

**OPINION 6**  
WITHOUT  
A ROADMAP

**WORLD 8**  
HONG KONG OPP SLAMS CHINA  
NATIONAL SECURITY LAW MOVE

**SPORT 12**  
BWF INDIA OPEN  
FROM DEC 8-13

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## Opp activities pick up

Sonia chairs meeting of 22 parties, questions Modi over handling of corona crisis; AAP, SP, BSP give it a miss

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a sign that the Opposition was gearing up to come out of the “lockdown” mode, 22 Opposition parties came on one platform on Friday to question the Narendra Modi Government's handling of the fallout of Covid-19 pandemic, including humanitarian crisis, and said all powers were now concentrated in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the regime has abandoned any pretence of being a democratic Government.

The Opposition parties demanded that the Centre present a revised and comprehensive package that will be a true fiscal stimulus in order to rev up the economy.

Presenting a 11-point charter to the Modi Government, the Opposition leaders, including Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Chief Ministers Mamata Banerjee, Uddhav Thackeray, Hemant Soren and NCP chief Sharad Pawar among others issued a joint statement saying, grand announcements of ₹20 lakh crore were made but it has done nothing meaningful to alleviate the sufferings of people, particularly the migrants who are toiling hard to reach their destinations.

They sought that the Centre facilitate free trans-



Congress president Sonia Gandhi chairs a meeting with leaders of Opposition parties via videoconferencing in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

portation of the migrants who are still on roads without food and water. At the same time it also demanded the Centre consult State Governments while allowing international/domestic flights.

“Present a clear and meaningful economic strategy focused on revival and poverty alleviation instead of propaganda. The ₹20 lakh crore package and its contents mislead the people of India,” said the Opposition.

Interacting with Opposition leaders through video conference, the Congress president accused the Modi Government of mismanagement in handling the situation prevailing in the country. She

said the very spirit of “federalism” has been forgotten as all power is now concentrated in the Prime Minister's Office.

“A number of renowned economists are predicting that 2020-21 will end with negative growth of up to minus 5 per cent. The consequences will be catastrophic,” Sonia said.

Top Opposition leaders included Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, National Conference Omar Abdullah, DMK's MK Stalin, CPI(M)'s Sitaram Yechury among others.

Others who attended the meeting and also expressed

their views, were Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, AK Antony, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mallikarjun Kharge, Ahmed, HD Devegowda (JDS), Derek O'Brien from Trinamool, Praful Patel (NCP), MK Stalin (DMK), Sanjay Raut (Shiv Sena), D Raja (CPI), Sharad Yadav (LJD), Dr Omar Abdullah (NC), Tejaswi Yadav and Manoj Jha (RJD), PK Kunhalikutty (IUML), Jayant Chaudhary (RLD), Upendra Kushwaha (RLSP), Badruddin Ajmal (AIUDF), Jitin Ram Manjhi (HAM), Jose K Mani (KC-M), NK Premchandran (RSP), Raju Shetty (Swabhimani Paksh), Thol Thirumavalavan (VCK-TN) and Prof Kondandaram (TJS).

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Samajwadi Party and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), however, did not attend the meeting.

The Congress chief said Modi's initial optimism of being able to “conclude the war against the virus in 21 days turned out to be misplaced”.

The meeting began by condoling the loss of lives and destruction in West Bengal and Odisha caused by cyclone Amphan and urged the Centre to declare it as a national calamity for providing better financial assistance to the States.

Continued on Page 2



Volunteers look for survivors of a plane that crashed in a residential area of Karachi on Friday

AP

## Pak plane with 99 crashes into houses

PTI ■ KARACHI

At least 57 people were killed when a Pakistan International Airlines plane with 99 people on board crashed into a densely populated residential area near the Jinnah International Airport here on Friday, officials said, nearly a week after the Covid-19-induced air travel restrictions were lifted by the Government.

Flight PK-8303 from Lahore was about to land in Karachi when it crashed at the Jinnah Garden area near Model Colony in Malir, minutes before its landing, they said.

The PIA Airbus A320 carrying 91 passengers and eight crew members has crashed landed into the Jinnah Housing Society located near the airport, a spokesperson of the national carrier said.

Thick black smoke rose from the accident scene of devastation in the Model Colony area. Earlier, a PIA Spokesperson and many media reports said that there were 107 people on board the aircraft.

Faisal Edhi of the Edhi Welfare Trust said so far 57 bodies have been recovered from the crashed plane. “Our rescue workers have taken out 57 bodies from the remains of

the aircraft,” he said.

Sindh Health Minister Azra Pechuho said that 19 bodies have been shifted from the crash site to Jinnah hospital and another 20 to the civil hospital. Scores of injured were also rushed to other hospitals.

The Minister said there are three survivors, including President of the Bank of Punjab Zafar Masood. He called up his mother to inform her of his well-being. Edhi said that around 25 to 30 residents whose houses were damaged by the plane have also been taken to the hospital, mostly with burn wounds.

Continued on Page 2

## PM hails Didi for Amphan relief, grants ₹1K crore; Odisha ₹500 cr

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday praised Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for trying hard to fight off the disastrous impact of super cyclone Amphan at a time when the State, much like the entire country, was suffering from the impact of the corona pandemic.

The Prime Minister who jointly conducted an aerial survey of the South Bengal districts of North and South 24 Parganas — to weigh up the extent of devastation left behind by the severe cyclone — along with the Chief Minister and State Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar later said after an administrative meeting that the Union Government would for the time being make an advance assistance of ₹1,000 crore for immediate relief works.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Modi on Friday evening announced an advance financial assistance of ₹500 crore for Odisha after an aerial survey of areas hit by cyclone Amphan and holding a review meeting with Governor Ganeshi Lal and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Modi, accompanied by the Odisha Chief Minister, took the aerial tour of cyclone-hit districts such as Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Balasore, Jajpur and Mayurbhanj for about 90 minutes.

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

### TRAVEL CURBS EASED FOR OCI CARDHOLDERS

**New Delhi:** A section of the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholders stranded abroad would now be able to travel back to India as the Ministry of Home Affairs on Friday relaxed the travel restrictions for certain categories of these OCIs including, minor children, Couples where one spouse is an OCI and the other is an Indian, and those wanting to travel to India to attend death in family.

### NINE BODIES RECOVERED FROM WELL IN TELANGANA

**Warrangal:** Mystery shrouded the death of 9 people, including six of a family, whose bodies were found in a well, five of them on Friday in Telangana.

### CAPITAL SIMMERS AT 45°C, HEATWAVE BEGINS

**New Delhi:** A heat wave swept parts of the national Capital on Friday, with the maximum temperature crossing the 45 degrees Celsius-mark in Palam area, the IMD said.

## RBI sees -ve growth, cuts repo rate by .4%

### Moratorium on loans extended by 3 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has painted a dismal picture of Indian economy on the basis of negative growth and high inflation projection. As a remedial measure, the Central bank cut interest rate by 40 basis points. The RBI said that the impact of Covid-19 is more severe than anticipated and the GDP growth during 2020-21 is likely to remain in the negative territory.

The central bank announced a further three-



RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das addresses a Press conference in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

month extension on moratorium on term loans, deferment of interest on working capital, easing of working capital financing requirements by reducing margins, exemption from being classified as defaulters, extension of timeline for

stressed assets, and asset classification standstill.

The extension on moratorium on term loans led to a sharp sell off in banking stocks amid fear that the bank will have to prepare them for sizeable write off in the coming months. After opening nearly 300 points higher, the 30-share index gave up all the gains to turn negative shortly after the policy announcement by the RBI. After gyrating 770 points during the day, the 30-share Sensex ended 433.56 points or 1.14 per cent lower at 37,673.31. It hit an intra-day low of 37,633.36 and a high of 38,403.54.

The broader NSE Nifty plunged 139.25 points or 1.23 per cent to close at 11,174.75.

Continued on Page 2

## Steady rise, total crosses 1,24,000

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With over 6,000 cases and 123 deaths for the second consecutive day, coronavirus cases in India has gone past 1,24,000 with 3,712 casualties.

Maharashtra recorded a massive 2,940 fresh cases in single day with 53 deaths while Tamil Nadu and Delhi registered record number of Covid-19 cases on Friday.

With 14 fatalities and 220 fresh cases reported on Friday, the death toll due to Covid-19 rose to 152 in Uttar Pradesh, while the number of cases climbed to 5,735.

officials said.

According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, around 80 per cent cases are reported from five States: Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Delhi and Rajasthan while over 70 per cent cases reported from cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Indore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Aurangabad and Thane.

At least 51,307 coronavirus patients have recovered so far. With total cases of 44,582, Maharashtra remains on the top in the list.

Continued on Page 2

## Shaheen Bagh shops reopen after 5 months

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Shops in Southeast Delhi's Shaheen Bagh, which were closed for five months first due to anti-Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) protest and then the coronavirus lockdown, opened on Friday, the last Friday of Ramzan.

The move comes after the Delhi Government lifted some curbs during lockdown 4.0 and allowed shops to function in non-red zone areas. However, despite the festival of Eid being just round the corner, the market did not witness much footfall mainly because of fear of the virus.

## Maha takes control of 80% beds in States pvt hospitals

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

To make most of healthcare facilities in charitable and private hospitals to deal with the coronavirus situation, the Maharashtra Government has virtually acquired 80 per cent of non-isolation beds in these hospitals across the State.

Invoking the provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, Disaster Management Act, 2005, Maharashtra Nursing Homes Act and other relevant acts, the Health department in an order issued late on Thursday night said the providers would make all attempts to increase their bed capacity relating to both isolation and non-isolation beds.

“That means 80 per cent of the isolation beds available with any healthcare provider under this notification should be regulated by the Government, district collectors and Municipal Commissioners and also 80 per cent of non-isolation beds. The providers may charge their rack charges to the remaining 20 per cent beds,” it said.

Covid-19			
TOTAL CASES: 1,24,462			
DEATHS: 3,712			
RECOVERED: 51,687			

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	44,528	1,517	12,583
Tamil Nadu	14,753	99	7,128
Gujarat	13,273	802	5,880
Delhi	12,319	208	5,897
Rajasthan	6,377	152	3,542
Madhya Pradesh	6,170	272	3,089
Uttar Pradesh	5,735	152	3,324
West Bengal	3,332	265	1,221
Andhra Pradesh	2,667	55	1,731
Punjab	2,029	39	1,847

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Directorate of Civil Defence  
Government of NCT of Delhi

DIP/Shabdarth/D/0008/20-21



NO PASS NEEDED

# Train, flight tickets enough to enter Delhi: Noida cops

**Noida (UP):** People from Noida and Greater Noida with a confirmed flight or train ticket will not require any “pass” to travel to Delhi, the Gautam Buddh Nagar police said on Friday.

The decision has been taken in view of resumption of passenger flights and rail services in the coming days, the police said.

At present the Noida-Delhi border is sealed for movement except for essential services and people having passes issued by the district administration.

“The central government has decided to resume some domestic flights from May 25 and some train services from June 1 for which online bookings have also resumed,”

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Law and Order, Ashutosh Dwivedi said. “Hence, all police personnel will ensure that all such people having confirmed flight or train tickets are permitted to travel to the airport or railway stations. These people do not require any other ‘pass’ for their movement,” Dwivedi said in an order.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the administration had in April sealed the Noida-Delhi border for movement except for some exempted services.

The move, officials had said, was aimed at combating COVID-19 transmission as several of the coronavirus cases in Gautam Buddh Nagar could be traced to Delhi. **PTI**

# SC: ED can attach JP Morgan’s properties in Amrapali case

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Friday allowed Enforcement Directorate (ED) to attach properties of JP Morgan, which was engaged in transactions with the now-defunct Amrapali Group to allegedly siphon off home buyers’ money in violation of the Foreign

Exchange Management Act (FEMA) and FDI norms. The ED told the top court that it has prima facie identified Rs 187 Crores in the accounts of JP Morgan, as proceeds of crime under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and it needs permission to attach its properties to recover the same.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra and UU Lalit, which took up the matter through video conferencing, granted the permission to the ED to attach the properties of the multi-national firm, a senior lawyer associated with the case said.

Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, appearing for ED told the bench that the probe agency has so far prima facie identified ₹187 crore in the accounts of JP Morgan, which according to them are proceeds of crime under the anti-money laundering law.

He said that the top court had on December 2, last year restrained the agency from attaching any properties and therefore now it needs permission to attach them, in order to move ahead as per law.

Meanwhile, the top court asked Additional Solicitor General Vikramjeet Banerjee to seek instructions on providing ₹500 crore as loan to NBCC for completing the stalled projects of the embattled real estate firm Amrapali, as there is no private player involved in it.

Banerjee told the bench that a meeting is scheduled in finance ministry on the issue and he would inform the con-

cerned authorities of the views expressed by the court.

He said that the suggestions given by court appointed receiver, senior advocate R Venkataramani, are being looked into by the State Bank of India for relaxing the guidelines for disbursing of loan.

The bench said that government has to take care of the funding as there are no private players involved in this and these stalled projects are stuck due to lack of funding.

It said that these unsold inventories also have money stuck and if they are completed and sold, they may fetch a considerable amount.

The bench said that funding through SBI Cap under government’s stress funding is concerned, a relaxed policy can be issued for Amrapali projects.

The top court said that it would take up the matter next week and asked Banerjee to seek instructions on possible funding of stalled projects. **PTI**

# Opp disconnected from people, doing negative politics: Javadekar

**New Delhi:** Accusing the Opposition of “double speak”, the BJP on Friday slammed it as well as Congress president Sonia Gandhi for their criticism of the Narendra Modi Government over its handling of the coronavirus crisis, saying they have become “disconnected” from people and “speaking out of frustration”. Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Prakash Javadekar alleged the Opposition was doing negative politics when it should have projected a united face in combating Covid-19.

The Opposition is displaying negative politics. It is indulging in hypocrisy and double speak. These parties earlier asked why the lockdown was not being extended and now they are asking why you are doing so,” he told reporters.

Non-BJP ruled states like West Bengal first did not use

Shramik trains as much as they should have and now the Congress is doing politics by sending very few buses, he said, in an apparent reference to the opposition party’s proposal to send buses to Uttar Pradesh to ferry migrants.

Hitting out at Sonia Gandhi for her criticism of the government’ Rs 20 lakh crore economic package, Javadekar said the Centre had earlier given Rs 1.70 lakh crore cash to the poor and has also hiked the MNREGA budget to over Rs 1 lakh crore.

“These parties have become disconnected with people and are speaking out of frustration. People are very much with Prime Minister Narendra Modi whose efforts to combat the coronavirus has drawn accolades from world leaders. The situation in India is much better for a country of its population,” he said. **PTI**

# Man dies in home quarantine in Uttarakhand’s Pauri district

**Pauri:** A man, who was under home quarantine after returning from Ghaziabad, died in Pauri district of Uttarakhand, officials said on Friday.

This is the third death in quarantine reported from the district.

The man from Pipli village of the district died late Thursday night, Pabau police chawki in charge Ajay Singh said.

The cause of his death is being ascertained as he was unwell for a long time and undergoing treatment at a hospital in Ghaziabad, Singh said. He had returned home on May 10 and was quarantined at home. His condition worsened late on Thursday night and he died, the official said.

He seems to have died of a heart attack, an official said.

Two persons had died in quarantine in Pauri district on May 17 and 18. **PTI**

# Opp activities...

From Page 1

The virtual meeting of Opposition leaders comes almost two months after the Centre declared a nationwide lockdown on March 25 to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

“That the present Government has no solutions is worrying, but that it has no empathy or compassion for the poor and vulnerable is heartbreaking. The Government has also abandoned any pretence of being a democratic Government. All power is now concentrated in one office, the PMO. The spirit of Federalism which is an integral part of our Constitution is all but forgotten,” Sonia said in her opening remarks.

The Congress chief noted that lakhs of migrant workers, many with children, walking hundreds of kilometres, without money, food or medicines, have become the “defining image of the pandemic”.

“Every economist of repute had advised an immediate need for a massive fiscal stimulus. The Prime Minister’s announcement on May 12 of a grand Rs 20 lakh crore package - and the Finance Minister spelling out its details over the next five days, have turned out to be a cruel joke on the country,” she said.

“Far from offering succour and support, the Government has embarked on a wild adventure of so-called reforms including a grand clearance sale of PSUs and repeal of labour laws. There is not even pretence of consultation with stakeholders or debate in Parliament. We deplore these unilateral moves,” Sonia mentioned.

She said the Government has largely ignored the suggestions of like-minded Opposition parties to transfer cash and free food grains to the 13 crore families at the bottom of the economic pyramid; provide wage protection to laid off and retrenched workers and assistance fund for 5.8 crore micro small medium enterprises (MSME).

# Pak plane with 99 crashes into...

From Page 1

The aircraft wings during the crash landing hit the houses in the residential colony before crashing down.

“At least 25 houses have been damaged in this incident,” Edhi said. “The first priority is to rescue the people. The main hurdle is narrow streets and presence of ordinary people who gathered at the place after the crash but they have been dispersed,” the minister said.

According to a PIA official, the captain informed the air traffic control that he was having problems with the landing gear before the aircraft disappeared from the radar.

Thick black smoke rose from a scene of devastation in the Model Colony area. Television footage showed rescue crews combing through debris strewn across the streets of the district — 3 km north-east of the airport — where a number of houses have been destroyed.

The cause of the crash is yet to be confirmed. PIA chief executive Air Vice Marshal Arshad Malik said the pilot had told traffic control that the plane was experiencing “technical difficulties”.

Malik rejected reports that the plane had problems even before flying. Talking to media, he said the aircraft was completely safe and sound.

He said all checks and procedures were done and “technically as well as administratively everything was in place and perfect”.

The plane with 99 people on board came for landing but just before landing the pilot said he was going for a go-around. While coming for second landing, it developed some problems and crashed. “The real cause of the mishap will be known after inquiry, which will be free and fair and it will be provided with media,” he said.

He said some houses were damaged but none of them collapsed. There was no death on ground so far. Malik said that the entire operation will take two to three days to complete. Pakistan’s Dunya News said it had obtained a recording of the conversation, also posted on monitoring website liveatc.Net.

In it the pilot says they have “lost two engines”. Several seconds later he calls “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday” and there is no further communication.

# Steady rise...

From Page 1

The number of fatalities in the State rose to 1,518, highest in India. This was the sixth consecutive day when the State reported more than 2,000 new coronavirus cases. Mumbai alone reported 1,751 new positive cases and 27 more fatalities in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 27,068. The death toll also surged to 909. Of these cases, Mumbai’s hotspot Dharavi reported 53 new cases. Total positive cases in Dharavi increase to 1,478 and 57 deaths.

Tamil Nadu has reported 786 new cases, taking the total cases of 14,753 in the State. The State reported four more deaths taking the toll to 98. Chennai reported 569 cases in a day taking the total tally to 9,370 cases. At least five senior doctors at the Stanley Government Hospital in Chennai have tested positive for Covid-19.

Chengalpattu reported 40 cases, Thiruvallur 39, Madurai 33, Virudhunagar 26, Tirunelveli 18 and Ramanathapuram 13.

Tamil Nadu had the highest number of coronavirus cases after Maharashtra.


Gujarat is the third in the top three States that has highest number of coronavirus case 13,273. The State has reported 363 new cases and 29 deaths in the last 24 hours. Of them, 26 deaths occurred in Ahmedabad only.

Ahmedabad reported 275 new cases in a single day, taking the total number of cases to 9,724. Surat reported 29 cases while Vadodara 21. Gandhinagar has reported three new cases. The total fatality in Gujarat is now 802, that is the second highest in the country.

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<b>Notice Inviting E-Tender</b>		<b>Dated: 11.03.2020</b>
<b>N.I.T No: 472/PHD/P&amp;C-213</b>		
<b>Name of Office:</b> Chief Engineer / System Operation, Planning & Design (Power Plants) Dte. BBMB (PW), BBMB, New Power House Housing Complex, Flat No.75, Industrial Area, Phase-I, Chandigarh-160002, Tel. Fax. 0172-2637035		
<b>Name of Work:</b> Online Tender for Supply, Delivery, Testing including Demonstration of one no. Leakage Current Meter (LCM) along with accessories for P & T Cell, BBMB, Chandigarh.		
<b>Downloading of Tender Specification/Tender Document from website (Part-I &amp; II)</b>	Start Date 19/03/2020 from 1000 hrs. End Date 18/06/2020 upto 1700 hrs.	
<b>Last Date &amp; Time of online bid submission (Part-I &amp; II)</b>	18/06/2020 upto 1700 hrs.	
<b>Date &amp; Time of Online Bid Opening (Part-I)</b> Online on <a href="http://bbmbeproc.abcpocure.com">http://bbmbeproc.abcpocure.com</a>	19/06/2020 from 1000 hrs onwards	
The Bids are to be submitted Online. For cost of tender document, earnest money deposit and detailed NIT, please visit BBMB website <a href="https://bbmbeproc.abcpocure.com">https://bbmbeproc.abcpocure.com</a> & <a href="http://www.bbmb.gov.in">www.bbmb.gov.in</a>		
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Any person(s) claiming any rights, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/Phone No.9810175844 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (Housing) or Director (Housing), Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.	
Naveen Aggarwal (Advocate) Ch.No. 7, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-110054	



# NDMC doctor tests +ve, dispensary sealed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A dispensary run by New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) at Palika Kendra was sealed after a senior doctor tested positive for Covid-19 on Friday.

A senior NDMC official said that the allopathic doctor was posted at Palika Kendra dispensary was tested positive after showing symptoms of Coronavirus. "All those including family members who had come in contact with the doctor are being screened and advised home quarantine. There are 20 staff including doctors and other medical staff deputed at the dispensary and all are advised home-quarantine," he said.

The family members of

the doctor will also be screened and their samples will be tested if they show any symptoms, he said, adding that further contact-tracing of patients and visitors has been initiated.

This is the third case of covid19 in New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) in a couple of month.

One sanitation worker was tested positive in the Charak Palika Hospital and a chief engineer has already tested positive.

A team of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) doctors is constituted and all the contact of those patients who might have visited dispensary recently are being traced with the help of dispensary registration computer data as per protocols of contact tracing, the official said.

# AIIMS mess worker dies of virus

Doctors' body seeks resignation of Sr Warden and Hostel Superintendent

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

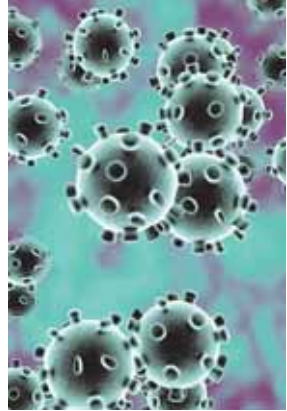
Resident Doctors' Association of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on Friday demanded the resignation of Hostel Superintendent and senior warden after a mess worker died of Covid-19 on Thursday.

In a letter addressed to the Director of AIIMS, the associ-

ation alleged that hostel section refused to take precautionary measures as demanded by the RDA more than a month ago.

The RDA also alleged that the hostel superintendent tried to present the death as probable cardiac event in morning review meeting.

Demanding resignation of both hostel superintendent and senior warden, RDA said "We also demand testing of all mess workers and resident by diligent contact tracing and ensure such incident does not repeat. We also demand appointment of a more receptive and resident friendly hostel superin-



tendent and senior warden. RDA also requested the AIIMS administration to grant

compensation to the grieving family of the mess worker.

In another letter written to Director AIIMS, RDA also suggested that AIIMS should adopts more scientific protocol to ensure safety of patients and residents.

"We as health care workers are accepting the increased risk of acquiring the infection but not inadvertently transmitting the infection to people who come in contact with us for treatment or otherwise. Shortening the quarantine duration and denying mandatory testing post duty may derail the battle against pandemic," it said.

# Docs wear 'black ribbon' in protest against new quarantine guidelines

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Doctors of various hospitals deployed in Covid-19 duty in all the Central and State Government hospitals in the national Capital on Friday sported black arm bands at work to express disappointment of the medical professionals' over the revised guidelines for health workers posted in Covid areas, issued by the Union and State Health Departments.

FORDA President Shivaji Dev Barman said that the 'black ribbon protest' was organised by the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA) India in which doctors of Deep Chand Bandhu Government Hospital, Sanjay

Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Lady Hardinge Medical College (LHMC), Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital and Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital participated by sporting black arm bands.

In a letter written to Delhi health minister on Thursday, FORDA had suggested 14 day quarantine along with adequate testing for all the doctor deputed on Covid duty under current circumstances. "It is a necessity in order to prevent spread of infection among their colleague, family members and in the community. It is essential to reduce the spread of Covid-19 among doctors for efficient maintenance of health-care services," it stated.

# 660 cases reported in a day, total crosses 12K-mark

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi crossed the 12,000 mark in novel coronavirus cases as casualties surged to 200 on Friday. In past 24 hours, 660 cases were reported which was the biggest single - day spike till day.

At times when the recovery rate is improving 'relatively', the spike in Coronapostive cases are a cause of concern for the Delhi Government as 600 plus cases in 24 hours has become normal as active cases graph has also increased as reported 6214 till date against 5897 recovered patients.

Amidst the lockdown four, when Delhi residents have come out for business and job related activities, Delhi Government along with civil corporations, health officials have been trying to bring the situation under control. The recovery rate has given hope for the Delhi Government as it is

According to the Delhi Government order, Delhi has now 79 containment zones while 33 areas have been de-contained

expected to cross 50 percent in the coming weeks.

According to Delhi Government order, Delhi has now 79 containment zone while 33 areas have been de-contained.

Senior officials in the administration said that with the help of local administration including police and Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM),

health officials and cooperation at community level, the administration has been able to control the epidemic in containment zones however there is lot to be done, the official pointed out.

Further, the State administration has given scaling down order to area SDMs of Model Town, Snagam Vihar, Deoli Extension, Khirki Village, Jain Mohalla, Nizamuddin West and Shastris Park of North - East Delhi.

Earlier this week, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, urged the residents of the national capital to show discipline during the fourth phase of the coronavirus lockdown.

Citing the example of fight against dengue and pollution, Kejriwal encouraged people to stay indoors as much possible while he also said that people must learn to live with coronavirus while protecting themselves and others around them.

# 3,800 workers leave Gurugram for home States

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Gurugram district administration on Friday sent back about 3,800 labourers belonging to Uttar Pradesh and northeastern States via a labour special train and Haryana Roadways bus in the wake of the Covid-19 global epidemic.

The train left for Dimapur and Guwahati in Northeast state with 1,400 labourers. While 2,400 workers were dispatched onboard 80 buses of the Haryana Roadways to Moradabad, Aligarh, Bareilly and Etawah in Uttar Pradesh.

As per the directions of Deputy Commissioner Amit Khatri, the health of all the workers were examined under the supervision of sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Chinara Chahal from Gurugram district and thereafter they were dispatched to their home districts by roadways buses.

"Around 3,800 migrant citizens have been sent in train and buses from the Gurugram

district in 80 buses. They buses were dispatched from Tau Devi Lal Stadium, Government Women's College Sector-14, Manesar Sector-8, Gaushala Manesar and Siddravali village," Chahal said.

According to the schedules prescribed by the district administration, thermal scanning of all those workers and their families before boarding the bus ensured that none of them was corona infected. Face masks, food and water bottles were also provided to them.

Chahal appealed to the migrant workers to show patience and restraint. "Arrangements have been made to send the migrants who have been registered with Saral portal. The workers are sending to their home districts in an orderly manner. No migrant citizen should leave in hurry on foot or cycle towards their home districts," the SDM said.

"We appealed to every migrant labour to cooperate with the district administration and said that they will be sent to the destination free of cost



through trains and buses under the prescribed schedule," he added.

"The migrant workers are being sent continuously through special labour train and buses from the Gurugram

district, but if any migrant citizens want to go home by their own vehicle too, then Gurugram district administration is ready to cooperate with it," Chahal said.

Apart from this, 11 more

coronavirus cases were reported in different areas of the Gurugram district on Friday, taking the total cases to 250, including 140 active cases in different hospitals of the district and 140 have been cured and discharged.

# 50-year-old charred to death as car catches fire

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a tragic incident, a 50-year-old man burnt to death after his car caught fire at a flyover in National Capital's Mangolpuri area.

The deceased has been identified as Ram Kishan, a resident of Karala.

According to a senior police official, on Thursday, police received information regarding fire in an Ecco car.

"During enquiry, the vehicle was found at flyover near Kali Mata Mandir, outer ring road. The driver was found on the seat in burnt condition who was declared brought dead when he was rushed to a hospital," said the senior police official.

"The vehicle was carrying some plastic material. It has a CNG kit and cause of fire is being ascertained," said the police official privy to investigation.

A case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at Mangolpuri police station and investigation is underway," he said.

# Jamia dispatches hostlers to Bihar, UP in 9 buses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A large number of students belonging to different parts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh staying in boys and girls hostels of Jamia Millia Islamia left for their homes in nine special buses arranged by university Vice Chancellor Professor Najma Akhtar, said Provost Dr Zakir Hussain Hall of Boys resident Dr Moshahid Alam Rizvi on Friday.

"These students were stranded in hostels due to lockdown in view of Covid-19. And their journey has been made possible due to efforts made by Jamia V-C," said Dr Rizvi.

Professor Akhtar expressed her satisfaction and said these students will now reach safely to their homes and be with their families like J&K and Jharkhand students who were also sent to their homes by the university through special arrangements a few days ago.

A senior university officer said buses left for Katihar, Purnea, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda and Bhagalpur districts carrying around 130 students with a student group leader in each



bus to coordinate things.

"Three students of West Bengal are also travelling in the bus going to Katihar. Two university guards (ex-Army personnel) also went in each bus along with students," university Chief Proctor Waseem Ahmed Khan said.

The official said buses left for the Delhi Government's health centre for screening of students for fever and other symptoms related to corona virus and to complete other formalities before leaving the city. "Students were also provided with food packets, water bottles, hand sanitisers and face masks by the university," he said.

# Senior official tests positive for Covid at Rail Bhavan


NEW DELHI: A senior railway official, who worked on the restructuring of the Railway Protection Force Service tested positive for novel coronavirus, becoming the third such case at Rail Bhawan, the headquarters of the Indian Railways.

According to railway ministry officials, woman staffer had visited the Rail Bhawan on May 13, after which the ministry office was shut down for sanitisation purposes for two days after a RPF staffer tested positive for the disease.

The official said the railway employee who has now tested positive stays at the Commonwealth Games Village apartments where many senior officers of the railways reside. Officials said a joint-secretary level officer working closely with her has been sent to 14 day home quarantine, while some junior staffers have been asked to isolate themselves.


Sources said the officer is diabetic and had taken all precautions required to shield herself from the disease. However, she only has a mild fever and is under watchp at home.

IANS



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DP/9237/2020

# Rly re-opens ticket counters for reservation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Railways on Friday announced that it will open reservation counters for booking of reserved tickets in a phased manner.

A senior Indian Railways said that Zonal Railways have been instructed to decide and notify opening of reservation counters as per local needs and conditions. "These reservation counters will open from tomorrow in a phased manner, along with dissemination of information about their respective locations and timings as per the local needs and conditions," he said.

Indian Railways has also allowed booking of reservation tickets through the common service centers and ticketing agents from Saturday.

It may be noted that running of Shramik Special trains will continue to be handled by



local State Governments as per the existing protocols. "Opening of all these booking facilities once again will mark an important step in the graded restoration of passenger

railway services and making the task of ticket booking easy for all prospective travelers from all parts of India in reserved trains," the ministry said in a statement.

"Zonal railways may adhere to standard social distancing guidelines and observe the hygiene protocols in view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic," it added.



# India averted 14-29L infections, 37-78K deaths: Govt

## Timely social distancing, lockdown measures paid dividends

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Citing various epidemic Cmodels, the Centre on Friday said India has averted 14-29 lakh infections and 37,000-78,000 deaths by putting in place social distancing and lockdown measures in time since the spread of the Covid-19.

It also asserted that current active Covid-19 cases (as of May 21 ) has been limited, concentrated in around 80 per cent in five states, over 60 per cent in five cities and over 90 per cent in 10 States and over 70 per cent in 10 cities.

Even by a simple model, at least 14-29 lakh coronavirus cases and between 37,000 and 71,000 deaths have been averted, said Praveen Srivastava, a senior officer with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), highlighting how India has been able to contain the virus through early implementation of nationwide lockdown.

In a routine Press briefing here, Srivastava said the Government has shared publicly available data with independent experts such as PHFI and BCG to model the impact of lockdown, adding that “in pandemic like this there are no parallels to compare”.

“Two independent economists have estimated that we have averted 23 lakh cases and 68,000 deaths. According to some retired scientists, about 15.9 lakh cases and 51,000 deaths have been avoided, my ministry worked with Indian Statistical Institute and found 20 lakh cases were averted,” said Srivastava.

India on Friday reported over 1,21,000 Covid-19 cases. India is currently in the fourth phase of the lockdown which

was imposed on March 25 to contain the outbreak of coronavirus.

Dr VK Paul, Chairman of Empowered Group 1 felt that the growth rate of coronavirus cases has witnessed a “steady fall” from 3 April, 2020 “when lockdown was able to put a brake on the speed of growth”. “The number of cases today would have been much higher, had lockdown not been implemented. Like the number of cases, growth rate of number of Covid-19 deaths too has fallen significantly due to lockdown, marking a notable difference between pre-lockdown and post-lockdown situations,” he added.

“The doubling time has come down from 3.5 days to 13.5 days because of the lockdown. You can imagine how it would have been if growth had continued at 22 per cent,” he said.

Reading the number of coronavirus cases reported in cities across the country, he said that the pandemic spread in India had been “contained in cities” by the measures implemented by authorities.

“Current active COVID-19 cases (as of 21 May) are concentrated in a few states and cities/districts; around 80 per cent in five states, over 60 per cent in five cities, over 90 per cent in 10 states and over 70 percent in 10 cities,” he said. Presently, most of the cases are being reported from Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

He added, “At the beginning of the lockdown, the doubling rate of the cases was .4, but today, it is doubling in 13 days. (13.3)”

Covid-19 cases would have also increased exponentially



in the absence of the lockdown, said Dr Paul.

“We need to save the country from deaths due to Covid-19,” asserted Dr Paul even as he

It also asserted that current active Covid-19 cases (as of May 21 ) has been limited, concentrated in around 80 per cent in five States, over 60 per cent in five cities and over 90 per cent in 10 States and over 70 per cent in 10 cities

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• India is currently in the fourth phase of the lockdown which was imposed on March 25 to contain the outbreak of coronavirus

praised Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, which on Thursday reached 1 crore treatments mark under the government scheme.

Joint Secretary, Health, Lav Agarwal emphasised on the improved mortality rate. He said the Covid-19 fatality rate has dropped from 3.13 per cent

## Corona is a long-haul fight: Centre

**ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI**

As cases surge each passing day amid lockdown relaxation and there is a continuous exodus of inter-State migrants, the Government on Friday warned that the fight against corona is a long haul not of weeks and months but much beyond. It indicated that restrictions on peoples’ movement were no longer a solution to check virus spread given the economic considerations.

“Lockdown cannot go on forever, it was meant for a purpose which we have achieved to a very large extent. Now we have to make things difficult for the virus,” said Dr V K Paul, Chairman of Empowered Group 1 and head of the

It indicated that restrictions on peoples’ movement were no longer a solution to check virus spread given the economic considerations

• Goal will be to stop the spread with minimum deaths, said Dr V K Paul, Chairman of Empowered Group 1 and head of the national task force on Covid-19 management — who is also the member of the Niti Aayog

national task force on Covid-19 management.

“Goal will be to stop the spread with minimum deaths,” said Paul who is also the member of the Niti Aayog, at a Press briefing here.

“Fight against Covid-19 and its progress in India will depend not just on the behav-

our of the virus but also containment measures at the government, community and individual level,” he added.

Paul also stressed that early detection of cases, effective contact tracing and testing would be the key to keep the Covid-19 cases and deaths under control in the coming days as the lockdown is now being relaxed.

“We have been able to keep the cases and mortalities to reasonable rates so far — so the key is to sustain the momentum we have gained as the lockdown measures are gradually eased,” he added. “But we have to understand that the lockdown cannot continue forever.”

He exhorted the people to

to 3.02 per cent, and the authorities involved in tackling the viral infection are concentrating on containment measures and clinical management of cases.

He said that 3,234 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours, and 48,534 people have been cured so far.

“The recovery rate has improved to 41 per cent and the case fatality rate has improved to 3.02 per cent,” said Agarwal, adding the focus of the Health Ministry is on districts which have reported most cases. According to the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), 27,55,714 tests for Covid-19 were conducted till 1 p.m. Friday, and 1,03,829 tests were done in the last 24 hours.

“Over 1 lakh tests for Covid-19 were done each day in the last four days,” said an official from the ICMR.

seek early treatment and help others to fight the disease.

“It is unethical, immoral to stigmatise the disease, please ensure early care seeking, hand-washing and social distancing etc. Goal is to stop the spread with minimum deaths,” he said.

While giving details on the availability of beds and PPEs and ventilators besides oxygen supply for the Covid-19 patients, Dr Paul also shared that the manufacture of diagnostic kits has begun. “Our indigenous capacity will be able to manufacture five lakh kits daily in the next 6-8 weeks. The ICMR has prepared viral culture, at least five companies and 4-6 scientists are working at national laboratories to develop vaccine.”

## Patients with Covid-19 infection may develop thyroid disease also

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Covid-19, which causes severe respiratory symptoms in a patient, may take in its grip other organs too, said a study which found that the deadly virus can also develop an inflammatory thyroid disease called subacute thyroiditis.

Subacute thyroiditis is characterised by neck pain and is usually preceded by an upper respiratory tract infection, the researchers wrote in a paper published in The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism. They pointed out that physicians should be alerted about the possibility of this additional clinical manifestation related to Covid-19 so that requisite treatment is initiated in time.

The disease may be caused by a viral infection or a post-viral inflammatory reaction, and many viruses have been linked to the disease, the researchers said. They noted that Covid-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus has emerged as a pandemic with severe respiratory symptoms, and may involve other organs.

“We reported the first case of subacute thyroiditis after SARS-CoV-2 infection,”

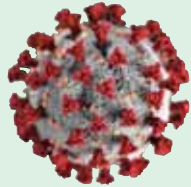
said Francesco Latrofa, from the University Hospital of Pisa in Italy. “Physicians should be alerted about the possibility of this additional clinical manifestation related to Covid-19,” Latrofa said.

Other authors included Alessandro Brancatella, Debora Ricci, Nicola Viola, Daniele Sgrò and Ferruccio Santini of the University Hospital of Pisa.

The clinicians examined an 18-year-old woman who was infected with Covid-19 after being exposed by her father. She completely recovered from Covid-

19, testing negative a few days later, but started experiencing some additional symptoms, according to the researchers. They noted the young woman had neck and thyroid pain, fever and an increased heart rate. She was sent back to the hospital, where she was diagnosed with subacute thyroiditis, according to the researchers in the study which was supported by the University of Pisa.

The woman had normal thyroid functioning and imaging just one month earlier, they said. “Because of the chronological association, SARS-CoV-2 may be considered accountable for the onset of subacute thyroiditis,” Latrofa added.



## Central Govt relaxes visa, travel restrictions for OCI cardholders

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

In yet another move to extend Ia helping hand its citizens abroad, the Centre on Friday relaxed visa and travel restrictions for certain categories of Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) stranded abroad and wishing to return to India.

“The Ministry has relaxed the visa and travel restrictions that were imposed due to coronavirus outbreak on certain category of OCI card holders. Couples will be allowed to return to India, in cases where one spouse is an OCI cardholder and the other is an Indian national. But they need to have a permanent residence in India. University students from India, who are OCI cardholders and have their parents living in India, can also return to India. Therefore, the travel restrictions imposed on these categories of OCI cardholders will not apply anymore,” the Union Home Ministry stated.

University students who are OCI cardholders (not legal minors) but whose parents

### CATEGORIES OF OCI CARDHOLDERS NOW ELIGIBLE TO RETURN TO INDIA ARE:

- Minor children born to Indian nationals abroad and holding OCI cards
- OCI cardholders who wish to come to India on account of family emergencies, such as a death in the family
- Couples where one spouse is an OCI cardholder and the other is an Indian national, and they have a permanent residence in India
- University students who are OCI cardholders (but are not minors) and whose parents are Indian citizens living in India



are Indian citizens living in India can travel, the ministry spokesperson said.

MÉA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava already revealed several details of phase 2 of Vande Bharat mission, which is expected to continue till June 13. “We are looking to bring back our nationals from 47 countries on 162 flights. In this phase, we are including places like Istanbul, Ho Chi Minh city, Lagos and also

increasing flights to the USA and Europe. We are also looking at developing Frankfurt as a hub,” he said.

The OCI card is issued to people of Indian origin, allowing them visa-free travel in most cases besides conferring certain privileges comparable to those given to citizens, except for buying agricultural land, voting, contesting elections and working in the Government.

### Indian Navy asks personnel to wear colour-coded masks matching with uniform

New Delhi: In a bid to bring in uniformity in uniforms put on by its personnel, Indian Navy’s Southern Naval Command has asked its men to put on colour-coded masks to match with their uniforms. As per the instructions issued to the personnel in the Kochi-based command, personnel have been asked to put on white masks with white uniforms and black or navy blue masks with other ceremonial uniform, Navy officials told ANI.

The Defence Security Corps and fire services personnel wearing khaki uniform have been asked to put on Khaki masks while on duty, they said. Officials said that fines have also been defined where a person not wearing a mask would be charged Rs 200. While for the second time, they would be charged Rs 2,000. On the need for wearing the colour-coded masks, officials said this was required as personnel were wearing masks of different colours which was not going well with uniforms. **Agency**



Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan took charge as the chairman of the World Health Organisation Executive Board on Friday and asserted that a worldwide crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the need for strengthening global partnerships to re-energise investment in global public health. Vardhan’s elevation to the chairmanship of the 34-member WHO Executive Board comes amid growing calls, including by US President Donald Trump, to investigate how coronavirus originated in China’s Wuhan city and subsequent action by Beijing



Migrants rest while waiting for buses in New Delhi


PTI



Senior J&K Police officer ties a mask around a child in Kupwara on Friday

PTI

Govt. of Bihar



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## Tomato prices below 3-year low

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Tomato prices in consuming centres of Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai and Hyderabad fell below three-year lows, in the range of Rs 4-10 per kg on Friday in the wholesale markets due to higher supply of the commodity amid sluggish demand and lack of smooth movement of perishable commodities in this Covid-19 crisis.

The prices had ruled at Rs 14.30 per kg on May 22 last year at the Azadpur wholesale mandi in the national Capital, while above Rs 30 per kg in Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

According to data maintained by the food ministry, “In Azadpur, the current modal prices are trading near Rs 440 per quintal as compared to Rs 1,258 per quintal last year.” Tomato in the retail market is being sold at Rs 10 per kg. In Delhi, the tomato crop is coming from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, it said.

In Hyderabad’s Bowenpally wholesale market, tomato prices were ruling at around Rs 5 per kg on Friday, compared with Rs 34 per kg a year ago.

Similarly, in the Bengaluru wholesale market, tomato prices



• The prices had ruled at Rs 14.30 per kg on May 22 last year at the Azadpur wholesale mandi in the national Capital, while above Rs 30 per kg in Hyderabad and Bengaluru

• According to data maintained by the food ministry, “In Azadpur, the current modal prices are trading near Rs 440 per quintal as compared to Rs 1,258 per quintal last year.” Tomato in the retail market is being sold at Rs 10 per kg. In Delhi, the tomato crop is coming from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, it said

were ruling at Rs 10 per kg as against above Rs 30 per kg in the year-ago period.

In tomato-producing areas also, the wholesale rates have fallen below three-year’s seasonal average in 40 districts out of 52 tracked by the food processing ministry for the purpose of extending marketing linkages.

Even in 12 clusters identified for linking directly to markets, prices of tomatoes are ruling below three-year’s average low.

For instance in five tomato clusters located in the Kolar district of Karnataka, prices declined to the level of Rs 3-8 per kg depending on the quality and varieties when com-

pared with Rs 14-35 per kg in the year-ago, the data showed. In Andhra Pradesh, five clusters located in Chittoor district as well as in two clusters in Odisha showed a similar declining trend in prices.

Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are the top-two major tomato-producing states in India. The combined production of the two states is estimated at 42 lakh tonne this year. India’s annual tomato production is enough to meet the domestic demand of about 111 lakh tonnes.

The Government has pegged total tomato output at 193.28 lakh tonne for 2019-20 crop year (July-June), according to the ministry’s data.

## SC seeks Centre's reply on plea for ban on Zoom app until appropriate legislation is put in place

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Friday sought response from the Centre on a plea which has sought a ban on the use of video communications app ‘Zoom’ for official as well as personal purposes until an appropriate legislation is put in place.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde issued notice to the Centre on the plea which has raised privacy concern and claimed that continued use of Zoom app is “making the users vulnerable and prone to cyber threats”.

The matter came up for hearing through video-conferencing before the Bench, also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy, which asked the Centre to file its reply within four weeks on the plea which has arrayed US-based Zoom Video Communications as one of the respondents in the case.

The plea, filed by Delhi resident Harsh Chugh, has also sought a direction to the Centre to carry out an exhaustive technical study into the security and privacy risks of using Zoom application.

The plea, filed through advocate Wajeeh Shafiq, has alleged that continued usage of this app might put the national security at stake and might also give a boom to number of cyber-threats and cyber crimes in India.

“The global Covid-19 pandemic has drastically reshaped the way in which consumers, businesses and schools communicate. Rather than lending a hand to people in need, Zoom violates the privacy of its millions of users by misusing and exploiting their personal information and falsely, deceptively and misleadingly advertising fictitious security benefits of the programme,” the plea has said.



# Tamil Nadu inching towards 15k mark

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Tamil Nadu is inching towards the 15,000 mark as 786 persons tested positive for coronavirus in the State on Friday, according to the bulletin issued by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine.

The release said that there were 14,753 persons in the State who have tested positive till date. Unofficial reports said that the number of covid-19 patients in the State have crossed the 15,000 mark by late Friday evening.

Four more persons succumbed to the pandemic on Friday , taking the death toll in the State till date to 98, said the official bulletin. The 786 persons tested positive on Friday include 91 who returned from Maharashtra (66), Delhi (13), Bengal (6), Andhra Pradesh (2), Gujarat, MP, Orissa and

Telangana (one each) and one from Philippines.

The 67 laboratories spread across the State tested 12,653 on Friday while the total number of samples tested till date stood at 3,85, 185. The day also saw 846 persons cured of the pandemic getting discharged from the hospitals across the State taking the number of patients discharged till date to 7,128.

Chennai recorded 569 persons testing positive on Friday while the total number of coronavirus afflicted persons in the district reaching 9,364. Out of the 98 deaths recorded in the State, 67 were from Chennai, said the bulletin.

The number of cases tested positive in the State has been on the increase steadily since May 19. Dr C V Krishnaswamy, eminent physician, said the numbers have to be analysed threadbare to make

any observation about the upward surge in covid cases. “We are seeing strange patterns as the modern medicine has found to be ineffective in controlling the pandemic. All I could say is that people should not panic by seeing the numbers. The vaccine is far away from becoming fruitful,” Dr Krishnaswamy told *The Pioneer*.

Leader of Opposition M K Stalin, complained to Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday that the Tamil Nadu Government and the Narendra Modi Government at Centre have failed miserably in handling the pandemic in the country. “The Tamil Nadu Government has been left clueless and is groping in the dark to devise a strategy to check the spread of coronavirus,” Stalin complained to Sonia Gandhi, who is believed to have offered him all help.

# BJP protests against MVA Govt for slack

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Hauling the Uddhav Thackeray Government over the coals for the second time in this week for “ineffective handling” of coronavirus crisis, the Opposition BJP on Friday staged “Save Maharashtra” agitation across the State against the Shiv Sena-led MVA Government for the failing to arrest the spread of the Covid-19 in various parts of the state.

Three days after its delegation complained to Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari about the inept handling of the Covid-19 situation in the State by the Uddhav Thackeray Government, the BJP leaders and workers staged “Save Maharashtra” agitation at many places across the State. They raised slogans like “Maza Angan, Ranagan” (My courtyard a battle field).

While former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis headed the agitation in Mumbai, State BJP



BJP functionaries, led by former Chief Minister and senior party leader Devendra Fadnavis, stage an agitation in Mumbai on Friday against the “inept” handling of the coronavirus crisis in the State by the Uddhav Thackeray Government

president Chandrakant Patil headed led the agitation in Kolhapur in western Maharashtra.

Talking to media persons during the course of the agitation, Fadnavis said: “At a time when the State is undergoing a major cororavirus crisis, the State Government has proved to be most ineffective in dealing with the situation. Patients are not getting treatment in the hospitals. Patients are forced to

run around the place looking for hospitals. While there are no beds in government hospitals, patients will have to pay through their nose in private hospitals”.

“At a time when Mumbai is reeling under severe coronavirus crisis, the State Government is not fully prepared to deal with the situation. The State Government has not taken concrete measures to deal with the situation. While

# J&K: Mosques, shrines remain deserted on Jamat-ul-Vida

PNS ■ JAMMU

Ahead of festival of Eid, several religious places including mosques and shrines wore a deserted look across Jammu & Kashmir on the occasion of Jamat-ul-Vida-the last Friday of the holy month of Ramzan.

In the wake of sudden spike in cases of coronavirus in Kashmir valley, the Government has not lifted the existing ban on religious gatherings during festivals. Strict vigil is being maintained and local clerics have been roped in by the local administration to appeal to residents to stay away from religious places and offer prayers inside their homes during the holy month of Ramzan.

At some places, worshippers were seen standing outside the locked down gates of famous shrines including Hazratbal,located on the banks of Dal Lake and Jama Masjid, in Srinagar paying obeisance but by and large the famous shrines wore a deserted look as mass assemblies were not allowed to take place.

Meanwhile, 40 new positive cases of novel coronavirus (Covid-19), 07 from Jammu division and 33 from Kashmir division, were reported taking the total number of positive cases in Jammu & Kashmir to 1,489 on Friday. According to the daily Media Bulletin on novel coronavirus (Covid-19), out of 1,489 positive cases, 749 are Active Positive, 720 have recovered and 20 have died; 02 in Jammu division and 18 in Kashmir division.

Moreover, 36 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 01 from Jammu division and 35 from Kashmir Division. The Bulletin further said that out of 11,4859 test results available, 11,3370 samples have been tested as negative till May 22, 2020.

# Online prayers, darshan in K’taka temples

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

As the Gods have run out of business at the time of Covid -19 pandemic and also because of the lockdown restrictions, to tide over the crisis Karnataka Government has introduced online darshan of gods across the State in temples for the benefit of the devotees.

The BJP Government captained by Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa has decided to open online prayers and darshan of gods from May 27. The devotees can also buy prasadam along with theertha, the holy water,to their door step by booking online.

According to Karnataka Endowment and Charities minister Kota Srinivasa Poojary the State Government has come out with online poo-

jas to help both the priests and devotees at the time of crisis. The Muzarai department under his Ministry controls over 30,000 temples across Karnataka. The live streaming of variety of poojas will help temples improve their financial condition.

According to the Minister initially, few major temples will go online via Facebook and their respective websites. “The devotees can pre-book a pooja by paying a fixed amount. They can, in fact, avail 30 kinds of special poojas by paying money for each kind or can even go for a bulk booking”, he said.

He said in the first phase, the Chamundeswari temple in Mysore, Banashankari temple in Bengaluru, Kukke Subramanya in Dakshina Kannada, Kollur Mukambika

**Devotees can also buy prasadam along with theertha, the holy water,to their door step by booking online**

in Udupi, Saundatti Yellamma in Belgaum, Yedyuru Siddalingeshwara in Tumkur and a few more temples will go online. These are some of the highest revenue earning temples in Karnataka.

The BJP Government has already released ₹34 crore to pay salaries of the priests at about 30,000 state-run temples. The priests, who survive on daily offers made by the devotees in cash and kind, are urging the government to open the temples at the earliest.

According to reports the state also has over 50,000 pri-

vate temples along with Government run temples. Recently the priests have appealed to the government asking for help as they are living in a precarious state at the time of corona with all religious activities and weddings have come to a total halt.

It is reported that the famous Balaji temple at Tirupati, in Andhra Pradesh, is struggling to pay salaries to its employees and priests as it has been shut for two months. This temple is the world’s richest Hindu temple and the second richest after the Vatican.

Many devotees say that Karnataka being the Information Technology state , this initiative would help them to offer prayers to the God at the time of deadly spread of Corona virus in the country.

# Maha Guv asks CM to hold varsity exams without further delay

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking a strong objection to a letter written by State Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant’s letter to the University Grants Commission (UGC), Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari on Friday asked Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to take steps to hold final year examination of students of universities in the State ‘without any further delay in the larger interest of students’

In a letter written to the Chief Minister, the Governor said: “Not conducting the final year examinations by the Universities amounts to breach of the UGC guidelines”.

Taking a strong objection to Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant’s letter to the UGC recommending cancellation of final year examination of students, the Governor asked the Chief Minister to issue suitable instructions to the Minister for his ‘unwarranted intervention’ which according to him was in ‘violation of UGC guidelines and also the relevant provisions of the Maharashtra Public Universitis Act, 2016’.

The Governor lamented t6hat he was not apprised by the Minister

in the matter before recommending the cancellation of final year examination to the UGC.

The Governor said that as per provisions of the relevant Universities Act, Universities have the power and duties to hold examinations and confer degrees upon successful students. He noted that it would not be ‘ethical or appropriate’ to award degrees to final year students without conducting their examinations, which results into violation of the provisions of the Universities’ Act.

The Governor noted that receiving degrees by students without undertaking any kind of examinations would have adverse impact on their higher studies, gradation and the possibility of their getting employment.

The Governor pointed out that the Ministry of Home Affairs had granted exemption from lockdown measures to the State Education Boards / CBSE / ICSE etc to conduct Standard X and XII examinations. He further noted that the UGC had also issued guidelines on lockdown measures covering important dimensions related to examinations, academic calendar, etc for adoption by the Universities.

# Maha acquires 80% beds in charitable, pvt hospitals

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major measure to make most of health care facilities in charitable and private hospitals to deal with the coronavirus situation in the State, the Maharashtra Government has virtually acquired 80 per cent of Non-Isolation beds in these hospitals across the State.

Invoking the provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, Disaster Management Act, 2005, Maharashtra Nursing Homes Act and other relevant acts, the State Health department stated in an order issued late on Thursday night that the health care providers would make all attempts to increase their bed capacity – relating to both Isolation and non-isolation beds.

“That means 80 per cent of the Isolation beds available with any health care provider under this notification should be regulated by the State Government, district collectors and Municipal Commissioners and also 80 per cent of non-isolation beds. Healthcare providers may charge their rack charges to the remaining 20 per cent beds,” the notification issued by the state government said.

The notification covers hospitals run by charitable trusts, including leading hospitals in Mumbai like H N Reliance, Lilavati, Breach Candy, Jaslok, Bombay Hospital, Bhatia, Wockhard, Nanavati, Fortis, L H Hiranandani and P D Hinduja among others.

The State government has taken this decision in view of the fact that there are

**State Govt has capped the routine ward and isolation bed rates have been capped at ₹4,000. It has fixed the ICU beds rates without ventilators, at ₹7,500 per day, it has capped the rates of an ICU bed with ventilator support at ₹9,000**

not enough Covid-19 beds in the metropolis.

Among other things, the State Government has capped the routine ward and isolation bed rates have been capped at ₹4,000. It has fixed the ICU beds rates without ventilators, at ₹7,500 per day, it has capped the rates of an ICU bed with ventilator support at ₹9,000.

The State Government has also capped package rates of nearly 270 procedures and surgeries, including cancer treatments.

Similarly, the State Government has capped the charges for non-Covid-19 patients in private and charitable hospitals. For instance, the charges for an angiography procedure at ₹12,000, while the hospitals can charge a maximum of ₹1.2 lakh for an angioplasty . According to the notification, normal delivery at a private hospital cannot charged more than ₹75,000 while delivery through a basic caesarean section has been capped at ₹86,250.

The revised prices are applicable for patients who do not have medical insurance and those who have exhausted their medical insurance cover and healthcare providers in Mumbai, Pune, Navi Mumbai, Panvel and Thane, who have agreements with insurance companies, cannot charge more than the lowest bed category rates agreed.

# Over 80% people in institutional quarantine satisfied with facilities in Raj: Additional CS

**Jaipur:** Migrant labourers returning to State are being kept in mandatory quarantine. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot wants that these labourers should not face any problems at the quarantine centres during their 14-day quarantine.

A State-level quarantine management committee was formed on May 13 on the directions of Gehlot to manage the facilities at the quarantine centres and Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department Veenu Gupta was made the head of the committee.

Gupta said that all the migrant labourers returning to the State have to be in compulsory 14-day quarantine.

These labourers are screened while entering into the border of the State and if no symptoms are found then they are asked to remain in home quarantine. If symptoms are found then the person is sent to the institutional quarantine.

She said that if any migrant says that there is not much space in the house for home quarantine then such migrants are sent to the institutional quarantine. Gram Panchayat Buildings, Hostels, Schools and

other such buildings are being used as institutional quarantine.

Gram Panchayat, district administration or philanthropists arrange provide food to the people at the institutional quarantine and at many quarantine centres in villages, the migrant gets the food from home.

Gupta said, “People at quarantine centres are called randomly to take feedback about the facilities provided to them and to know their grievances. I am happy to say that more than 80% people were satisfied at the quarantine centres.”

The state-level quarantine management committee chief said that the state has 10,212 quarantine centres. More than 12.10 lakh migrants have returned to State of which more than 7.43 lakh are presently quarantined including approximately 7.08 lakh in home quarantine and around 35,000 in institutional quarantine.

There were 61grievances lodged at Sampark Portal related to facilities provided at quarantine centres of which barring six complaints, rest all were disposed.

Districts including Pali, Udaipur, Jalore, Nagaur and Dungarpur have witnessed a huge influx of migrants, while Jalore, Pali, Nagaur, Hanumangarh and Barmer are the districts, where the number of people in home quarantine is high. Similarly, number of people in institutional quarantine is high in Nagaur, Rajsamand, Jhunjhunu, Chittorgarh and Churu districts.

She said people who are in home quarantine are strictly monitored and those who violate it are first counselled and then sent to institutional quarantine.

Monitoring of people in home quarantine is done through Covid Quarantine Alert System (CQAS) through Department of Information and Technology (DoIT). If any person breaches the quarantine, then information is received on CQAS and immediately action is taken.

Smt Gupta informed that maximum breaches take place in rural areas and 390 people have been shifted from home quarantine to institutional quarantine, while legal action has also been taken in few cases.

# 63 more deaths, 2,940 test +ve in Maha

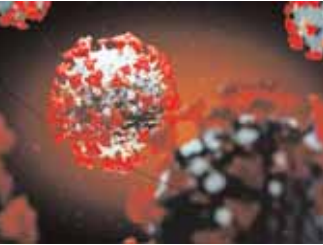
TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Coronavirus continued to wreak havoc in Maharashtra on Friday, as 63 more persons succumbed to Covid-19 and a record 2,940 others tested positive for the pandemic, taking the total number of deaths to 1517 and the total infected cases to 44,582.

Of the total deaths reported on Friday, Mumbai accounted for 27 deaths, while there were nine deaths in Pune, eight in Jalgaon, five in Solapur, three each in Vasai-Virar and Aurangabad city, two in Satara, one each in Malegaon, Thane, Kalyan-Dombiwali, Ulhasnagar, Panvel, and Nagpur city.

With 2940 fresh positive cases, the total number of infected has risen to 44,582. Of the total cases, the active cases in the state are 30,714.

Of the 63 deaths today, 37 were men and 26 were women. Twenty eight of them aged over 60



years, 31 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 4 were aged below 40 years. “ Forty six of 63 patients (73%) had high-risk comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease,” a state health department bulletin said.

There have been as many as 498 Covid-19 triggered deaths in Maharashtra5ra during the last seven days. The death tally has been as follows: May 15- 49, May 16 -67, May 17 -63, May 18-51, May 19 -76, May 20 -65, May 21 – 64 and May 22-63.

Mumbai, which is the worst affected city in the country, record-

ed a staggering 1751 cases on Friday, taking the total number of infected cases to an alarming 27251.

Mumbai’s crowded Dharavi slum alone continued to be a cause for serious concern, as Asia’s biggest recorded one death and 53 new cases on Friday, taking the total number of patients to 1,478, and 57 deaths.

On the laboratory tests front, 2,88,195 out of 3,32,777 laboratory samples tested negative while 44,582 tested positive for COVID-19 until Friday.

There are 1949 active containment zones in the state currently. As many as 16,154 surveillance squads worked across the state on Friday and surveillance of 66.32 lakh population was done.

As many as 12,583 patients have been discharged till date after full recovery. Currently, 4,69,275 people are in home quarantine and 28,430 people are in institutional quarantine.

# TN Govt takes over Jayalalithaa’s bungalow

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Tamil Nadu politics which has been in deep slumber since the outburst of coronavirus pandemic has started slowly waking up to routine life as lockdown is slowly giving way to hustle-and-bustle of normal life.

On Friday Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit promulgated an ordinance to temporarily take over Veda Nilayam, the personal residence of late J Jayalalithaa, the former Chief Minister of the State who breathed her last on December 5, 2016.

The move is part of the State Government’s decision to make the residence of late Jayalalithaa into a memorial. The Government had announced its intention to make the imposing building, which was once described as the Command Post of national politics.

It was from here Jayalalithaa announced her decision to support the BJP-led NDA Government in 1998 and also declared the withdrawal of support to the same government in 1999 resulting in the mid-term election of

1999.

Since Jayalalithaa passed away issueless, a legal dispute arose between Sasikala clan, the AIADMK and Deepa (niece of the late Chief Minister) over the ownership of the building.

Jayalalithaa left no will which further complicated the matter. Sasikala continued to stay in Veda Nilayam till she surrendered before the Parappana Agrahara Jail in Bangalore to serve the four-year prison term ordered by the Bangalore Special Court which was upheld by the Supreme Court.

Though Sasikala’s nephew TTV Dhinakaran moved into Veda Nilayam following her imprisonment, the Government managed to ease him out of the bungalow.

But Deepa approached the High Court with claims to the ownership of the building and the matter is being heard by the court.

It is at this juncture the Edappadi Palaniswami Government announced the promulgation of the ordinance and took over the bungalow with all movable properties.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority		
 <b>Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)</b> Website : <a href="http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com">www.noidaauthorityonline.com</a>		
E-TENDER NOTICE		
E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: <a href="http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com">www.noidaauthorityonline.com</a> & <a href="https://etender.up.nic.in">https://etender.up.nic.in</a> . Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.		
S.No.	Job No./ Name of work	Amount
1	81/D(H)/DD(H)/II/20-21, - D/o Green Belt with two year maintenance Sec-79 Near Gaur Sports Wood.	₹ 5226698.00
2	72/D(H)/DD(H)/II/20-21, - M/o Park Block Sector-39 All Park, PG College with two year maintenance.	₹ 5534720.00
3	69/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, - M/o Park Two Year Maintenance, Sec-52 A,B,C,D Block.	₹ 6279906.00
Which can be uploaded by date 06/06/2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 08/06/2020 at 11.00AM.		
Office: Sector - 39, Noida		Director (Hort.)
<b>CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE &amp; SECURE NOIDA</b>		



# Bengal battered

With the face of Kolkata and Sundarbans changed forever by Amphan, the Centre vs State war should stop now



The trouble with facts and figures is that they are good enough for comparative data analysis, historicity and references but fall short of mapping the extent of human tragedy, the loss of human settlements and the death of man-made legacies. So though the super-cyclone of 1999 claimed over 10,000 lives, compared to the 80-odd caused by Amphan at a time when early warning systems and disaster preparedness have improved, the latter has left a rampaging trail of destruction unseen in the last two decades. Although 500,000 people had been evacuated, the wind speed of 185 kmph hammering in with brute and unsparing force from the Bay of Bengal meant that it disfigured the iconic face of Kolkata as we knew it. The city has lost over 9,000 big trees that lined its avenues and wrapped around its colonial splendour. The howling storm tore through the facades of a cultural entity called Park Street, crumbled heritage ruins down to their last bones and shattered the egoism of modern-day highrises which couldn't hold their glass showcase as they splintered wildly. Even at the time of writing, cellphone towers and power supplies are out in many areas. Kolkata airport looked like a sea with untold damage to infrastructure. Mangled heaps of metal, cars that had turned turtle or telescoped into houses, debris and uprooted trees and poles have buried lives, livelihoods and identities. The official cost of destruction may be estimated to be at ₹1 lakh crore but rebuilding an emotion and culture that had held out for hundreds of years is quite something else. For Kolkata has never been about inanimate structures, each of them had a life force of its own. That moral invincibility, a sense of being really, has taken a big hit. Not only that, Amphan's rage has caused irreparable damage to the ecologically fragile Sundarbans region and its people. Mud embankments in the delta, a UNESCO site, were breached as the hungry tide whipped up by the churner flooded large swathes of the islands and submerged them into oblivion. With sea water entering agricultural land, officials now fear that more than two lakh rice farmers could be severely affected. Nobody knows if the tigers, numbering around 100, are safe or not. The marine ecosystem has also shape-shifted overnight, the mangroves reduced to clumps. Almost the same part of the Sundarbans was devastated last November by Cyclone Bulbul and the State Government had asked for a financial relief package worth ₹23,000 crore from the Union Government. Political wrangling on the package was still going on when Amphan pummelled Bengal further. Besides the State makes up 15 per cent of India's food supplies, so the nation has a broken conduit. That's the reason why Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee called for an end to politicisation and Prime Minister Narendra Modi rightly responded by doing an aerial tour besides announcing a ₹1,000 crore package. And although media coverage of the crisis smelt of bias despite the scale of devastation, any kind of politicisation over relief and rehabilitation should be avoided by either side. For given the COVID-19 pandemic, nobody would want Bengal to become an uncontrollable hotspot with thousands displaced and forced to seek shelter in crowded camps. Although the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) had done mass evacuations in both Bengal and Odisha, its teams now have the dual task of rehabilitation and disease control. It is being helped by the State police and firemen but saving lives is still a humongous task. Lessons learnt from Fani have, however, helped NDRF deploy tree-pole cutters in the areas which were expected to be worst-hit. Which is why the State could resume some patchy bursts of power supply in 24 hours. But it is relocating the displaced and evacuees that is causing a bigger problem. Due to social distancing protocols in place, the cyclone rescue centres, which could hold about 1,000 people, can now shelter only 400-500 locals. With a lot of physical handling in relief and rescue efforts, teams also have an additional responsibility of ensuring that locals who moved into shelter homes do not contract the disease. Apart from routine medical assistance to the injured and hurt, there is a simultaneous need for testing given the high infectivity of the disease. Let us not forget that returnee migrants also form a part of the evacuees. Clearly, Amphan has been an epic humanitarian disaster for East India. And a precursor to what a rough monsoon could do to coastal states amid the pandemic. So for once, the Centre versus State war or ruling party versus Opposition won't make sense to anybody, not even the politicians.

## Double degrees

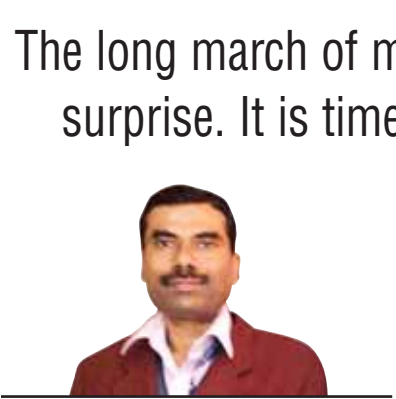
While this will increase employability, the question is about the quality of college courses and industry-ready orientation



In a move that will change the higher education scenario in India forever, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has green-lighted a proposal to allow students to take up two degree courses simultaneously. What is clear at the moment is that only one of the courses can be pursued in the regular format while the other can be followed online. A student can pursue two degrees in different streams as well as from different institutions. Though this move was being mulled for a long time, the UGC took it up seriously only last year. Dual degrees empower a student with a higher skill set and improve his/her job prospects, particularly relevant when the world is staring at a recessionary economy. In the West, universities routinely offer students double majors, which essentially come in the form of a single degree from a single university but with combined honours, such as a degree in two different streams like English Literature and Computing, giving graduates the option of pursuing a career in either. As it is, the country's unemployment rate at the moment is a scary 24 per cent. So the UGC's decision will help urban job-seekers become more employable. Being flexible in a dismal job market will mean better chances of getting hired in a cut-throat economic environment. However, as we celebrate this move, we must not ignore some of the stark realities of the Indian education system. A whopping 47 per cent of the graduates being churned out by our universities and professional colleges are not employable for any industry role. A 2019 survey reveals that close to 90.92 per cent of graduating engineers lack the required programming and algorithm skills required to work in IT product companies. Software engineers have a very low employability rate, with only 16.25 per cent being employable in IT services and 3.4 per cent in IT product companies. So, if this is the level of our education and this is the kind of knowledge, or lack of it, that our students are imparted, then how does it matter if they can do one or more degrees? They will still be unemployable and feel the worse for it because they would have worked that much harder. It is better we overhaul the education system and make it more research-based with practical industry knowledge. We must encourage innovation, higher-order thinking and improve our youths' cognitive skills. In short, we must adopt global standards of education so that when our students graduate, their degrees can be put to good use.

# Without a roadmap

The long march of migrant workers back to their home States took the Government by surprise. It is time we have a consistent policy on this diligent segment of society



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Ignorance is like knowledge, it has no limits. The colossal movement of the blue-collar migrant workers back to their home districts has exposed our ignorance about this segment. How could the Centre not anticipate its possibility when it shut down everything on minimal notice, drawing a *lakshman rekha* around houses on March 25? A planned evacuation, like in the case of a natural calamity, would have helped. This could have also prevented many deaths that the migrant workers are facing almost on a daily basis on the highways and railway tracks.

However, we choose to be wise only when tragedy strikes. After beating around the bush initially, branding the upsurge in COVID-19 cases as a conspiracy by certain Chief Ministers or a political party, the Centre could no longer overlook the elephant in the drawing room. Commendably, the Ministry of Railways brought the wheels back on track. The Shramik special trains were started to ferry the stranded workers back to their home districts. Post this, the Union Government has been proactive in combating the COVID-19 pandemic and providing relief materials. However, it chose to be wise only in hindsight when it came to migrant workers.

In a recent article, Mark Tully attributed this crisis to the class divide. Since none of our policy-makers comes from the class of the migrant workers, the mandarins of Raisina Hill could not think about their fate. One would like to cite another factor that can be termed as "dereliction of political duty." Problems of the agriculture sector and farmer suicides have rocked the Parliament many times. Some members have also called for convening a separate session to discuss agrarian issues and formulating a separate agriculture Budget. It is another thing that those suggestions have never been pursued.

However, this writer believes that the plight of the migrant workers in urban India, a bulk of whom belong to the unorganised sector, is actually grimmer. Agrarian suicides constitute seven to 12 per cent of all suicides in the country. Year-on-year figures are available in Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, an annual publication of the National Crime Records Bureau (Ministry of Home Affairs). The figures are low in percentage terms if one considers that close to half of India's population remains dependent on primary sectors like agriculture and forestry among others. The law of probability entails that half of the suicides in India should come from that sector as well. However, mercifully, this is not the case. Agriculture is in the green zone as far as suicidal deaths are concerned. Which sector is in the red zone then?

To cite an example, in 2018, 22.4 per cent of those who committed suicide were daily wage earners; 9.8 per cent were self-employed; 9.6 per cent were unemployed; and other persons (a grey area) were 16.2 per cent. Comparatively, 7.7 per cent of the people engaged in the farming sector committed sui-



cide. More people coming from the salaried and professional class (8.9 per cent) committed suicide in 2018 in the country than those engaged in the farming sector.

The exact situation of the migrant workers might fall through these statistics. However, a little application of the mind will reveal their plight. A person in the farm sector at least lives in his own home/native place. A migrant worker, however, is surrounded by professional uncertainties and mental insecurities. These gnaw him to the core.

But why did the plight of the people in the urban unorganised sector, many of whom are migrant workers, never capture the attention of the political class? This is possibly because nobody is sure where they have their votes. In a lecture delivered by OP Rawat, IAS (Retd), the former Chief Election Commissioner, at Jigyasa Forum, New Delhi, earlier this year, he had said that nearly five crore of the migrant workers have never been registered as voters. The Election Commission of India might have bridged that gap lately. But with a registered electorate of 91 crore out of India's estimated population of 137 crore, the saturation limit of above 18 years voters seems to have been reached in 2019 (discounting for some duplication in electoral rolls, which is likely to be streamlined in near future).

While farmers are "settled" voters, migrant workers are often not. While some of them remain voters in their native place, oth-

“WHILE FARMERS ARE SETTLED VOTERS, MIGRANT WORKERS ARE OFTEN NOT. WHILE SOME OF THEM REMAIN VOTERS IN THEIR NATIVE PLACE, OTHERS CHANGE THEIR ADDRESS TO THE PLACE OF USUAL RESIDENCY. THIS OFTEN LEADS POLITICAL PARTIES, BOTH IN THE HOME AND RESIDENT STATE, TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO THEIR CONDITION”

ers change their address to the place of usual residency. This often leads political parties, both in the home and resident State, to turn a blind eye to their condition. Thus, their fate is less likely to be discussed in the legislature. It is only in the wake of the lockdown that we have been reminded of a 40-year progressive piece of legislation (formulated by the then Janata Party Government) viz, the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, which has been more honoured in breach than in observance.

A migrant worker doesn't have the dignity associated with a farmer. As the share of agriculture contracted in the GDP basket of India, it implied more people had shifted out of that sector to become wage earners. Now, the COVID scourge has inflicted heavy damage upon the manufacturing and service sectors. It is anticipated that the unemployed migrant labour population will fall back upon agriculture for the time being. A situation close to that happened when following the destruction of industries, during the onset of the British rule, people fell back on agriculture, leading to overcrowding.

Apparently, this overcrowding was never fully outlived. Nearly a century of industrialisation failed to bring down India's agricultural dependency in terms of employment substantially. Notwithstanding, the share of agriculture has been reduced drastically in the GDP basket.

It is a pity that States do not have approximate figures about the number of migrant workers. Since it is the fundamental right of any citizen to move and resettle in any part of the country, the State is not willing to intervene, despite the 1979 law. However, during a reply to a question in the Lok Sabha recently (Vide unstarred question 4747 dated March 23), figures (as of 2016) were estimated to be over 100 million (10 crore). Indian Post money orders booked in Karnataka (paradoxically India's IT State) amounted to ₹3,259 crore out of India's total figure of ₹5,065 crore for the year 2018-19. The other leading States are Kerala (₹900 crore), Tamil Nadu (₹198 crore) and Maharashtra (₹185 crore), referring to a strong element from the migrant worker community. A recent digital wallet ad on television (Phone Pe) chose to break away from elitism and featured a migrant worker. It is an indication that the digital wallet economy is now giving challenge to "money order economy" of the migrant workers.

Economies often demonstrate great resilience in the face of tough challenges. They often recover sooner than predicted by experts. As the economy settles down post-COVID, there will be fresh demands for migrant workers. It remains to be seen whether they retake the flight of fancy back to the same place or explore local options.

(The writer is an independent author based in New Delhi. The views expressed herein are his personal)

SOUNDBITE

The Government was uncertain about the criteria for lockdowns. Nor does it have an exit strategy. Successive lockdowns have yielded diminishing returns.

**Congress president**  
—Sonia Gandhi

Oh! I am hale and hearty. *Main abhi zinda hoon.* I am glad someone called to check officially. I don't know why someone is deliberately doing this. Is it some kind of a joke?

**Actor**  
—Mumtaz

We urge the Indian side to work together with us, abide by our leadership's consensus, comply with the agreements signed, refrain from unilateral actions complicating the situation.

**Chinese official**  
—Zhao Lijian

I don't think KL Rahul is a long-term option. He should always be the back-up wicket-keeper. If a keeper gets injured then Rahul should keep wickets.

**Former India cricketer**  
—Mohammad Kaif

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Teachers' plight

Sir — Private school teachers are among the worst hit due to the COVID pandemic. Many teachers and lecturers in private institutions are facing the repercussions of pending dues and salaries. Left with no option, some have been forced to take up agricultural works in their villages. Many have turned as manual labourers and some have been seeking work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme because they did not get their salary for the last two months and there is no certainty as to when they might receive their dues.

They are facing termination threats, too, even after providing online classes to pupils. Some teachers, who moved to the urban areas from the villages, do not have ration cards. This makes them ineligible to receive Government assistance, including foodgrains. The payment of salaries, job security and addressing other problems of private teachers and lecturers should be a priority area for the administration.

The Government should direct private schools and other

### A callous response to emerging crisis

The Indian Railways has been a source of both hope and anguish for millions of Indians. But it appears that the migrants, who are desirous of returning to their native places, are in for a long and miserable wait. Despite the Railways having introduced a number of "Shramik" special trains to carry them back to their home States, it is surprising that thousands of labourers, without a valid ticket, thronged outside railway stations in several parts of the country. In some places, the police had a tough time in tackling the situation. This certainly lays bare the truth behind the administration's claims of having an efficient system in place to ensure that the entire process of transporting the migrants back home is carried out methodically and in accordance with the guidelines prescribed *vis-à-vis* the COVID pandemic. Reports of stranded migrant labourers giving vent to their annoyance indicate a complete failure or a marked reluctance on the part of the Government to come to terms with the enormity of the situation. With no vaccines or cure in sight to contain the virus, social distancing norms and the wearing of face masks continue to be the most reliable methods to ward off the dangers of the pandemic.

This is why the blatant disregard shown by the migrants on the need to maintain social distancing is a



cause for alarm. One can well understand their plight. They are seemingly at their wit's end as they try to get accustomed to the circumstances arising out of the pandemic. Apparently, there has been a communication gap between the "facilitator" and the "migrants." This has resulted in unmanageable crowds becoming the order of the day around most "departure" points. How does the Government propose to tackle this issue?

Pachu Menon  
Margao

institutions to pay salaries for the entire month. Education departments of all States should do their best to ensure that no teacher goes unpaid.

Ravi Teja Kathuripalli  
Hyderabad

### Tap grassroot talent

Sir — The story of Jyoti Kumari, a 15-year-old native of Bihar's Darbhanga, who travelled on a bicycle carrying her wounded

father and covered more than 1,200 km from Gurgaon in Haryana to her village is one of indomitable courage and persistence. Cycling down more than 1,200 km is not a mean job. This is why, impressed by her physical

endurance, the Indian Cycling Federation has decided to invite her for trials next month. This is a life-changing opportunity for her. Jyoti has proved that talent exists in small villages. Due to a lack of guidance, infrastructure and opportunity, those talented fail to deliver. The State Government must provide all support and help her tap talent.

MN Ullah  
Saharanpur

### Back to playing games

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "The dragon's grip" (May 22). When the focus of the entire world is on trying to get rid of the COVID pandemic, China is back to playing old games and is preparing strategies to destabilise India's development by creating disturbances along the Line of Actual Control. India should be extra careful in guarding its borders more than in wartime as China is creating problems *via* the Nepal tri-junction, too.

Manisha  
Via email

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)







# Hong Kong Opp slams China national security law move

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong's pro-democracy lawmakers sharply criticized China's move to take over long-stalled efforts to enact national security legislation in the semi-autonomous territory, saying it goes against the "one country, two systems" framework that promises the city freedoms not found on the mainland.

The proposed bill, submitted on the opening day of China's national legislative session Friday, is aimed at forbidding secessionist and subversive activity, as well as foreign interference and terrorism. It comes after a months of pro-democracy demonstrations last year that at times descended into violence between police and protesters.

The move, one of the most controversial items on the agenda of the National People's Congress in years, drew strong rebukes from the U.S. Government and rights groups. Despite that, Beijing appears to have lost patience and is determined to assert greater control and limit opposition activity following last year's protests.

"Xi Jinping has torn away the whole pretense of 'one country, two systems,' former pro-democracy lawmaker Lee Cheuk-yan said of China's leader.

He said at a press briefing by opposition parties and activists that the move shows Beijing is "directly taking control." "They're trying to ban every organisation in Hong



Police officers stop members of the Democratic Party moving forwards the Chinese Central Government's liaison office during a protest in Hong Kong on Friday

Kong who dares to speak out against the Communist Party," he said, describing it as a challenge to global values such as freedom and liberty.

A previous effort to pass such legislation in Hong Kong's legislature was shelved after massive street protests in 2003. This time, Beijing has decided to circumvent the territory's law-making body using what critics say are dubious legal grounds under the Basic Law, which has served as a sort of constitution for Hong Kong since its return to China from British colonial rule in 1997.

While the enactment of

such legislation is required under Article 23 of the Basic Law, Beijing has decided not to try to ram it through the Hong Kong legislature, said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Instead, it has chosen what he called a "worse option" by proposing the National People's Congress enact a national security law for the territory.

"For many in Hong Kong, the NPC enacting for Hong Kong will be tantamount to the effective end of the 'one country, two systems' model," Tsang

said. "I find it hard to believe this will not trigger either a massive peaceful and orderly demonstration or more vocal and aggressive protests or, indeed, most probably, a combination of both." A return of violent protests would be a further drag on the territory's creaking economy, prompting multinational companies to reconsider their presence and Washington to review its policy of granting Hong Kong more advantageous trade conditions than mainland China, Tsang said.

Former Hong Kong leader C.Y. Leung defended the move

in an interview with Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

He warned that the pro-democracy opposition should not "underestimate the determination of the Chinese government to deal with the issues of Hong Kong." The national security legislation neither hinders foreign investors from investing in Hong Kong, nor prevents local residents from enjoying the freedoms accorded to them by law, he said.

"To implement one country, two systems in Hong Kong, there must be laws to safeguard national security," Leung said, noting that countries such as the United States and Singapore have strict national security laws as well.

Pro-democracy lawmaker Tanya Chan countered that the proposal goes against the Basic Law. "It is a complete dishonor of promises made under the Sino-British Joint Declaration, as well as all the promises made by the Chinese government to us and the world," she said.

Taiwan's government urged Beijing not to lead Hong into "greater turmoil" with the proposed national security law, stating that it will cause dissatisfaction among the Hong Kong people and cause social instability.

"The laws of any civilized society should be an umbrella to protect the people, rather than shackles on their freedom," Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said in a statement.

## China seeks India's support

**Beijing:** China has sought the support and understanding of India and other countries for its controversial decision to impose a new national security law on Hong Kong, saying the new legislation is aimed at containing the "secessionist" forces in the former British colony who have posed a "grave threat" to the country's national security and sovereignty.

In an apparent move to blunt any international backlash, China has sent demarches to India and several other countries explaining the reason for the new draft legislation with a reminder that "upholding national security" in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is "purely China's internal affair and foreign country may interfere in this matter."

China on Friday introduced the draft of a controversial national security law in Hong Kong in its parliament to tighten Beijing's control over the former British colony, in what could be the biggest blow to the territory's autonomy and personal freedoms since 1997 when it came under Chinese rule.

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. It has observed a "one country, two systems" policy since Britain returned sovereignty to China on July 1, 1997, which has allowed it certain freedoms the rest of China does not

have. "Your country maintains close economic and trade cooperation as well as people-to-people exchanges with Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's prosperity and long-term stability is in line with the common interests of the whole international community, including your country, as well as protection of your country's legitimate interests in Hong Kong. We hope that your government will understand and support China's relevant practices," it said. The demarche said since the return

of Hong Kong to China 23 years ago, "the Hong Kong SAR has not acted out its constitutional duty for national security in line with China's Constitution and the Basic Law".

"There is a clear loophole in Hong Kong's legal system and an absence of a mechanism of enforcement. The opposition in Hong Kong have long colluded with external forces to carry out acts of secession, subversion, infiltration and destruction against the Chinese mainland," it said.

## Pompeo: China measure a 'death knell' for Hong Kong autonomy

**Washington:** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday condemned China's effort to take over national security legislation in Hong Kong, calling it "a death knell for the high degree of autonomy" that Beijing had promised the territory.

The measure, submitted Friday on the opening day of China's national legislative session, is strongly opposed by pro-democracy lawmakers in semi-autonomous Hong Kong.

Pompeo weighed in as well, calling the proposal by China an effort to "unilaterally and arbitrarily impose national security legislation on Hong Kong," "Hong Kong has flourished as

a bastion of liberty. The United States strongly urges Beijing to reconsider its disastrous proposal, abide by its international obligations, and respect Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, democratic institutions, and civil liberties, which are key to preserving its special status under US law," Pompeo said in a statement.

He said the decision to ignore the will of the people of Hong Kong would be a "death knell for the high degree of autonomy Beijing promised for Hong Kong" under a decades-old agreement known as the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

## Africa virus cases surpass 1L, lockdowns slowed growth

**Johannesburg:** Africa's coronavirus cases have surpassed 1,000,000, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday, as the continent with many fragile health systems has not yet seen the high numbers of other parts of the world.

More than 3,100 people have died from COVID-19 across the continent of 1.3 billion people.

The African continent has seen roughly the same number of new cases in the past week as the week before, Africa CDC director John Nkengasong said Thursday, adding that "we hope that trend continues" instead of a rapid exponential increase.

While early lockdowns in

many of Africa's 54 countries slowed the growth of the pandemic, Nkengasong said "that doesn't mean Africa has been spared." But he said health officials are not seeing a lot of community deaths or "massive flooding of our hospitals" because of COVID-19.

He said the African continent needs to test about 10 times the number of people it has already tested for the coronavirus. It should strive to test at least 1 per cent of the population, or 13 million people, but so far only 1.3 million to 1.4 million tests have been conducted. Shortages of testing and medical equipment remain a problem.

Countries with fragile health systems and a recent

history of conflict like Somalia and South Sudan remain a worry for health officials as cases rise. And in Tanzania, where the president claims the virus has been defeated by prayer, the government hasn't updated its case numbers in three weeks.

South Africa has been testing assertively and leads the continent with more than 19,000 cases.

Africa's worst-case scenario, according to published models, would see more than 3 million infected and more than 300,000 deaths and "that would be overwhelming for sure," Nkengasong said. But he warned that "models are only as good as the assumptions we put in there."

## Russia reports highest spike in virus death toll

**Moscow:** Russia has reported the highest daily spike in coronavirus deaths on Friday, as health officials registered 150 deaths in the last 24 hours, bringing the country's toll to 3,249.

Russia's comparatively low mortality rate has raised eyebrows in the West, with some suggesting that the country's government may be underreporting virus-related deaths and manipulating the statistics.

Russian officials vehemently deny the allegations and attribute the low numbers to the effectiveness of the measures taken to curb the spread of the outbreak. Russia's coronavirus caseload has exceeded 326,000 on Friday, with health officials reporting almost 9,000 new infections.

## Pak cases go past 50,000 with record 2,603 new patients

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's coronavirus cases on Friday crossed the 50,000-mark after a record 2,603 more patients were diagnosed with the COVID-19 disease, the health ministry said.

The deadly contagion claimed the lives of 50 people in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 1,067, the Ministry of National Health Services said. Out of the total 50,694 patients, Sindh reported 19,924 cases, Punjab 18,455, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 7,155, Balochistan 3,074, Islamabad 1,326, Gilgit-Baltistan 602 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir 158 cases.

It also reported that so far 15,201 people have recovered

from the malignant virus. In the past 24 hours, 1,064 people recovered from the novel coronavirus. The authorities also carried out a record 16,387 tests, taking the total number of tests so far in the country to 445,987.

A special flight of Emirates carrying 251 stranded Pakistanis arrived at Islamabad International Airport from Dubai after Pakistan allowed the airline to operate special flights.

Officials said that all the passengers were shifted to different quarantine centres in Islamabad for 24 hours for medical tests related to the COVID-19.

## Lancet study finds no benefit for HCQ in Covid patients

PTI ■ BOSTON

**T**reatment for COVID-19 with the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine, either with or without the antibiotic azithromycin, offers no benefit for COVID-19 patients, according to a large observational study.

The research, published in the journal The Lancet, analysed data from nearly 15,000 patients with COVID-19 who received chloroquine or its analogue hydroxychloroquine, taken with or without the antibiotics azithromycin or clarithromycin, and 81,000 controls.

According to the researchers, including Mandeep Mehra from Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US, COVID-19 patients on these drug regimens, experi-

enced an increased risk of serious heart rhythm complications.

The scientists said these drugs should not be used to treat COVID-19 patients outside of clinical trials until results from randomised clinical trials are available to confirm their safety and efficacy for COVID-19 patients.

They explained chloroquine, an antimalarial drug and its analogue, hydroxychloroquine, are commonly used to treat autoimmune diseases including lupus and arthritis.

Both these drugs have a good safety profile as treatments for those specific conditions, and the current research said these patients should not stop taking these drugs if they are prescribed for approved conditions.

## Khashoggi's sons forgive Saudi killers, sparing 5 execution

**Dubai:** The family of slain Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi announced on Friday they have forgiven his Saudi killers, giving legal reprieve to five government agents who had been sentenced to death for an operation that cast a cloud of suspicion over the kingdom's crown prince.

"We, the sons of the martyr Jamal Khashoggi, announce that we forgive those who killed our father as we seek reward from God Almighty," wrote one of his sons, Salah Khashoggi, on Twitter.

Salah Khashoggi, who lives in Saudi Arabia and has received financial compensation from the royal court for his father's killing, explained that forgiveness was extended

to the killers during the last nights of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in line with Islamic tradition to offer pardons in cases allowed by Islamic law.

The Saudi court's ruling in December that the killing was not premeditated paved the way for Friday's announcement by leaving the door open for reprieve. Additionally, the finding was in line with the government's official explanation of Khashoggi's slaying that he was killed accidentally in a brawl by agents trying to forcibly return him to Saudi Arabia.

The family's decision to pardon Khashoggi's killers comes as questions continue to linger over who ultimately ordered the operation and whether his sons have come under pressure. The trial was widely criticized by rights groups and an independent UN investigator who noted that no senior officials nor anyone in charge of ordering the operation was found guilty.

The independence of the Riyadh criminal court was also brought into question. Prior to his killing, Khashoggi had written critically of Saudi Arabia's crown prince in columns for the Washington Post.

He'd been living in exile in the United States for about a year as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over-

saw a crackdown in Saudi Arabia on human rights activists, writers and critics of the kingdom's devastating war in Yemen.

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saw a crackdown in Saudi Arabia on human rights activists, writers and critics of the kingdom's devastating war in Yemen.

## US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

### Biden: If you can't choose me over Trump, 'you ain't black'



**Atlanta:** Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, had a testy exchange with a prominent black radio personality on Friday over his support among black voters and his potential running mate.

Charlamagne Tha God pressed Biden on reports that he is considering Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who is white, to be vice president and told him black voters "saved your political life in the primaries" and "have things they want from you."

"I'm not acknowledging anybody who is being considered," Biden said.

"But I guarantee you there are multiple black women

being considered. Multiple." A Biden aide then sought to end the interview, prompting the host to say, "you can't do that to black media."

Biden responded, "I do that to black media and white media" and said his wife needed to use the television studio.

He then added: "If you've got a problem figuring out whether you're for me or for Trump, then you ain't black."

The host countered that conversations about Biden's running mate aren't about Trump, whom many black voters view as racist.

"Take a look at my record," Biden said, citing his work as senator to extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"The NAACP has endorsed me every time I've run. Come on, take a look at my record."

Biden has emphasized his relationship with black voters throughout his campaign, noting throughout the primary campaign his dependence on

black voters in his Delaware Senate races and his partnership as former President Barack Obama's top lieutenant.

Black voters resurrected Biden's campaign with a second place finish in the Nevada caucuses and a resounding win in the South Carolina primary after he'd started with embarrassingly finishes in overwhelmingly white Iowa and New Hampshire.

Older black voters especially sided with Biden over a wide Democratic field that included several black candidates, including Kamala Harris.

The California senator is widely believed to be a contender for the vice-presidential nomination.

## Myanmar prepares response to ICJ order on Rohingya

**Yangon:** Myanmar says it will submit a report due Saturday outlining its claims of compliance with an order from the International Court of Justice to protect members of its Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority.

The Netherlands-based court in January issued an order for Myanmar to implement provisional measures for the protection of the Rohingya.

The court agreed last year to consider a case alleging that Myanmar committed genocide against the group, an accusation vigorously denied by the government. The court's proceedings are likely to continue for years. Myanmar's military in August 2017 launched what it called a clearance campaign in Rakhine state in response to an

attack by a Rohingya insurgent group. The campaign forced about 740,000 Rohingyas to flee to neighboring Bangladesh and led to accusations that security forces committed mass rapes and killings and burned thousands of homes.

Chan Aye, director general of the International Organizations and Economic Department of Myanmar's Foreign Ministry, said Friday the government was working on the report, but would not discuss its contents before submitting it.

Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, a spokesman for Myanmar's military, said it has complied with government orders by providing "complete and necessary information" for the report.

## Cyclone Amphan toll mounts to 22 in Bangladesh

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh on Friday began assessing the damage caused by Cyclone Amphan that killed at least 22 people and left many displaced in the country's coastal areas.

Cyclone 'Amphan', the strongest to hit the region in nearly two decades, made landfall on Wednesday evening. It was the most powerful storm since cyclone 'Sidr' killed nearly 3,500 people in 2007.

The powerful cyclone has caused Taka 11 billion (\$129 million) in damage to the housing, infrastructure, fisheries and livestock, water resources and agriculture in Bangladesh, according to initial government estimates.



# BANK, NBFC STOCKS tumble after RBI decision

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bank and NBFC stocks on Friday tumbled up to 6 per cent after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) extended moratorium on loan repayments.

“Markets were hoping some measure from the RBI that could boost the banking and financial sectors but the announcement of the extension of moratorium further dented the sentiment,” said Ajit Mishra, vice-president (research), Religare Broking Ltd.

At the close of trade, shares of Axis Bank plunged 5.65 per cent, Federal Bank 5.08 per cent, ICICI Bank dropped 4.32 per cent, RBL Bank 4.20 per cent, IndusInd Bank 2.52 per cent, HDFC Bank 2.43 per cent and SBI 0.72 per cent on the BSE.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, however, bounced back and closed 0.91 per cent higher.

The BSE BANKEX fell 2.44 per cent. Among non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services tumbled 6.31 per cent, Shriram Transport Finance Company tanked 5.78 per cent, Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company 5.12 per cent, Bajaj Finance 4.67 per cent and Ujjivan Financial Services 3.57 per cent. “The RBI has announced further extension in the moratorium period to end-borrowers from May 31 till August 31. We read this as major negative for all NBFCs (including the ones with strong liability franchises) as this would further delay the overall collection and recovery procedure, and stretch the total liquidity cycle for all,” Emkay Global Financial Services said in a note.

It said that in addition, this would further damage financial



▲ The Sensex ended 260.31 points or 0.84 per cent lower at 30,672.59

▲ The repo rate was cut by 40 basis points to 4 per cent, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said announcing the decisions taken by the central bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) that met ahead of its scheduled meeting in early June

discipline, especially for small-ticket borrowers and micro-finance institutions (MFIs).

Jimmeet Modi, founder and CEO of SAMCO Securities & StockNote said, “Extension of moratorium is good for the economy but in substance, it will negatively impact banks and NBFCs. As a whole, the RBI has taken a calibrated approach to save the economy rather than favouring banks.” The RBI on Friday slashed interest rates, extended moratorium on loan repayments and allowed banks to lend more to corporates in an effort to support the economy which is likely to contract for the first time in over four decades.

The repo rate was cut by 40 basis points to 4 per cent, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said announcing the decisions taken by the central bank's Monetary

Policy Committee (MPC) that met ahead of its scheduled meeting in early June.

The RBI supplemented the interest rate cut by extending by three months the permission given to all banks to give a three-month moratorium on payment of monthly instalments on all outstanding loans, providing relief to home and auto buyers as well as the real estate sector where construction activities are already at a standstill.

The moratorium on interest on working capital was also extended by three months. “It was a good effort policy by the RBI though extension of moratorium is a short term measure and not really long term. Rate cuts and reverse repo rate cut are moves in the right direction but risk aversion by banks is still high,” Virendra Somwanshi, MD & CEO, Motilal Oswal Private Wealth Management, said.

Somwanshi added that even though one-time loan restructuring would have led to credit rating issues, it would have been a step in the right direction which the market was expecting.

“Good for companies but banks/NBFCs will be hit in short term particularly when they are staring at higher NPAs.”

The Sensex ended 260.31 points or 0.84 per cent lower at 30,672.59.

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Name of the Work : Supply of 01 no. 25 knots speed patrol-cum-chase boat along with manning crew on hire for a period of five years. Estimated cost : Total Estimated cost Rs. 13,94,20,000/- Plus GST. Estimated cost put to tender : 6,63,44,058/- Excluding Fuel Cost and GST. Last date & time of submission of bids through on-line bidding is 15.00 hours on Dt. 20.06.2020. Technical Bids shall be opened at 16.30 hours on Dt. 22.06.2020. For details, please log on to the Website : <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Dy. Conservator PPT/PR/22/20-21 Date : 22.05.2020

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**Executive: DEN (Central)BCT. e-Tender No.: BCT/20-21/120 Dt.22.05.2020. Work & Location: Udhna-Jalgaon Section:** Providing and supplying, fixing of retro reflective Engineering indicator boards.  
**Approx. Cost:** ₹ 1,26,02,645.29. **EMD:** ₹2,13,000/- **Date & time of submission:** on 22.06.2020 till 15.00 Hrs. **Date & Time of opening:** on 22.06.2020 till 15.30 Hrs. **Note:** Regarding detailed nature of work, containing cost of tender document (non-refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions, please visit [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Manual offers will not be considered.  
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## RBI's measures will boost exports, imports, debt servicing : CITI

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) has hailed the measures announced by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday which are aimed at preserving the financial stability in the system and improving the functioning of the market.

These announcements will revive the market, boost exports and imports and debt servicing, said T. Rajkumar, Chairman, CITI.

CITI Chairman thanked the RBI Governor for reducing the repo rate by 40 basis points under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) bringing it down to 4.0 per cent from 4.40 per cent with immediate effect.

Accordingly, the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate stand reduced to 4.25 per cent from 4.65 per cent; and the reverse repo rate under LAF now stands reduced to 3.35 per cent from 3.75 per cent.

Rajkumar said that the industry has been demanding for extending the moratorium period for a further period of 10 months as earlier announced for the period of three months (March, April and May) as industries across sectors could not resume functioning due to containment measures resorted to prevent pandemic effect and huge cash crunch resulting thereof.

He welcomed the decision of RBI Governor for extension

of moratorium period for another 3 months from June, July and August 2020 and further said it has brought a definite relief to the industry which is one of the worst hit industries because of its highly capital and labour intensive nature and providing employment to more than 110 million workforce.

The announced measures will certainly prevent a number of companies from turning into NPAs. He hoped that the moratorium period could further be extended up to March 31, 2021, to ease the financial burden on companies.

He also welcomed the decision of reduction of margin money, and deferring of interest on working capital for a

period of 6 months with an option that the interest on moratorium can be converted into FITL or Term Loan and can be repaid by March 2021. However, repaying interest amount within a period of next six months would be a daunting task for the textile and clothing industry which is grappling with the lockdown situation at the moment.

CITI Chairman pinpointed that repo rates reduced by RBI many times in the last one year has not been fully transmitted by banks to borrowers and are very miniscule. The industry wants the banks should be advised to pass on the full benefit of the recent and earlier reduction in repo rate by RBI.

## India's forex reserves rise by over \$1 bn to \$487 bn

IANs ■ MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$1.726 billion during the week ended May 15, RBI data showed on Friday. According to the RBI's weekly statistical supplement, the overall forex reserves increased to \$487.039 billion from \$485.313 billion reported for the week ended May 8th.

On Friday, while announcing the repo rate cut, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said: “India's foreign exchange reserves have increased by \$9.2 billion in 2020-21 so far.

## RBI's extension of moratorium on repayment of loans will help aviation companies: Puri

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) extended the moratorium on repayment of loans for three months on Friday, Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri said this step will offer relief to aviation sector companies like airports, airlines and ground handlers and help them improve their cash flow position.

The aviation sector has been hit hard due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown. Consequently, during the last few weeks, all Indian airline

companies have either fired employees, sent them on leave without pay or cut their salaries. “The RBI announcement to permit lending institutions to extend the previously announced moratorium by another 3 months, i.E., from June 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020 in view of further extension in the lockdown offers relief to civil aviation stakeholders,” Puri said on Twitter.

“These announcements will also benefit aviation sector companies, including airports, airlines, freight operators, ground handlers.”

## Jet Airways: Insolvency resolution process deadline extended till August 21

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when fresh bids have been invited for the grounded Jet Airways, the deadline for completion of its insolvency resolution process has been extended till August 21 due to the lockdown.

The full service carrier, which shuttered operations in March 2019, is under Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) and the time period given for its completion was to end on June 13.

According to a regulatory

filing, 69 days of lockdown period from March 24 to May 31 would be excluded for computing the CIRP deadline.

The nationwide lockdown to curb spreading of coronavirus infections was announced on March 24 and has been extended thrice. It is now to end on May 31.

“Therefore, the revised timeline for completion of the CIRP of Jet is now August 21, 2020, subject to any further extension of the lockdown by the State Govt of Maha or the Central Government.

## FM MEETS PSU BANK CHIEFS

## Prods them to implement ‘Aatmanirbhar’ relief package

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday held a review meeting with CEOs of public sector banks (PSBs) and asked them to implement the mega ‘Aatmanirbhar’ relief package to revive the COVID-hit economy.

The meeting via video conferencing took place in the backdrop of the ₹21 lakh crore stimulus package announcement and the Reserve Bank coming out with fresh measures, including interest rate cuts. The Union Cabinet headed by PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday gave its nod for many of the schemes announced as part of ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ package to prop up the economy reeling under the COVID-19 crisis. “Finance Minister Smt.@nsitharaman chairing the review meeting, through VC, with the chief executives of PSBs today to review the readiness of banks in implementing ‘Aatmanirbhar’ relief package”, the Finance Ministry said in a tweet. “To operationalise the announcements made by Hon'ble FM @nsitharaman ji under #AatmanirbharBharat, review meeting through VC was helw with all PSBs.

## ONGC, NTPC sign MOU to set up joint venture for renewable energy business

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's top oil and gas producer ONGC and country's biggest electricity generator NTPC have signed a preliminary agreement to set up a joint venture company for renewable energy projects.

Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) and NTPC Ltd “entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on May 21, 2020 in New Delhi to formalise this arrangement,” ONGC said in a statement.

The MoU will enable both companies to achieve their respective targets in renewable energy business.

As per the MoU, NTPC and ONGC will explore and set up renewable power assets including offshore wind, in India and overseas, and explore opportunities in the fields of sustainability, storage, e-mobility and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) compliant projects,” the statement said.

ONGC has a renewable

portfolio of 176 MW comprising of 153 MW wind power and 23 MW of solar plants. Through this collaboration with NTPC, ONGC envisages significant growth in its presence in the renewable power sector. ONGC's Energy Strategy 2040 document calls for the company to invest in renewable energy sources with a target to create 5-10 gigawatts portfolio with a focus on offshore wind power. NTPC, with a 920 MW of installed renewable power capacity in its portfolio with about 2,300 MW of renewable energy projects under construction and aspiring to reach 32 GW by 2032.



**J&K PROJECTS CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LTD.**  
**(A (UT) J&K Govt. Undertaking)**  
**OFFICE OF DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER, MECHANICAL UNIT, JAMMU**  
**Short Term E-NIT Tender Notice**  
For and on behalf of the Managing Director JKPCCL Ltd., Jammu e-tenders are hereby invited vide - **E-NIT No: Mech./J/NIT/08 of 2020 Dated: 20-05-2020** for Supply, Installation, Testing & Successful Commissioning of Fire Hydrants and Fighting System at Rajiv Gandhi hospital Gangyal Jammu. The details of e-NIT can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) from Dt: 21-05-2020 from 1800 Hrs to Dt: 02-06-2020 upto 1600 Hrs i.e. last date of submission of on line bid is 02-06-2020 upto 1600 hrs.  
No.: JKPCCL/Mech./J/150-67 Dt:- 20.05.2020 Sd/- (Er. KK Padotra), Deputy General Manager, No.DIP/JJ-268-P/20 Dt: 21.05.2020 JKPCCL Ltd., Mechanical Unit, Jammu.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (Const), Northern Railway, Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender for the following work:-  

1.	Name of work and location	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of 500kVA, 63kVA and 30kVA D.G. sets installed in the office complex of CAO/C/Kashmere Gate, Delhi, CEE/C/Tilak Bridge, Dy. CE/ C/SE Road New Delhi & Dy.CEE/C/Shivaji Bridge.
2.	Completion period of the work	36 (Thirty Six) Months
3.	Approx. Cost of work	₹ 7,84,980/-
4.	Earnest Money to be deposited	₹ 15,700/-
5.	Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on 16.06.2020 date on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 16.06.2020.
6.	Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e. <a href="http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in</a> and tender document is available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . Above tenders document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 02.06.2020 to 16.06.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

  
No. 17-Elect./DYCEE/CT/126B Dated: 22.05.2020 1163/20  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**UJVN LIMITED**  
**(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)**  
H.O. "UJJAWAL" Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006  
Ph: 0135-2763507, 2763508, CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
Office of Executive Engineer, Project Distribution Division, Dakpathar (D.D.un), invites tenders for following work.  
**Tender No. PDD-04/2020-21-** Supply and fixing of 11 KV TPMS's, LA, 11KV outdoor metering unit and 11KV Fuse sets with all accessories and other repair work for 11KV overhead lines (11KV Kulhal-Dhalpur, 11KV Kulhal-Dhakrani, ID colony).  
**Tender No. PDD-05/2020-21-** Supply and erection of LED Street light fittings at Kulhal, Dhalpur Substation & colony.  
**Approx. Value of Tender** - Rs. 17,38,661/-, Rs. 6,07,692/- + GST Extra respectively.  
**Earnest Money** - Rs. 53,000/- and Rs. 19,000/- respectively.  
**Tender Cost** - Rs. 1180/- and Rs. 590/- respectively.  
**Last date for downloading of tender** - 12.06.2020 (Upto 16.00 Hrs.).  
**Last Date for submission of tender** - 13.06.2020 (Upto 16.00 Hrs.).  
**Date of Tender opening bid (Part-I)** - 16.06.2020 (at 11:30 Hrs.).  
For eligibility criteria and full & further details, kindly visit our web site. Tenders can only be downloaded from our website "www.uttarakhandjaldiyut.com". Their cost has to be paid at the time of submission of the tender.  
पत्र सं. 325/दिनांक: 22.05.2020 Executive Engineer  
**"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const.-I, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India invites open e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:-  

Name of work and location	Hiring of (02) Two Nos. Non-AC Vehicle such as "Jeep, Gypsy, Tata Sumo type of vehicle" on monthly basis for a period of 03 (Three) years for the officers working in the unit of Dy. Chief Engineer/Construction-I, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi
Completion period of the work	(36) (Thirty Six) months from the date of issue of acceptance letter
Approximate Cost of Work	₹32.94 Lakh (Rs. Thirty Two Lakh & Ninety Four Thousand only)
Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)	₹65,900/- (Rs. Sixty Five Thousand nine hundred only)
Date, Time for submission of e-Tender and opening of tender	Tender may be uploaded upto 11:30 hrs. on 17.06.2020 on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . The bidders can only participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11:30 hrs. on 17.06.2020.
Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website i.e. <a href="http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in</a> . Above tenders document will be available on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 27.05.2020 to 17.06.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

  
No.: 220-Acs/11/141/HV/SERd Dated : 22.05.2020 1154/20  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**  
General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead near Wine Shop, Asaf Ali Road, Kamla Market, Delhi on dated 14.04.2020. In this regard a DD No. 20A Dated 14.04.2020 has been Registered at P.S. Kamla Market, Delhi. The Dead body had been preserved in MAMC Mortuary, Delhi for 72 Hrs for identification. The description of the dead body is given as under:  
**Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown **R/o:** Unknown **Age:** About 50-55 Yrs, **Height:** 5'5", **Face:** Oval, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing:** Blue colour Jeans Pant, Without Shirt and Baniyan and Bare footed. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.  
**S.H.O**  
**P.S. Kamla Market, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-23230623, 23233743**  
**DP/102/CD/2020**

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**  
  
General public is hereby informed that an unidentified body of a male namely **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown was found Unconscious on 05.04.2020 at Corridor property No. 2253 Near S.K. Electronics, Rajguru Road, Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj, Delhi and send to LHMC Hospital, New Delhi MLC No. 1226/20. During the treatment the doctors declared him dead on 05.04.2020.** Dead Body has been preserved in LHMC Hospital, Delhi mortuary for 72 hours for identification. In this regard DD No. 11A, dated 05.04.2020 has been lodged at Police Station, Paharganj, New Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:  
**Name:** Unknown, **Age:** About 50 Years, **Height:** 5'3", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Thin, **ID Mark:** Old Cut mark center of Neck, **Wearing:** Dirty Grey colour full pant. If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.  
**SHO**  
**Police Station, Pahar Ganj, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-23524746, 8750012525**  
**DP/98/CD/2020**



## Trend Blazer

### Virgin Bhanupriya confirms OTT release

After *Gulabo Sitabo*, *Shakuntala Devi* and *Ghoomketu*, the **URVASHI RAUTELA**-starrer *Virgin Bhanupriya* is the latest Bollywood film to confirm a release on an OTT platform, bypassing a traditional theatre opening.

“We are in conversation now to release it directly on OTT. Looking at the current situation, and the revenue one is getting from OTT, this seems like a good option than waiting when there is so much uncertainty in terms of opening of theatres,” said its producer Mahendra Dhariwal.



**‘I can’t believe it’s been 20 years. I clearly remember how shy I was when I joined**

**this field. Twenty years is a long time. It’s been an interesting journey for me because there were many ups and lows. Unfortunately, I did not do many films but all the aspects and phases of my life have made me a better and a stronger person.’**

**—Shamita Shetty**

Filmmaker **ANURAG KASHYAP**, who returns to acting as a corrupt cop in the self-coproduced digital film *Ghoomketu*, says he really hates acting but he had no choice but to say yes to the project.



He said: “I had no choice. I really hate acting but it’s always the emotional blackmail that works. Also the desire to be with Nawaz on-screen and Pushpi (writer-director Pushpendra Nath Misra) and his narration. And to be in the same film as Raghbir Yadav, Ila Arun and Swanand (Kirkire)... wait till you see them on screen.”

### ‘I knew people will like the show’

Actor **STEPHEN JAMES** says he knew people would love



*Homecoming* season one as it featured Hollywood superstar Julia Roberts.

“Any time you’re in a show with a pretty and talented woman like Julia Roberts, you know that people are going like it. So, I definitely knew that people were going to watch the show,” James said.

“But honestly, I have to say, I was probably pretty much blown away by the response,” he added.

ENCOUNTER 60 MINUTES

# LARGER THAN LIFE

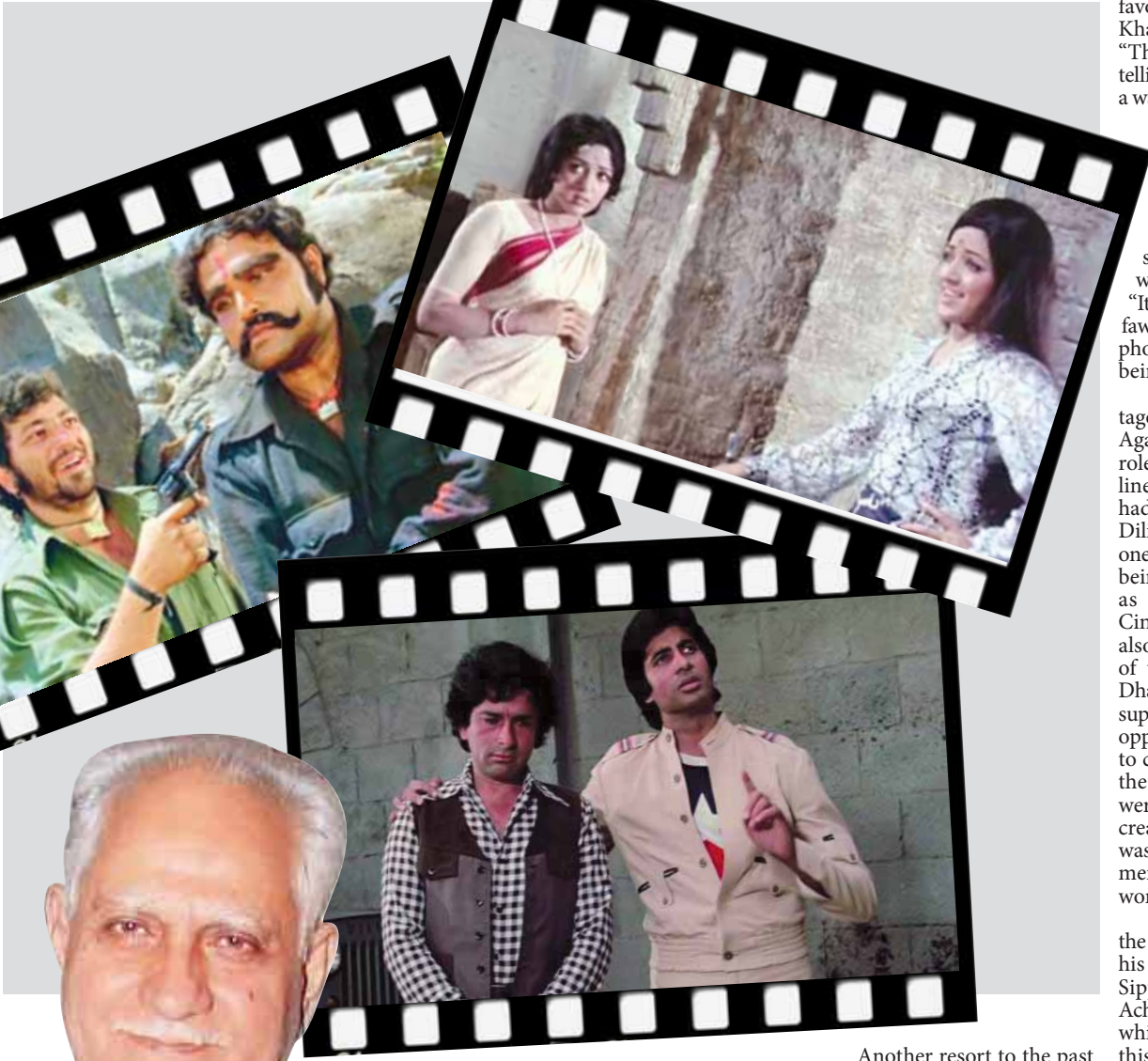
Producer director RAMESH SIPPY attempted the unthinkable with the use of technology in *Sholay* and created a phenomenon. He tells SAIMI SATTAR that it is time to harness it yet again in the post-pandemic world

When I connect over a conference call with director producer Ramesh Sippy, the first thing that strikes me is the old world way of holding a conversation that is warm yet professional. He doesn’t ask for my name as he is already aware of it and uses it to address me rather than the impersonal salutation that many of the current crop engages in. He doesn’t want to enter into the interview headlong but first inquires which part of the world I am holding the conversation from. On hearing that I am connecting from Delhi, he quips “You are better off as things are opening up while in Mumbai, we can’t venture out as yet.” Clearly, even if you are the director of a larger-than-life spectacle like *Sholay*, you have to abide by the whims of a microscopic virus and adjust to life accordingly.

He is doing just that. His Ramesh Sippy Academy of Cinema and Entertainment (RSACE) at Kalina, Mumbai, which runs five graduation courses around film making in association with the Mumbai University and Garware Institute since 2017, has shifted to the online module of teaching. Given the nature of the profession and the way it is taught, where physical contact seems essential, I wonder how it would be possible to continue to teach online indefinitely and he says, “That is a million dollar question. No one knows how we will go forward. And what’s happening. We do not know what shape and form the course the pandemic will take. We will have to see how much it is possible to go back to the normal or whether in the next six months or one year we do a mix of online and physical classes or just the former.” But one thing he is sure of, his vast repertoire of films helps budding film makers learn the craft.

It is not just teaching film making that will be affected but the profession leading up to it is bound to take a hit in the way that it works. Already, there are speculations about the manner in which intimate scenes would be shot, something which Sippy’s film *Sagar* had in ample measure between the lead pair of Dimple Kapadia and Rishi Kapoor. The director is unfazed and says, “Technology is there to help us do a lot of things that we cannot. Even five, 10 or 20 years back, we used technology in *Sholay* and *Shaan* to change the face of cinema. At that time, those were creative decisions but now they might become necessary.” He goes on to point to several projects where people are sitting at home and relating interesting stories through short films. “That is a new way of story-telling now but, of course, this can’t be permanently used for entertainment, he says and adds, that it was possible as humans, by their nature, are a race of thinkers. He believes that taking things lying down is not the appropriate reaction to the reaction. “It is good to understand what the problems are but it is not a good idea to sit back and let the virus take over your entire life. We have to stand up and fight for the welfare of society and individual. If we try to look after everyone, everyone will look after us. There will, of course, be stray cases of unfortunate incidents of people who we cannot help.”

He resorts to a history lesson to explain the point further. “There hasn’t been a World War for 70-75 years. But we are now facing Coronavirus across the world, which is nothing short of a war. We will resolve this too. There will be suffering along the way, naturally, but that is the price we pay. We would learn a lot of new things along the way,” he says optimistically.



**Not just the story but the whole storytelling technique has changed. You are, after all, telling the story to a completely different audience which has the sensibilities of the time it lives in. Today’s viewers are very different from the audience of the 1960s, 70s, 80s or 90s. While the themes continue to be the same because we are humans, the narrative style has transformed**

Another resort to the past is the way Doordarshan decided to telecast the serials of yore which commanded huge fan-following including Sippy’s *Buniyaad*, which followed a migrant family during Partition. He believes that the serial has struck a chord among the younger generation as “it was basically a good story about the events that took place.” And there are parallels in contemporary life as well. “In north India, there were refugee camps and people were confined to them. It is a reminder of those times when the confinement was greater and, the problems, more dangerous,” says the director.

Talking of *Buniyaad* naturally brings us to his love for ensemble casts which was evident not just in the serial but also in films like *Shaan* (1980), *Sholay* (1975) and to an extent, *Seeta aur Geeta* (1972). “Of course, I like working with bigger casts but it is never easy. It is the challenge that eggs you on. The actors too could feel the vibes of something very good being made and, with so much care and attention, they put their best foot forward,” he says as his voice fades out over a connection that is often patchy.

Another thing that was very much apparent in his films were larger than life villains. Whether it was Gabbar Singh menacingly asking his cohorts, “Kitne aadmi the?” or Shakaal declaring, “Ajeeb janwar hai. Kitna bhi khaye bhooka hi rehta hai,” — both could chill you to the bone. Sippy retorts, “Don’t heroes come out larger than life? Were heroes, like Amitabh or Dharmendra ordinary?”

However, it wasn’t a huge canvas rather a heartwarming story that the director started his career with. The son of producer GP Sippy, after having assisted during several films, decided to turn director with *Andaz* in 1971. The story about a widower’s daughter and a widow’s son bringing the duo together was unconventional given the time when second marriages were uncommon. Add to it the fact that Sippy was all of 25. “Everyone called me a fool for attempting a film like that. Reactions included, ‘You are a young guy. What are you doing making a film on a widow and a widower. What is wrong with you?’” His father was also surprised that he wanted to debut as director with this film. When he approached actor Shammi Kapoor for the role of the widower, his reaction was not very different but for an altogether different reason. Shammi, who was known for his light-hearted and stylish romcoms which featured great music as well as a lot of Elvis Presley-inspired dancing asked, “Do you know what I am famous for? Dancing and singing. What are you trying to do?” A young Sippy, backed by a powerful idea, was undeterred and said, “Haven’t you done enough of that? Let us try something different.” He looked at me, somewhere it clicked and he agreed.

Sippy was completely convinced that, despite the zeitgeist of the age, the world would not object to a man who had lost his wife and has a daughter coming together with a woman who had lost her husband and had a boy. “If you make a film like that, you need to make the audience want them to come together so they had to be warm people with feelings,” says Sippy thoughtfully. Luck

favoured them and superstar Rajesh Khanna agreed to be a part of the film. “The music was superb while the story telling was interesting and bright. It was a warm story told with an unusual angle with great performances,” he says and pauses. The gap becomes inexplicably long and we realise that we have lost the connection with him yet again.

Once reconnected, Sippy’s voice still wavers and when I suggest that we should re-connect again, he retorts, “It is a Coronavirus phone,” and guffaws before adding, “Everyone is on the phone and the internet so these are being used beyond their capacities.”

He repeated Hema Malini, the protagonist in *Andaz*, in *Seeta Aur Geeta*. Again many people felt that a double role for a woman and that too on the lines of *Ram Aur Shyam* (1967), which had been essayed by none other than Dilip Kumar was a huge risk. “I felt this one was better. The idea of Dilip Kumar being exploited was not as convincing as a young woman suffering the Cinderella syndrome,” he says. What also immensely helped the popularity of the film was Sanjeev Kumar and Dharmendra, two fine actors and young superstars in their own right, being cast opposite Hema. “It is not easy in India to convince the male actor to take on the secondary role. Their characters were interesting but Hema had the cream and they were supporting her. It was great of them to say yes. In its commercial way the film spoke about a woman,” he says.

But it was *Sholay* that placed him in the big league so much so that even now his name is synonymous with the film. Sippy recently received a Lifetime Achievement Award at Filmfare Awards which was held in Assam in February this year and he feels that it was given to him mostly because of *Sholay*. However, he doesn’t deny, “I do have a body of work and I couldn’t have made a *Sholay* without having made *Andaz* or *Seeta aur Geeta*.”

The fact that the film continues to be a phenomenon where its dialogues are still quoted in different situations off screen is lost on no one. But at the time of filming no one, least of all Sippy, realised it. “I could feel that we were making a great film. How can you predict it was a phenomenon? It just happened, you couldn’t predict it. People found something new every time they watched it,” he says attributing its success to a combination of its technique, storytelling, performances, music and background score. He credits writer duo Salim Javed, lyricist Anand Bakshi, music director RD Burman, the technicians and cameraperson along with the cast which came together to put up a great show.

Considering that remakes are often attempted of films that break box office records, what are Sippy’s views on the same? “I wouldn’t make *Sholay*. It is not like remakes can’t work but you should add something to it or have a new take on it. A film like *Titanic* was made 20 years before this version. *Mother India* had been made by Mehboob Khan less than 10-15 years ago before the colour film which was a much bigger and improved version of the original and it worked brilliantly. It is very difficult to add to *Sholay* which already has so much. I fail to see why I should attempt to make it? If someone has the confidence they should do it but make it worth the attempt,” he says recalling the fate of *Ram Gopal Varma Ki Aag* (2007).

With the advent of OTT platforms, newer directors and increased exposure of the audience, Sippy agrees that films have changed. “Not just the story but the whole storytelling technique has changed. You are, after all, telling the story to a completely different audience which has the sensibilities of the time it lives in. Today’s viewers are very different from the audience of the 1960s, 70s, 80s or 90s. While the themes continue to be the same, love stories or revenge dramas, because we are humans, the narrative style has transformed. That is the challenge as you have to do something differently for today’s age and do it as interestingly as possible hoping that the audience will like it,” says Sippy matter factly.

It is not just story-telling which has transformed but the way that the audience consumes entertainment as well. “Something which is for the phone will remain for the phone and will never be as as impressive on screen. Under the present circumstances, people are saying that cinema may never come back but I don’t believe it. If you have an experience to share with people that is worth it, they will come to the theatre. Aren’t people feeling fed up at home during lockdown? They want to step out and cinema would enable them to do that, of course, at the right time — three or six months down the line,” he says and adds, “This is a good note to end,” but when I persist that I do have a few more questions left, he teases, “You don’t want to talk to me another time? Let’s keep it for that.”



CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES

Filmmaker SAPNA MOTI BHAVNANI, in her web documentary, *Sindhustan*, explores the migration of the Sindhi community post-Partition through a series of tattoos on her body. She talks about why she explained it through art, not words.

By TEAM VIVA

INKED TALES

When Warsan Shire said, “No one leaves home unless/ Home is the mouth of a shark/ You only run for the border/ When you see the whole city running as well,” it continued to be a reality for many people and their communities who lost their cultural and regional identities in the blink of an eye.

Celebrity hairstylist and filmmaker Sapna Moti Bhavnani’s web documentary, *Sindhustan*, recalls one such event where a community, amid political upheavals and religious riots, was again forgotten. It explores the migration of the Sindhi community to India during and post-Partition. The first inspiration for such a project came to her when she discovered how her father, born in Shikarpur in Sindh, migrated from Karachi to Bombay after Partition and lived in refugee camps. The film, narrated through a series of extensively designed body tattoos on Sapna’s body, was also inspired by a random conversation with her grandmother, a few years ago.

She says, “I had gone to meet my grandmother over lunch one day. I had covered myself because I had just started getting inked at that time. She commented on those tattoos by calling me ‘old-fashioned.’ I was stunned to hear that term from a 90-



year-old woman. She then explained the theory behind her saying so — when we first came to this planet, we lived in tribes and didn’t have any borders or governments or territories. We had extended families and each one of them had their own markings. She said, ‘You are actually going back to your roots and that makes me very happy.’”

And that moment, she says, made it evident for her that she was going to write their stories with that ink. It was when she decided that it was the best way to tell the story — “to herself become the story.” The tattoos illustrate various stories of Sindhis from both India and

Pakistan. It is made using *Ajrak*, a Sindhi design art form, as well as *Madhubani* from India. The tattoos, showcased only on her legs in the film, depict the legends of Jhulelal (a revered deity of Sindhi Hindus), a vegetarian crocodile, a family enjoying a picnic near the river Sindh and more. For the audience, they would look like a visual map of South Asia and its division, an art gallery of memories and a story narrated on the skin. But for Sapna, her legs are now like a museum, which tell the tales of a lost culture. Well, just as our footprints mark how long we have traversed, for her, too, “my legs symbolise my journey and the very roots,

where I come from.”

Well, contrary to this concept, usually, a film’s idea is conveyed through conversations, dialogues and some fictionalised version of reality. So why did she think that designs and art could help her best express more than the words? She says, “The film features narrations of real experiences of Sindhi people who remained in Pakistan during the Partition but later, had to migrate to India as many Hindu Sindhis were being forced to convert to Islam. And just to sustain, they had to adapt to new cultures and practices, learn a new language and engage in newer trades, worldwide. This loss of their



homeland slowly led to a death of their own heritage and culture. History books never did justice to Sindhis while explaining the Partition. Hence, I don’t think a fictional representation of this event — history’s largest migration of a culture — would have been the best choice. It’s being talked about openly for the first time.” It’s why, she says, it’s not a film, but a “movement.”

When one talks about Sindh or Sindhis, one is reminded of how even though the province did not become a part of India after 1947, it still echoes through our voices when we sing these lines of the National Anthem — *Punjab-Sindh-Gujarata-*

*Maratha, Dravida-Utkala-Banga*. For Sapna, it’s because even though the state isn’t ours but there are many Sindhis, who are Indians and have been residing here since Independence. And hence, she adds, “it’ll always be sung like that.”

Sapna, who is currently working on her book, tentatively titled, *Chapter One*, recalls that she was denied the visa to Sindh some time ago. And that’s when “I became my land. Hence, *Sindhustan* is like a hope for me that one day, I’d be able to cross the border and touch that soil where my ancestors lived. I wait with love!”

From a hairstylist to a filmmaker-

er, her journey has certainly been a very transitional one. She says, “I never believe in transitioning completely and hence, I haven’t left hairstyling at all. I still do that and will continue to do so. But yes, seven years into making this important film did mark the beginning of something new and relevant.”

Well, certainly the reason why the film is making rounds at various international film festivals and winning hearts and accolades. To name a few, Excellence in Cinema Award at AIFF May 2019, Official Selection from India at the MAMI Film Festival Asia Premiere 2019, etc.

STUDIO CHAT 30 MINUTES

Somewhere in between

Actor-director FRED SAVAGE realised that he could explore life behind the camera on the sets of *The Wonder Years*. By TEAM VIVA

❑ **The Wonder Years was such an iconic show that the jacket that you wore in the show is now at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC. How did that happen?**

My mother had kept it safely, all this while. We have a garage and it is full of every piece of memorabilia from me, my brother, and sister. Our entire childhood is there — old printers and other tons of stuff. We always used to tell her you have to clean that up but she liked storing all these. She also had this jacket which Smithsonian wanted. So now my mom has got the validation for keeping the garage and all the stuff.

❑ **You’ve directed more than 200 episodes of television and are widely regarded for your single-camera comedy work. When did you realise that a life behind the lens was also for you?**

This realisation happened when I was on the sets of *The Wonder Years*. I was interested in the camera. It was so cool. I would have questions like — why one director filled a two-page scene in the kitchen, and someone would do that in two shots and another would need six shots. And how those choices affect the final product? These things interested me. The first episode I directed for *Modern Family* was just after they had won the Emmy for the best comedy. I was so terrified as to what am I going to do, what will I bring to the show and how can I add to it?

❑ **How did you get past the nerve?**

A lot of times in my directing career, I would not literally but psychologically slap myself, reminding that you are the director and whether you want it or not, you are here. I would tell myself that I have to get over myself and do the job.

❑ **You’ve been both, on camera and off-camera. In which way do you think were you treated better?**

Oh, for sure on camera. When I was directing TV shows, it was



of such things. So I had it ready and still have it.

❑ **Do you remember who all were in your category?**

I actually do. These are all the people I love and they’re still in the industry — John Goodman for *Roseanne*, Ted Danson for *Cheers*, Michael J Fox for *Family Ties*. And there was Richard Mulligan from *Empty Nest* who won.

❑ **How old are your kids? Have they been nominated for Emmys yet?**

I have two sons, 12 and six years old and a 10 year old daughter. No, they’ve done nothing, as of now. When I look at my eldest son I think I had fired three agents when I was that age. I was doing commercials in Chicago when I was six year old. It was so tough back then.

❑ **Have your kids watched The Wonder Years? It must be interesting to watch their father go through puberty on TV.**

Yes, they’ve watched the show. My mum shows it to them whenever they go to her place. That was very sweet of her. But it is conflicting. I don’t want them to see it just because I am their dad. But I also desperately want them to love it and think that I am super cool. So we landed somewhere in between. They think it’s cool.

❑ **How many other young gentlemen did you beat up for The Wonder Years?**

They came to me after they saw me in the film, *The Princess Bride*. They sent me that script and said ‘we’d love you to take a look at this role and consider this part.’ And I was so young then. So it was really my parents who went back and forth to decide about it for a long time. Then my dad asked himself, ‘if we see this on TV and some other kid is playing the role, could we live with that?’ The answer was no and so we went to LA and met with the people who wrote the show and I got the job. (All seasons of the show are airing on Star World.)

great, challenging and fulfilling. But no one really cared at all. I was just totally off the grid. But then when I was on TV again, a couple more times and I felt the warm embrace of the love of America again. It was really fantastic.

❑ **How old were you when you were first nominated for an Emmy and how was the experience?**

I was 12 years old. And I remember I was sleeping over at Tony Rubin’s house, and it was

summer and we were all in Chicago. When I woke up that morning, his mom had left a note on the dishwasher that said “hey you got nominated for an Emmy, congratulations!”. Then the two of us rode bikes to the park and it was great.

❑ **Did you go to the ceremony with a speech ready?**

I did. I went with my parents and grandparents. It was great. Yes, I had a speech ready. My parents made sure that I was always on top

CELEB TALK 15 MINUTES

RANVEER’S PLEA

The actor requests authorities to declare the Indian Sign Language (ISL) as the 23rd official language of the country



Ranveer Singh is urging authorities to consider and declare Indian Sign Language (ISL) as the 23rd official language of India. The actor has always raised his voice on social issues and this time he is signing a petition to raise awareness on this cause. Ranveer’s independent record label InCInk, which he has formed with Navzar Erane, is also releasing its first sign language video.

He says, “We created InCInk as a platform to promote inclusivity through art, hence, the name — InCInk. Through our latest endeavour, we’re lending support to the

cause of making Indian Sign Language the 23rd official language of India. I will be signing the official petition filed by National Association of the Deaf (NAD) India with support from the Access Mantra Foundation, who are working tirelessly to make this a reality.

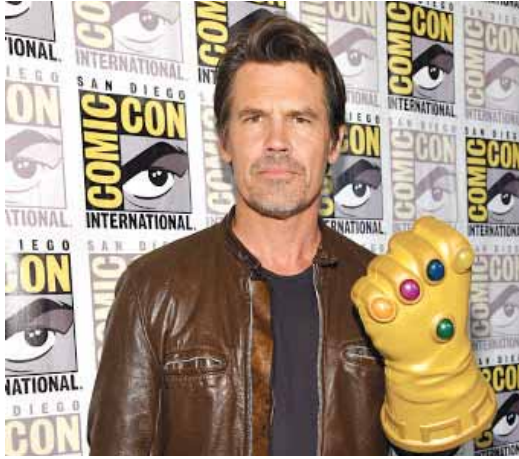
Thanos is hands-down

one of the best comic book villains of all time. Everything about him is very intimidating from his stature to his voice. However, to some extent he is very humane and someone whom we could sympathise with. In the comic books, the character has this weird motivation which was dubbed as ‘Obsession with Death’. The directors of *Avengers Endgame*, Russo brothers thought that this motivation was not impactful, mainly because there were elements of too much fantasy and the character of Lady Death had yet to be introduced.

Actor Josh Brolin who portrayed Thanos in *Avengers Infinity War* and *Endgame*, experimented a lot with the character to achieve the acclaimed depiction on screen. In today’s time, CGI has gone on to become extremely realistic. Despite this, the actor had a big challenge to portray an 8’3 tall formidable character so that the audience could connect with it and simultaneous-

Think and feel

Actor JOSH BROLIN, who portrayed Thanos in *Avengers Infinity War* and *Endgame*, says that he had to experiment a lot with the character to achieve the acclaimed depiction on screen



ly, fear it.

Brolin said, “Earlier, we didn’t understand the nuances of the role. The Russo’s had the intentions and the relationship with Gamora, Nebula and all the others but it wasn’t until we started experi-

menting. We realised that there was a character where we could invest and everyone could sympathise with. I think that’s the biggest struggle we had to face.”

Fellow cast member Paul Rudd who portrayed

Ant-Man in *Avengers Endgame*, said, “I think Thanos is a really complex and an amazing antagonist. When I saw *Infinity War*, I was thinking that what he is saying has logic behind it. Maybe, he is a psychopath and wants to destroy the world but he is equally soft at his heart. Nobody other than Brolin could have played it so well. It’s a perfect casting. He just exudes the strength and poise that Thanos possesses. When you got so many heroes fighting, you got to be a formidable opponent which means you will be needing a formidable actor playing the character. Josh Brolin hit a home run with the character’s portrayal.” (Catch the Mad Titan go against the Avengers on Star Movies on May 17 at 12 pm and 9 pm.)



# BCCI made no commitment on SA tour: Dhumal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI has not made “any commitment” to tour South Africa in August and there have only been discussions about such a possibility, Board treasurer Arun Dhumal said on Friday, denying Cricket South Africa’s claims of a confirmation.

CSA Director of Cricket Graeme Smith and Chief Executive Jacques Faul on Thursday said that India has agreed to tour the rainbow nation for three T20 Internationals in August, signalling resumption of cricket in the post Covid-19 world. But Dhumal disagreed.

“When South Africa’s tour of India got cancelled due to coronavirus, we had discussions that if there is a possibility, we will make an effort to tour South Africa. But at no point have we made any commitment to Cricket South Africa about touring in August,” Dhumal said.

The senior BCCI office-bearer then said that unless the Government clears international travel, BCCI won’t be in a position to make a commitment to any country.

“Right now, we can’t even commit that we can tour Sri Lanka in July followed by (short T20 series) in Zimbabwe. Both these tours are part of the FTP programme and we are still not sure what the situation will be in two months, so how can we commit on South Africa tour?” Dhumal asked.

On a different note, when asked about CSA Director of Cricket Graeme Smith’s supprt



to Sourav Ganguly’s candidature for the ICC chairmanship, Dhumal said it would be good for global cricket if an Indian is at the helm.

“There has been no formal discussion in BCCI about ICC chairmanship. Graeme Smith obviously spoke in his personal capacity which is not CSA’s stand,” he said.

CSA President Chris Nenzani refused to endorse Smith’s support for Ganguly in a statement issued on Friday.

“As far as the BCCI is concerned we would certainly like an Indian to lead the global body and our President has credentials obviously. But again we haven’t yet discussed it,” Dhumal said.

While the support to have an IPL in October-November window instead of the T20

World Cup is growing, Dhumal said BCCI won’t push for a postponement of the global event but at the same time, it needs to be seen that in these times, whether an event of that magnitude can be held in Australia.

“T20 World Cup is a global event. Why should we push for postponement of global event? Yes, what we need to check is that an event of such magnitude with so many teams and all the health safety norms, empty stadiums, can it be held?”

“These are calls that ICC and Cricket Australia wil have to take,” Dhumal said.

#### DHARAMSALA OPTION FOR CAMP

With the civil aviation ministry announcing that domestic flights will be starting from May 25, Dhumal said the Board could explore safe zone options

for a national camp in case it can’t be held at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru.

Will it make Dharamsala an option considering that HPCA now has a state of the art indoor stadium?

“Since it’s my state association, I would never, from my end, push it but if after exploring options, BCCI finds that Dharamsala can have a camp, I am more than ready to make all the arrangements. Even the hotel where the Indian team stays *Pavilion* is HPCA property,” he said. “In case, the situation in Himachal is under control and it’s considered to be a safe zone as per Government protocols, the HPCA will then do everything to make it a bio-secure environment. It all depends on what is best available option,” he added.



## India Open from Dec 8-13

**NEW DELHI:** The Olympic-qualifying India Open badminton tournament, which was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will now be held here from December 8 to 13 after the BWF unveiled a revised calendar to salvage the disruption-hit season.

The World Tour Super 500 tournament, originally scheduled to be held in New Delhi from March 24-29, will now take place from December 8 to 13, the BWF said in a release.

The all-important event will be preceded by the Hyderabad Open (August 11 to 16) and the Syed Modi International (November 17 to 22).

The BWF announcement comes a day after India’s singles players were allowed access to indoor courts with badminton in the list of 11 sports which have been permitted to resume training.

As many as eight tournaments were rescheduled from their original dates, including important events such as New Zealand Open Super 300 (Oct

20-25), Indonesia Open Super 1000 (Nov 17-22), Malaysia Open Super 750 (Nov 24-29), Thailand Open Super 500 (Dec 1-6) and season-ending World Tour Finals (Dec 16-20) in Guangzhou, China.

Four tournaments — German Open (March 3-8), Swiss Open (March 17-22), European Championships (April 21-26) and Australian Open (June 2-7) remained suspended with BWF saying that “suitable replacement dates are still being finalised.”

As many as 10 tournaments, including Singapore Open Super 500 (April 7-12), Badminton Asia C’ships (April 21-26) — which fell within the April 28 Olympic qualification deadline — were cancelled.

According to the revised calendar, the HSBC BWF World Tour will return with the Taipei Open Super 300 from September 1-6, while the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals in Aarhus, Denmark will take place on the rescheduled dates of October 3-11.

PTI

## San Siro moves closer to demolition



Milan’s iconic San Siro stadium that is home venue to AC Milan and Inter in Serie A

AFF ■ MILAN

Milan’s San Siro stadium is closer to being demolished after Italy’s heritage authority found that the iconic stadium cannot be protected for cultural or historic reasons.

“The property named *Giuseppe Meazza Stadium* (San Siro) has no cultural interest and as such is excluded from the protection provisions,” the Lombardy region of Italy’s cultural heritage ministry wrote in

a report.

AC Milan and Inter Milan, who share the stadium to the west of the city, have launched their bid to knock down the San Siro and build a new 60,000-capacity home on the same site.

City authorities have been divided over the project and requested the opinion of Italy’s heritage authorities.

The report found that as the San Siro has undergone continuous transformation since being

built in 1926, with only a small part of the original stadium remaining, it would not be subject to protection.

Although approval from Italy’s heritage body is not the final decision, it could be an important step towards both teams’ hope of redeveloping the site.

The clubs want to build a new ground adjacent to the current San Siro, while the old stadium would make way for an area “dedicated to sports, entertainment, and shopping”.

Milan Mayor Giuseppe Sala insists he wants to renovate the existing stadium so that it could celebrate its centenary in 2026 by hosting the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics that year.

Both clubs are former European giants with AC Milan having won the Champions League seven times while Inter were the last Italian team to win the European title, when they lifted the trophy for the third time in 2010.

Neither have won the Serie A title since AC Milan triumphed in 2011.

## 13K cut-outs to attend Gladbach game

AFF ■ MÖNCHENGLADBACH

Nearly 13,000 cardboard cut-outs of Borussia Moenchengladbach supporters are set to welcome the team for Saturday’s Bundesliga match against Bayer Leverkusen behind closed doors.

Gladbach hosted the first Bundesliga game ever played without fans on March 11, shortly before the German season was put on hold because of the coronavirus outbreak.

One of the club’s supporters’ groups, *Fanprojekt Moenchengladbach*, subsequently came up with the idea of allowing fans to print life-sized images of themselves to be placed inside the ground.

The cut-outs line the stadium’s otherwise empty stands, with season ticket holders able to have their cardboard look-alike allocated to their regular spot.

“We’re arranging close to



the focus is on trying to resume cricket, which has come to a halt due to the pandemic.

“We’ve got a lot of home series between now and then, which hopefully will all go successfully, and we’ll give more confidence to the likes of Australia and England, who are due to tour in 2022.”

“But this is about getting cricket back on again. The cricketers want to play and I think it’s important for the global game as well that we start to bring a level of normalcy to playing cricket again — whatever that may look like — over the next six to 12

## Players not allowed loo breaks during training: ICC guidelines

PTI ■ DUBAI

There will neither be loo breaks during training nor the players will be allowed to hand over their caps or sunglasses to the on-field umpires as international cricketers will be required to let go of some of their intrinsic habits when play resumes in the post-Covid-19 world.

In its “back to cricket” guidelines issued for resumption of the game, ICC has effectively barred players from handing over their personal equipments (cap, towel, sunglasses, jumpers) to the umpire or his teammates as part of maintaining social distance.

“Players and umpires should maintain social distancing on the cricket field and that includes no handing over of player items (cap, towels, sunglasses, jumpers) to the umpire or teammates,” read the ICC playing guidelines.

However there was no clarity on who will keep the players’ items?

“Consider adopting a process that will assist the bowler in managing his/her items. Umpires may also be encouraged to use gloves when handling the ball,” says the governing body.

The players are unlikely to keep their cap or sunglasses in the field of play as it

would attract penalty runs just like in the case of a helmet. The ICC also wants them to minimise their “time spent in the changing room before and after a match”.

The ICC Cricket Committee has already recommended ban on using the saliva on the ball and now players have been advised not to “touch eyes, nose, and mouth after making contact with the ball” and sanitise their hands after they come in contact with the ball.

Life might get even tougher for them when they are training for the game with no loo and shower breaks encouraged.

“All participants should adopt a ‘ready to train’ approach where possible i.e. Come to training prepared without the need to use any communal facilities such as changing rooms or showering facilities,” read one of the training guidelines.

“Personal equipment should be sanitised before and after use (training and competition),” read another one.

## India most likely travel to Aus: CA

**MELBOURNE:** There is a 9 out of 10 chance that India will make the trip Down Under for a four-Test series later this year, Cricket Australia chief executive Kevin Roberts said trying to downplay the uncertainty triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“I guess there’s no such thing as certainty in today’s world so I can’t say 10 (out of 10), but I’m going to say nine out of 10,” Roberts told *News Corp*.

“With the variable being, who would know whether we can have crowds ... I’d be really surprised if we can’t get the Indian tour away.

“But I wouldn’t, hand on heart suggest we’ll have full crowds from the start. We’ll just have to see how that goes,” the under-pressure chief executive said.

However, when it comes to away tours, Roberts wants a bio-secure environment which might prompt Cricket Australia to explore options of sending a team for a white ball series in England.

But before that, the CA would wait and watch how the Pakistan and the West Indies tours of England plan out in terms of health safety measures.

“I think there’s some chance we could send a team over,” Roberts said.

“Obviously we won’t jeopardise the safety of the players, but the best test of that is that the West Indian and Pakistan tours of England before we’re due to tour. We hope they go off without a hitch,” Roberts said.

PTI

INDIAN RAILWAYS PARTIALLY RESTORES TRAIN SERVICES I.R. TO RUN 200 MAIL/EXPRESS TRAINS W.E.F. 1st JUNE, 2020	
Ministry of Railways has decided that train services on Indian Railways shall be partially restored w.e.f. 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2020.	
The following trains will originate/terminate on Northern Railway system:-	
LIST OF MAIL/EXPRESS TRAINS ORIGINATING/TERMINATING ON NR	
Train No. & Train Name	Stations Between
01071/72 Kamayani Express	Lokmanya Tilak (T) - Varanasi - Lokmanya Tilak (T)
01093/94 Mahanagari Express	Mumbai (CST) - Varanasi - Mumbai (CST)
02156/55 Bhopal Express	H. Nizamuddin - Habibganj - H. Nizamuddin
02230/29 Lucknow Mail	New Delhi - Lucknow - New Delhi
02392/91 Shramjeevi Express	New Delhi - Rajgir - New Delhi
02394/93 Sampurn Kranti Exp.	New Delhi - Rajendra Nagar (T) - New Delhi
02418/17 Prayagraj Express	New Delhi - Prayagraj - New Delhi
02420/19 Gomti Express	New Delhi - Lucknow - New Delhi
02407/08 Karmabhoomi Superfast	New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar Jn. - New Jalpaiguri
02357/58 Durgiana Express	Kolkata - Amritsar Jn. - Kolkata
02452/51 Shram Shakti Express	New Delhi - Kanpur Central - New Delhi
02463/64 Rajasthan S. Kranti	Delhi Sarai Rohilla - Jodhpur Jn. - Delhi Sarai Rohilla
02533/34 Pushpak Express	Lucknow Jn. - C. Shivaji Maharaj (T) - Lucknow Jn.
02560/59 Shivganga Express	New Delhi - Manduadih - New Delhi
02618/17 Mangla Express	H. Nizamuddin - Ernakulam Jn. - H. Nizamuddin
04009/10 Champaran Satyagrah Ex.	Bapudham Motihari-Anand Vihar (T)-Bapudham Motihari
02629/30 Karnataka Sampark Kranti	Yesvantpur - H. Nizamuddin - Yesvantpur
02715/16 Sachkhand Express	Hazur Sahib Nanded-Amritsar Jn.-Hazur Sahib Nanded
02724/23 Telangana Express	New Delhi - Hyderabad Decan - New Delhi
02801/02 Purushottam Express	Puri - New Delhi - Puri
02904/03 Golden Temple Mail	Amritsar Jn. - Mumbai Central - Amritsar Jn.
02916/15 Ashram Express	Delhi Jn. - Ahmedabad Jn. - Delhi Jn.
02926/25 Paschim Express	Amritsar Jn. - Bandra Terminus - Amritsar Jn.
02963/64 Mewar Express	H. Nizamuddin - Udaipur - H. Nizamuddin
05484/83 Sikkim Mahananda Exp.	Delhi Jn. - Alipur Duar Jn. - Delhi Jn.
02805/06 A.P. Express	Visakhapatnam - New Delhi - Visakhapatnam
02182/81 Express	H. Nizamuddin - Jabalpur - H. Nizamuddin
02217/18 Mahamana Express	Varanasi - New Delhi - Varanasi
09167/68 Sabarmati Express	Ahmedabad Jn. - Varanasi Jn. - Ahmedabad Jn.
02553/54 Vaishali Express	Saharsa Jn. - New Delhi - Saharsa Jn.
02381/82 Poorva Express	Howrah Jn. - New Delhi - Howrah Jn.
02303/04 Poorva Express	Howrah Jn. - New Delhi - Howrah Jn.
02557/58 Sapt Kranti Express	Muzaffarpur Jn. - Anand Vihar (T) - Muzaffarpur Jn.
02573/74 Satyagrah Express	Raxaul Jn. - Anand Vihar (T) - Raxaul Jn.
02219/20 Suhaildev Express	Ghazipur City - Anand Vihar (T) - Ghazipur City
02233/34 Express	Ghazipur - Anand Vihar (T) - Ghazipur
04673/74 Shaheed Express	Jaynagar - Amritsar Jn. - Jaynagar
04649/50 Saryu Yamuna Express	Jaynagar - Amritsar Jn. - Jaynagar
05955/56 Brahmaputra Mail	Dibrugarh - Delhi Jn. - Dibrugarh
02283/84 Duronto Express	Ernakulam Jn. - H. Nizamuddin - Ernakulam Jn.
02285/86 Duronto Express	Secunderabad Jn. - H. Nizamuddin - Secunderabad Jn.
02091/92 Jan Shatabdi Express	Dehradun - Kathgodam - Dehradun
02053/54 Jan Shatabdi Express	Haridwar Jn. - Amritsar Jn. - Haridwar Jn.
02055/56 Jan Shatabdi Express	New Delhi - Dehradun - New Delhi
02057/58 Jan Shatabdi Express	New Delhi - Una Himachal - New Delhi
02065/66 Jan Shatabdi Express	Ajmer - Delhi Sarai Rohilla - Ajmer
02059/60 Jan Shatabdi Express	Kota Jn. - H. Nizamuddin - Kota Jn.
02565/66 Bihar Sampark Kranti	Darbhanga Jn. - New Delhi - Darbhanga Jn.
02917/18 Gujarat Sampark Kranti	Ahmedabad Jn. - H. Nizamuddin - Ahmedabad Jn.
02779/80 Goa Express	Vasco-da-Gama - H. Nizamuddin - Vasco-da-Gama
PASSING TRAINS HAVING STOPPAGE ON NR	
Train No. & Train Name	Stations Between (Stoppage on NR)
02555/56 Gorakhdham Express	Gorakhpur-Hisar-Gorakhpur (via Barabanki,Lucknow, New Delhi)
09037/38 Avadh Express	Bandra Terminus-Gorakhpur-Bandra Terminus (via Lucknow City)
09039/40 Avadh Express	Bandra Terminus-Muzaffarpur-Bandra Terminus (via Lucknow City)
09165/66 Sabarmati Express	Ahmedabad - Darbhanga Jn. - Ahmedabad (via Lucknow)
01016/15 Kushinagar Express	Gorakhpur - Lokmanya Tilak (T) - Gorakhpur (via Barabanki Jn.)
01061/62 Darbhanga Express	Lokmanya Tilak (T)-Darbhanga - Lokmanya Tilak (T) (via Varanasi Jn.)
02792/91 Express	Danapur - Secunderabad Jn. - Danapur (via Varanasi Jn.)
09045/46 Tapti Ganga Express	Surat - Chhapra - Surat (via Varanasi Jn.)
Note : Reservation/Booking in the above trains may be done through any PRS counter, IRCTC, Authorised Rail Travel Agents and Common Service Centres etc.	
Note :- For Time Table, frequency & stoppages of the above trains, passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <a href="http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in">www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in</a>	
Integrated Helpline No. 139 and Security Helpline No. 182	
Please join us on	 <b>NORTHERN RAILWAY</b> visit us at: <a href="http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in</a>
	
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