

OPINION 6
IN THE SPIRIT
OF FEDERALISM**WORLD 8**
EUROPE REOPENS WIDELY;
CHINA GIVES \$2 BN TO FIGHT VIRUS**SPORT 12**
CELTIC DECLARED
SCOTTISH CHAMPIONS

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KANGANA
PENS POEM ON
LOVE & LIFE
10 VIVACITY

Different strokes for different folks

States' response to lifting curbs varied

PNS ■ NEW DELHI:

As the country on Monday entered the "lockdown-4 phase", State Governments largely reactivated economic activities, including markets, saloons, private taxis, autos, even inter-State movement of passenger buses and vehicles. But malls, metro rails, domestic and international flights, colleges, schools, religious political gathering remained in the prohibited list.

Different States have given leeway to economic activities in the green and orange zones and narrowed down their enforcement of lockdown guidelines to only containment zones. Some States, like Karnataka and West Bengal, have permitted opening of salons and barber's shops where close contacts with the customers is possible. In contrast Delhi has not allowed barber shops, spas and salons to open yet.

Telangana too has allowed salons to open and permitted bus services within the State. Walmart-owned Flipkart said it is awaiting advisories from different States for resuming full services, including in red zones, a day after Home Ministry's guidelines on lockdown 4.0 were released.

Parks and sports complexes will be open with the norms of "social distancing" but stepping out of homes between 7 pm and 7 am, except for essential services will be prohibited. Taxis and cabs will be allowed but only 2 passengers at a time

in a car. The Government and private offices too were allowed to work with restricted staff.

Centre has allowed States for inter-State passenger bus and vehicle bus services with the mutual consent. The move will greatly ease public transportation and is likely to come to immediate help mitigate the plight of migrant labour on the roads due to the nation-wide lockdown entering 54th day.

The night curfew, between 7 pm and 7 am, will continue in all zones. Hotels, restaurants and other hospitality services, except for the running of canteens in bus depots, railway stations and airports, will not be allowed.

Maharashtra, the worst affected State in the country and particularly its Capital Mumbai with nearly 20 per cent of coronavirus cases in the country, will not experience relaxations in major part of the city. Saying Mumbai is still a Covid-19 red zone, authorities have not eased restrictions and warned people about strong action against violators in the fourth phase of the nationwide lockdown.

Taking a rather relaxed view of coronavirus situation, Karnataka has allowed major concessions for re-starting economic activities. Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, however, said people from four States — Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala — will not be allowed entry into the State till May 31.

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Delhi: What is allowed and what is not

- ❑ Buses are allowed to run with only 20 passengers at a time
- ❑ Passengers to be screened before boarding the bus, social distancing at bus-stops also
- ❑ Auto-rickshaws, e-rickshaws and cycle-rickshaws allowed but only with 1 passenger
- ❑ For two-wheelers, pillion rider will not be allowed.
- ❑ Taxis, autos and app-based cabs will be allowed but only 2 passengers at a time in a car
- ❑ Metro services, schools, colleges, cinema halls, salons will remain closed
- ❑ Markets can open but shops will open on odd-even basis
- ❑ Construction activities but only with labourers who are in Delhi
- ❑ Stepping out of homes between 7 pm to 7 am, except for essential services, prohibited
- ❑ Private offices can open at full strength but they should try that most work from home
- ❑ Sports complexes and stadiums can open but without spectators
- ❑ 50 people to be allowed in marriage functions; 20 people can attend funerals
- ❑ Carpooling or car-sharing will not be allowed for aggregators
- ❑ No activity allowed in containment zones
- ❑ Religious gatherings are barred in the city till May 31
- ❑ Restaurants can open for home-delivery but no dining facilities



Traffic congestion seen at Delhi-UP border during the fourth phase of nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus, in New Delhi on Monday PTI

Public transport allowed, odd-even shops in Delhi

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on the first day of lockdown 4.0 on Monday emphasised on the importance of gradual revival of economic activities with certain relaxation and a few restrictions amid corona in the national Capital which saw 1,0054 positive cases.

The CM announced opening of shops in markets on an odd-even basis and running of buses with only 20 passengers, but said Metro services,

schools, colleges, cinema halls and saloons will remain closed. Addressing an online media briefing here, Kejriwal said, "We have to gradually move towards opening the economy. We used the lockdown period to make arrangements to deal with Covid-19."

People boarding buses in the city will have to be screened first, he said, adding that four-wheeler vehicles, including taxis, will be allowed with only two passengers.

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Traffic jam at Delhi borders

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

On the day one of lockdown 4.0, heavy vehicular traffic was witnessed on Monday at the Delhi-Gurugram and Delhi-Noida borders. There were long queues of vehicles at Delhi-Noida border on Monday morning.

The Delhi Traffic Police advised people to avoid crossing border via Kalindi Kundi and DND without an e-pass as the Uttar Pradesh Police was allowing vehicles only with movement pass.

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Covid test for all severe respiratory infection patients

ICMR revises testing plan as migrants carry risk of corona

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of huge movement of migrants from across the States, the Indian Council of Medical Council (ICMR) on Monday revised its testing strategy mandating all patients of severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) to be tested for the Covid-19 regardless of travel or contact history. Frontline workers involved in containment and mitigation of Covid-19 will also be tested.

This comes even as the Government has maintained that there is no community transmission in the country.

Testing has been one of the concerns in India's management of the Covid-19. Many experts have said India's testing strategy is too restrictive.

According to new strategy, no emergency procedure (including deliveries) should be delayed for the lack of test. But the sample can be sent for testing simultaneously if the person showed symptoms prescribed in the guideline.

Beside the earlier categories of individuals fitting the testing criteria, the ICMR said



A health worker collects swab sample of a resident for Covid-19 test at a containment zone during ongoing lockdown in Guwahati on Monday PTI

asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of confirmed cases be tested once between day 5 and day 10 of coming into contact.

"All hospitalised patients who develop ILI (influenza like illness) symptoms, symptomatic individuals with history of international travel in the last 14 days, symptomatic contacts of laboratory confirmed cases, symptomatic healthcare workers, patients of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI), symptomatic ILI within hotspots and containment zones to be tested for the Covid-19," the ICMR said.

ILI case is defined as one with acute respiratory infection with 38 degree Celsius fever or more than that and cough. SARI patients are those with acute respiratory infection and 38 degree Celsius fever or more and requiring hospitalisation.

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Coronavirus count over 1 lakh

4,641 new cases; 40 per cent patients recover; 3% dead

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India crossed a dubious milestone in the spread of corona cases on Monday when its overall count crossed 1,00,000 cases with 3,156 deaths as the deadly virus continued to spread across the country with alarming speed. With around 4,641 new cases, the country's total stood at 1,00,340 cases. New cases were still coming in from different States and the overall count could go up.

According to the data from the States, the highest number of confirmed cases in the country are from Maharashtra at 35,086, Gujarat at 11,746, Delhi at 10,054, Rajasthan at 5,505, Madhya Pradesh at 5,326 and Uttar Pradesh at 4,605.

Maharashtra followed by Tamil Nadu were the two top contributors of new cases on Monday. They were followed by Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in that order.

Covid-19
TOTAL CASES: 1,00,340
DEATHS: 3,156
RECOVERED: 39,233

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	35,086	1,249	8,437
Tamil Nadu	11,760	82	4,406
Gujarat	11,746	694	4,804
Delhi	10,054	160	4,485
Rajasthan	5,507	138	3,218
Madhya Pradesh	5,236	252	2,435
Uttar Pradesh	4,605	118	2,783
West Bengal	2,825	244	1,006
Andhra Pradesh	2,432	50	1,552
Punjab	1,980	37	1,547

Maharashtra reported 2,033 cases and 51 deaths taking its overall tally to 35,086. They were followed by Tamil Nadu which chipped in with 536 cases and three more death, taking its overall count to 11,760 and 82 deaths.

Madhya Pradesh reported 259 new cases and 4 death to take its overall count to 5,236 and 252 deaths. Uttar Pradesh recorded 141 new cases and no death, while West Bengal reported 149 new cases and 6 deaths.

Even as India crossed 1 lakh mark on the first day of the Lockdown 4 on Monday, the Government found solace in the fact that at 7.1 cases per lakh, the coronavirus ratio is lowest in world.

"In terms of confirmed cases per lakh population, India has so far about 7.1 cases per lakh population vis a vis approx 60 cases per lakh population for the world as a whole," said an official from the Union Health Ministry.

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31 new cases in GB Nagar, Oppo factory op shut

Noida: Thirty-one people tested positive for Covid-19 in UP's Gautam Buddh Nagar on Monday, pushing the total cases to 286 in the district. Chinese smartphone maker Oppo has suspended operations at Noida factory after its six workers were found infected by Covid.

Market tanks 1,069 pts in thumbs down to stimulus

Goldman Sachs predicts major recession in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The equity market tanked on Monday sending clear signal about the participants' disappointment over the stimulus package announced by the Government even as global investment firm Goldman Sachs saw India slipping into a major recession. The market fell for the third consecutive day, each day responding to the separate tranches of stimulus announced by the Finance Minister.

Benchmark Sensex crashed 1,069 points tracking massive selloffs in banking and auto stocks. The 30-share BSE index ended at 30,028.98, while the broader NSE Nifty plunged 313.60 points to 8,823.25.

IndusInd Bank was the



top laggard in the Sensex pack, cracking around 10 per cent, followed by HDFC, Maruti Suzuki, Axis Bank and UltraTech Cement. On the other hand, TCS, Infosys, ITC and HCL closed with gains.

Traders and investors remained on edge as the Home Ministry extended the lockdown for another two weeks till

May 31 to contain the spread of coronavirus, said Narendra Solanki, Head Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand Rath.

The relief package announcements appeared falling short of meeting market expectations on any demand side reforms, triggering an intense selloff in the domestic market, he noted.

The Government, in its first four tranches of the stimulus package, focussed on credit line to small businesses and new fund creations to be shouldered by banks and financial institutions with very little extra budget spending.

In the last set of measures, the Centre on Sunday announced plans to privatise PSUs in non-strategic sectors and suspend loan default-triggered bankruptcy filings for one year, and also gave a ₹40,000-crore hike in allocation for the rural employment guarantee scheme to provide jobs to migrant workers.

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Amphan turns super cyclone, evacuation in coastal areas

PM holds high level meet with MHA, NDMA

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Extremely severe cyclone storm Amphan on Monday turned into a super cyclonic storm and thousands of people have been evacuated from low lying coastal areas in Odisha and West Bengal. Amphan has potential to extensive damages to property and infrastructure in coastal areas of north Odisha and West Bengal. Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard have been put on high alert.

According to Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General of India Meteorological Department (IMD), super cyclone will arrive with a wind speed up to at 250 km per hour



Motorists ride past an uprooted tree following gusty winds ahead of the landfall of Cyclone Amphan in Kanyakumari district on Monday PTI

and it will hit the West Bengal on May 20. "Amphan will make landfall in some area between Digha of West Bengal and Hatia Island of Bangladesh, both are highly populated areas," he said.

The IMD has warned of storm surge of 4-6 metre height above astronomical tide, will inundate low lying coastal areas and likely to inundate low lying areas of South & North 24 Parganas and about 4-6 metres over the low lying areas of East

Medinipur of West Bengal during the time of landfall.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also held a high level meeting with officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to review the arising cyclone Amphan situation in different parts of the country and to assess the situation that may arise after the landfall.

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UP accepts Priyanka's proposal on 1,000 buses to ferry migrant workers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As the migrant workers issue has taken a political turn between the Congress and the BJP, the Uttar Pradesh Government has accepted Congress national general secretary Priyanka Gandhi's offer to provide 1,000 buses to transport migrant workers.

UP Additional Chief Secretary Awanish Awasthi said the Government has accepted the Congress proposal and asked them to furnish details of 1,000 buses. Congress president Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' claimed to have handed over the list of buses they had provided on the borders to ferry the migrant workers.

But taking a jibe at the Congress, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked Priyanka Gandhi why migrant workers



from Congress-ruled States were sent in trucks if the Congress-ruled States had so many buses.

Yogi's tweets were in response to an emotional tweet from Priyanka Gandhi where she had asked the UP Government to allow entry of 1,000 buses which the Congress had arranged to ferry migrant workers to their native districts.

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BJP MP's representative among 2 killed in Ayodhya shootout

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Despite lockdown restrictions, a sensational shootout took place in Ayodhya on Monday in which two persons, including a representative of BJP MP Lallu Singh, were killed.

The incident took place when Lallu Singh's representative Jai Prakash Singh reportedly called a panchayat at Paliya Pratap Shah village under Haringtonganj Block of the district on Monday morning. Reports confirmed that several villagers were present as Singh was also sitting pradhan of the village.

The situation took a violent turn when history sheet Nanna Yadav, opened fire at Singh after some heated arguments.

Agitated with the firing, the villagers also opened fire with their weapons in which Nanna Yadav died on the spot. Singh



was rushed to District Hospital where seeing his condition to be "critical", his supporters staged demonstration asking him to be shifted to Trauma Centre at KGMU. However, before the authorities could take any decision, Singh also succumbed at the hospital. Local police registered a case and were making further investigation.

In another incident in Ayodhya, body of Mansaram, having his history-sheet with Maharajganj police station, was found buried under the sand on the banks of Saryu river in Salempur Majha on Monday. The body was two days old and the police arrested Mahesh Verma, a property dealer and three of his accomplices in this regard.

Nepal Cabinet OK's controversial map

Claims Indian territories of Lipulekh, Kalapani, Limpiyadhura as its own

New Delhi:The Nepali Cabinet on Monday endorsed a new controversial map of the country that includes Indian territories of Lipulekh, Kalapani, Limpiyadhura as its own. The Nepal Government intent to publicise the new political map incorporating these territories. Last week Nepali President addressing the joint session of the Parliament said new maps of the country will be published that will show all areas it considers as its own. Nepal President Bidhya Devi Bhandari stated that Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani region are Nepal's territory and concrete diplomatic efforts will be taken towards reclaiming these territories. "An official map of Nepal will be published accordingly incorporating all the territories of Nepal," he said. Elaborating Nepali government approach, Bhandari

explained that the government of Nepal is committed to safeguarding the international borders of Nepal and outstanding border disputes with India will be resolved through diplomatic medium relying on available historical treaties, maps, facts and evidence. Kathmandu raised the chorus over the issue earlier this month when Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a new road from Dharchula to Lipulekh so as to reduce the time taken for Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage. Following the development, Indian envoy to Nepal Vinay Mohan Kwatra was called by Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali to raise the matter. India has clarified to Nepal on Lipulekh that the recently inaugurated road section in Pithoragarh district in

Uttarakhand lies completely within the territory of India. New Delhi sees increased Chinese role in Nepal as a reason for current comments by Kathmandu. On May 15, Army Chief General MM Naravane had stated that Nepal's protest against a newly built Indian road in Uttarakhand, up to Lipulekh pass on the China border, was at 'someone else's behest'. His statement has been widely taken to mean that Nepal was acting as a proxy for China, at a time when tensions have spiked sharply on the LAC between the Chinese PLA and the Indian Army at Ladakh. The ongoing dispute is not new and dates back to 1816 when under the Treaty of Sugauli, King of Nepal lost parts of its territory to British including Kalapani and Lipulekh.

Courtesy: Zee News

Public transport allowed, odd-even shops in Delhi...

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Two-wheelers will be permitted but no pillion riders, the CM said. "Construction activities and trucks carrying goods will be allowed in Delhi," he said. Religious gatherings are barred in the city till May 31, he said, adding that restaurants can open for home-delivery but dining facilities will not be permitted. A total of 50 people can attend marriage functions, while 20 people can take part in funerals, Kejriwal said. On Sunday, the Centre extended the coronavirus-triggered lockdown in the country till May 31 while giving more relaxations.

India backs move at WHO to seek corona origin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
India on Monday joined nearly 120 countries at a crucial conference of the World Health Organisation in pushing for a probe into the origin of coronavirus as also comprehensive evaluation of the global response to the pandemic that has killed over 3.17 lakh people and afflicted nearly 48 lakh besides wrecking the world economy. During the two-day 73rd session of the World Health Assembly (WHA) which is taking place in Geneva amid growing calls, including by US President Donald Trump, to investigate how the virus originated in China's Wuhan city and subsequent action by Beijing, Chinese president Xi Jinping

said his country had provided all relevant outbreak data to WHO and other countries, including the virus' genetic sequence, "in a most timely fashion."Representing India at the meet, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said the country took all the necessary steps well in time to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, and asserted that the country has done well in dealing with the disease till now and is confident of doing better in months to come. Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally monitored the situation and ensured a pre-emptive, proactive and graded response, leaving no stones unturned to contain the deadly virus from spreading, Vardhan said.

Amphan...

From Page 1
"Reviewed the preparedness regarding the situation due to cyclone 'Amphan'." The response measures as well as evacuation plans were discussed. I pray for everyone's safety and assure all possible support from the Central Government," PM Modi tweeted. Dr Mohapatra said the cyclone could ravage the property and infrastructure in east Medinipur, south and north 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly and Kolkata districts in West Bengal and to property and infrastructure in West Bengal and in Odisha in Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Balasore, Jajpur and Mayurbhanj districts. The State is expected to face extensive damage in the storm that is likely to uproot communication and power poles. It said the Amphan could also disrupt rail and road links in many places in Bengal and Odisha, uproot kutch properties and inflict extensive damage to standing crops, plantations and orchards.

The damages are expected to be less in Odisha as compared to West Bengal. The Home Secretary has also requested Governments of West Bengal & Odisha to take all preventive actions. These include timely evacuation of people from the areas likely to be affected, having a 24x7 control room, provision of adequate food items. The super cyclone has unleashed heavy rains coupled with high-velocity winds in coastal Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu before its landfall on May 20. This is the only third pre-monsoon super cyclone in 30 years. NDRF chief S Pradhan said, 19 teams has been deployed in West Bengal and four have been put on stand-by while 13 teams deployed in Odisha and 17 put on stand-by. Besides six batalians has been put on hot standby. Taking note of its severity, the Odisha government has planned to evacuate 11 lakh people from low lying in coastal Odisha districts like Gajapati, Ganjam, Puri, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara. The New Delhi-

Bhubaneswar special train will run on a diverted route for the next four days. Ahead of Cyclone Amphan making landfall, Odisha has urged the Centre to temporarily suspend 'Shramik Special' trains passing through areas falling in the direction of the storm. The Odisha government also announced that it will shift migrant workers lodged in various quarantine centres near the coast to safer places. According to IMD, 21 years ago, in 1999, another super cyclonic storm had ravaged large parts of Odisha and Gangetic West Bengal. It had taken Odisha a number of months to repair the extensive damage that the super cyclone had caused back then. Amphan would be only the third super cyclone to form in the Bay after 1990, after the Andhra Pradesh super cyclone (May4-9, 1990, no name) and the Bangladesh super cyclone (April 24-May 2, 1991, Gorky). The former had hit the Machilipatnam coast in Andhra Pradesh and claimed 967 deaths, while the latter rammed into Chittagong, Bangladesh, killing an estimated 1.38 lakh people.

UP accepts Priyanka's proposal on 1,000 buses to ferry migrant workers...

From Page 1
In the first tweet, the CM asked if the Congress had 1,000 buses at its disposal than why the Punjab and the Maharashtra Governments were sending migrant workers in trucks. "The nation is saddened to hear accident in Auriya in which a truck was coming from Punjab while

another from Rajasthan. Will Priyanka Gandhi take responsibility of that accident and tender an apology to the nation," Yogi asks in his second tweet. In the next tweet he says if the Congress has arranged for 1,000 buses why it has so far not furnished the details of the buses to the Uttar Pradesh Government.

"The majority of the Shramik Express trains are coming to UP. If Priyanka is so concerned about migrant labourers from UP why she is not asking her State Governments to send these labourers through trains," Yogi asks in his fourth and last tweet. In the evening, however, Additional Chief Secretary Awanish Awasthi said the Government has accepted the Congress proposal and asked them to furnish details of 1,000 buses. Congress president Ajay Kumar 'Lallu', here on Monday claimed to have handed over the list of buses they had provided

Six test Covid +ve, Oppo Noida factory op shut

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chinese smartphone maker Oppo has suspended operations at Noida factory after its six workers were found to be infected by coronavirus, a senior Gautam Budh Nagar police officer confirmed on Monday. The company had resumed operations on Friday with screening of all employees who were asked to join the work.

Based on the information available with the Gautam Budh (GB) Nagar police, the officer told PTI that six workers at the Noida plant of Oppo have been tested covid-19 positive. When contacted, Oppo India said that the company had obtained permission from the state authorities to resume production, following the MHA directive.

"As an organisation that places the safety of all our employees and citizens at the forefront, we had not only undertaken COVID-19 tests for all employees at the manufacturing facility in Greater Noida but also suspended all operations at the plant. We are undertaking stringent measures to keep the employees safe," the company said in a statement.

Oppo also said that it has started screening more than 3,000 workers who have to join work and also approached the government for the test.

There have been total 255 coronavirus positive cases in GB Nagar as on Sunday.

Till Saturday, 4,738 samples were collected from all across the GB Nagar district, comprising Noida and Greater Noida.

Kashmir's apple industry bears worst affect during nationwide lockdown



IANS ■ SRINAGAR

Huge quantities of apples are rotting due to non availability of a market and buyers

Kashmir's apple industry is facing a major crisis. The lockdown following the abrogation of article 370 last year was a huge setback and then early snowfall that destroyed the apple orchards, and now the coronavirus lockdown that has broken the supply chain and hampered business causing major losses to the farmers and apple growers.

Huge quantities of apples are rotting due to non availability of a market and buyers. Tens of thousands of apple boxes are lying in cold storages across the valley. The farmers have appealed to the J&K administration to intervene and help them come out of this crisis. "Farmers are suffering losses in crores, we appeal to the Lt Governor to come to our rescue, our produce has suffered huge damage, there are no buyers, we can't sell the apples during the lockdown," said a farmer in Pulwama. The apple industry suffered major losses in the lockdown following the abrogation of article 370 on August 5 2019.

The harvest got delayed. The killing of some non-local labourers in south Kashmir worsened the situation. The growers stored their harvest in the hope of receiving better rates this spring. But the second lockdown in less than a year has dashed all their hopes. "We are really at a loss and don't know how to deal with the situation," said an apple merchant. Kashmir produces 20 lakh metric tonnes of apples every year. The fruit is cultivated on more than 37 lakh hectares of land across the valley constituting 75 per cent of the total apple production in India. The fruit earns Kashmir ₹8,000 crores annually, and provides livelihood to 33 lakh people including seven lakh farmers.

Covid test for all severe respiratory infection patients...

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The ICMR said all testing in the categories mentioned in the

guideline, is recommended by real-time RT-PCR test only. The latest version of the testing strategy document (version

5) also says that no emergency procedure (including deliveries) should be delayed for lack of test.

Coronavirus count over ...

From Page 1
Spain has reported 494 cases per lakh population, which is the highest, followed by the US, which has 431 cases per lakh population. Italy has 372 cases per lakh population and the UK has 361 cases per lakh population.

Karnataka recorded a biggest single-day spike of 99 new positive cases of coron-

avirus, taking the number of infections in the state to 1,296, the state government said on Monday, as it allowed buses, autos and cabs to operate with the COVID-19 induced lockdown entering the fourth phase.

106 new coronavirus cases were reported in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, reports said. The total number of cases is

Traffic jam at Delhi borders...

From Page 1
Roads were packed with hundreds of cars on the Delhi-Noida Direct (DND) way. According to media reports, the vehicular queue went up to over a kilometre as the police deployed at the border checked the passes and the identity cards of the people travelling. Delhi Traffic Police said people must have a travelling

pass issued by the District Magistrate, Gautam Budha Nagar, in order to travel to the NCR region.

As UP police is allowing entry to Noida only for vehicle having movement pass issued by District Magistrate, Noida. People travelling from Delhi to Noida using Kalindi Kunj barrage flyover and DND flyover may plan their trip

accordingly,' tweeted Delhi Traffic Police.

Similar scenes were witnessed at the Delhi-Gurgaon borders as people arrived on way to their offices.

The traffic in the national capital also witnessed a surge as a number of vehicles were seen on the streets in areas like Income Tax Office (ITO) and others.

Govt would enforce lockdown-4 norms more strictly in red zone areas, says Maha CM Uddhav

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said here on Monday night that State Government would enforce the lockdown-4 norms more strictly in red zone areas as it would have to tide over the Coronavirus crisis in the State before the onset of the monsoon, even as 51 more people succumbed to Covid-19 and 2033 others tested positive for the pandemic in various parts of the State.

Addressing the people across the State through social media on the day when the Lockdown-4 began, the Chief Minister said: "We can lift the lock down at any time. But I know what will be consequences of lifting the lockdown at this State. I do not want to push the state into a crisis. I am ready to face any kind of crisis of criticism. I am not going to take the decision of lifting the lockdown in a hurry".

"But, we will have to tide over the Coronavirus crisis before the onset of the monsoon in the state. Hence we will enforce the lockdown-4 ve5ry strictly," Uddhav said.

"The normal activities are beginning in the green zone areas. We are giving permission to start shops. But, we will enforce the lockdown-4 strictly in the red zone areas of the state," the chief minister.

Meanwhile, with 51 fresh deaths and 2033 new positive cases, the total number of deaths mounted to 1,249 and the infected cases to 35,058. "Of the total infected cases, 25392 are active cases," a State health official said.

Of the total deaths, Mumbai accounted for 23 deaths, while there eight deaths each in Navi Mumbai and Pune, three deaths

in Jalgaon, two deaths each in Aurangabad, Ahmednagar and Nagpur and one death each in Bhiwandi and Palghar. Additionally, one death of a Bihar resident occurred in Mumbai.

Out of the dead, 35 were men while 16 were women. Twenty-one of them aged over 60 years, 19 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 11 were aged below 40 years.

"Thirty five out of 51 patients (68%) had high-risk comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease," the state health bulletin said.

Out of 2,82,194 laboratory samples, 2,47,103 tested negative and 35,058 samples tested positive for COVID-19 until Monday.

In a related development, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi has decided to conduct a community-based sero-survey in 69 districts of 21 states in the country.

To carry out this surveillance activity, National Centre for Disease Control, New Delhi, National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai and National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis, Chennai are providing the necessary technical support.

Six districts from Maharashtra have been included in the list of 69 districts. They are: Ahmednagar, Beed, Jalgaon, Parbhani, Nanded and Sangli. Blood samples from random selections of 40 people each from 10 clusters (total 400) will be tested using ELISA technique developed by National Institute of Virology (NIV). "Antibodies from blood serum will be detected in this way. This surveillance will help understand the spread of COVID-19," the bulletin said.

Different folks...

From Page 1

The Karnataka Government announced that all four State transport corporation buses will be allowed to operate in the State, except in red and containment zones, from Tuesday. Only 30 people would be allowed to travel in the buses and wearing of face masks and maintaining physical distancing are mandatory, he said. Bus fares would not be increased, he added.

Karnataka CM said complete lockdown will be imposed across the State on all Sundays till May 31, adding that parks will be opened from Tuesday and night curfew will continue across the State from 7 pm to 7 am.

But inter-State transport would not be allowed, except in emergency cases. Trains can operate within the State but not inter-State services till May 31.

Yediyurappa said all shops, except those in containment zones, will be allowed to open and passenger trains will run within the State.

Auto and taxis were also given green signal to get on to roads, but there should be only three passengers, including the driver. In maxi-cabs, the maximum number should be four passengers, including driver.

Except shopping malls and cinema halls, saloons and all shops can open, he said.

In West Bengal private offices, including those in shopping malls, can operate with 50 per cent strength on alternate days. According to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, saloons and beauty parlours can function but equip-

ment have to be disinfected regularly, she said.

Hotels can be opened in Bengal but with strict social distancing in place. Inter-district buses will be allowed. Sport is permitted but no gathering of spectators can take place, she said.

"We are not declaring curfew, but the lockdown will continue till May 31. We don't like the word curfew particularly," she said.

All big shops will open from May 21, she said, and the hawkers' market will open from May 27 every alternate day.

Gujarat will make guidelines according to containment zone and non-containment zone and Tuesday District Collectors, Municipal commissioners will make a list of these zones, according to Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani. Gujarat, despite rise in coronavirus case, had in PM-Chief Minister conference had opposed extension of Lockdown beyond May 17.

The nationwide lockdown was first imposed for 21 days starting March 25 and then extended on April 15 and later on May 4 with an aim to contain the spread of novel coronavirus pandemic in the country.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, FIRST CIRCLE, UP JAL NIGAM, MEERUT

Letter No. 572/731/52
Date: 15.05.2020

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

Online percentage rate Short Term E-tenders in two bid system for Dams Dehat Reorganization water supply scheme Zone-I Kallu Garhi under RRBAN Mission Programme are hereby invited on behalf of the Chairman, U.P. Jal Nigam, from the reputed contractors having requisite work experience of similar nature of works & financial capabilities. Tender document shall be available at e-procurement website, <http://etender.up.nic.in> from 26.05.2020 to 01.06.2020 upto 17.00hrs. Interested firms/contractors may view & download tender document and upload their tender, duly filled online latest by 01.06.2020 upto 18.00 hrs. Uploaded tender document shall be opened on 02.06.2020 at 13:00 Hrs. onwards in the office of "Superintending Engineer, First Circle, U.P. Jal Nigam, Meerut." The Non refundable cost of e-tender document is Rs. 10000.00 plus 12% GST =Rs. 11200.00. Details of work of e-tender will be available on U.P. Jal Nigam website www.jn.upsdc.gov.in.

NDMC workers disposing hazardous waste get PPE kits



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In order to collect highly infected Covid-19 waste from quarantine houses and its proper disposal in scientific manner, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has deployed sanitation workers equipped with full new personal protection equipment (PPE) kits to provide full protection from catching infection while collecting hazardous waste.

A senior NDMC official said a driver of the vehicle and two other employees are deployed for the purpose and they are daily equipped with full new PPE kits item to provide full protection from Covid19 infection while collection of hazardous waste from these quarantine hous-

es in NDMC area. “They will collect household waste from door to door of quarantine home in which covid19 related person or patients are residing in its jurisdictions area,” he said. The collection of bio medical waste will start every day at 7 am from each and every house who have people with covid19 effected person or patients in quarantine, he said, adding that the list of the houses is being provided by the District Magistrate office in advance on daily basis of approximately 30 to 40 in numbers.

The official further said that the collected waste material from the quarantine houses are being filled in yellow bags which was already treated with sodium hypochlorite

solution . After filling the bag, it is sealed by a tight tag and loaded on the vehicle designated for transportation of this type of waste, he added.

During this lockdown period, he said “These collected garbage bags are approximately 150 kg to 200 kg in weight and then it is given to

BioTec Solutions agency for final disposal in scientific manners as per guidelines of Delhi Pollution Control Committee,” he said.

Teacher deputed at dry ration distribution centre tests +ve

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A teacher of North Corporation deputed at dry ration distribution center has tested positive for coronavirus. The civic body has placed eight staffs that came in contact with him under home quarantine.

Assistant director of the corporation has issued a circular instructing remaining staff that came in contact with teacher to go on home quarantine.

In view of Information received from centre in charge regarding a teacher who was deputed at dry ration distribution centre running at MCPS Adarsh Nagar contracting Covid 19, eight employees are directed to remain at home quarantine for 14 days with immediate effect.



“They were also instructed to get themselves tested for Covid -19 infections.

The distribution centre has been sanitized and distribution process has temporarily been suspended and shall resume its functioning from tomorrow,” it said.

A senior north Corporation official said that out of our total strength of almost 58,000 employees, a total number of 60 staff of North Corporation have tested positive for Covid-19. “It is to be noted that almost all our staff is front-line in the on-

going battle. Out of 45, 37 are hospital personnel and eight are field staff,” he said.

On Sunday, at least six health care staff of Hindu Rao Hospital including doctors, paramedics and other medical workers had tested positive for coronavirus after coming in contact with an infected person. Ten health-care workers, including seven doctors, of the Hospital have tested positive for Covid-19 till date, he said.

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) had quarantined 69 hospital staff after they were suspected of being contracted with the dialysis patient who tested positive for Covid-19, he said. The hospital is being sanitised every day and the welfare of the staff is being looked after by North MCD, he added.

Affordable housing, clean environment in 2041 Master Plan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal on Monday said Master Plan for Delhi (MPD) 2041 will focus on redevelopment and regeneration of built fabric using innovative strategies.

The MPD 2041 will “provide a transformative approach for affordable housing, environment regeneration, availability of public spaces, service planning and robust economy, he said.

Bajjal on Monday held a meeting with the National Institute of Urban Affairs and

the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to review the progress of the preparations. “The development of resilient infrastructure with efficient resource management, move towards cleaner technology, regeneration of heritage precincts and urban renewal strategies are to be the guiding

principles for the plan,” he said.

“Reviewed progress of preparation of MPD-2041 with VC, DDA @official_dda & NIUA. MPD 2041 will focus on redevelopment & regeneration of built fabric using innovative strategies,” Bajjal said in a series of tweets.

“Strategic Greenfield development incentivising clean economies, entertainment & cultural hubs through public participation will open opportunity to stimulate city’s economy while creating massive infrastructure for the city,” he said in another tweet.

Man arrested for offensive social media post about woman leader

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a man for sharing the “offensive content” on social media platform after an First Information Report (FIR) was registered on the basis of complaint of Delhi BJP IT cell co-convenor Apurva Singh.

This comes a day after she took to twitter and expressed her disappointment over police inaction in her case which was lodged in March.

“Is it wrong to be a woman BJP supporter. Then why these Congress, SP and particularly minorities people are making viral my photo with the flag by morphing it with obscene photo. Dont they have mothers and sisters. Two months have passed since lodging FIR but the photo was not removed nor any action was taken, Singh tweeted on Sunday.

The FIR was lodged by Singh on March 19 with the Special Cell of Delhi Police.

Taking to twitter, Anyesh Roy, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Cyber Cell said a case was registered on the complaint of Apurva Singh and all offensive posts made on social medial platforms were removed.

“In Case FIR registered on the complaint of @isinghapurva, all offensive posts made on Twitter and 26 posts made on Facebook have been removed till date through the concerned Platforms. One accused person, Md. Aasim, who had shared the offensive content, has been arrested, he tweeted.

“Other account holders who posted the offensive content are being identified through technical investigation for further legal action,” he added.

Lance Naik martyred in Doda cremated with State honours

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Lance Naik Raj Singh Khatana (29), who was martyred on Saturday in a terrorist attack in Doda district in Jammu & Kashmir was laid to rest with State honours in his native village of Damdama in Sohna, on Monday afternoon.

Singh was survived by his wife Ravita Devi and three children — two sons Rishab (10), Anurag (6) and a daughter Ishika (8). Singh was the elder of three brothers and two sisters.

The body was taken in a special vehicle from Delhi to his house in Damdama village. The last journey was attended by local residents, relatives and officials from the Haryana Government and the Indian Army.

Based on information of



the presence of terrorists in village Tasnal of District Doda (J&K), a joint operation was launched by Indian Army and Police in the suspected area. After cordoning off the area, the terrorists were asked to surrender.

However, they resorted to indiscriminate firing. During the ensuing firefight, Khatana was critically injured and later succumbed to his injuries on Saturday night.

“Khatana had joined the Indian Army in 2011 and was presently posted in Doda. Raj Singh had last visited his native during 45 days leave period in December 2019 and spent time with his wife, children and family members. During the holidays, he also arranged married his two younger sisters Neetu and Payal,” Singh’s relative said.

Meanwhile, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar condoled the death of Raj Singh on his Twitter account.

Also, the BJP MP, Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria on Monday condoled the death of the Lance Naik and visited Singh’s village.

“My brother was a brave, highly motivated and sincere soldier. I am proud of my brother’s sacrifice,” the martyred Singh’s brother Sonu Khatana said.



Migrant workers wait at a Government school to get screened before boarding buses for the Anand Vihar Railway Station to leave for their native places, during ongoing Covid-19 lockdown, in east Delhi on Monday

Gurdwara Committee starts ‘langar on wheels’ for migrants

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) has started “langar on wheels” (community kitchen) at around 10 location along with Delhi borders and NCR areas like Noida, Ghaziabad, Seelam puri, Sahadra areas etc for providing food and water to the migrant labourers walking back to their villages.

The decision was taken to ensure they get nutritious, healthy and fresh food and water on the way back to their homes, said DSGMC president Manjinder Singh Sirsa President

Sirsa said that mobile langars is being served to around homebound migrant labour going by walk along the main roads connecting from New Delhi to UP areas nearer to the inter-state check posts. “These langar vans with banners highlighting food and water arrangements for standard migrant workers are stationed at different places and all the needy are asked to partake langar while sitting in a nearby convenient place maintaining social distancing and food packets and water

bottles are provided to them for use during journey time,” he said.

Sirsa further said that each langar van leaves Gurdwara Bangla Sahib around 9 am morning and ensures that all food material is distributed to the needy people. We rush additional supply in case if there is additional demand at any place

“The volunteers of DSGMC are distributing food packets to railways passengers in Shramik trains at New Delhi Railways Station, Old Delhi Railways Station, Nizammudin, Anand Vihar Railways station etc depending on the route of the train and demand for the food packets,” he said.

The DSGMC has set up food counter at New Delhi Railways station at the request of Indian Railways to provide free drinking water, juices, and biscuit packets to the migrant workers travelling in Shramik trains to their native place and said that DSGMC volunteers will also provide further support and assistance to railways if any such request is made by railways authorities.

Lockdown 4.0 freedom sees sudden spike in air pollution

NEW DELHI: As the country stepped into the fourth phase of the lockdown, the national capital, which for two months saw azure blue skies and breathable air, witnessed a sudden spike in the air pollution on Monday.

The level of Particulate Matter (PM) with diameters of 2.5 and 10 microns, which are too small to be filtered out of the body, stood at 83 and 183 micrograms per cubic metre, respectively.

SAFAR categorises air quality in the 0-50 range as good, 51-100 as satisfactory, 101-200 as moderate, 201-300 as poor, 301-400 as very poor and above 400 as severe.

Data by the Central Pollution

Control Board showed that overall air quality near Punjabi Bagh area stood at 298 micrograms per cubic metre, followed by Delhi Technological University, Bawana and Mundka.

Out of 36 stations, the AQI in as many as 16 stations, was above 200 micrograms per cubic metre till 4 p.m. on Monday.

According to the System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research, “this is owing to the dust transport from the Rajasthan region which is going to keep PM 10 levels high until evening of May 18 and then start to descend.”

The weather forecasting agency further said that the dust is likely to be

a dominant factor in contributing to particulate pollution for the coming days. Researchers indicated that PM 10 and PM 2.5 will be 215 and 103 micrograms per cubic metre on Tuesday.

According to a study conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, in the earlier stage of the lockdown, the country had witnessed 43 and 31 percent decreases in PM 2.5 and PM 10 as compared to previous years. But, in the past few days it appears to be increasing again.

If the low levels of air pollution reached during the lockdown period are maintained, India’s annual death toll could reduce by 6.5 lakh, the study had stated.

Injured Greater Flamingo treated, released in wild

After treatment, bird was returned to its natural habitat and integrated with a resident flock of flamingos at Najafgarh wetlands

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a joint operation led by Delhi Zoo and Wildlife SOS, a Greater Flamingo bird that was found critically injured has been treated and released in the wild.

The bird was returned to its natural habitat and integrated with a resident flock of flamingos at the Najafgarh wetlands, thus setting a new precedence in ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

According to officials, the critically injured Greater Flamingo (Phoenicopterus roseus) was treated at Delhi Zoo & released when it was declared fit.

As soon as the Delhi Zoo Director informed Wildlife SOS that the bird was ready for release, the Wildlife SOS team reached out to the Delhi bird

group for their assistance in locating and identifying a resident flock of flamingos into which the bird could be integrated. A resident flock of flamingos was identified at Najafgarh Jheel Wetlands.

A team consisting of Delhi Zoo Vet and Wildlife SOS team left with the flamingo from NZP for Najafgarh to begin the integration process.

According to rescue officials since the flamingo flock was over 1 km from the bank in the wetlands, there was no road access. “Therefore the team arranged a boat to transport the flamingo closer to the flock. When the team was a couple of hundred meters from the resident flock, the flamingo was released,” said a member of rescue team.

Greater flamingos are the largest and most widespread

flamingo species and live in flocks called colonies to protects individual birds from predators. Parent flamingos produce a red colour crop milk, in their digestive tracts and regurgitate it to feed their young.

Dr. Suneesh Buxy, IFS - Director NZP Delhi Zoo, said, “Vet team NZP has done good job with team spirit, providing treatment. It’s a pleasure to see that the isolated bird was reunited with its family and set free in its natural habitat. More zoos must make sincere efforts to return wildlife to their habitat, as their contribution to conservation.”

Dr Vikas Jayswal, Veterinary Officer, Delhi Zoo, said, “We monitored the flamingo’s treatment and medical progress to expedite recovery so it could be returned to the wild.

Kartick Satyanarayan, CEO of Wildlife SOS, said, “Delhi Zoo and Wildlife SOS shared a common goal. We wanted the bird successfully released in the wild. Delhi Bird members came



to our aid and helped us identify resident flock of flamingos in Najafgarh Wetlands. This was a challenging situation as the only way to successfully release the bird was by using a boat. I appreciate the NZP

Director and Veterinary team returning the flamingo to its natural habitat”

Bhavya, a bird watcher said, “This is one of the most exciting adventures we have experienced. Our parents encour-

aged us to protect birds & become nature lovers. It was inspiring to see Delhi Zoo and Wildlife SOS work so hard to put this bird back in its natural habitat. We learnt a lot about flamingos today.”

Covid death toll in Delhi 160, cases over 10,000

New Delhi: The death toll due to coronavirus in Delhi has mounted to 160 as the total number of Covid-19 cases reported in the national capital crossed the 10,000-mark on Monday, authorities said.

A total of 299 fresh cases were recorded while the total number of cases stood at 5,409.

With this Delhi has become the fourth state, where the total cases have crossed the 10,000-mark. Maharashtra has 33,055 Covid-19 cases, Gujarat 11,379 and Tamil Nadu 11,224, according to data shared on the union health ministry website

In a bulletin issued on Monday, the Delhi health department said the death toll from coronavirus has risen to 160, and the total number of cases mounted to 10,054.

from various hospitals.

On Sunday, the total number of cases stood at 9,755, including 148 deaths.

With 299 fresh cases, the total number of corona cases in Delhi has climbed to 10,054.

Of the total number of deceased patients, 82 were aged 60 and above, accounting for over 52 per cent of the fatalities here.

Forty-five of them were aged between 50-59 years and 33 were less than 50 years, the bulletin said.

Facing criticism for “under reporting” Covid-19 deaths, the Delhi Government on Sunday issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) for hospitals.

An order has been issued regarding standard operating procedures for handling of dead bodies of Covid-patients or people suspected to have had Covid-19, in accordance with guidelines on dead body management issued by the health ministry, the bulletin said. **PTI**

Cong: Fiscal package hopelessly inadequate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday said the fiscal stimulus package announced by the Government is “hopelessly inadequate” given the gravity of the economic crisis as it amounts to only ₹1.86 lakh crore, which is 0.91 per cent of the GDP.

The party sought a revised and comprehensive package of 10 per cent of the GDP.

Senior Congress leader and former Finance Minister P Chidambaram said the stimulus package has left several sections like the poor, migrants, farmers, labourers, workers, small shopkeepers and middle class high and dry.

“In our view, a fiscal stimulus of ₹1,86,650 crore amounting to barely 0.91 per cent of GDP will be totally inadequate given the gravity of the economic crisis and the dire situation in which people find themselves,” he said.

Chidambaram said most analysts, rating agencies and banks have placed the size of the fiscal stimulus between 0.8 to 1.5 per cent.

On Sunday, former Union Minister and Congress leader Anand Sharma accused the government of misleading people with its “trickery, fakery, quackery” and said the economic measures announced by the Centre amounted to only 1.6 per cent of India’s GDP, i.e. worth ₹3.22 lakh crore instead of ₹20 lakh crore as claimed by the prime minister.

“We express our thorough disappointment and request the government to reconsider the stimulus package and announce a revised and comprehensive fiscal stimulus package of not less than ₹10 lakh crore of real additional expenditure equivalent to 10 per cent of GDP,” Chidambaram said at a press conference

through video-conferencing.

He also accused the Government of being opportunistic by pushing reforms. It is bypassing stakeholder consultation, legislation and discussion in Parliament on the package and this will be strongly resisted and challenged in the House, he added.

“I think the Government is deliberately sidelining Parliament. A meeting of the Parliamentary Committee should at least be held to discuss the fiscal stimulus package,” the Congress leader said. “If there is a genuine reform that takes economy forward, we will support it but we will have to read the fine print,” he said.

“The Government is being opportunistic. They are just announcing what one person or one group of persons think is right without thinking through the consequences. Editorials and articles today point out downside of some of the announcements,” Chidambaram noted.

“You can’t fool all the people all the time. This fiscal stimulus package is inadequate,” he said.

The former finance minister said “we note with deep regret” that the fiscal stimulus package has left several sections high and dry, including the bottom half of the population (13 crore families), migrant workers, farmers, landless agricultural labour, daily-wage non-agricultural labour, workers who have been laid off or retrenched and those in unorganised or unregistered businesses or units who have lost their jobs.

He said the self-employed, who have no work, seven crore shopkeepers, lower middle class families, who have run out of cash and are forced to borrow, and the 5.8 crore MSMEs have also been left out in the package.

He said the Congress has analysed the contents of the five tranches and in its considered opinion except for 1.86 lakh crore of additional expenditure, the rest of the announcements are included already in budget expenditure, front loading of some budgeted expenditure, regulatory measures, medium to long term plans or schemes and proposed reforms.

Chidambaram said there can be no fiscal stimulus to the economy without additional expenditure over and above the budgeted expenditure and this has been acknowledged by the finance minister.

Thus the true value of fiscal stimulus package will be known when we know what is the additional borrowing in 2020-21, he said.

“The truth cannot be hidden for long.” To a question on fear of rating agencies downgrading India, the former finance minister said he does not think rating agencies run the country.

“Every country in the world is in distress, practically every country in Europe is facing a recession. If rating agencies downgrade us, they will have to downgrade every European country too.

“This is an unnecessary fear. We will have to face that situation. As long as our foreign exchange reserves are high, inflation is under control, we are on the right path, demand grows and GDP picks up, why would a rating agency downgrade us,” he asked?

Chidambaram also noted that it is not the time to worry about fiscal deficit and if additional expenditure turns out to be another ₹10 lakh crore and additional borrowing is Rs 10 lakh crore.

Obviously fiscal deficit will go up but that should not be a matter of worry, he added.

CBSE Class 10, 12 exams to be held from July 1-15

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ on Monday released the revised datesheet for the pending CBSE exams for both classes 10 and 12, which will now be held from July 1-15 with strict distancing norms in place.

The exams were postponed due to the nationwide lockdown imposed on March 25 to contain the spread of COVID-19.

While class 12 exams will be conducted across the country, the class 10 exams are only pending in North East Delhi, where they could not be held due to the law and order situation in the wake of protests against the amended citizenship act.

The schedule has been decided in order to ensure that the board exams are completed before competitive examinations such as engineering entrance JEE-Mains, which is scheduled from July 18-23, and medical entrance exam NEET, which is scheduled on July 26.

The class 10 exams will be staggered on four dates, starting July 1. The first paper will be of Social Sciences, while the next day students will be required to appear in Science exam,” CBSE Controller of Examination Sanyam Bhardwaj said.

“On July 10, exams will be conducted for both courses of Hindi, and on July 15 for both courses of English,” he said.

On health guidelines for students, Bhardwaj said, they will be required to carry own sanitiser bottles and wear mask to their examination centres.

“Parents will have to ensure their ward is not sick



Students to carry sanitiser bottles, wear masks

and candidates will have to strictly follow physical-distancing norms,” he said.

The class 12 date sheet has two sections - one for exams in Northeast Delhi and the other for exams across the country.

In North East Delhi, Physics exam will be held on July 3, Accountancy (July 4), Chemistry (July 6), English (July 8) and Political Science (July 14).

On July 15, four class 12 exams have been scheduled in North East Delhi -- Mathematics, Economics, History and Biology.

For class 12 exams across the country, the Home Science exam will be held on July 1, followed by both courses of Hindi the next day.

The class 12 Business Studies exam has been scheduled for July 9 followed by Biotechnology on July 10, and Geography on July 11. Sociology exam will be held on July 13.

The board was not able to conduct class 10 and 12 exams on eight examination days due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The board had last month announced that it will only conduct pending exams in 29 subjects which are crucial for promotion and admission to higher educational institutions.

CAPF swadeshi-only sale to aid Khadi commission

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is going to get a big push after Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s direction to buy only swadeshi products in all canteens of central paramilitary forces. This decision will also impact the production and sales of KVIC which will be fulfilling the majority of supplies at these stores, apart from lot of job opportunities to people across the country, said Vinai Kumar Saxena, Chairman, KVIC.

“India has taken the first big step towards becoming Aatmanirbhar (self-reliant). Immediately after Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s call for encouraging local products, the Home Minister Amit Shah has taken a lead and has made it mandatory for all canteens and stores of paramilitary forces to sell only “Swadeshi” products through Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC). The move will open great employment opportunities for farmers, unemployed youths and lakhs of people already engaged with cottage and village industries,” said KVIC in a statement.

Saxena lauded the decision of the Home Minister saying this would provide a big boost to the cottage and village industries sector apart from the MSMEs units. “This decision will directly benefit lakhs of people engaged with manufacturing of various village industries products. With this order over 10 lakh personnel of the various paramilitary forces will be added to KVIC’s consumer base. As a goodwill gesture, the KVIC has also immediately decided to supply products to the CAPF canteens at a small margin of 3% only as against the 20% margin in other cases,” Saxena said.

Notably, there are 20 master bhandars of these forces

Liquor manufacturers hail Army's decision to purchase only India made products in canteen stores



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Country’s liquor manufacturers have welcomed the Indian Army’s decision to purchase only India-made products in the Canteen Stores including Indian alcoholic beverages.

In a letter to the head of Canteen Stores Department (CSD), the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC), the apex body of the Indian alcoholic beverage industry, stated: “Armed Forces have been among the first to respond to the Prime Minister’s appeal to go local and have decided to purchase only India-made products in Canteen Stores. We compliment Armed Forces for this step as this will help India create world class

products, so vital for it to become a global economic force.”

CIABC Director General Vinod Giri said that Indian alcoholic beverage industry is coming of age with internationally acclaimed single malt whiskies like Amrut, Paul John, Rampur etc. “However, these brands need support and encouragement from the Government to become global household names. Hence, a decision by CSD, the largest purchaser of alcoholic products in India, to sell only Indian-made products is truly a watershed moment for the Indian industry. This will give them scale to compete globally, and spur them to innovate and produce even better products,” he added.

across the country with annual turnover of over ₹1,800 crore. The KVIC is likely to get major share of the total turnover. At present, KVIC has registered 17 products for the supply to CAPF canteens. These include Khadi National Flag, eatables like honey, pickles, edible oils, agarbatti, papad,

amla products and cotton towels etc Further, a list of 63 new products like Khadi clothes, woollens, cosmetics like herbal oils, shampoo, soaps, face wash, tea and coffee and others has been submitted to the CAPF canteens by KVIC to be included in supply list at these stores.

V-P dwells on new way of life during corona pandemic



Naidu suggested a 12-point new normal of living during corona times

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu on Monday underlined the need to adopt new ways of living in corona times and suggested a 12-point framework for this new normal to deal with the virus by learning from the lessons so far taught by the pandemic. He stressed on the need for new attitudes towards life and humanity amidst indications of the virus likely to stay for longer than earlier expected.

“Live differently and live safe,” he put forth his mantra in a lengthy Facebook post hours after the announcement of lockdown 4.0 with restrictions substantially relaxed.

He dealt with the philosophical and moral issues thrown by the COVID-19 contagion saying life can’t be lived in isolation and the virus outbreak highlighted the interconnectedness of lives. He said, “What affects one person anywhere affects everyone everywhere, be it the disease or economy.”

Giving an account of the nature of life ‘Before Corona’, Naidu stated that man emerged a loner in his quest for happiness and material advancement reducing the family and the society to being mere adjuncts and his confidence bordering on arrogance made him believe that he can live alone and all by himself, unmindful of the lives of others.

“Stacked with better tools to fight the epidemics than when the pestilence struck humanity earlier and empowered with gene editing, Artificial Intelligence, big data etc, man was seeking to play God,” he

stated. On the life ‘After Corona’, Naidu noted that it has shaken the fundamentals of living by oneself and highlighted the need for living in harmony with nature and fellow humans. “The invisible microbe once again proved that life can change very quickly. It brought into full play the uncertainty that can co-sail with life,” he pointed out.

“Uncertainty continues to haunt the people. Uncertainty is the known source of anxiety which can lead to psychological issues,” he said even as he suggested adopting a new normal of life by staying calm and confident.

Naidu stressed that the corona challenge is more a civilizational issue than that of individual lives and new norms and ethos of living should be evolved to save the present civilization.

Noting that life can’t be lived for long in confinement, he welcomed the new relaxations for lockdown 4.0 even as he recalled how people living with HIV virus had no vaccine for long time and had to change habits. Similarly, Naidu urged the people to learn to cope with corona virus by changing the habits and attitudes towards life and fellow humans.

He suggested a 12-point new normal of living during corona times that includes among others living in harmony with the nature and fellow beings; knowing that safety and security of lives are interconnected, rationally analysing the impact of every movement or action on the spread of virus, not responding impulsively to the situation, strictly adherence to the behavioral changes ushered in so far like wearing mask, maintaining physical distance and ensuring hygiene besides preventing stigmatisation and replacing the sense of collective helplessness by the spirit of the virtue of living interconnected with shared destiny.

Part of Krishi Bhawan sealed after official tests corona +ve

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A part of Krishi Bhawan building in Central Delhi has been sealed after an official in the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying tested positive for COVID-19. The official works as a personal secretary in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

“The entire office premises will be thoroughly sanitised as per extant guidelines in this regard on May 19 and May 20, apart from the daily sanitisation that takes place,” according to an official memorandum. The officers have been asked to work from home for the next two days. The office will reopen on May 21, it said.

All those who had come in direct contact with the



COVID-19 patient have been advised to get themselves home quarantined and to also get themselves tested after five days. They will be allowed to attend office only after being tested negative for COVID-19, it added. The remaining staff will be called from May 21 on rotation as per the instructions

of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Besides the Fishery, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Ministry, Krishi Bhawan also houses several other ministries including agriculture, food and consumer affairs, rural development and panchayati raj.

Repatriation of pregnant women first priority: Centre’s undertaking in HC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday undertook in the Delhi High Court that it will follow its standard operating procedure (SOP), including giving priority to pregnant women, while repatriating Indian nationals stranded in Saudi Arabia since the COVID-19 outbreak.

The undertaking was given before Justice Vibhu Bakhru by Additional

Solicitor General Maninder Acharya and central government standing counsel Jasmeet Singh who appeared for the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The high court noted the undertaking and bound the government to the statement made by it. The order came while disposing of a PIL by the United Nurses Association seeking directions to the Centre to bring back 56 pregnant nurses stranded in Saudi Arabia due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

With regard to the association’s plea for bringing back the pregnant nurses by via

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special chartered flights, the high court said it was not giving any such direction “as steps have been The high court said, “It is expected that the Government would take all necessary steps, within the limitation of the resources available, to operate flights to bring back Indian citizens who are stranded overseas.”

It also observed that “it is necessary to ensure within the

category of persons who are to be accorded priority, a higher priority be accorded to persons who are in medical distress vis-à-vis persons who are otherwise hale and hearty but are stranded due to the expiry of their visa or other reasons”.

The United Nurses Association, represented by advocate Subhash Chandran, had also sought a direction to the MHA to “strictly follow” its SOP which states that priority has to be given to people with medical emergencies, including pregnant women.

The association claimed that many of the pregnant nurses are in their third trimester and therefore, require “medical and psycho-socio support”.

The petition had also claimed that these women are staying alone in Saudi Arabia as family status visa was not provided to staff nurses like them.

The association had sought a direction to the Centre to bring back the stranded pregnant nurses in the second phase of ‘Vande Bharat Mission’ between May 19 and May 23.

Why Covid is more fatal to men than women? Research begins

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Why the Novel Coronavirus is more fatal to men than women? Is there any link between prostate cancer in men and Covid-19? Is a protein receptor abnormally grown in prostate cancer patients is being used by the virus to enter the lungs and attack lung tissue of men?

These are some of the pertinent questions that a team of researchers from University California Los Angeles Health Sciences is exploring to help improve better clinical outcomes for men afflicted with Coronavirus.

In the UCLA-led clinical trial, researchers will suppress male hormones using the FDA-approved medication known as degarelix, to temporarily shut down the production of TMPRSS2 and block the virus from entering lung tissue.

The decision came after researchers noted that the protein receptor called TMPRSS2 which is abnormal in about half of all prostate cancer patients plays a role in the

development and progression of prostate cancer.

The UCLA researchers believe that the virus uses this same receptor to enter the lungs and attack lung tissue. The receptor is regulated by male hormones in prostate cancer, and researchers believe it may also be regulated in lung tissue by male hormones.

The phase 2 trial will assess if temporarily suppressing male hormones will reduce the severity of COVID-19 illness by helping patients get out of the hospital faster, decrease the need for intubation and improve mortality.

The UCLA-led study is being conducted at the Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System and other VA sites across the country.

“It’s becoming pretty clear that men are more likely than women to die from COVID-19 and we think there is a connection between prostate cancer research and our understanding of COVID-19 research,” said principal investigator Matthew Rettig, professor of medicine and urolo-

gy at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and member of the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“It’s kind of like a lock and key,” explained Rettig, who is also the chief of hematology/oncology at the Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System.

“If the virus was the key and its receptor is the lock, then the virus inserts into the lock and can gain entry into the lung while the male hormones makes that lock more accessible to the virus. By suppressing the male hormones, it’s kind of like putting a piece of masking tape over the lock so that the key won’t fit in.”

“We’re hoping this (the research) will not only help men with COVID-19 get out of the hospital faster, but ultimately, see less men dying from the virus,” said Rettig.

Recent data from New York City, the epicenter of infections in the United States, show that men are not only infected in greater numbers, but they are also dying at nearly twice the rate of women.

CRPF veterans seek action against J&K IGP for casual comment on force’s role

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Veterans of 1972 batch of Group A CRPF Cadre officers have written to Home Minister Amit Shah seeking action against IPS officer and Inspector General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Vijay Kumar for making casual comments about CRPF’s role in the Valley.

During a recent review meeting held by Jammu and Kashmir Police Director General, Kumar had said that CRPF is not working well in the Union Territory.

At the meeting for review of the local police, armed forces and CAPFs collaborating in anti-terror operations in J&K on April 29, Kumar had allegedly said “CRPF is not working well”

“Here (In J&K), JKP gen-

erates intelligence, Army/Rashtriya Rifles carry out the operations and CRPF’s name is inserted just like that...This I know, I have been in CRPF,” the letter quotes Kumar to have asserted during the meeting.

“This statement is not only contrary to the facts, but also belies the valorous sacrifices made by the Force, a consistent track record of exceptional performance, and laurels earned by the Force in the most difficult anti-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir. 76 gallantry medals given at the Republic Day of 2020 are a testament to the sweat, blood and martyrdom of brave men and women of CRPF,” the veterans said stated to buttress the paramilitary’s role in anti-terror operations in the Valley.

The retired officials of CRPF who have put in 35-40

years of service further said, “Singular lack of leadership and maturity demonstrated by IGP Vijay Kumar, and his factually incorrect and hurtful comments, have caused consternation in the Force personnel. Ignoring this incident to let it pass would be even more hurtful and memories of disrespect will never fade away.”

...a visible action from you would go a long way in restoring the morale and confidence of the Force, repair the damage caused by immature and disrespectful comments by Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir. It will also be a powerful reminder to all to work together as a cohesive, collaborative, respectful and unified team to wipe out the virus of terrorism,” the group 35 veterans who are signatories to the letter asserted.

WB divides containment zones into 3

Zone A- Affected zones, Zone B- Buffer zones, Zone C - Clean zones

SAGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a bid to effect a micro-surveillance of the corona-hit areas and at the same time afford a thin life line to a gasping economy Bengal Government has sliced the containment zones into three sub-divisions.

Announcing the decision Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that the containment zones would henceforward be divided into ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ sub-zones.

Declaring that Bengal will not impose curfew but too will continue the lockdown till May 31, the Chief

Minister said “the containment zones in Bengal will be sub-divided into three zones: Zone A- which will be the affected zones, Zone B- or the buffer zones, and Zone C that are - clean zones,” adding “we are however not in favour of imposing curfew as we don’t want to use that word for our state.”

While in A zones there will be complete shutdown with no activity the zone Bs will have partial relaxations. Zone C will get complete relaxations, she said adding even in such zones the people will have to maintain social distancing and all other protocols they are required to follow.

The State which already had allowed opening of roadside food stalls, mobile shops, electronic shops etc would let

big shops open from May 21 she said adding the vendors market too will be allowed to open from May 27 --- “but with some restrictions and protocols.” She said the street vendors would be allowed to open their shops on “odd-even basis so as to avoid crowding” of the sidewalks. Hotels too would be allowed to function with social distancing norms but restaurants would remain shut till further orders, she said.

On the migrant workers’ issue she said the State government was handling the crisis with utmost sensitivity paying for the fares or arranging for their travel back home adding “about 2-3 lakh people had been brought back in buses and trains,” Banerjee said referring apparently to the allegations brought by the

BJP that the State Government was not doing enough to bring back the migrants.

Swelling on the issue State BJP president Dilip said that “the State Government is ignoring the plight of the migrant workers. They are not bringing them back though the Centre is ready with trains.”

He asked, “when Uttar Pradesh can requisition 400 trains, Bihar, Jharkhand and other States too can take back their workers in huge numbers why should Bengal shirk its responsibility?”

Earlier senior leader Rahul Sinha demanded at least 1000 trains to bring back the workers. “The Chief Minister has said that she has requisitioned 105 trains that will bring back workers till

June 15. This means that these workers will have to remain stranded for another one month or so. Besides how many people can be brought back in 105 trains. There is a need of at least 1000 to 1200 trains to evacuate the hapless workers,” he said.

Attacking Trinamool Congress for dismissing the central package as a lip-service, Ghosh said that “the Chief Minister and her party had wanted cash in their hands so that the State can party with that fund as they did with the funds sent for Aila and Bulbul cyclones... This time Modiji (Prime Minister) was cautious about seeing the money go into the pocket of the people who need it. This is the reason why this government is angry on the Centre.”

Govt taking all necessary steps to minimise damage: Mamata

PNS ■ KOLKATA

With cyclone Ampan crystallising into a super cyclonic storm threatening large parts of coastal Bengal the State Government went on a high alert suspending ferry services in all districts and transporting vulnerable villagers to safer areas, source said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who called an emergency meeting of top officials said the “Government is taking all necessary precautions like it did on earlier occasions to minimise the damage.”

Bengal Home Secretary Alapon Bandopadhyay said “the entire state machinery is prepared to deal with the situation” adding disaster management teams were being sent to the high risk areas like North and South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore including the coastal town of Digha

a much sought after tourist destination. The Government had arranged for shelters following social distancing norms the Home Secretary said adding National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams had been put on high alert to conduct rescue and relief operations

High alert had been issued in two 24 Parganas, particularly the Sundreban areas and East Midnapore, he said adding senior officials were camping in the stated areas.

Super cyclonic storm Ampan is hurtling towards Digha at a high speed of about 180 kmph weather office said adding during landfall sometime on Wednesday the wind speed could be around 140-160 kmph. In fact a day before on Tuesday the wind speed could be around 60-80 kmph, weather office sources said.

13 Kerala districts under yellow alert

IANs ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday predicted heavy rains in Kerala on account of the extremely severe cyclonic storm ‘Amphan’ over west central and adjoining central parts of South Bay of Bengal moving north-north westwards, following which the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) placed 13 of the 14 districts under yellow alert.

Yellow alert means people and authorities have to be cautious as heavy rainfall can be expected. Only the capital district has been left out from the yellow alert on Monday.

Herd masking to fight virus spread in Chennai

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

As part of the initiative to put a stop to the spread of coronavirus cases in Chennai,Tamil Nadu’s major hotspot, authorities have switched over to a new phenomenon by name Herd Masking. A group of officials led by Dr J Radhakrishnan, former secretary to the department of health who has been appointed recently as the special officer for tackling Covid-19 in Chennai are on a mission to mask the unmasked.

Those in containment areas in Chennai who come out of their houses without wearing face masks are issued masks by Radhakrishnan and his team of officials. “Our aim is to reduce the number of persons who are exposed to the virus spreading this pandemic. Over the last few days my team of officials have distributed more than two lakh face

“Our aim is to reduce the number of persons who are exposed to the virus spreading this pandemic. Over the last few days my team of officials have distributed more than two lakh face masks,” said Radhakrishnan

masks,” said Radhakrishnan. Radhakrishnan, who is a veteran in fighting natural disasters and experienced in rescuing and rehabilitation of persons affected by tsunami, cyclones and floods want the wearing of mask to be made compulsory in the State. “It is possible for a coronavirus afflicted person to infect 10 persons and hence we should make it mandatory to wear face masks,” said Radhakrishnan.

Meanwhile political Tamil Nadu saw the fighting between the ruling AIADMK and the Opposition DMK reaching new heights. MK Stalin, president, DMK, alleged that Tamil Nadu

Government has been left clueless in controlling the coronavirus pandemic.

“The Government has announced that the 10th Standard examination will be held from June 1. How is it possible to have the examination at this critical juncture? What is the need for conducting examination during the time of Covid-19,” asked Stalin in a release on Monday.

T R Balu, MP and DMK’s New Delhi face , said that the tranche of announcements made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sithraman will not help in addressing the problems faced by the poor in the country.

“The announcements were meant for the rich and powerful strata of society. The Centre has mailed miserably in handling the coronavirus pandemic,” said Balu at Chennai.

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

More than 200 farmers, most of them in loin-cloth, the traditional wear of Tamil Nadu farmers, staged a demonstration in front of the district collector’s office at Tiruchirappalli on Monday to give vent to their disappointment and dismay over the tranche of announcements worth ₹20 lakh crore made by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sithraman during the last four days to rejuvenate the economy.

Disregarding the Government order on assembly of people and social distancing norms, the farmers singing folk songs highlighting their woes and worries assembled under the scorching sun and shouted slogans against the State and central Governments. “The series of announcements



made by the Finance Minister are mere hog-wash. It is not going to save the farmers from the impending disaster. You please wait for some more time and you will see many farmers committing suicide in Tamil Nadu,” Ayyakkannu Ponnusamy, president of South Indian River Inter Linking Association who led the agitation told The Pioneer.

“Considering the fact that 85 crore people in India are dependent on agriculture, the Government should have

allocated a compensation of ₹20,000 per acre for the loss caused due to the nationwide lockdown. This means that an amount of ₹14 lakh crore should have been set apart to compensate for the loss suffered by the farmers. But whatever allocation the Finance Minister has made is far below the expectation,” said Ayyakkannu.

He said the Finance Minister should consider all farmers (small, medium and big) as one irrespective of

the size of the farm they own and provide ₹20,000 per acre as compensation for the loss suffered by the farmers due to lockdown.

“The agitation was a total success as many people took part in it irrespective of the weather and the fear of coronavirus. We will sit together later this week to decide about the future course of action,” said Ayyakkannu.

But Kattumannarkoil Kannan, vice president, Cauvery Delta Farmers

Association, said that the measures announced by the Finance Minister would go a long way in resolving the problems faced by the farmers.

“The important thing about the announcements by the Finance Minister is that only real farmers would be eligible for farm loans now. What was happening in Tamil Nadu till now was the hijacking of farm loans by private financiers. They would usurp all loans meant for farmers at the rate of seven per cent interest and offer loans to farmers at the rate of 20 per cent interest.

This system will go with the reforms ordered by the finance minister,” said Kannan. But he expressed his reservations against disbursement of more loans because it would end up making the farmers more debt-ridden.

Karnataka bans entry from 4 Covid-hit States

Eases lockdown norms further, lifts several restrictions

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

On the first day of the fourth phase of lockdown, Karnataka has announced many relaxations but said the State will not allow people from four Covid -19 hit States to enter Karnataka. Further the State also announced ease of lockdown norms and lifts several restrictions.

In a press conference in Bengaluru on Monday, Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa has announced that Karnataka will not allow entry of people from Gujarat, Maharashtra,

Kerala and Tamil Nadu till May 31 as a precautionary measure to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

He announced easing of many restrictions which include operation of cabs, buses, opening of shops and allowing trains within Karnataka from Tuesday.

According to Government sources Chief Minister has taken this decision to give a boost to the economy of the State which has taken a beating at the time of Covid-19 lockdown. Yediyurappa said trains and state corporation buses will run within Karnataka and shops will be allowed to open.

“Strict lockdown measures will be followed in containment zones and economic activities will be permitted in other areas. Sundays will be total lockdown across the State,” he

said. Yediyurappa announced that strict lockdown measures will be in place in containment zones. He said all economic activities will be permitted in the State except for red zones.

According to Chief Minister only 30 people would be allowed to travel in the buses and wearing of face masks and maintaining physical distancing are mandatory. He said bus fares will not be increased and inter-state transport would not be allowed, except in emergency cases.

Auto and taxis were also given green signal to get on to roads, but there should be only three passengers, including the driver. In maxi-cabs, the maximum number should be four passengers, including driver.

The State has also allowed parks to open up for the public, though gyms and golf

course will remain shut. All shops that are standalone, independent shops can open across the city, except for the ones in malls. Salons will be allowed to operate from Tuesday with fresh guidelines on their operations.

The Centre on Sunday extended the nation-wide lockdown for another 14 days till May 31 and warned of strict action under the Disaster Management Act and Indian Penal Code if the fresh guidelines are not followed. This is the fourth time the lockdown has been imposed in the country.

The nationwide lockdown was first imposed for 21 days starting March 25 and then extended on April 15 and later on May 4 with an aim to halt the spread of novel coronavirus.

Tamil Nadu inching towards 12,000 mark

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Though the coronavirus cases in Tamil Nadu registered an increase on Monday and took the total number of persons tested positive in the State till date to 11,760, there was a sense of relief on the face of Dr C Vijaya Baskar , Minister of Health who briefed the media late evening.

“We have tested 11,760 coronavirus positive cases in the State till Monday. Today 536 persons were tested positive across the State. Out of this, 46 persons were those who returned to the State from Maharashtra. Chennai alone tested 364 coronavirus cases which took the total number of cases in the capital city to 7,270,” said the Minister. He said the death toll was 81 with three more persons succumb-

ing to the pandemic till Monday evening.

Dr Baskar said that 3,37, 841 samples have been tested and 61 laboratories are functioning on a round-the-clock basis in the State.

“This is the highest number of samples tested anywhere in the country and we have the largest number of labs,” said the Minister.

The day also saw the discharge of 234 persons from various hospitals in the State making the total number of discharges in the State 4,406. “This means that there are 7,270 active coronavirus cases under treatment in the State. Our mortality rate is the lowest in the country and these factors are encouraging,” said Dr Baskar.

He also said that the last ten days saw an average of

12,536 samples being tested in the State. “This is also the highest number in the country which further proves that the State is tackling the situation effectively,” he said.

Dr J Radhakrishnan, veteran IAS officer, who is in charge of entire Chennai region as the special officer for tackling Covid-19 pandemic said that aggressive testing was on in Greater Chennai. “We have tested almost one per cent of the population in the metropolis which is an achievement.

The spike in the number of cases is due to the massive testing undertaken by my team of health professionals and revenue officials who are helping them,” Dr Radhakrishnan told *The Pioneer*. He said he was confident of bringing down the numbers to naught in coming days.

Kerala CM: 29 test +ve, 130 under treatment

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, here on Monday, said 29 new coronavirus cases in the state had raised the number of people under treatment to 130. “Of these, 21 came from abroad, 7 from other states,” Vijayan said.

Stating that 630 people have tested coronavirus positive in the state, the Chief Minister said 67,316 people were under observation in homes and 473 in hospitals. The total hotspot areas have risen to 29.

On lockdown easing, Vijayan said, “The public transport will be allowed within the district and in buses only 50 per cent seating capacity will be permitted.

IANs

Maha: MMRDA hands over 1,026-bed Covid care capacity to BMC

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

In two major developments that would help the State Government tackle the coronavirus situation in the State during the lockdown-four period, the State-run MMRDA on Monday handed over the 1026-bed Covid Care Centre-2 (CCC-2) facility created on the MMRDA ground at Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) here, even as eight companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) arrived in Maharashtra to help the State police in enforcing the lockdown-4 strictly in the coming days.

Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) Commissioner R A Rajeev handed over the new CCC-2 with quarantine and isolation facility with treatment for non-critical Covid-19 patients at BKC exhibition ground in north-central Mumbai to Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation’s Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal in the presence of chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, senior Congress minister Balasaheb Thorat and other senior ministers and bureaucrats on Monday.

At the new facility, there are in all 1,026 beds. In each of the 18 wards created at this facility,

there are in all 504 cots (28 cots in each ward) with Oxygen supply facility to the patients. In nine other wards, there are in all 522 cots (58 cots in each ward). In addition, there are 10 ICU mobile beds.

The BMC has appointed 13 doctors, eight nurses and 14 ward to manage this CCC-2 facility at MMRDA ground.

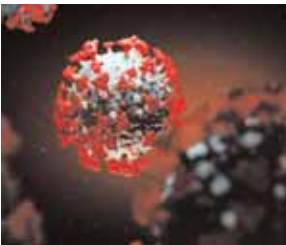
Spread over 1 lakh sq feet, the Covid Care Centre-2 has been created at the MMRDA ground in a record 14 days. The work, which started on May 2, was completed on May 16.

Jupiter Hospital, Thane as a part of its CSR activity has provided the design and technical guidance for the construction of this hospital, while MMRDA has borne the cost of constructing the hospital. It will be a full-fledged hospital with the facilities of pathology labs to conduct general blood tests of patients.

Meanwhile, eight companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) arrived in Maharashtra on Monday to assist the state police with the Covid-19 duties

Announcing this, Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said here: “While 5 companies – each with 1 20 highly-trained personnel will be deployed in from tomorrow, five others shall be spread across the State.”

K’taka reports 84 new cases, tally at 1,231



IANs ■ BENGALURU

Eighty-four new Covid-19 cases, majority of them with travel history to Mumbai, emerged in the past 19 hours in Karnataka, which is the highest single day rise, taking the state’s tally to 1,231, according to an official, here on Monday.

In addition to 54 patients who visited Mumbai, two had travelled to Solapur and one to Raigad in Maharashtra. Total cases with Maharashtra contact were 57 out of 84. Of all the cases, 58 were men and 26 women.

Of the 1,231 cases, 672 are active, 521 got discharged and 37 died from Covid-19.

Nowadays, Karnataka is regularly posting the highest single-day rises, beating earlier maximums.

On Monday, cases spiked in Raichur, Bengaluru Urban, Gadag, Yadagiri, Uttara Kannada and Mandya. Until Sunday, Raichur was a green zone without a case.

106 test +ve in J&K, total mounts to 1,289 55 policemen afflicted in two days

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

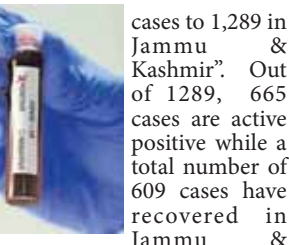
Jammu & Kashmir police personnel, playing a crucial role in containing spread of coronavirus, have been adversely affected especially in Kashmir valley.

In the last two days, at least 55 police personnel including a top ranking officer have tested positive only in Anantnag district.

On Monday, 3 more patients admitted in the Chest Disease hospital died taking the total tally of deaths due to Covid-19 to 16 while 106 fresh cases of coronavirus were detected, 12 from Jammu division and 94 from Kashmir valley.

The highest number of 59 cases were detected in Anantnag on Monday. Out of these, 36 were police personnel. 19 cops were tested positive in Anantnag on Sunday. Meanwhile, 12 cases each tested positive in Srinagar and Kulgam. Among them five doctors also tested positive in Srinagar.

According to media bulletin on novel coronavirus, “two patients, died at Chest disease hospital in Srinagar while 106 fresh cases were detected taking the total tally of positive



cases to 1,289 in Jammu & Kashmir”. Out of 1289, 665 cases are active positive while a total number of 609 cases have recovered in Jammu & Kashmir.

According to official sources, a 65-year-old female from Kulgam, admitted in SMHS Hospital, tested positive on Monday morning and soon after she was admitted to CD Hospital she died after suffering a major cardiac arrest.

Another 70-year-old man from Hillar Anantnag died at CD Hospital Srinagar, following his multiple procedures and comorbidities including Covid-19 at SMHS Hospital. Another cancer patient, tested positive, died in Chest disease hospital Monday evening, official sources said.

In Jammu division, Poonch district reported two cases of coronavirus. One of them was identified as government employee of the health department. Meanwhile, 10 other cases detected in Jammu division were stranded passengers who were screened at Lakhampur and tested positive while they were kept under administrative quarantine.

J&K notifies domicile rules

PNS ■ JAMMU

Ending the long wait, the Jammu & Kashmir Government on Monday notified Jammu & Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020.

These Rules prescribe the procedure for issuance of Domicile Certificate which has been made the basic eligibility condition for appointment to any post under the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir following amendments in the Jammu & Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralization and Recruitment) Act, 2010.

Under the Domicile Rules, Permanent Residents of the erstwhile State of J&K in whose favour Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) has been issued by the competent authority before 31.10.2019 shall be eligible for receiving their Domicile Certificates on the basis of PRCs alone and no other additional document shall be required for such residents.

Kashmiri migrants can also get the Domicile certificate on production of either a PRC or Certificate of registration of migrant. Further there may be bonafide migrants and bonafide displaced persons who have migrated but have not registered with the relief department. In order to facilitate such persons, the Relief Department shall be making a special limited provision to

apply before the Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrant), for registration for the purpose of issuance of a domicile certificate only, with any one of the many documents, such as 1951/1988 electoral roll, proof of employment, ownership of property, proof of registration in other states/UTs as a migrant or a displaced person or any other documentation which would have made him/her eligible for grant of PRC before 06-08-2019.

As a result of the new rules and procedure, West Pakistan Refugees (WPRs), Safai Karamcharis and Children of Women married outside Jammu and Kashmir who were earlier deprived shall also be now eligible for Domicile Certificate. West Pakistani Refugees were part of the Parliamentary electoral roll but not that erstwhile state electoral roll. They will now be covered under the 15 year residence rule or their children under the 7 year/ class 10/12 rule.

In addition, all those persons and their children who have resided for 15 years in Jammu & Kashmir or have studied for seven years and appeared in class 10th or 12th examination in an educational institution in the UT are eligible for grant of domicile. Children of Central Government officials, All India service Officers, officials of PSUs and Autonomous body

of Central Government, Public Sector Banks, Officials of Statutory bodies, Officials of Central Universities and recognized research institutes of the Central Government, who have served in the Union territory of Jammu & Kashmir for a total period of ten years will also be eligible for Domicile status in the UT.

Besides, all those migrants and their children who are registered with Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner will be granted Domicile certificate. Children of those residents of Jammu & Kashmir who reside outside the Union Territory in connection with their employment of business or other professional or vocational reasons have also become eligible for grant of domicile status.

The rules provide a simple and time bound procedure for the issuance of the Domicile certificate so that no one is put to any inconvenience. There shall be a timeline of 15 days for issuance of the certificate after which the applicant shall be free to approach an Appellate Authority.

The decision of the Appellate Authority shall be binding upon the issuing authority and the orders of the Appellate Authority are to be complied within seven days, failing which the defaulting officer shall be liable for a penalty of ₹50,000 out of his salary.

PAPER WITH PASSION

Too little still

The stimulus that came in tranches won't make for a big push to the economy. Much more is required



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has been announcing economic booster packages in small doses over the weekend but the fact of the matter is that the stimulus just doesn't seem punchy enough for a big push. Yes, on any other day, policy-driven structural and reformatory changes would have seemed visionary as all of them can only yield results in the long-term and frankly cannot make it past the agenda-setting stage at this moment. But these are turbulent times, the COVID-19 pandemic is severely aggravating an already depressed economy and a fund infusion in the form of largescale cash transfers is still needed. Just to galvanise the wheels of the economy that are still grunting and gasping. The intended beneficiaries, like migrants, the self-employed and small unit owners, are so listless that they cannot wait for processing loans, they need money in hand. Anyway the relief for them has come too little, too late. States, too, need much more to steady the ship from all sides. Yes, market-borrowing limits for States have been raised from three to five per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). But this is contingent on them introducing reforms relating to portability of ration cards though digitisation, power distribution and ease of doing business. This makes much of the agency of decision-making dependent on Central assessment and could be used as a tool for playing politics. None of these measures makes sense in the absence of demand and the increasing spiral of joblessness means consumer spending is at an all-time low. Without any discernible immediate push to perk up overall infrastructure, there is little scope for job creation, incomes or demand. The Government is probably holding back on largescale bank transfers, fearing bad loans and provisioning for a deeper trough, but the fact of the matter is that if nothing is done to plug the current sink hole, the economy could whoosh down further like quicksand. For all the grandiloquence, the actual fiscal outgo is just a bit over one per cent of the GDP, which is hardly enough to battle an unprecedented crisis such as this, when the economy is expected to contract to 12.5 per cent. All packages are aimed at pushing banks to extend credit on the basis of Government guarantees to certain sectors or measures to ease cash flow to companies in the short run rather than addressing collective anxieties of the economy as a whole. While the Finance Minister has put the overall stimulus at ₹20 lakh crore, the near-term fiscal impact is just ₹1.7 lakh crore, including free foodgrain, additional DBT, healthcare spending, fund outlay for MSMEs — subordinated debt and equity contribution — EFT support, interest rate subversion for Mudra loans, subsidies under CLSS-MIG, viability gap funding and additional MGNREGA allocation. Some amount would go into creating infrastructure for agriculture and allied activities in the longer run. Policy wise, there are quite a few ups in the form of emphasis on social infrastructure, rural jobs, turning agriculture into a robust business model, improving healthcare facilities like setting up infectious disease blocks in district hospitals and e-learning programmes through satellite channels. All of these will be on a public-private partnership model. There is regulatory relief for entrepreneurs to encourage investment and reduce public sector monopoly except in strategic sectors. Structural reforms in coal, minerals, defence production, civil aviation, power distribution, space and atomic energy are definitely welcome but have long-term gestation. We know how long coal block auctions, which have been allowed, take and the procedural bungling that happens in between. FDI limits have gone up but one hopes that foreign and Indian firms can help develop a local industry and get some tech transfers. An additional ₹40,000 crore has finally been allocated to MGNREGA to generate more work for returning migrants but that doesn't address the chronic labour shortages at vacant SEZs and the urban economies. That's where the demand is.

A crisis provides a rare opportunity for structural reform and an impetus to the Government to think out of the box without being hemmed in. Seemingly done for the poorest, the Government has just rescued them temporarily without providing them long-term comfort as growth is projected to dip in key sectors. Right now, the focus seems to be on attracting investment but boosting demand means innovative responses and interventions to specific problems and sectors and get each moving lest they clog up the economy as a whole. Promises can be made anytime but how many can be actualised overnight? Such is the crisis that only increased Government spending can work now, considering that most Governments around the world, some of whom have been tight-fisted, too, are doing so.

Soulless sport

Top-flight sport Bundesliga resumed behind closed doors this weekend. But without the audience, it isn't the same



The German premier football league, the Bundesliga, the first major sports league in the world to open up after the Coronavirus pandemic if one discounts Korean baseball and some other smaller leagues, played its first games this weekend in two months since the virus struck the world. The games were entertaining, a lot of goals were scored and the celebrations were properly socially distanced with a few exceptions here and there when the excitement of scoring a goal made players forget the times we are in. Some players were not able to follow the guidelines or contain themselves after scoring. Yet, while the return of the top-flight sport is welcome and it might help other leagues across the world formulate their plans for a return, the fact of the matter is that without crowds, sports is not the same. Take the game at Dortmund's Signal Iduna Park for example, where the famous "yellow wall" is a place where tens and thousands of supporters jumping up and down in unison lend the stadium an atmosphere that makes it hostile to visiting teams. Watching that game in an empty park felt wrong.

While empty stands might make little or no difference to Test Cricket matches, where audience numbers have been a challenge for years, save the occasional game at Kolkata, sports without live audiences is not on. While ticket receipts from stadia account for a diminishing proportion of sales as television revenues keep climbing, the fact is that even television viewers missed the crowds. Without the ambient noise and the sudden excitement when a goal is scored or a six is hit, how can sports be fun even to the television viewer? Yes, we are living in incredible times where things will take time to adjust and maybe smaller crowds will be a fact of life but it seems strange. The fact is that the return of major sports is a sign of normalisation and people need that comfort. The new "normal" may be a much-abused term now but if the new normal of sports will be so soulless, is it worth it?

In the spirit of federalism

The Centre's decision to take charge of the overall operations *vis-à-vis* COVID-19 is in line with the Constitutional scheme of things. States must cooperate to tide over the Corona crisis



A SURYA PRAKASH

It may take some more time for the COVID-19 pandemic to be brought fully under control in our country and to be eventually eliminated but one thing is clear, Coronavirus is certain to result in a re-ordering of India's federal structure and relations between the Union and the States. While a united national effort is on to tackle the virus, there are a few discordant voices here and there that question the Union Government's right to issue directions to the States. The nation has never witnessed such a national health crisis ever before and, therefore, Constitutional and other legal provisions that exist to deal with an emergency of this kind will, inevitably, have to be deployed. This means that the "unitary tilt" that is there in the Constitution becomes rather pronounced in circumstances such as these.

BR Ambedkar, the Chairman of the drafting committee of the Constitution, dwelt on the nature of the Indian federation *vis-à-vis* other bodies, especially in emergencies, in his concluding remarks on November 25, 1949, in the Constituent Assembly. He said that there was an allegation that there was too much centralisation and that the States had been reduced to municipalities. He said this view was not only an exaggeration but was also founded on a misunderstanding of what the Constitution sought to achieve.

The basic principle of federalism is that the legislative and the executive authority is partitioned between the Centre and the States, not by any law to be made by the former but by the Constitution itself. This principle is embodied in the Constitution. Therefore, he said, the charge that centralisation is defeating federalism must fail. The second charge was that the Centre had been given the power to override the States. Ambedkar said he "admitted" to this charge and explained that the overriding powers do not form the normal features of the Constitution. He said, "their use and operations are expressly confined to emergencies only."

He obviously had in mind not only the articles in the Constitution regarding the proclamation of an emergency among other things but also the powers vested in the Centre in the Union List and the Concurrent List in the Seventh Schedule to make laws to deal with emergency situations. For example, item 23 under the Concurrent List in the Seventh Schedule gives the Union Government the power to make law with respect to "prevention of the extension from one State to another of infectious and contagious diseases or pests affecting men, animals and plants."

In the light of this epidemic and the coordinated national effort that is on, one can see the Disaster Management Act (DMA) as one which enables the Centre to evolve a national policy and a plan of action to handle the current COVID-19 crisis.

This Act defines a disaster as "a catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence...." Several of its provisions, including Sections 6, 10 and 35, empower the Centre



to take charge when a disaster strikes, issue directions and ensure compliance.

The orders issued by the Union Home Secretary, who is also the chairperson of the National Executive Committee, regarding the lockdown and the measures to be taken to implement the same, flow from these provisions of the DMA. For example, in his March 29 order, the Home Secretary referred to the movement of a large number of migrants in different parts of the country and violation of lockdown measures on maintaining social distance and said that in case of any violation of these directions, the States and Union Territories should take necessary action. The order also made it explicitly clear that the district magistrates and the superintendents of police in the districts "will be personally liable for the implementation of these directions and lockdown measures issued under the above-mentioned orders."

This, to ensure that the orders are not flouted because generally, the district magistrates and superintendents of police are drawn from the Central services and they are well acquainted with the consequences of non-compliance in these matters. Apart from the provisions in the Concurrent List and the DMA, the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, also arms the Centre with powers to handle such epidemics.

However, the State of West Bengal took objection to the

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ACCORDING TO KC WHEARE, THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION ESTABLISHES A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH IS QUASI-FEDERAL. IT IS A UNITARY STATE WITH SUBSIDIARY FEDERAL FEATURES RATHER THAN A FEDERAL STATE WITH SUBSIDIARY UNITARY FEATURES. IVOR JENNINGS, TOO, CONCLUDED THAT THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION IS A FEDERATION WITH A STRONG CENTRALISING TENDENCY”

Centre's decision to send inter-ministerial Central teams to assess the situation on the ground in some districts that were suspected to be COVID-19 hotspots in the State. Some political parties, too, joined the murmur and complained about the Union Government's attitude. However, the Centre's decision to take charge of the overall operations *vis-à-vis* COVID-19 is in line with the Constitutional scheme devised by Ambedkar and his colleagues seven decades ago.

The Constitution vests residuary power with the Union Government as also the power to override the States in an emergency. According to KC Wheare, a noted Constitutional authority, the Indian Constitution establishes a system of Government which is quasi-federal. It is "a unitary State with subsidiary federal features rather than a federal state with subsidiary unitary features."

Ivor Jennings, too, concluded that the Indian Constitution "is a federation with a strong centralising tendency." In his concluding remarks, Ambedkar was emphatic with regard to the tilt towards a strong Centre in certain contingencies. He said that in the opinion of the vast majority of the people, the residual loyalty of the citizen in an emergency must be to the Centre and not to the constituent States. For, it is only the Centre that can work for a common end and for the gen-

eral interests of the country as a whole. Herein lies the justification for giving to the Centre certain overriding powers to be used in an emergency. "After all, what is the obligation imposed upon the constituent States by these emergency powers? No more than this that in an emergency, they should take into consideration alongside their own local interests, the opinions and interests of the nation as a whole. Only those, who have not understood the problem, can complain against it."

When one reads these observations of Ambedkar, one realises the depth of his understanding and his foresight. He knew his country and his people very well. He could anticipate the problems that could arise in a national emergency in a country that is as diverse as India. Currently, 42 political parties run the States and Union Territories and are tugging in different directions with regard to the plans to fight this epidemic. Only a strong centralising force with adequate consultations (the Prime Minister has held several rounds of discussions with the Chief Ministers) between the Union and the States can help tackle this problem. We owe it to our founding fathers for creating the Constitutional mechanism to cope with this pandemic and national emergency.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal.)

SOUND BITE

Whenever there is a terrorist attack on our soil, Pakistan should be worried. It has to stop abetting terrorism in India and it has to get out of worries.

Chief of the Air Staff
—RKS Bhaduria



The film industry will chalk out a pandemic-proof plan to function and be safe. I am optimistic that we will bounce back with more relevant content and suitable formats.

Actor
—Anil Kapoor



Playing cricket in an empty stadium is like marriage without a bride. We need crowds to play games. I hope the Corona situation will be normalised within a year.

Former Pakistan pacer
—Shoaib Akhtar



The fiscal stimulus package is hopelessly inadequate given the gravity of the economic crisis as it amounts to only ₹1.86 crore, which is 0.91 per cent of the GDP.

Congress leader
—P Chidambaram



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Address loopholes

Sir — The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the dilemma of life vs livelihood for Governments, Central and States, as well as the citizens. The problem is exacerbated due to the absence of basic income and food security facilities for migrant workers. With most workers taking a train home, the migrant crisis will come to haunt the country's development paradigm as these workers are the wheels of the urban economy.

Moreover, according to the 2011 census, there were 45 crore internal migrants, who accounted for 37 per cent of the population. In this context, the Centre's plan to roll out the one nation, one ration card scheme is welcome. This programme is meant for the welfare of migrant workers. But loopholes remain. The package provides for the distribution of foodgrains only. It does little to address the plight of those worst affected. And it's not just a matter of losing livelihoods. Workers have lost lives in an attempt to reunite with their family.

Gautam SR
Bhopal

COVID exposes the real migrant story

Twenty-five migrant workers, who lost their lives in a trailer-truck collision in Uttar Pradesh's Auraiya district, six migrant workers who were killed when a truck overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district, 16 migrant workers who were killed on the tracks in Maharashtra's Aurangabad and many more who fell prey to accidents and exhaustion were our compatriots. Had the lockdown been adequately planned, keeping in mind the financial support and transport facilities the workers would need, such tragedies could have been avoided. It is incomprehensible as to why the Government remains unmoved and untroubled by such tragedies and refuses to help stranded and cash-strapped migrant workers. Interminable lip service does not help.

Transportation of the migrant workers is a doable task and well within the capacity of the Government machinery. But for this, it must have the will. The mighty Indian State is resourceful enough to take care of the migrant workers. If this involves some expenditure, the Government must bear it. Besides, the differential treatment based on social class is all too apparent. Sadly, the Government spared no expense to fly home Indians stranded abroad. It seems to have forsaken migrant workers and developed a certain mental resistance to their needless deaths.

Together, we can

Sir — The Union Government has taken the right decision to vest greater powers with the

States by allowing them to decide on the reopening of all commercial activities. The onus is now on the State Governments to prepare a roadmap for a safe resumption of the economy on the one hand

and devising COVID-19 management strategies on the other.

It's a do-or-die situation not only for the Central and State Governments but also for the people of this country. Citizens



The 100 million-strong migrant workers form a considerable part of the country's workforce. They earn wages by working in the construction industry, factories and farms and doing other sundry work that come their way. They belong to the unorganised informal economy and don't have unions or organisations to voice their grievances or fight for their rights. The pandemic has given visibility to migrant workers and their vulnerability. There can be no act more patriotic than caring for migrant workers and others in untold misery.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

must exercise voluntary safety to keep the spread of the disease in check. They must venture out of their homes only when necessary.

The succour is that awareness regarding the need to maintain social distancing has grown. Since there is no cure for the virus and the economy, too, cannot be kept in limbo, people must cooperate with the Government by following all safety protocols. In the absence of any cure or vaccine, we will be living a dangerous life. Any laxity on our part and we will have to pay a huge penalty.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao
Hyderabad

Safety first

Sir — It will be good if the States agree to open up public transport. The general public needs public transport, including buses, metro, cabs and auto rickshaws. But at the same time, the safety of the citizens, too, will have to be ensured through social distancing and other guidelines.

Sweta
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

4.8 mn people worldwide tests +ve

More than 4.8 million people worldwide have tested positive for the coronavirus and over 3,17,000 deaths have been reported. Those figures are believed to understate the true dimensions of the outbreak because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some Governments

Europe reopens widely; China gives \$2 bn to virus fight

EU and other countries have called for an independent evaluation of the WHO’s response to the pandemic ‘to review experience gained and lessons learned’

AP ■ ATHENS

Europe reopened more widely on Monday, allowing people into the Acropolis in Athens, high-fashion boutiques in Italy, museums in Belgium, golf courses in Ireland and beer gardens in Bavaria. China announced it will give \$2 billion to the fight against the coronavirus.

As nations carved out a new normal amid the pandemic, Chinese President Xi Jinping told the World Health Organization’s annual meeting that the money will be paid out over two years to help respond to Covid-19, which has killed hundreds of thousands and devastated national economies. He said the funds will especially support efforts in developing countries.

Xi’s address came amid sharp tensions between Beijing and President Donald Trump, who has suspended U.S. funding to WHO and accused it of failing to stop the virus from spreading when it first surfaced in China. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar represented the US at the meeting, held online this year.

WHO announced it will evaluate the response to the outbreak “at the earliest appropriate moment,” after a watchdog body found possible shortcomings in the UN agency’s handling of the crisis.

New infections and deaths have slowed considerably in Europe, where some countries started easing lockdowns a month ago. Many nations are preparing to open their borders next month, trying to sketch out the rules for a highly unusual summer tourist season.

Germany’s foreign minister was discussing the options with colleagues from 10 largely southern European countries.

More than 4.7 million people worldwide have tested positive for the coronavirus and over 3,15,000 deaths have been reported, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Those figures are believed to understate the true dimensions of the outbreak because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some Governments.

The US has reported almost 90,000 deaths, and Europe has seen over 1,60,000 dead.

Greece reopened the Acropolis and other ancient sites, along with high schools, shopping malls and mainland travel. Paving stickers were used to keep visitors apart. Tourists were local, for the country still has a 14-day quarantine for arrivals, and travel to Greek islands remains broadly restricted.

Authorities are keen to reopen Greece’s vital tourism sector, following a warning that the country is likely to suffer the worst recession in the 27-nation European Union this year.

Greece’s beaches reopened over the weekend during a heat wave with strict social distancing, but buses from Athens to the coast were crowded.

In Belgium, more students returned to school, hairdressers began clipping locks again, and museums and zoos reopened, all with strict reservation systems to avoid overcrowding. Hoping to make the most of the sunny weather, open-air markets started selling spring fruit and vegetables.

Golf courses and garden stores reopened in Ireland, but Health Minister Simon Harris said he is nervous because the

virus hasn’t gone away.

If Ireland can get the next three weeks right, “we as a country will find a way to live safely alongside the virus,” Harris told RTE radio.

Churches in Italy and at the Vatican resumed public Masses. Guards in hazmat suits took the temperatures of the faithful entering St. Peter’s Basilica, where Pope Francis celebrated an early morning Mass in a side chapel to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of St. John Paul II.

Across town, the Rev. Jose Maria Galvan snapped on latex gloves and a face mask before distributing Communion to a dozen parishioners at his Sant’Eugenio parish.

In Milan, the Montenaepolone district of luxury boutiques reopened, but few if any shoppers were in sight. The area is home to such fashion houses as Armani, Versace, Ferragamo, Fendi and Bottega Veneta, but its customers are mostly foreigners, and travel to Italy remains severely restricted.

At Milan’s City Hall, hundreds of open-air vendors protested the failure of the city

to come up with rules for non-food stands to reopen.

Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa took his morning coffee at a Lisbon cafe and was having lunch at a restaurant with the speaker of parliament as officials encouraged people to support local businesses. Costa told reporters “we can’t return to our old life as long as the virus is around” but said the economy must come back to life.

In France, authorities were concerned after about 70 infections popped up in the country’s schools since they started reopening last week. France reopened about 40,000 preschools and primary schools last week, with classes capped at 15 students.

The WHO has been drawn into a blame game between the US and China over the spread of the virus. Trump claims China mishandled the outbreak early on, but China has defended its record.

The EU and other countries have called for an independent evaluation of the WHO’s response to the pandemic “to review experience gained and lessons learned.”

SARS antibodies can block Covid-19 infection: Researchers

AFP ■ PARIS

An antibody from a patient who recovered from SARS has been shown to block Covid-19 infection in a laboratory setting, researchers said on Monday in another potential breakthrough in the search for coronavirus treatment.

Scientists based in Switzerland and the United States previously isolated the antibodies from the patient in 2003, following the SARS outbreak that killed 774 people.

They experimented with 25 different types of antibodies — which target specific protein spikes on viruses - to see if they could prevent cells becoming infected with Covid-19. Both SARS and the pathogen which causes Covid-19 are coronaviruses, thought to have come from animals, and so their structures are similar.

The researchers identified eight antibodies that could bind to both Covid-19 and the infected cells.

One candidate, known as S309, was shown to have “particularly strong neutralising activity” against Covid-19.

By combining S309 with other less potent antibodies they were able to target different sites on the virus’ protein spike, thus reducing its potential to mutate.

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen hundreds of trials for effective treatment launched, including some involving the use of antibodies from recovered patients.

While there were no experiments on humans in the study, published in the journal Nature, its authors said their findings represent “proof-of-concept” that antibodies from SARS can prevent severe Covid-19 infection and spread.

“These results pave the way for using S309- and S309-containing antibody cocktails for prophylaxis in individuals at high risk of exposure or as a post-exposure therapy to limit or treat severe disease,” they wrote.

FBI: Shooter at Pensacola military base link to al-Qaeda

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The gunman in a deadly attack at a military base in Pensacola, Florida, last December was meticulous in his planning and had been radicalized overseas for at least five years, US officials said n Monday.

The FBI learned of the contacts between the gunman, Mohammed Saeed Alshamrani,

and an al-Qaeda operative after breaking the encryption on cell-phones that had previously been locked.

Attorney General William Barr and FBI Director Chris Wray held a news conference to announce the developments in the shooting late last year at the Pensacola Naval Air Station, in which a Saudi Air Force officer killed three US sailors and injured eight other people.

Alshamrani, who was killed by a sheriff’s deputy during the rampage at a classroom building, was undergoing flight training at Pensacola, where members of foreign militaries routinely receive instruction.

The Justice Department had previously asked Apple to help extract data from two iPhones that belonged to the gunman, including one that authorities say Alshamrani damaged with a

bullet after being confronted by law enforcement. Wray said FBI agents were able to break the encryption without the help of Apple.

Law enforcement officials left no doubt that Alshamrani was motivated by jihadist ideology, saying he visited a New York City memorial to the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend and posted anti-American and

anti-Israeli messages on social media just two hours before the shooting.

Separately, al-Qaeda’s branch in Yemen, released a video claiming the attack.

The branch, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP, has long been considered the global network’s most dangerous branch and has attempted to carry out attacks on the US mainland.

Taliban suicide bomber kills 9 troops in Af

Kabul: A suicide bomber in a stolen military Humvee targeted a base in eastern Afghanistan belonging to the country’s intelligence service early on Monday, killing at least nine members of the force, Afghan officials said. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

At least 40 members of the force were wounded in the attack near the city of Ghazni, the provincial capital of Ghazni, according to Arif Noori, the spokesman for the provincial governor. Eight of the wounded were in critical condition and were transferred to the capital, Kabul, for further treatment, Noori added.

Earlier reports had seven dead but Tariq Arian, spokesman for the Afghan interior minister, confirmed the latest casualty tolls. According to Noori, the bomber used a stolen military Humvee full of explosives, detonating it as he approached the main entrance gate to the base. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the insurgents were behind the attack in Ghazni province, where the Taliban control most of the countryside and the rural areas.

HK lawmakers clash as pro-Beijing camp elects chair

AP ■ HONG KONG

Clashes broke out in Hong Kong’s legislature Monday for a second time this month as a pro-Beijing lawmaker was elected as chair of a key committee that scrutinizes bills, ending a prolonged struggle for control with the pro-democracy camp.

The legislature’s House Committee, which vets bills and decides when to present them for a final vote, had been without a chairperson for more than six months. The central government in Beijing criticized deputy chairperson and pro-democracy lawmaker Dennis Kwok for deliberately delaying matters and causing a

backlog of bills that affect public interest.

Kwok was replaced Friday by Chan Kin-por, who was appointed by the legislature’s president to preside over Monday’s election. After scuffles and shouting matches led to Chan ejecting most of the pro-democracy lawmakers, the election took place, with pro-Beijing lawmaker Starry Lee winning easily. Her election will likely speed up the passing of a controversial bill that would criminalise abuse of the Chinese national anthem. Hong Kong’s leader, Carrie Lam, said last week that passing the bill was a priority for the government, and the bill will be presented to the committee on May 27.



Pan-democratic legislator Lam Cheuk-ting, is taken away by security during a Legislative Council’s House Committee meeting in Hong Kong, on Monday

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK’s “historic” new strategy for visas and immigration, which is pitched as a points-based system established on skills rather than the country of origin, returned to the House of Commons on Monday.

The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill 2020, which was tabled in March but had its progress slowed down due to the coronavirus crisis, forms the basis for the UK’s

post-Brexit plans once the European Union (EU) free movement rules come to a close at the end of the year.

“This historic piece of legislation gives the UK full control of our immigration system for the first time in decades and the power to determine who comes to this country,” said UK Home Secretary Priti Patel, who is leading the charge on the new strategy.

“Our new points-based system is firmer, fairer, and simpler. It will attract the people we need to drive our economy forward

and lay the foundation for a high wage, high skill, high productivity economy,” the Indian-origin minister said.

Under the new system, to be enforced from January 1 next year, the magic number of points required to apply to work and stay in the UK will be 70. These will accrue in increments of 20 or 10 based on professional skills, English language proficiency, a job offer from an approved sponsor and salary levels between GBP 20,480 and GBP 25,600 or above.

Iran approves creation of ‘virtual embassy’ in Palestine

IANAS ■ TEHRAN

A Commission of the Iranian Parliament on Monday tasked the government to create a “virtual embassy” in Palestine.

Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Commission approved a previously drafted motion bill, which obliges the Iranian Foreign Ministry to lay the groundwork for the creation of “the Islamic Republic’s Virtual Embassy in Palestine” within six months and submit the results for approval to the cabinet, reports Xinhua news

agency.

On May 12, Iranian lawmakers approved “a double-urgency motion” which, in case of turning into law, would oblige the Iranian Government to take certain measures against “hostile measures” of Israel.

One of the articles of the motion endorsed by the Commission states that “the historic land of Palestine belongs to the original Palestinian people.”

The approvals of the Commission should be turned into a law by Parliament for its enforcement.

Around the Globe

● Japan’s economic growth plunged into recession in the first quarter as the coronavirus pandemic squelched production, exports and spending, and fears are growing that worse times may lie ahead. The Cabinet Office reported Monday a 3.4% drop in the annual pace of seasonally adjusted real gross domestic product, or GDP, for the January-March period. The annual pace gives what the rate would be when continued for a year. For just the quarter, the drop was 0.9%. Exports dived 21.8%. Private residential investments slipped nearly 17%, and household consumption fell 3.1%.

● A Canadian aerobatic jet crashed into a British Columbia neighborhood Sunday during a flyover intended to boost morale during the pandemic, killing one crew member, seriously injuring another and setting a house on fire. Video appeared to show the plane’s crew ejecting. The crash left debris scattered across the neighborhood near the airport in the city of Kamloops, 260 miles (418 kilometers) northeast of Vancouver. The Snowbirds are Canada’s equivalent of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds or U.S. Navy’s Blue Angels.

● Confirming that museums have been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic with nearly 90 per cent of them shut, the UNESCO and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) on Monday expressed concern over the global cultural space. More than 85,000 institutions shut their doors for different durations during the crisis and nearly 13 per cent of museums might never reopen, they said in a statement on the International Museum Day.

● Moscow health officials say 77 people died of coronavirus in the city in the past 24 hours, the highest daily number for the Russian capital so far. With a total of over 1,46,000 confirmed infections and 1,580 deaths, Russia’s capital currently accounts for more than half of the country’s virus cases and 58% of all reported deaths.

● World Health Organization member states agreed during their main annual assembly Monday to delay a controversial discussion on granting Taiwan observer status, despite the United States and others stepping up pressure in recent days.

● In a significant development towards developing a vaccine for the coronavirus, an American biotechnology company on Monday said its initial vaccine tests in people have shown promising results and can stimulate an immune response against the virus. Moderna said that the first coronavirus vaccine to be tested in people appeared to be safe, according to a report in *The New York Times*.

● Iraq will impose a complete lockdown on some areas of the capital, the country’s new health minister said on Monday, amid an uptick in coronavirus cases in recent weeks since curfew hours were relaxed.

AROUND THE WORLD IN PICTURES



A woman sips her coffee from under her facial protection at a coffee bar with outdoor tables in Rome on Monday



People rush to shop for the Eid holiday that marks the end of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan after the Government relaxed a weeks-long lockdown that was enforced to help curb the spread of the coronavirus, in Quetta, Pakistan, on Monday

STOCK MARKET DISAPPOINTED

Aviation stocks tumble as all commercial passenger flights suspended till May 31

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation stocks on Monday fell up to 7.3 per cent after regulator DGCA said all scheduled commercial passenger flights have been suspended till May 31 midnight.

Shares of InterGlobe Aviation dropped 7.27 per cent and those of SpiceJet fell 4.92 per cent on the BSE.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said “foreign and domestic airlines shall be suitably informed about the opening of their operations whether international to or from India or domestic, respectively, in due course”.

All commercial passenger flights have been suspended in India since March 25, when the lockdown was imposed to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the nodal department, has announced lockdown 4.0 till May 31 to check the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Bank stocks hit hard; tank up to 10 pc

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bank stocks were the worst hit among the BSE sectoral indices on Monday in a weak broader market where the BSE benchmark crashed 1,069 points. IndusInd Bank was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, cracking 10 per cent, RBL Bank dropped 9.55 per cent, Federal Bank 9.47 per cent, City Union Bank 8.41 per cent, Axis Bank 7.55 per cent, ICICI Bank 7.44 per cent, SBI 6.61 per cent, HDFC Bank 5.83 per cent and Kotak Mahindra Bank 5.47 per cent.

The BSE bankex index fell 6.69 per cent. “With the stimulus package announced by the Government, not seen as adequate considering the need of the hour and with infections continuing unabated, the markets ended down by around 3.4 per cent, in spite of positive global cues.

“Most measures may be seen as a long term positive and

markets were more worried about the immediate impact of these measures. With concerns about rising NPAs, financials were most affected,” said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

The BSE benchmark closed 1,068.75 points, or 3.44 per cent lower at 30,028.98. Banks were the biggest contributors in the market crash on Monday.

“Banking stock witnessed selling pressure on the back of suspension of new bankruptcy cases for one year, declared in a stimulus package by the Finance Minister,” said Vishal Wagh, Research Head, Bonanza Portfolio Ltd. Seeking to provide relief for the coronavirus pandemic-hit economy.

The Government will provide various relaxations under the insolvency law, including suspending fresh proceedings for up to one year, exempting COVID-19-related debt and coming out with a special framework for MSMEs.

Multiplex, hotel stocks plunge as nationwide lockdown extended till May 31

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of multiplex and hotel operators on Monday cracked up to 14.5 per cent after the countrywide lockdown was further extended till May 31.

Shares of INOX Leisure tumbled 14.49 per cent and

those of PVR tanked 12.54 per cent on the BSE.

Besides, Chalet Hotels plummeted 13.38 per cent, Indian Hotels Company Limited plunged 8.04 per cent, EIH Associated Hotels 5.83 per cent, Wonderla Holidays 4.91 per cent and Lemon Tree Hotels 4.78 per cent.

Rupee declines by 33 paise as stimulus fails to cheer investors

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee plummeted by 33 paise to close at 75.91 against the US dollar on Monday, tracking weak domestic equities and foreign fund outflows.Forex traders said rising crude oil prices and concerns about the effectiveness of the fiscal stimulus package weighed on investor sentiment.

India’s rupee led losses among emerging-market currencies in Asia on disappointment over the Government’s stimulus announcements. Spot

USDINR is expected to find resistance around 76.50 on expectation of foreign fund inflows at lower equity levels,” said Devarsh Vakil, Head Advisory, HDFC securities.

Market participants also said that the extension of the nationwide lockdown could weigh on the economic outlook of the country.

The Government on Sunday extended the coronavirus lockdown for two more weeks with the fourth phase providing more relaxations outside the containment zones.

Indecisive officials dealing with highway projects to face action, warns Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sending out a strong message, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has said the Government will consider removal or demotion of officials whose indecisiveness is obstructing highway works as many such projects have also been impacted by the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

“Enough of warning has been given to officials sitting on files and not taking decisions. A large number of our highway projects are suffering due to this.

It is time that such officials who despite being promoted and empowered to take decisions be demoted or removed and give chance to those who want to perform,” Gadkari told PTI in an interview.

To make up for the losses incurred in terms of highways projects and to bring them on track, the Road Transport, Highways and MSME Minister Gadkari has already fixed a target to build roads worth ₹15 lakh crore in the next two years.

Earlier, the Minister, had reviewed 740 highway projects totalling 28,304 km from 16 states and has asked officials and stakeholders to fast-track these.

The projects were worth about ₹5 lakh crore. “Despite

cautioning repeatedly.

I have found that a large number of officials specially project directors and regional officers of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) who have been empowered to take decisions on projects up to ₹50 crore on the spot, keep flooding the head office with queries obstructing work,” Gadkari said.

He said though he was not in a position to provide the exact number of such queries, but said the number is “huge”.

“I have come to a conclusion that it is time to take action against these officials and remove them or demote them. Project Directors and Regional Officers were given rights.

They are afraid of taking decisions... Taking responsibility and sending each and every query to us. Those who do not exercise their rights, have no right to continue... There is no justification for them to hold the position,” the Minister said.

NHAI has about 175 project directors and 25 regional officers across the country.

The Minister said the NHAI has resumed 95 per cent of work on war-footing now with permission to start construction activities while adhering to guidelines.

On the NHAI arbitration

conciliation, he said: “In 22 out of 24 ongoing cases adjournment was sought by NHAI officials and I have directed the Chairman to expedite it. Hopefully things will be fast-tracked now.” “Performance audit of each and every official will be done.

Those found not performing up to the mark will be shown the exit through compulsory retirement as also said by the Prime Minister. However, good work will equally be rewarded.”

The Minister said his Ministry was conducting performance audit and termed it more important than financial audit.

The Minister had earlier said in case of stalling of projects on account of court or tribunal orders, NHAI and the Highways Ministry will put hoardings and banners informing people behind the reasons for delays.

The issue of timely approval of Extension of Time (EOT) and change of scope (COS) was particularly raised by the Contractors/Concessionaire during a recent meeting saying timely approvals would help in facilitating lending by banks.

An online portal “GATI” was also launched to fast-track decision making and make the process transparent.

Indian economy to contract 5 pc in FY21: Goldman Sachs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

American brokerage Goldman Sachs expects the Indian economy to contract by 5 per cent in FY21, making it the worst performance by the country ever. The brokerage said the GDP will contract by a mind-boggling 45 per cent in the June quarter as compared to the January-March period on an annualised basis, because of the continuing lockdown which is chilling economic activity, before recovering later.

A slew of watchers are expecting a contraction in the Indian economy in FY21, some even after the ₹20 lakh crore stimulus announced by the Government. Goldman was earlier expecting a 0.4 per cent contraction before revising it down to a level it shares with Japanese brokerage Nomura.

“The -5 per cent growth we forecast for FY21 would be deeper compared to all ‘reces-

sions’ India has ever experienced,” its analysts wrote in the note.

The virus continues to spread in India, resulting in the pushing of the nationwide lockdown with gradual relaxation of restrictions, while concerns among consumers and businesses continue, it said. The rebound from a quarterly perspective will be very strong in the September quarter, it said, expecting a 20 per cent growth in GDP over the level of June-end, but added that the same will be gradual from then on.

Joining its peers, the brokerage also said that the reform measures announced by the Govt will help growth only over the medium term and are not expected to have any benefit in the near-term. In line with its peers, the brokerage also said that the fiscal impact of the stimulus measures announced by the Govt is very small at 1.3 per cent of GDP.

CAIT seeks revised economic package in support of traders

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Registering its displeasure over no stimulus for the trading community, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has asked Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to reconsider the economic package and announce measures to support the trading community.

In a statement, the traders’ body said that it has resented with deep regret that one of the largest and most committed segments of the trading community in the country has been omitted in wide reaching announcements of the economic package.

The traders’ body has written to Sitharaman to come up with measures for around seven crore retail traders in the country.

It has also sent similar communication to Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence

Minister Rajnath Singh, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Textile Minister Smriti Irani.

In the letter, CAIT has said that the traders of India have stood firmly with the Government and the people of India in these troubled times to ensure continuous supply of essential commodities but now the traders feel that the Centre has let them down.

It reiterated that at the time of lifting of lockdown, the traders will have to meet various financial obligations like payment of salary to employees, payment of GST, Income Tax and other levies, EMIs, bank interest on loans and various other incidental expenses among others.

“All such circumstances will land the traders in turbulent time of financial crisis and it is expected that in absence of any handholding of the traders by the traders.

Transporters demand relief package

WARN SUPPLY OF GOODS, ESSENTIALS WILL BE HIT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cautioning that movement of goods and essential supplies will be impacted if the Government fails to announce immediate relief for transporters, AIMTC on Monday said that on the ground, the situation is deteriorating with every passing day and it is going to result in another major crisis. The All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) is the apex body of transporters and represents about 95 lakh truckers and entities.

The coronavirus turmoil

and the nationwide lockdown have taken the road transport ecosystem to dreadful levels, AIMTC said pointing out that about 30 per cent vehicles seen on the roads, those engaged in transporting essential supplies and delivering loaded stock, are being run majorly by owner-drivers and small operators.

“The movement of trucks, containers and other freight vehicles will not only affect the movement of goods from one State to another, will also affect import-export. This will affect the supply of both essential and non-essential items. The Central Govt has announced an economic relief package for various sectors in 5 phases to revive the slowing economy due to the coronavirus epidemic. However, the Central Government did not take care of this sector while announcing the relief package,” AIMTC President Kultaran Singh Atwal said.

Atma Nirbhar Bharat scheme to provide free food grains to migrant labour kicks off

New Delhi: Under Atma Nirbhar Bharat package, Government of India has decided that food grains will be provided free of cost at the rate of 5 Kg per month for two months i.e. May and June 2020, to about 8 Crore migrant

labour who are not covered under NFSA or State scheme PDS cards.

The total estimated cost of about ₹3,500 Crore for implementation of this scheme will be fully borne by Government of India.

INDIAN RAILWAYS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)
E-Tender No. 2019RSI8743TC
Executive Director, Railway Stores(S), Ministry of Railway, Railway Board, Government of India invites e-tender for procurement of 37,803 Nos. AAR approved Cartridge Taper Roller Bearings (CTRB) Class E (6"x11") complete including four items for use on Freight Stock for Indian Railways to RDSO specification No. AB/RB-40-2016 (Rev. 1) of August, 2018 & latest amendments.
2.0 The interested tenderers are advised to visit the website <http://ireps.gov.in> for details of the tender and submission of their e-bids.
3.0 No manual offers will be accepted against e-tender.
4.0 Tender will be closed at 15:00 hours on 29.06.2020.

Director, Railway Stores (W),
Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, New Delhi
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 1120/20

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION


General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a boy **Namely** : Unknwn, **S/o** : Unknown, **R/o** :Unknown, **Age** : About 16-17 years, **Height** : 5'6", **Complexion** : Wheatish, **Face** : Long, **Built** : Thin, **Wearing** : Yellow, White and Black colour T-shirt, Light Blue colour Jeans and Black colour Sparg Sandal in feet has been found in DDA Green Belt Land, Behind Rohini Heliprot, Sec-36, Rohini, Delhi on 13.05.2020. In this regards a case vide FIR No 237/2020 dated 13.05.2020 U/s 302 IPC has been registered at P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this found dead boy may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO :
P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi
Outer North Distt., Delhi
Tel. No. 011-27822207, 27821047,
7065036322

DP/233/ON/2020

PARADIP PORT TRUST
e-Tender-cum-e-Auction Notice
A e-Tender-cum-e-Auction Notice invites for "Allotment of Port land about 100 acres on 60 (sixty) years long term lease basis for setting up of Port based capital intensive industries as part of Industrial park under Paradip SIPC Project". The date of available of documents in the website is from 14.05.2020 to 17.06.2020. For details, please log on the website: <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.

Dy. Secretary
PPT/PR/16/20-21 Dated: 14.5.2020

RAJASTHAN STATE GANGANAGAR SUGAR MILLS LIMITED
Regd. Office : 4th Floor, Nehru Sahkar Bhawan, Bhawani Singh Road, Jaipur-302006
Ph: 0141-2740841, Fax: 0141-2740676, E-mail ID: RSGSMlimited@yahoo.in
NIB No. RSGSM/RML-CL/OCB/2020-21/Pur/04
Short Notice Inviting e-Bid

E-bids are invited from firms located in Rajasthan, holding valid licenses and running distilleries / bottling plants for procurement and supply of Rajasthan made liquor (RML) and country liquor at the depots of RSGSM up to 6.00 p.m. of 18.05.2020. Details may be seen in the bidding document on <http://rajexcise.gov.in/>; <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>. Only those firm who did not participate/get purchase order in the previous bid need to apply this bid shall be processed through e-procurement portal <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> of Govt. of Rajasthan. Further updated about the bidding will be available only on above websites; therefore, interested bidders are advised to visit above websites regularly for updates.

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)
Samwad/C/0189/2020-21

Appeal for Identification


General Public is hereby informed that a male dead body **Name:** Sukant Das, **S/o** Sh. Gajadhar Das, **R/o:** HNo.700/6, Gali No.10, Near Yamha Motor, Indra Nagar, Sector 07, Faridabad Haryana, **Age:** About 36 Yrs, **Height:** 5'3", **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Wearing** : Red Colour Shirt & Blue Colour Jeans Pent was found dead at Bus Stop of TB Hospital Lado Sarai New Delhi on 05.05.2020. In this regard, a **DD No. 27-**

A, U/s 174 CrPC has been lodged at PS Mehrauli, South, Distt. New Delhi. Permanently he is belong to ORISSA STATE.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any, person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S., Mehrauli, New Delhi
Ph. : 011-26643200
8750870824

DP/82/SD/2020

E-tailers see grooming products, kitchen appliances in high demand

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The demand for personal care products and kitchen appliances saw a meteoric rise on e-commerce platforms as the Government allowed sale of non-essential items across zones (barring containment spots) from Monday.

Paytm Mall saw a 50 per cent surge in sales for grooming products from tier II and III towns. There was almost a 50 per cent jump in the sale of shavers, trimmers, epilators, hair straighteners and styling products and hair dryers, among other products.

“We think the demand for these products is set to rise further over the next few weeks and post that it would remain consistently high,” said Srinivas Mothey, Senior Vice President, Paytm Mall.According to Anuj Singh, Chief Merchandising Officer, Best Price, Walmart India, when the lockdown was imposed, they saw a spike in categories like sanitizers, personal wash, staples, and home cleaning products.

“With non-essential categories opening up, we expect some pent up demand in small kitchen and home appliances like irons, kettles, pressure cookers, and fans,” said Singh.

The new guidelines for lockdown 4.0 have paved the way for a broader resumption of economic activities across most parts of the country.“At Snapdeal, we are ready and equipped to now start serving customers all across India.

After Zomato, Swiggy sacks 1,100 workers as Covid-19 shuts Cloud kitchens

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Joining arch rival Zomato, food delivery platform Swiggy on Monday announced to lay off 1,100 employees, nearly 14 per cent of its workforce, spanning across grades and functions in the cities and head office over the next few days as Covid-19 continues to hurt its business across verticals.

All impacted employees will receive at least three months of salary, irrespective of their notice period or tenure,

Sriharsha Majety, Co-founder and CEO, Swiggy, told employees in a virtual town hall meeting.“For every year they have spent with us, we will be offering an extra month of ex-gratia in addition to their notice period pay, working out to between 3-8 months of salary depending on the tenure,” said Majety.

Swiggy said if someone’s notice period is three months and they’ve spent five years with the company, they will get eight months of salary.

The company will inform

those being laid off in one-to-one video calls.

Swiggy said it is also going to scale down or shut down adjacent businesses that are either going to be highly volatile or will not be highly relevant for the next 18 months.

“The biggest impact here is on the Cloud kitchens business, with many unknowns about volumes through the year. Since the onset of Covid-19, we have already begun the process of shutting down our kitchen facilities temporarily or permanently.

DOCYARD

DR SARABJIT S CHADHA

Regional Technical Director

FIND INDIA



All about COVID-19 tests

COVID-19 continues to spread in India. As of May 17, more than 88,000 cases have been diagnosed, and over 2,800 people have died. To combat it, the Government is rapidly ramping up testing: the number of laboratories performing COVID-19 tests has increased from 19 in March, to 520 today. More than two million tests have been performed across the country since the pandemic began.

Why is testing such an essential part of our country's defence strategy? One critical reason is that it is actionable now. And while a vaccine may be over a year away, testing will continue to be crucial to the roll out of both treatments and vaccines once they are available.

Testing allows infected people to be identified and isolated quickly, so they can receive care and the chain of transmission can be broken. It also provides essential information to our public health decision makers.

The majority of confirmatory testing in India and across the world has, to date, been performed using molecular tests. These look for genetic material from SARS-CoV-2 — the virus responsible for COVID-19 — in a sample from a person's nose or throat. If it is present, they make millions of copies until the concentration is high enough to detect. The chemical reaction that drives the copying process is called polymerase chain reaction, and so this type of test is known as a PCR test.

As the most accurate, gold standard frontline test, molecular tests are most commonly used to confirm diagnosis of COVID-19 in an individual.

Molecular tests are commonly used to confirm COVID-19. But they need to be performed in a laboratory by trained technicians as they need special equipment. This limits the number of tests that can be performed each day

Antigen tests detect the antigens in a patient sample, but development of an antigen test accurate enough for diagnosis is challenging. Right now there are several antigen tests under evaluation, but none yet in general use.

Antibody tests detect the antibodies that have been produced during an infection. Due to uncertainties over how long it takes for the antibodies to be produced and for how long they continue to circulate after the infection is over, these tests cannot confirm if the person is currently infected by SARS-CoV-2.

However, antibody tests are crucially important to find out how many people in a particular population have already had the disease. Data from these tests can tell us how well our public health measures, like social distancing, are working. They also tell us about the intensity and longevity of the pandemic, to help guide public health decisions. A number of rapid antibody tests have been validated by the Indian Council of Medical Research (several of which are manufactured locally), and are already being rolled out across 75 districts. In future, these tests could be used to help inform deployment of vaccines.

Clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccines and drugs also rely on testing, using molecular tests to check whether vaccines have protected people from the virus or whether new treatments have helped infected people recover.

Testing is central to many aspects of the pandemic response, and countries that are implementing robust testing strategies are showing how this vital tool can save millions of lives.

SUMMERCoolERS

WATERMELON: Watermelon is a refreshing and low calories summer fruit. It is made up of around 90 per cent water, which makes the fruit useful for staying hydrated in the summer. It can also satisfy a sweet tooth with its natural sugars.

It also contains antioxidants. These substances can help remove molecules known as free radicals, or reactive species, from the body. The body produces free radicals during natural processes, such as metabolism. They can also develop through smoking, air pollution, stress, and other environmental pressures.

The high water content in watermelon and the other nutrients help promote a healthy gut by preventing constipation and promoting regularity of bowel movements. Watermelon juice may also reduce muscle soreness and improve recovery time following exercise in athletes.



FIGHT THE SILENT KILLER

The World Hypertension Day was on May 17. Doctors suggest ways how to keep your blood pressure in check and fight the disease

Hypertension is one of the major public health problems in our country and its prevalence is steadily increasing among both urban and rural populations. Given the fact that hypertensive patients often lack pronounced external symptoms, the condition is considered a 'silent killer.' It is a significant risk factor for potentially dangerous conditions such as stroke, heart attack, heart failure, encephalopathy, and kidney failure.

High blood pressure is often mismanaged, and the approach to treating it as a disease rather than as a symptom of underlying problems is the main reason. Modern medicine seeks to control high blood pressure through medications such as ACE inhibitors, Diuretics, Beta-blockers, Calcium channel blockers, among others. While these drugs do help in controlling blood pressure and thereby lower the risk of heart attacks and strokes, they do not address the underlying cause of high blood pressure.

The naturopathic approach focuses on ascertaining the characteristics of hypertension — vascular relaxation, sodium sensitivity, autonomic dysfunction, arteriosclerosis, and addressing the underlying cause via lifestyle and dietary modifications, stress management and herbal supplementation. If you visit a naturopath, they will order tests to check your kidney function, thyroid function, or look for inflammatory markers in the blood. Your cardiovascular risk factors will also be assessed in-depth as they are usually associated with hypertension. Adiposity, insulin resistance, sleep apnea, and systemic inflammation are all considered in the workup.

Dietary interventions: Dietary modifications are among the most

Yoga shows way

Practising yoga nidra: It is best advised to maintain sleep hygiene. An average adult should get at least seven to nine hours of sleep. A proper sleep schedule stimulates balanced metabolism, hormonal balance, avoids palpitations, chronic diseases which are directly proportional to balanced blood pressure. It has been proven that a 30 minutes session of yoga *nidra* is equivalent to two hours of quality sleep. yoga *nidra* helps to relax and rejuvenate. People who struggle with sound sleep at night, stress or anxiety because of work, can indulge in the practice of yoga *nidra*. Certain apps have guided meditation and/or yoga *nidra* as a part of guided meditation and promises to make you

experience worthwhile and prodigious. Yoga *nidra* thus releases stress and hence keeps you from having high blood pressure.

Measure your health parameters regularly: The symptoms of hypertension are not often visible. Hypertension develops over a period of time. And when you cannot notice the symptoms clearly you use certain IoT devices that can help in easily monitoring your health. And monitoring your health regularly gives you the current status that will help you make amends, and move in the right direction. Because ignorance is not always bliss!

The writer is Dr Gulshan Kumar, Neurophysiologist, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences

commonly prescribed interventions for most lifestyle diseases, and hypertension is no different. Specific nutritional systems like the DASH diet and the Mediterranean diet are among the fundamental strategies to control high blood pressure and associated conditions like Type II Diabetes, insulin resistance, and obesity. The Mediterranean diet comprises of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and legumes, with minimal dairy intake. The diet has a favorable effect on hypertensive patients. A number of large scale studies have shown significant reductions in both the systolic and diastolic blood pressure measurements. The DASH diet promotes a balanced nutritional system that supports a heart-friendly lifestyle. It focuses on a diet rich in whole foods with an abundance of fruits and vegetables, fat-free dairy

products, whole grains, nuts, beans, and vegetable oils. The program restricts the consumption of foods rich in saturated fats, including full-fat dairy and palm. Additionally, sodas, desserts, and foods with artificial sweeteners are to be avoided. Compared to other dietary systems like low carb diet, paleo diet, low fat and others, the DASH diet has proven to have the most positive impact on blood pressure.

Stress management: Since stress and over-stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system play a significant role in hypertension, it is imperative to keep it in check. High-stress levels can boost your blood pressure by stimulating your sympathetic nervous system, which leads to a series of cascading physiological effects, causing the constriction of blood vessels. Fortunately, it is possible to man-

age stress through a set of non-pharmacological interventions like meditation, acupuncture, and biofeedback, all of which help bring down high blood pressure. Regular exercise also helps keep stress under check. It reduces the level of stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, and stimulates endorphin production, elevating the mood and promoting analgesic effects. Staying active can bring down your systolic blood pressure by up to eight millimeters of mercury.

Botanical supplements: Several herbs can help promote healthy blood pressure. Hawthorn extracts have proven cardiovascular benefits, including anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. It also supports healthy lipid metabolism, increases vasodilation and protects the lining of blood vessels in the body. Garlic is another herb that can regulate the level of nitric oxide, reduce inflammation and act as an ACE inhibitor.

Indian snakeroot, also known as serpentine wood, has several antihypertensive effects. According to a study published as early as in 1949, 40 out of 50 participants who were administered the herb experienced a noticeable drop in blood pressure. Moreover, the herb's hypotensive action was perceptible for two weeks after discontinuation in over 90 per cent of the participants.

Although there are a number of natural treatments available to manage blood pressure, the exact combination of treatments is best decided by a licensed and trained naturopath. A proper diagnostic work-up includes a physical exam, a complete medical history, lipid profile, and lab testing to uncover the cause of hypertension.

The writer is Dr Srikanth HS, Senior Naturopath, Jindal Naturecure Institute

PLAN YOUR MEALS SMARTLY



It is easy to lose motivation when you are preparing all the meals at home that too with limited options. NMAMI AGARWAL shares stay at home diet plan that can help

The world has come to a standstill because of the current pandemic. While there might be partial relaxation in some areas, but in most of the areas, the lockdown has extended. It definitely is crucial to prevent the further spread of the virus, but somehow staying inside has played a toll on our mental and physical health — with no gyms to work out or a limited supply of food resources — managing optimum health can be tough, but with few tips and tricks, we all can maintain a healthy lifestyle.

It might be easy to run out of motivation when you are preparing all the meals at home that too with limited options. But, planning meals in advance can help you overcome the dilemma of what to cook and also will prevent food wastage. Here are some tips for stay-at-home diet:

Early morning: Start your day with a glass of lukewarm water, you can soak chia/ flaxseeds/fenugreek seeds in the water overnight. Refrain from having tea/coffee on an empty stomach

Breakfast: A protein-rich breakfast will keep you energised throughout the day. Consider eating eggs in the form of omelette or sandwich. You can also have *ragi paneer cheela*, *besan cheela*, oats pancake, or cottage cheese toast. For extra doses of vitamins, top your breakfast with some freshly cut fruit slices.

Mid-meal: Sitting entire day at home can be tough on your appetite and you might feel really hungry at sometimes while might feel fuller at other. Keep fruits handy for mid-morning cravings- say an apple orange, banana, or some grapes. You can also have a glass of vegetable juice

Lunch: Aim to consuming a wholesome lunch with aq balance of all food groups. You can have chapatis, rice, pulao or khichdi as per your liking. Just keep a check on the portion size. Include legumes or pulses in lunchtime along with raita/ plain curd.

Evening snack: Snacking is the time where most of us go wrong by giving up to cravings and succumbing to unhealthy foods. It's the best time to fix your evening binge with healthier options like a handful of walnuts. Walnuts are not only crunchy and palatable, they house a whole package of nutrients — from brain-boosting Omega-3 fatty acids to immunity-boosting vitamin E. You can also have roasted chana chaat, three-four pieces of *paneer* or roasted makhana. Just sprinkle some crushed walnuts over these to add an extra flavour. Other options can be — trail mix, vegetable sticks, fruit smoothie, or baked vegetable cutlets.

Dinner: Keep your dinners light and finish off early, say by 8 pm. You can have a bowl of vegetable soup (unstrained) with a wheat tortilla/*chapatti*. *Paneer* stuffed wheat roll is another great option.

Post dinner: You can have a cup of lukewarm milk with a pinch of turmeric and pepper. This golden drink will help boost immunity and increase your body's ability to fight off infections.

The writer is Nutritionist & Founder-CEO Nmami Life

Body shaming is ugly & unfair

Millennials are increasingly becoming dissatisfied with the way they look. All they want is to look perfect. This leads to anxiety and stress. PULKIT SHARMA tells you why it is important to break societal stereotypes about beauty and think beyond it

Even though the desire to look beautiful is as old as history, the last few decades have witnessed a raging obsession with appearances. Millennials are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the way they look, and they are desperate to acquire a 'designer body' with perfect looks. Most of these people look fine but they are deeply convinced that something is wrong with their appearance and consequently, they suffer from social anxiety, depression, and poor self-confidence. Exasperating workouts, mealy diets and cosmetic surgeries are fast becoming a norm as this sizeable population works hard to fix its imagined ugliness and feel good.

What could have caused so many people to despise their normal bodies? Blame it on the prevalent global culture of body shaming. We get multiple messages everyday telling us that there is something terribly wrong with our body: friends and family bantering us to lose some pounds of weight, actors and models flaunting their specimen figures and thousands of advertisements persuading us to utilise their services in living up to the most unrealistic stan-



dards of body image. Even small children are exposed to these bizarre standards.

All this creates a vicious circle where we despise our appearance, criticise other people for their physical imperfections and then as a reaction, they start hating some aspect of their appearance and mock at us for not being picture perfect. Ultimately, we end up perpetuating cycles of self-loathing and body

shaming. To break free, we need to question these bizarre standards of bodily perfection. Physical beauty is short-lived — our bodies change over time and so does the perception of other people about our physical appeal. Besides, there are many individual, societal and cultural variations in the standards used to determine physical beauty.

More often than not, we think that by changing our body and turning it

into a certain type will end all our worries but, experience and research shows that even those few who manage to attain such unreachable targets continue to reel under fear and pain. The answer lies in changing how we look at our body, shoving off all the dysfunctional perceptions and beliefs we have internalised over the years around what constitutes a beautiful body.

Begin this healing journey by boldly rejecting messages that tell you to despise your body and look for ideas, words and stories around body acceptance and love. It also includes identifying and silencing your inner critic which tells you time and again to berate your body. You must also educate your family, friends, and acquaintances in clear words that body shaming in any form is cruel and encourage them to coalesce in bringing a change in your close circle. Going further, make a resolve to love your body as it is and frame some strong body positive messages which you can repeat to yourself every day.

The writer is a clinical psychologist and the author of When the Soul Heals

SLIMLINE

A young pregnant woman due for delivery, was tested positive for COVID-19 after compulsory preliminary tests, post which she was denied admission in a lot of hospitals, the lady was brought to Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in a critical condition.

At the hospital under the supervision of Dr Kiranbala Dash (Gynaecology) and Dr Ajay Sinha (Internal Medicine), the lady successfully gave birth to a baby girl in the 39th week of her pregnancy. The child has tested negative for COVID 19.

Dr Ajay Sinha, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, said: "Pregnant women are at a high risk of contracting COVID-19 as compared to any other adult. Though not all have serious complications if affected by coronavirus and only experience mild to moderate flu-like symptoms, it is important that extra care and precautions are taken for treatment and management of pregnant women who are tested positive, for the well-being of the mother and the unborn child. In this case, she was tested COVID positive after going through a compulsory COVID-19 test pertaining to the current situation, days before her due delivery date. Her condition was monitored, and only once her vitals were stabilised her delivery was done successfully."

Trend Blazer

Kangana pens poem on love and life

Actor **KANGANA RANAUT** once again turned a poet to share her thoughts about love and life through her poem *Aasmaan*.

She released the poem in her voice. The video of the poem was shared by Team Kangana Ranaut on their official Instagram account.

“Kangana Ranaut reveals another treasure from her innumerable talents. *Aasmaan* by Kangana has been penned and directed by her, and is truly food for thought in these testing times,” her team wrote while sharing the video.

In the video she can be seen without any make-up, having tea, writing, lying on grass and sitting in front of a fireplace.

‘We had to shoot the pregnancy scenes for Mimi and Laxman sir was very clear that it was necessary to gain weight for those scenes because he didn’t want the character to have a chiseled face. I knew I had to increase my appetite and calorie intake, so I completely stopped working out, even Yoga.’

—Kriti Sanon

SONAKSHI SINHA has revealed that she loves to draw faces. The actor on Monday shared a video where she can be seen making a painting of Buddha’s face. Her painting titled *The Enlightened One* has been put up on auction to raise funds for the daily wage-earners.

Sharing the video on Instagram, Sonakshi wrote: “I love drawing faces, so decided to draw the most peaceful one — The painting is up for auction to raise funds for the daily wage earners... if you’d like to make it your own, do bid for it on the link @fankind-official #artbyasilsona.”

Amy’s son turns eight months old

Actor **AMY JACKSON**’s son Andreas, whom she lovingly calls her “little bunny,” has turned eight-months-old.

She took to Instagram, and posted an adorable photograph of her son looking out of the window.

“And just like that, my little bunny turned 8 months old,” Amy captioned the image.

She even recently shared the “pros and cons” of working from home amid lockdown.

Just five months ago, on the New Years’, we were making our travel plans for this year. While, for some, it was their first solo trip to Vietnam or Japan, for others, it was a honeymoon trip to Santorini that they had on the cards. For some others, it was a fully sponsored vacation by their work company to Moscow, a part of their incentive. Others were just looking forward to a long-awaited mini get-away to Pondicherry or a girls’ vacation to Goa. Everyone was dreaming of taking time off from their busy schedules and flaunting photographs on social media. Well, people did get some time off from their offices but not in the manner anyone had imagined. An unimaginable, total lockdown, where one could not even venture out beyond one’s home, is what we got.

Now, with the Coronavirus having stolen the limelight this year, changing our life entirely, we are left wondering as to what is the future of travel post this pandemic. Until a reliable vaccine is developed, there is no assurance of reopening of the borders or travel allowances. So how long will it take for international travel bans to be eliminated? Will we be able to travel as freely as we did earlier? Will online bookings be as hassle-free? Since social distancing is here to stay, will airfares rise because of lesser number of bookings per flight? Will domestic travel see a spike? Even if airlines start functioning again, how would the safety be ensured?

Experts suggest the following changes, which are set to become a new normal in the world of travel:

NEW AND SAFER HYGIENE REGIME

Experts suggest that since the industry is currently on a complete standstill, to boost travel again post the pandemic, a lot of emphasis on health, hygiene and safety will be required. “Hotels, cruise companies, airlines, attractions and more will have to cater to these practices and maintain social distancing in some ways. I don’t see it in full practice (that is, six-feet apart), but consumers and companies will have to be conscious of this,” says Varun Chadha, CEO, TIRUN (Royal Caribbean Cruises).

The industry will have to prioritise safety and hygiene at every step to rebuild consumers’ confidence in travelling again. So how will it be ensured?

Vikram Lalvani, Chief Officer, Revenue Management and Sales, Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited, suggests three things that travel companies should consider — what should we do for i) Guests; ii) Employees; iii) Suppliers/vendors?

He says, “We require a 360-degree ‘clinically’ hygiene programme, regularly, for the all employees and guests. It should begin with a well-designed protocol for hygiene and sanitisation for going in-and-out of work for the employees. All services or facilities should be opened gradually — one stage after another while considering all norms of hygiene and dis-



With extra attention to hygiene, a little rise in expenses, a shift in regular customs and a change of plans and desired destinations, experts from the tourism industry set the agenda for travel post COVID-19.

By CHAHAK MITTAL

tancing for everyone involved. Hospitality brands, for a long time, should indulge in contact-less services or consider only organising pre-planned/combo meals for customers to avoid contact with other staff members in the chain. Last and most important, it is crucial to prove the efforts to customers to re-establish their trust. Customers believe what they see as they are just as humans as us and hence, companies should be transparent about their hygiene protocols. Moreover, travel companies have an edge over hotels and can make stricter guidelines for the guests and staff to adhere to the norms of social distancing even during travelling.”

Since travel is not just limited to commuting to and fro from a place to another, how can visa and passport application services ensure health safety and social distancing?

As per the guidelines prescribed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), as well as local authorities, both customers and employees at Visa Application Centres will be subject to body temperature checks, face masks and gloves for protection. Centres are also maintaining preventive measures such as disinfecting high-contact surfaces, use of hand sanitisers, and social distancing practices. The ‘Visa At Your Doorstep’ is set to be the new normal.

Experts from VFS Global tell us that they are working on the feature and post lockdowns, their staff will visit the customer’s location of



choice (home, office, etc) to complete the visa application process and/or biometric enrolment if needed, while maintaining necessary health precautions.

DIGITAL OPTIONS ENSURING TOUCHLESS TRAVEL

The journey from airports to hotel check-ins will see the most immediate and crucial transformation — touchless travel, suggest experts.

Since hygiene is the first priority, Nishant Pitti, CEO and Co-founder, EaseMyTrip, suggests that the use of high-end digital options will become the “new normal.” He adds, “There will be more emphasis on booking everything online, including more web check-ins, instead of standing in a queue to get the boarding pass. Airports will also have to change their systems of collecting the luggage and checking a person before immigration.”

Other changes in automation would be biometrics, which have already become a widely-accepted solution for identity verification

and will now become more widespread as physical fingerprint and hand scanners will be phased out. Touchless options like contactless fingerprint, as well as iris and face recognition, will come into play. There will be technology for touchless data-entry such as gesture control, touchless document-scanning and voice commands, some of which are already being tested. Seating configurations in airplanes will also have to change to ensure safety and distancing.

INFLUENCE OF MARKET FORCES

Given that the travel industry contributes about nine per cent to India’s GDP and generates employment for more than 12 per cent of the total workforce, an absolute halt on its services is certainly a huge loss for it. As per an analysis by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the tourism industry is staring at an overall loss of ₹5 lakh crore and job cuts impacting up to five crore people. And the aviation sector, as Rikant Pitti, COO and



tourism businesses are going to rethink strategies and travellers will have to settle for spots with fewer crowds.”

A spokesperson from MakeMyTrip also earlier suggested that domestic travel is the first area, that they foresee, which will likely “show green shoots of recovery and could prove to be a force multiplier for the industry to survive and recover from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.”

Nishant adds that travellers would avoid visiting international destinations, especially, the ones which were heavily impacted by COVID-19 in short-term even post recovery. He adds, “Instead, they would prefer small domestic destinations or prefer travelling through their own vehicle to nearby locations to avoid crowds. The weekend and nearby hill station getaways are likely to gain popularity. People are likely to prefer homestay or small resorts to ensure that they come in contact with fewer people.”

THE BRIGHT SPOTS

Varesh lists some points, which, in the longer run, will prove to be beneficial for the world:

□ Over-tourism will no longer be a problem for some time. And it will lead to more responsible and sustainable travel practices.

□ With pollution levels evidently reducing over cities across the world, destinations will hopefully become cleaner, purer and greener once again, having some permanency to it. This, in turn, would be an added travel incentive for globetrotters.

□ It will give an opportunity to hitherto unknown or underrated but good destinations and attractions which will come to the fore and receive footfalls.

□ People will look for pristine and lesser-visited places with natural beauty, which are away from local civilisation and commercialisation.

□ And overall, this will bring a much-desired balancing effect of the tourism industry footprint on the world and hopefully, keep emission levels down.

Considering all these points, even though the recovery will surely take some time, especially with the international travel experiences, experts definitely see a silver lining here as people are bound to get out of their homes after lockdown with a renewed desire to travel.

This year’s graduation ceremonies have celebrities bidding students goodbye online

This year’s college graduates won’t get to take their triumphant walk across the stage. They won’t get to toss their caps amid a sea of classmates. Instead, they have to settle for online ceremonies while their diplomas are mailed home. But at least one aspect of the traditional graduation ceremony is being salvaged for the class of 2020: the celebrity keynote address.

As scores of colleges host virtual graduation ceremonies amid the Coronavirus pandemic, many are recruiting famous figures to give commencement speeches over their laptops instead of the lectern. In the first weeks of graduation season, schools have landed speeches from big names including Tom Hanks, Pharrell Williams and Tom Brady. Others are promising appearances from comedians, authors, civil rights leaders and politicians.

At the same time, a growing number of companies are stepping in with their own star-studded events celebrating college graduates across the nation.

Facebook recently hosted a “Graduation 2020” event with commencement speeches from Oprah Winfrey, Awkwafina, Lil Nas X and Simone Biles, among others. YouTube is offering a “Dear Class of 2020” celebration headlined by Barack and Michelle Obama, with additional speeches from Lady Gaga, Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai and the K-Pop supergroup BTS.

A separate online event will celebrate graduates at historically black colleges, with speeches from Barack Obama and a host

Toss your caps, virtually



of other stars.

It’s all meant to take the sting out of losing such a memorable moment. Schools started cancelling or postponing traditional ceremonies in March, to the dismay of graduates who had hoped to celebrate years of hard work. In their addresses, some speakers have used the moment to offer a lesson on life’s curve balls and the need to adapt.

In a video message for Texas A&M University’s law school, actor Rainn Wilson told graduates he was sorry they couldn’t share “big group hugs and high fives and kisses on the cheek.” But he also said students can learn from that disappointment.

“It may also teach a very valuable life lesson not to take anything for granted. To know that things can and will change all the time,” Wilson said. “The world out there can be incredibly difficult and fraught, and plans change all the time.”

Tom Hanks, who survived COVID-19, told graduates at Wright State University that their lives will forever be divided into time before and after the Coronavirus pandemic, in the same way that past generations had their lives marked by wars.

“You have finished Wright

State during the great reset, the great reboot,” Hanks said in a video message. “You chosen ones are going to form the new structures and define the new realities, and make the new world — the world after all that we have been through.”

Hanks’ message was delivered as a surprise to graduates at the Ohio school. Other colleges have similarly kept quiet about their celebrity speeches until they were shared online, including at Virginia’s Norfolk State University, which tapped singer and producer Pharrell Williams to give a virtual address. “Even if this is not the norm, you guys and girls still deserve all the praise,” Williams said in his message. “You stuck it through, you made it and today’s your day. And man, you made it at a really crazy time in life.”

Some colleges are keeping the same speakers they previously lined up for campus ceremonies, including at Harvard University, which will offer a message from Marty Baron, editor of *The Washington Post*, and at Ohio State University, which broadcast a virtual address from Apple CEO Tim Cook.

The virtual celebrations have a different look from school to

school, with some preparing videos that are recorded in advance and then shared online. Others are holding live events over video conference, in some cases produced by companies promising to replicate the traditional graduation experience.

Some are passing up on celebrity speeches, though, saying the online events aren’t meant to be an exact replica of the campus event. At Rice University, officials are hosting an online event with no guest speaker. Instead, the school hopes to bring graduates back for a belated ceremony on campus with the previously announced keynote speaker, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof. And some others are skipping online events entirely. Officials at the University of California, Berkeley, say they surveyed students and found it was their “clear preference” to pass on a virtual celebration and aim for a campus celebration later. A message from the university said it’s “too early at this stage of the pandemic to finalise when and how we will mark this milestone.”

Recently, a university in Tokyo, Japan, used remote-controlled robots to hold a virtual graduation. —AP

Need a perspective change towards LGBTQ+ : Arunabh

A head of International Transphobia and Homophobia Day, Arunabh Kumar, founder of TVF, has a surprising anecdote for his admirers. Many would not know that he did one small cameo in Farah Khan’s *Om Shanti Om* as a transgender. He was closely associated with Farah for a long time as an assistant for the film.

“A song shoot was going on and Farah has a habit of making very interesting and inclusive cameos in the film. She asked if anyone was up to play the role of a transgender person in a scene for the film but the whole set refused and there were also people who made fun of the entire affair,” recalls Arunabh.

He took a strong stand against the on-going jokes of playing the cameo for the film and decided to step in and played the role himself.

He says, “I went up to Farah and gladly volunteered to play the role. She thought I was brave and encouraged me. I went and did a proper make up and costume and even connected with a friend of mine who is a transgender for some small tips.”

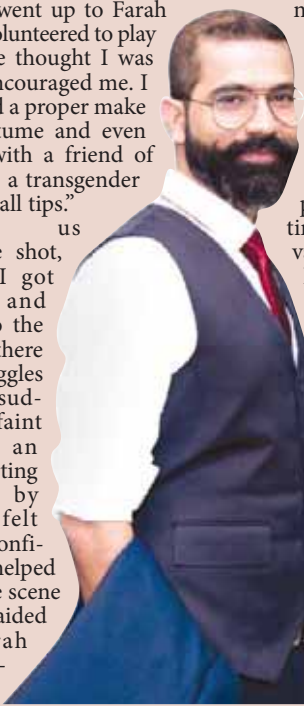
Taking us through the shot, he adds, “I got dressed and walked onto the set. While there were few giggles there was suddenly the faint sound of an applause starting followed by more. I felt happy and confident which helped me to do the scene confidently aided by Farah ma’am’s brilliant direction”.

Apparently, the scene was for one of the most popular dialogues from the iconic film *‘Ek chutki sindoor ki keemat tum kya jaano...’*

Currently busy with his comic book, *Indusverse* series and also working towards helping migrants in India who are suffering due to lockdown, Arunabh feels that humanity comes first.

Coming from a small town he recalls how his homosexual friends were scared about disclosing their sexual preferences due to social structure. “I was taken aback as I have homosexual friends since I was in a hostel in my school days. I have seen how it has been very tough for them to get out of the closet for the fear of being ridiculed,” says Arunabh.

He feels that as a society we need to change our perspective before we expect others to change. “I have always felt that the LGBTQIA community has been marginalised and made to feel alien. But on the contrary, they are exactly people like us and it’s about time that this taboo should vanish from the society. I have had the fortune of having friends from this community since school and college days and it was this proximity with them in an everyday environment that made me think of them just as any other human being with their own preferences. I wish that the day makes the community feel more inclusive in our culture, art and lives. That is when we will be able to stop needing this day,” he shares.



Premier League clubs agree group training return from today

Green light

AFP ■ LONDON

Premier League clubs will return to training in small groups from Tuesday after the latest stage of *Project Restart* was approved on Monday. Clubs unanimously voted to allow players to start socially distanced training in a bid to resume the season next month. However, Premier League chief executive Richard Masters admitted a target return date of June 12 may prove to be too ambitious. “June 12 was a staging post; it wasn’t a firm commitment and what we don’t want to do is continue to move it around,” said



Masters following a meeting with the 20 top-flight clubs. “It really depends on when we can start full contact training and we have a process to go through before we can get to that stage. Of course we’ve got to be flexible.” Masters confirmed the results from the first round of testing, conducted on Sunday and Monday, would be back by 2pm (1300 GMT) on Tuesday. Testing will continue regularly throughout the training period. “Strict medical protocols of the highest standard will ensure everyone returns to training in the safest environment possible,” a Premier League statement

said. The training protocols were presented to players and managers last week before being rubber-stamped during Monday’s video conference call. The first step requires training to last for no more than 75 minutes for any single player, and with groups of a maximum of five players in each mini-session. Players will be asked to leave three parking spaces between their vehicle and any other at the training ground, and arrive wearing kit. There will be no access to communal areas such as canteens or physio rooms.

Newcastle manager Steve Bruce warned on Sunday that his players could “fall down like a pack of cards” with injuries if they are not given enough preparation time to get back up to speed before matches restart. However, he welcomed the first stage of a return to training. “I must stress that phase one looks as if it’s as safe as it can be. I’m sure everyone will be delighted that we’re trying to make that effort,” said Bruce. “In phase one we’re allowed to train four to five people on one pitch, so basically a player has a quarter of a pitch to work

within, so social distancing is not a problem. We’ll train with eight to 10 at a time on two separate pitches.

“Everything is in place in the safety aspect. I’ve got no issues and I can tell the supporters the players and the staff are as safe as we possibly can be.”

The resumption of Germany’s Bundesliga over the weekend has raised expectations that the Premier League can follow suit.

But some Premier League players remain concerned over returning to work while the virus is still uncontained, with Britain one of the countries worst hit by the crisis.

“Phase one is social distancing individual training with a coach. That’s no problem, that’s like going to the park,” Watford captain Troy Deeney told *Good Morning Britain*.

“I would say 98 per cent (of players) are very much aware that phase one is very good, I would say 65-70 per cent of people are concerned with phase two. I’d say even higher after that.”

However, Britain’s Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said he was still hopeful for a return in mid-June.

“I had some very constructive discussions on Thursday with the FA, the EFL and the Premier League,” Dowden told *Sky News*.

“We are working hard with them to try and get it back, aiming for mid-June, but the number one test is public safety.

“If we can sort that out then we will look to resume by mid-June. We’re making good progress.”

La Liga clubs begin group training

AFP ■ MADRID

Spanish clubs began training in groups of 10 players on Monday, in line with health protocols, as La Liga takes another step towards the planned resumption of the coronavirus-hit season next month.

Barcelona confirmed their squad was back on the training ground at 9:30am (0730 GMT), with pictures published on their *Twitter* account showing several players including Gerard Pique and Sergio Busquets taking part in the session.

Real Madrid players also trained at the club’s base on the outskirts of the Spanish capital, as clubs begin the last step towards being able to work with their full squads together.

“I feel very good to be back on the pitch working with my teammates. Now we have to wait for the matches to come, but I’m very happy,” Eden Hazard told Real’s in-house TV channel.

Spanish Government protocol allows training sessions to be expanded by all clubs, even those belonging to areas that are further behind in the country’s programme of de-escalation from a strict lockdown.

That means teams like Real, Barcelona and Atletico Madrid are able to train in groups of 10, despite both the



Barcelona players train during team’s first group training session FCB/Twitter

capital and Catalonia remaining in *phase 0* as two of Spain’s worst-hit regions.

“Today was the first time we could get together and face each other. We did small-sided games, which is what we like and we missed,” said Atletico forward Joao Felix.

Spain has been one of the world’s hardest-hit countries by Covid-19 with more than 231,000 confirmed cases.

“It is a ministerial decision. It was very important that all teams could train in the same way,” said Javier Tebas, the president of La Liga, on Sunday.

‘NO IDEAL DATE’ Tebas reiterated La Liga’s desire to finish the remaining 11 rounds of matches in a season that has been suspended since mid-March.

He has circled June 12 as the ideal date for matches to return

but admitted the exact timing will depend on the health authorities in Spain and the trajectory of the virus.

“We are working so that (the return of La Liga) will take place from June 11-12, but we are working to be ready regardless of the date,” Tebas told *Movistar TV*.

“It is the health authorities who will say when we start.

“I would like it to happen as soon as possible, but the truth is that we do not have an ideal date. We have to wait for the green light from the health authorities.”

According to an official statement by the Government on Saturday, professional sports clubs “may carry out complete training sessions” while “complying with the corresponding prevention and hygiene measures”.

The statement put the maximum number at 14 for group training but La Liga informed clubs the limit would be 10 on Monday.

Dortmund showdown will decide Bundesliga: Mueller

MUNICH: Thomas Mueller expects Bayern Munich’s showdown behind closed doors at closest rivals Borussia Dortmund in a week’s time to decide who wins the Bundesliga title.

Goals by Robert Lewandowski and Benjamin Pavard sealed a 2-0 win for Bayern at Union Berlin on Sunday.

The result in Berlin maintained Bayern’s four-point lead at the top of the table. Dortmund host Bayern on May 26 and Mueller expects the potential top-of-the-table clash to be a key factor in determining whether Munich will go on to clinch an eighth straight league crown.

“The match in Dortmund will decide how exciting and close it will be in the next few weeks, that’s for sure,” said Mueller. Former Dortmund striker Lewandowski netted a first-half penalty for Bayern on Sunday for his 26th league goal this season, taking him one closer to Gerd Mueller’s record of 40 in the 1971-1972 season.

Aked if the Pole could overtake Mueller’s 48-year-old record, Bayern coach Hansi Flick said: “It won’t be easy, but he (Lewandowski) has the quality. “If anyone can do it, he’s the one.”

AFP



Singapore GP not possible behind closed doors

AFP ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore F1 organisers on Monday said it was “not feasible” to hold the race behind closed doors, threatening further problems for the coronavirus-ravaged season.

After 10 races were cancelled or postponed, Formula One bosses are aiming to begin the season with two races in Austria in July, both without fans. Races in other countries are also expected to go ahead in closed venues.

But the Singapore Grand Prix, scheduled for September, is a night-time street race around the city-state’s waterfront, where it would be challenging to keep spectators away.

Organisers said they have been in talks with Formula One, the Singapore Government and others involved “to assess different possibilities” for holding the race.

But a spokesperson added that “as the Singapore F1 race is a street circuit, it is not feasible to conduct the race behind closed doors.”

Ferrari’s Sebastian Vettel won last year’s race, which drew 268,000 spectators over three days, a substantial portion of them coming from overseas.

Celtic declared Scottish champs



Celtic team fans celebrate outside Celtic Park AP

AFP ■ GLASGOW

Celtic were crowned champions for a record-equalling ninth consecutive season as the Scottish Premiership campaign was declared over on Monday.

Neil Lennon’s men were 13 points clear at the top of the table when the season was stopped due to the coronavirus pandemic in March with eight games remaining for the majority of clubs.

Second-placed Rangers had a game in hand to try and cut that gap and were due to face Celtic twice more before the end

of the season.

“It is, of course, a real shame that we were not able to see out the league in front of our fans. However, no one can deny how deserved this title is,” said Celtic chief executive Peter Lawwell.

A ninth consecutive title matches the record set by Celtic’s European Cup-winning side of the sixties and seventies and Rangers’ dominant team that won nine in a row between 1988 and 1997.

“To be sitting here now as the manager of the nine in a row, and having played a huge part in that, fills me with so much pride,” said Lennon, who has been in charge for five of the nine straight titles.

“It feels wonderful and I’m so proud of the players. It’s an incredible record and to be part of that is something very special, and I think it’s thoroughly deserved as well.”

A points-per-game formula for determining final league placings also sees bottom club Hearts relegated unless there is any progress in talks over league reconstruction.

Premiership clubs have previously rejected proposals for reconstruction, but Hearts said they will put forward a new resolution and warned they may take legal action if it is rejected.

Sports Ministry gives go ahead for training to resume in stadia

NEW DELHI: The Sports Ministry on Monday gave it go ahead to the resumption of training in all sports complexes and stadia with immediate effect after the Government eased restrictions for the fourth phase of the coronavirus-forced lockdown.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said activities can now be conducted in all sports complexes and stadia, including those managed by private players, but only in accordance with the Ministry of Home Affairs guidelines.

‘It’s time for Mortaza to retire’



DHAKA: Bangladesh’s bowling coach Ottis Gibson has urged Mashrafe Mortaza to bid adieu to international cricket as he doesn’t see the 36-year-old fast bowler in the scheme of things for the 2023 World Cup slated to be played in India.

Gibson, who joined Bangladesh in January this year, said that head coach Russell Domingo has to look at several younger bowlers to build a team in the next three years.

“I think he (Mortaza) has had an outstanding international career,” *ESPNcricinfo* quoted Gibson as telling Bengali daily *Prothom Alo* on Monday.

“He has done himself and his country proud. With the next World Cup in 2023, any interna-

“I’m happy to inform sportspersons and all concerned that sports activities will be conducted in sports complexes and stadia strictly in accordance with MHA guidelines and that of the States in which they are situated,” Rijiju tweeted.

“However, use of gyms and swimming pools are still prohibited,” he added.

According to ministry sources, sporting activities can resume in facilities and academies across the country, including those man-

tional coach will now start to build a team. I am quite sure that’s what Russell will be thinking.

“So he would want to see players like young Hasan Mahmud, (Mohammad) Saifuddin, Shafiul (Islam) and Ebadot (Hossain). We haven’t seen Ebadot in white-ball cricket yet. There’s Taskin (Ahmed) and Khaled (Ahmed) gets fit again. We have Hasan and (Mehedi Hasan) Rana. So there’s a lot of young cricketers in the country,” Gibson added.

According to Gibson, Domingo is now trying to build a team for the future and that’s why Mortaza should now move on and can advise country’s young fast bowlers in a different capacity. “I think if Russell is now trying to build a team for the future, then I don’t know what part Mashrafe will have to play in that. Perhaps now is his time, with all that’s going on in the world, to move on,” Gibson said.

“He (Mortaza) can find other ways to pass on his vast knowledge and experience to the young guys. I don’t think he has to be on the field to be able to pass on what he has learned over his career. He needs to find other ways to pass on that message,” he added. *PTI*

aged by private entities like TransStadia and JSW Group.

“Sporting activities can now start across the country, including in private facilities and those managed by states but in complete adherence to MHA guidelines,” the source said.

“There is no time frame on when to start. It entirely depends on individual players and NSFs. For example, our hockey teams are based in SAI Bengaluru since the start of lockdown, so if Hockey India wants to start onfield training from tomorrow, they can do so,” he said.

The source, however, said that sportspersons joining the national camps or SAI centres afresh will have to go through medical checkups and a mandatory 14-day quarantine period.

“Not just SAI facilities, all private facilities and academies will have to ensure medical check ups of those wanting to resume training.” *PTI*

Markram not desperate for SA Test captaincy

JOHANNESBURG: Batsman Aiden Markram on Monday expressed his desire to lead Proteas in Tests but at the same time insisted that it will not be the end of the world for him if he isn’t given top job.

After veteran batsman Faf du Plessis resigned from captaincy across all three formats, Cricket South Africa (CSA) has been in a lurch, trying to find a suitable leader for the longest format of the game.

Quinton de Kock was handed the reins in both white-ball formats but South Africa’s director of cricket, Graeme Smith, ruled out the wicketkeeper-batsman for Test captaincy, prompting several players to throw their hats into



NEW DELHI: Former Australian captain Ian Chappell feels India skipper Virat Kohli’s penchant for playing copybook cricketing shots and his incredible fitness make him the world’s best batsman across formats among the current generation of cricketers. “Of that group (including Steve Smith, Kane Williamson, Joe Root), Kohli is the best in all three forms. That’s unquestionable,” Chappell said on *The RK Show*, which is hosted by Radhakrishnan Sreenivasan on *YouTube*.

“His record in all three forms is quite unbelievable, particularly his record in the shorter forms.”

Chappell’s comments come after former

Saliva on ball, neutral umpires set to be axed

NEW DELHI: Cricket is set to do away with one of its oldest practices — the use of saliva to shine the ball — as an Anil Kumble-led ICC committee recommended banning it owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, the ICC Cricket Committee saw no health hazard in continuing with the use of sweat.

During a meeting over a video conference, the committee also pushed for bringing back two non-neutral umpires (both from the host nation) for all international matches, as DRS ensures more accurate decision making. This was also recommended to curb travel.

In line with its proposal, the committee has recommended an increase in the use of DRS review per innings, from two to three.

“We are living through extraordinary times and the recommendations Committee have made today are interim measures to enable us to safely resume cricket in a way that pre-



serving the essence of our game while protecting everyone involved,” Kumble said.

“The ICC Cricket Committee heard from the Chair of the ICC Medical Advisory Committee Dr Peter Harcourt regarding the elevated risk of the transmission of the virus through saliva, and unanimously agreed to recommend that the use of saliva to polish the ball be prohibited,” the apex body said.

However, the bowlers can continue using sweat to shine the ball as it’s not a virus transmitter. “The Committee also noted the medical advice that it is highly unlikely that the virus can be transmitted through sweat.

“(It) saw no need to prohibit the use of sweat to polish the ball while recommending that enhanced hygiene measures are implemented on and around the playing field.”

The use of saliva to shine the cricket ball, especially in the red-ball format, is primarily meant for swing bowling but the practice is now being seen as a health risk in a world battling the pandemic. *PNS*

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Khawaja dropped due to inconsistency: Ponting

MELBOURNE: Australia’s two-time World Cup winning captain Ricky Ponting says senior batsman Usman Khawaja was axed from the national team due to his inconsistency but he is not willing to write him off yet.

The 33-year-old Khawaja was recently left out of the Australia’s annual list of contracted players after he was dropped midway through last year’s Ashes. “I honestly think now he’s going to find it difficult (to get back into the Australian team) and I feel for him,” Ponting, who was recently involved with the Australian team as a batting consultant, told *ABC Grandstand*.

“I’ve always felt he’s a very good player and we probably never saw the absolute best of him at international cricket. We saw glimpses of it, and dribs and drabs, but not the consistently good player I thought he could have been for Australia.”

Ponting, however, hoped that Khawaja can score loads of runs in the domestic circuit and make an international comeback.

“One thing I know, you never write great players off. He’s got every opportunity once domestic cricket does start this summer, and all he can do is represent Queensland, get a truck load of runs under his belt and wait for another opportunity to come along.

“If it does I’m sure he wouldn’t let anyone down if he gets a chance to play again.” *PTI*