coronavirus. "The risk of contagion is everywhere," Messi said in an interview with *Mundo Deportivo*, published on Friday.

"When you leave the house the risk is already there, so I think you can't think about it too much because otherwise you'll not want to go out anywhere.

"But we also understand it is essential to comply with protocols and take all the possible measures of prevention. Going back to training is a first step but we shouldn't get complacent and we must continue taking all the necessary precautions and assume we have to start playing games but behind closed doors."

Messi also spoke about Inter Milan striker Lautaro Martinez, whom Barcelona are reportedly keen to sign this summer. Martinez is viewed as a long-term replacement for the 33-year-old Luis Suarez.

"If I'm honest I'm not sure if there were or are negotiations right now for him, I have no idea," Messi said. "Lautaro is an impressive striker, especially because I think he is very complete — he is strong, he dribbles well, he has an eye for goal, he knows how to protect the ball."



## Eng players told to use own set of balls



English pacer James Anderson ECB

LONDON: England's cricketers will be handed a box of balls each only for their individual use and they can't apply saliva on them when they resume training next week ahead of the scheduled Test series against Windies and Pakistan.

The England and Wales Cricket Board announced that a pool of 30 cricketers will be prepared for the planned start of international cricket this summer. Training will be held as per the Government-approved guidelines.

A "one skin per ball" policy will be implemented for the sessions at 11 county grounds where players will train at different times to ensure social

distancing.

"We need to mitigate as many of the risks as we possibly can. At one venue guys may train individually but with the same coach — a single coach for four or five bowlers. But with social distancing they shouldn't be close enough to pass anything on. It's essential we stick to these guidelines," said Giles.

The *Guardian* reported that the players have to use only the individual box of balls assigned to them and the balls must remain in their kit bags when not in use.

Bowlers will be having one-on-one sessions with coaches from Wednesday and the batsmen will enter the nets two week later.

"Players have been told to travel by car, bring their own clearly marked water bottles, regularly sanitise hands and make a swift departure afterwards before showering at home," the newspaper stated.

A two-metre distance has to be maintained with the coach and the physio will be the only one wearing a PPE kit.

When the batsmen resume net sessions, they must not pick the ball up and pass it back to the coach, instead they will kick it or use the bat to hit it back. PTI

## Kane wants assurances before PL is back

LONDON: England captain Harry Kane says players are waiting for safety guidance from the Premier League after the Government said it was "opening the door" for the return of football next month.

The Premier League hopes for a return to action on June 12, with matches behind closed doors. Tottenham striker Kane is willing to take the next step, moving from individual training to small group sessions, but suggested more information was needed.



Harry Kane arrives for Spurs training AP

"I don't think anyone knows the right answer at the moment," he told *ITV's Good Morning Britain* programme.

"I think the majority of players are looking forward to playing again as soon as possible but we know we want it to be as safe as possible too.

"From what I have heard — obviously I haven't seen too much of my team-mates — at the moment everyone is OK. We want to see how the Premier League gives us a plan and what that looks like."

Kane confirmed that he, along with the rest of the Spurs squad, had taken initial tests for coronavirus, with no positive results following their return to training. AFP