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NEW DELHI, THURSDAY MAY 28, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3

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Nepal defers new map Act call

Lack of consensus forces Oli Govt to delay Parliament debate to include Indian territories in their map

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal has delayed a discussion in Parliament to amend the Constitution for updating the country's map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura under its territory as Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has decided to seek national consensus on the issue amid a border dispute with India, parliamentary sources said on Wednesday.

The Constitution amendment proposal was to be tabled in Parliament on Tuesday but it could not be done after Oli said that he wanted to hold an all-party meeting to discuss the matter. Amid rising tensions, Oli is seeking other parties' views on the issue and called the all-party meeting to forge



national consensus before moving the Constitution amendment proposal forward, the sources said.

The ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) commands a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, but it needs support from other parties to get the Constitution

amendment proposal through the Lower House, as it falls short of around 10 seats.

Ganesh Shah, the ruling NCP's standing committee member, said that the Government has decided to hold the discussion on Constitution amendment for the time being as per the



request of the main Opposition Nepali Congress (NC) and Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP), a key Madhesi party. The NC sought some time as the matter should be discussed in its Central Committee Meeting, before being brought to Parliament for discussion. The SJP has demanded that their

long-standing issues relating to the re-demarcation of the provinces and citizenship should also be incorporated while amending the Constitution amendment.

The Government had registered the amendment proposal in Parliament on May 22 after releasing the new political map of Nepal depicting Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura as its territories on May 18.

Reacting to Nepal's move, India on Wednesday bluntly asked it not to resort to any "artificial enlargement" of its territorial claim after the neighbouring country came up with a new political map showing Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani as its territory.

Continued on Page 2

China hints at talks to end LAC tension

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As tension simmers on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, China on Wednesday hinted that talks are the only way to defuse the four ongoing standoffs with India.

While its envoy in New Delhi said the difference should be resolved through communications, his Government in Beijing said both the countries have proper mechanisms to find solution through dialogue. It also said the situation on the border is "overall stable and controllable".

This indicated that diplomatic and military level parleys between the two countries are now on in full swing to come at an amicable agreement enabling the two Armies to move back from each other thereby ending the eyeball to eyeball confrontation.

At least six rounds of talks at the local level at the rank of Brigadiers were held so far between the two sides in the last 20 days but of no avail so far.

Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong said in New Delhi the two nations should never let their differences shadow the overall bilat-

Two countries must enhance mutual trust: Chinese envoy



eral ties and must enhance mutual trust.

Without referring to the military standoff, Sun said both the sides should resolve their differences through communication and adhere to the basic premise that they pose no threat to each other.

"We should correctly view our differences and never let them shadow the overall situation of bilateral cooperation.

At the same time, we should gradually seek understanding through communication and constantly resolve differences," Sun said.

He was speaking at an online interactive session organised by Confederation of Young Leaders (CYL). "We should adhere to the basic judgment that China and India are each other's opportunities and pose no threat to each other. We need to see each other's development in a correct way and enhance strategic mutual trust," he said.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

AID TO PM CARES FUND TO BE TERMED CSR SPENDING

New Delhi: The Government has amended the norms whereby contributions by corporates to the PM CARES Fund will qualify as CSR spending under the companies law.

LOCUSTS REACH JHANSI, MAY HEAD TO MAHA

New Delhi/Jhansi/Nagpur: After damaging crops in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, swarms of locusts entered Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi on Wednesday and could head towards Maharashtra amid what is being described as the worst attack in 26 years.

Maha shows fall but spike in other States hikes corona number by 7K

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maharashtra may be showing signs of stabilising in the range of 2,000-2,200 new cases in a day, but the situation is fast taking a turn for the worse elsewhere in the country. On Wednesday, India saw the biggest single day spike of 7,270 new cases and 187 deaths, due to alarming spurt in Tamil Nadu, Delhi, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and States which had so far been able to contain the fury of the coronavirus.

Maharashtra reported 2,190 new cases and 105 death, which is on the very high side but far better than the 3,000-plus number it reported five days ago. The State has a total 56,948 cases and 1,897 deaths.



The death figure of 105 is highest single day count so far.

Engaged in a fierce battle against coronavirus, Maharashtra is also witnessing a bitter political war between the ruling alliance and the BJP.

On Wednesday, the Ministers belonging to the three constituents of the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress —

ripped into the Opposition BJP, demanding to know if it was a friend or foe of Maharashtra and picking holes in the statistics provided by former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis about the Central assistance to the State.

Addressing a joint news conference at the Shiv Sena's south Mumbai office, Water Resources Minister Jayant Patil, Congress Minister Balarsaheb Thorat and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat came down heavily on Fadnavis for trying to "malign" the Government.

Continued on Page 2

COVID IS HERE TO STAY TILL 2021, AGGRESSIVE TESTING NEEDED: HEALTH EXPERTS

New Delhi: Two global health experts on Wednesday said novel coronavirus infection is here to stay for more than a year and called for aggressive testing to prevent its spread.

While US health expert Professor Ashish Jha exuded confidence that a vaccine for the highly infectious disease will be available in a year's time,

Professor Johan Giesecke from Sweden said India should adopt a 'soft' lockdown as a severe one will ruin its economy. In an interaction with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the experts talked extensively about the Covid-19 pandemic as part of the series being aired on Congress social media channels.

Detailed report on P4

Covid-19

TOTAL CASES: 1,58,086
DEATHS: 4,534
RECOVERED: 67,792

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	56,948	1,897	17,918
Tamil Nadu	18,545	136	9,909
Delhi	15,257	303	7,264
Gujarat	15,205	938	7,549
Rajasthan	7,816	172	4,562
Madhya Pradesh	7,261	313	3,927
Uttar Pradesh	6,991	182	3,991
West Bengal	4,192	289	1,578
Andhra Pradesh	3,117	58	2,065
Bihar	3,036	15	918

Pvt hospitals took land for free, they must treat Covid free: SC to Centre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday blasted private hospitals who set up their buildings on land given by the Government for free but failed to reciprocate by helping the Government in treating the poor Covid patients for free.

"They have been given land either free of cost or at a very nominal cost. These private charitable hospitals should treat them for free," a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India SA Bobde asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta. The SC asked Mehta to identify such private hospitals, which have been allotted free land.

Migrants worst sufferers, 8 die in tragic way

PREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■ LUCKNOW

Migrants remained the worst sufferers of corona pandemic with eight of them dying in tragic circumstances on Wednesday. Three women and a man came under the wheels of Shramik Express in Chandauli district in Ballia, while four others were found dead on special trains in Varanasi.

According to driver of Shramik Express, four persons were sleeping on tracks at Khobarwa hamlet of Hinauta



Jagdhisarai under Sadar Kotwali police station of Chandauli late on Tuesday.

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Now, flyers pose spread threat, 7 in 4 flights test corona +ve

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After migrant workers, air passengers have posed a serious threat amid coronavirus pandemic across India as seven air travelers in four different domestic flights have tested positive so far after the opening of domestic flights on May 25.

Three air passengers who arrived in Jammu, one member of Air India security staff in Delhi-Ludhiana flight and one passenger of IndiGo Chennai to Coimbatore flight tested positive. Besides, two crew members of Air India's Toronto to Delhi flight (for bringing



stranded Indians) have tested positive for Covid-19.

The incident of coronavirus patients undertaking air travel in domestic flights has led to serious concerns not only over the implementation of

safety norms by airports, but on the entire decision of resuming flight operations. Three air passengers who had arrived in Jammu via air tested positive for coronavirus on Wednesday.

Continued on Page 2

Your homemade layered cloth mask can block coronavirus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

You don't need to purchase a costly face mask such as N95 to keep the Covid-19 at bay. Cloth masks, particularly those with several layers of cotton cloth, are enough as they can reduce transmission of the deadly virus by blocking up to 99 per cent of infectious particles, said researchers in their study published in the journal Annals of Internal Medicine.

Scientists, including those from McMaster University in Canada, said most virus transmission occurs via larger particles in secretions like droplets,



generated while speaking, coughing, or sneezing, and some are created when water evaporates from these droplets, turning them into aerosol-sized particles.

"The point is not that some particles can penetrate the

mask, but that some particles are stopped, particularly outwardly, from the wearer," said study first author Catherine Clase from McMaster University in Canada.

"Ideally, we would want a mask to work in both directions, protecting the wearer from the environment and reducing the contamination of the environment by the wearer," Clase added.

The review suggests that cloth can block particles, even aerosol-sized particles, and this supports Canadian public health policy on the issue.

Continued on Page 2

Reply to plea against Tablighi incident slur, SC asks Centre, PCI

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed that the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) be also made a party to the pleas alleging that a section of the media has been fanning communal hatred by portraying Tablighi Jamaat congregation, held in March in Delhi, as being one of the main reasons for the spread of Covid-19.

While issuing notices to the Centre and the Press Council of India (PCI), a Bench comprising Chief Justice SA Bobde, AS Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy said it takes all matters "seriously", when a lawyer urged it to do so.

Continued on Page 2

Grateful farm employee books air tickets for his stranded workers

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

While an innumerable number of migrant labourers, mostly hailing from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, have set off on foot in the scorching heat to reach their homes hundreds of miles away after they were left in the lurch by their employers in the cities, a farmer in National Capital's Tigipur village has set an example by booking flight tickets to Bihar for 10 labourers who have been working in his mushroom farm for the last 27 years.

"They have always stood by us and now it is the time for us



to stand by them in the time of their despair," Pappan Singh Gahlot, the farmer, said, adding the flight is scheduled to leave on May 28 morning.

"Every year some families hailing from Sripur Gahar village in Bihar's Samastipur,

come here to sow my field and thereafter they return to their homes. This time around 10 labourers had arrived here to sow my field but lockdown was announced and they got stuck here," said Gahlot.

Detailed report on P3

Trump threatens to shut Twitter after it labels Prez tweets with fact checks

Washington: For the first time, Twitter put a warning label under two posts by Donald Trump, prompting the US President to accuse it of "interfering" in the presidential election and even threatened to close down the social media platforms.

Twitter highlighted two of Trump's tweets on Tuesday that falsely claimed mail-in ballots would lead to widespread voter fraud in the polls, appending a message Twitter introduced recently to fight misinformation or unverified claims.

Detailed report on P8

HEALTH SCAM ROW

Himachal BJP prez resigns over ‘scam’

Shimla: Himachal Pradesh BJP president Rajeev Bindal resigned from his post on Wednesday within four-and-a-half months of his appointment, saying he was doing so to ensure a proper investigation into the case of alleged corruption by a Health Department official.

In a resignation letter sent to BJP president JP Nadda, Bindal stated that he was tendering his resignation on high moral grounds as some people were dragging the party’s name in the alleged corruption case.

Health Services Director Ajay Kumar Gupta was arrested on May 20 by the State Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau after a 43-second audio

recording went viral, in which he purportedly asks the other person for a bribe of ₹5 lakh.

Gupta was placed under suspension by the State Government after his arrest, an official said.

Bindal, who became state BJP president on January 18 after resigning from the post of assembly Speaker, said he resigned so that the case might be thoroughly investigated without any pressure.

The resignation has been accepted by the BJP president, the party said. Bindal said that BJP had nothing to do with the alleged corruption, adding that the state government had acted promptly and took action against the health official.

Without naming anyone, he said dragging the BJP’s name in the case was “injustice to social service” done by the party during the coronavirus lockdown by distributing over five lakh food packets, 1.10 lakh ration kits and over 30 lakh face masks.

Reacting to the resignation, the Congress said that BJP cannot get rid of the “sin of corruption” in the Health Department amid the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The state Congress demanded that the probe into the scam should be entrusted to a sitting high court judge as it had no faith in the probe being conducted by the vigilance bureau. **PTI**

Punjab CM to decide on lockdown extension on May 30

Chandigarh: The Punjab Government will decide on the future course of action with respect to the lockdown in the State on May 30.

Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh will chair a review meeting with the concerned departments on the over-all Covid situation in the state on May 30, and announce the Government’s decision on lifting or further extension of lockdown thereafter.

Disclosing this on Wednesday after the Cabinet meeting, an official spokesperson said the Cabinet decided that the decision should be taken after on-ground assessment of the situation a couple of days before the current lockdown is due to end. Any decision on extension, with our without relaxations, will be taken after the review meeting.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet complimented the Food & Civil Supplies department for ensuring seamless procurement of wheat during Rabi Marketing Season 2020-21 especially amid the trying Covid-19 and lockdown situation.

Will launch Statewide stir in Haryana if curbs on paddy cultivation stay: Hooda

Chandigarh: Former Haryana Chief Minister and Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Wednesday threatened to launch a statewide agitation from next month if the Government did not lift restrictions on paddy cultivation in parts of the state.

Hooda’s warning has come a day after Haryana Chief Minister ML Khattar defended the recently launched Mera Pani, Meri Virasat scheme, aimed at crop diversification.

Hooda, who is the leader of the Opposition in the state assembly, gave the Government an ultimatum to withdraw its decision by June 1.

If the Government failed to do so, our party will take the issue to every farmer in the state and a detailed programme of agitation will be announced in Kurukshetra, he said.

The Congress recently slammed the crop diversification scheme, saying the Government wants farmers in 19 blocks to stop cultivating paddy and punish them by denying MSP for it in case they choose to grow the crop.

The Congress has alleged that the Government wants to deny farmers in 26 other blocks the right to grow paddy on the panchayati land.

Hooda accused the Government of being stubborn on the issue, saying it remained adamant despite repeated pleas. **PTI**

Assam flood situation worsens: 1 dead, nearly 3 lakh affected in 11 districts

Guwahati: The flood situation in Assam worsened on Wednesday with one person losing his life and nearly three lakh people suffering in the deluge across 11 districts.

According to the daily flood report of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), one person was killed at Rongliuli in Goalpara district.

At present, around 2.72 lakh persons are affected due to flood in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Nagaon, Hojai, Darrang, Barpeta, Nalbari, Goalpara, West Karbi Anglong, Dibrugarh and

Tinsukia districts, it said.

Goalpara is the worst-hit district with 2.15 lakh people affected, followed by Nalbari with over 22,000 people hit and Nagaon with nearly 11,000 persons.

Till Tuesday, around 1.95 lakh people were affected in seven districts.

The NDRF and SDRF have rescued nine people in the last 24 hours in Goalpara, while 172.53 quintals of rice, dal, salt and 804.42 litres of mustard oil have been distributed along with tarpaulin and other essential items. **PTI**

Maha shows fall but spike...

From Page 1

After Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu has emerged as the worst affected State. On Wednesday, TN reported 817 new cases and 6 deaths. The overall count for the State stands at 18,545 and 136 deaths.

The Government release said that out of the 817 persons tested positive on Wednesday, 138 were from Maharashtra. A total number of 4,42,970 samples have been tested in Tamil Nadu till date and there are 70 laboratories working round the clock to test the samples. On Wednesday alone 11, 231 samples were tested in the State.

Delhi recorded 792 new cases and 16 deaths, Gujarat reported 376 fresh cases and 26 deaths, and Rajasthan logged 144 new cases and 2 fatalities

while Madhya Pradesh tracked 237 new patients and 8 deaths.

Jammu & Kashmir saw massive spike of 162 cases from a base of around 1,830 cases while West Bengal reported 183 cases to take its tally to 4,192. Bihar, which has seen a manifold increase in number of cases in the last 25 days, reported 44 cases to 3,000 mark.

Assam which has just around 650 cases till Tuesday reported a 10 per cent spike in day reporting 92 new cases, while Kerala, which had contained the virus, traced 40 new cases on Wednesday, taking its overall tally to 1,004.

Odisha reported 76 new case while Uttarakhand reported 69 new cases, which is 15 per cent hike in day from a base of 400.

Trumps offers to...

From Page 1

On the same day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi took stock of the situation and India’s operational preparedness to tackle any challenge with the security top brass including National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat.

Sources said the main outcome of the high-profile meeting was that India will continue to improve its infrastructure on the LAC despite Chinese protests. In fact, one of the standoffs in the Galwan valley is on as the Chinese do not want India to construct a bridge on the strategically important 250-km long road there. New Delhi says the road is well within the Indian territory.

Incidentally, last week, the outgoing head of the State Department’s South and Central Asia bureau Alice Wells supported Indian position in the border dispute with China and said such disputes are a “reminder of the threat posed by China”.

Wells said like-minded nations such as the US, India, Australia and Asean states have rallied together in the face of China’s “provocations and disturbing behaviour”.

“The flare-ups on the border, I think, are a reminder that Chinese aggression is not always just rhetorical. And so whether it’s in the South China Sea or whether it’s along the border with India, we continue to see provocations and disturbing behaviour by China that raises questions about how China seeks to use its growing power,” she said.

China hints at talks...

From Page 1

“China and India should be good neighbours of harmonious coexistence and good partners to move forward hand in hand. The realisation of “Dragon and Elephant dancing together” is the only right choice for China and India, which serves the fundamental interests of our two countries and two peoples,” he added.

In Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said the situation at the border with India is “overall stable and controllable,” and both the countries have proper mechanisms and communication channels to resolve the issues through dialogue and consultation.

“We are committed to safeguarding our territorial sovereignty and security and safeguarding peace and stability in the border areas. Now the China-India border area situation is overall stable and controllable. Between the two countries, we have good border related mechanism and communication channels” the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said during a media briefing.

He also said the two countries are capable of resolving the issues “properly though dialogue and consultation.”

“We have been following the important consensus reached by the two leaders and strictly observing the agreements between the two countries,” he said, apparently referring to the directions of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi after their two informal summits, asking the militaries of the two countries to take more confidence building measures. On being asked if talks are being held through diplomatic channels, Zhao said, “I think we have established border related mechanisms and diplomatic channels. This includes the communication between border troops, and between our diplomatic missions.”



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Reply to plea against Tablighi...

From Page 1

It asked the authorities to respond within two weeks to the pleas seeking action against some media houses for allegedly spreading communal hatred over the congregation and also apprise it of the actions taken with regard to alleged violation of the Cable Television (Regulation) Act by them.

“The petitioners (Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and others) are directed to implead the NBA as party respondent in the array of parties. Issue notice to all the respondents as also the newly added respondent(s),” the Bench said

in the order, passed in the hearing conducted through video conferencing.

It said the copies of the petitions be served to the Centre and others during the day and fixed the matters for hearing on June 15.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for Jamiat, alleged that fake news was “galore” in relation to Tablighi Jamaat issue and such reports have damaged the secular fabric of the nation.

Circulation of such fake news constituted an offence and strict actions were needed, he added.

The top court had on

April 13 said it would “not gag the press” and had asked Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind to implead the PCI as a party to the case.

It had said it would not pass any interim order in the matter at this stage.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind has sought directions to the Centre to stop dissemination of “fake news” and take strict action against those responsible for it.

The plea has alleged that unfortunate incident of Tablighi Jamaat was being used to “demonise” and blame the entire Muslim community.

As per the media reports, at least 9,000 people had participated in the religious gathering at Tablighi Jamaat’s headquarters in Nizamuddin West and the congregation became a key source for the spread of Covid-19 in India as many of the participants had travelled to various parts of the country for missionary works.

The plea has sought directions to the Centre to stop dissemination of fake news and take strict action against the section of the media spreading bigotry and communal hatred in relation to the Nizamuddin Markaz issue.

“It is submitted that such reporting has triggered communal antagonism and has also perpetrated hatred, result-

ing in fissiparous tendencies gaining foothold, undermining and affecting communal harmony,” the plea has said.

The petition further stated that this “demonisation” of the community has led to serious “threat to life and liberty of Muslims”, and has thus led to the violation of their “right to life under Article 21” of the Constitution.

It has also sought direction to all sections of media to strictly comply with the Supreme Court directions asking them to maintain strong sense of responsibility and ensure that unverified news is not disseminated.

Later, three more similar petitions were filed which were heard together on Wednesday.

Delhi sees...

From Page 1

Dr Balvinder Singh, the medical superintendent of Safdarjung Hospital, told PTI that officials of the Delhi government are constantly changing their Covid-19 death data collection teams because of which there has been a “miscommunication” among its own staffers. Singh said the hospital has been reporting deaths on a daily basis and the accumulative data of Covid-19 deaths from February 1 to May 16 was misconstrued as a single day death which is very erroneous. “On Tuesday evening, the Safdarjung Hospital submitted reports on 52 fatalities that have taken place at the facility in the last two months. The reports have been submitted to the Delhi death audit committee.

“Until now, the hospital had sent reports on four deaths caused by Covid-19” an official source told.

in Varanasi on Wednesday morning, two migrants were found dead in separate coaches. One of the victims was identified as Dashrath Prajapati (30).

His brother, Lalmani, hailing from Lalpura in Badlapur area of Jaunpur, who was also travelling in the same train claimed that as the train left Prayagraj, condition of his brother started deteriorating and he collapsed when they reach Varanasi. Dashrath was also physically challenged.

The other passenger who was also found dead in another coach of the same train was identified as Ram Ratan Gaud (63), a resident of Raunapar in Azamgarh. The cops of Railway Protection Force (RPF) used PPE kit to seal the bodies and sent them for postmortem. At Ballia railway station also, two migrants were found dead. Bhushan Singh (48), a resident of Ekmacharan in Hazipur district of Bihar was returning from Surat on Shramik Express and was found dead when the train halted at Ballia railway station on Tuesday night.

Your...

From Page 1

Whether cloth masks protect others from the wearer was studied in the 1960s and 1970s, the researchers said.

According to the study, a mask made of three layers (muslin-flannel-muslin) reduced surface contamination by 99 per cent, total airborne microorganisms by 99 per cent, and bacteria recovered from the smaller particles, aerosols by 88 per cent to 99 per cent. A commercial mask made of four-layer cotton muslin was shown to reduce all particles by 99 per cent, compared with 96 per cent to 99 per cent for contemporary disposable medical masks.

Even for aerosols, the cloth mask was comparable with the medical masks of the day, the researchers said. The filtration of cloth is quite variable and single layers of the scarf, sweat-shirt and T-shirt may be in the 10 to 40 per cent range. But multiple layers increase efficiency, and modern studies have confirmed that some combinations of cloth, for example, cotton-flannel, block more than 90 per cent of particles.

“Our work is just one part of a complex puzzle. In terms of making masks, it is important to realise that more layers will give more protection, both inward and outward, but will make it harder to breathe,” Clase said.

The researchers note that more research is also needed into the best materials and design of cloth masks, to help the many people who are sewing masks to protect people in their community.

Another study, published last month in the journal ACS Nano, revealed that a combination of cotton with natural silk or chiffon can effectively filter out aerosol particles.

WESTERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

To Tender Notice No.: BCT/20-21/120 dt. 22.06.2020 due on 22/06/2020. The Name of Work of Subject has been Amended and Now may be Read As under: Existing: Udhna-Jalgaon Section: Providing and Supplying, Fixing of Retro Reflective Engineering Indicators Boards. **May be Read As: Udhna-Ukai Soghad Section:** Providing and Supplying, Fixing of Retro Reflective Engineering Indicators Boards under DEN (Central). The other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

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दैनिक : 22/06/2020

उ०३०० जल निगम की ओर से नलकूप निर्माण में अनुमती फर्मों से जनपद सहारनपुर में नगर निगम सहारनपुर के कार्य क्षेत्र में कार्य स्थलों पर आर०३००० रिग मशीन से ०१ नंग नलकूप साइज ३००x२०० मिमी (महाराई १६०-१७० मी०) के निर्माण कार्य, नलकूप की सम्पूर्ण एस्केल्मी एवं एसेसरीज एवं पुराने नलकूप से नये रीबीर नलकूप के इन्टर-कनेक्शन हेतु ई-निविदाओं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। प्राप्त निविदाओं को दिनांक १०.०६.२०२० को अधिशासी अभियन्ता, यांत्रिक खाण्ड, उ०३०० जल निगम, मेरठ के कार्यालय में निविदा संप्रति द्वारा उपस्थित ठेकेदारों के समक्ष पूर्वाह्न १५:०० बजे खोली जायेगी। निविदाओं को उ०३०० ई-Procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर दिनांक २९.०५.२०२० से ०८.०६.२०२० तक डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। निविदा प्रप्त का मूल्य ₹० ३०००.०० (+18%) GST है। निविदा सूचना से सम्बन्धित विवरण जल निगम की वेबसाइट jn.upscd.gov.in पर एवं कार्यों का विस्तृत विवरण E-Procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है।

Prepare micro-plan for opening schools: Sisodia to principals

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday directed all Delhi Government school principals to prepare a micro-plan for opening the schools.

Interacting with over 1,000 Delhi government school principals, Sisodia said “We cannot have one common plan for all schools to re-open them this year,” he said.

“The reason behind following an elaborate planning process is because we need to keep many factors in mind before taking a decision. It is not just about maintaining social distancing or sanitization alone or calling one set of

classes to school and not the others,” he said.

Any decision will have far reaching implications on children and their families because school is an integral part of our social life, he said, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown has caused closure of schools since March 2020.

Sisodia, also the Deputy Chief Minister, said the agenda of his meeting was two-fold. “How should we stay connected with our children and their parents in this time when lockdown is impacting different people differently? This will help us to directly understand their situation and prepare better and how do we plan the



reopening of schools whenever we get the go ahead,” he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister asked the principals to reach out to all children through

phone to see if they are in Delhi or has gone back to their native place and to check if they were able to use online classes, SMS and what is their feedback



about it.

He also appealed principals to lead an in-depth brainstorming at school level involving all key stakeholders and come up with a micro-plan on

how to lead the transition when the time comes. “We cannot have a common plan to re-open for all schools this year as the context of every school is different,” he added.

Planning the reopening of school is a challenging task because apart from academic we have to keep many other factors in mind like health, safety, trust, emotional well being, and so on, he said, adding that the other challenge is that all these have to be done without extra financial resources from the government.

A “Preparatory Planning Framework for Heads of Schools” has been issued by the department of education on

Tuesday to help the schools formulate the strategy, he said.

As per this framework, all head of schools will first meet in a cluster of about 10 to discuss about the issues that they need to keep in mind while planning for their school, he added.

Sisodia further said that principals have been asked to submit their school level plan to DDE (zone) and DDE (district) should study it. DDE (district) shall present a district wise plan to Deputy Chief Minister after June 5.

Explaining the planning framework, the Deputy Chief Minister said, it has three broad components:

“What we need to keep in

mind before we reopen the schools. What we need to put in place before schools starts and what is the basis on which school makes its plan? For example strengths, limitations, overall context, etc,” he said.

Deputy Chief Minister also emphasized that school should follow some points in mind while preparing their plan such as how should we provide social-emotional support to all our children, how should we ensure that we stay in touch with all our children and support them so that they do not drop out from school and join the work force and which classes should come for daily teaching-learning when school reopens etc.

ATTENDING NIZAMUDDIN EVENT

15 fresh chargesheets against 294 foreigners

STAFF REPORTER ■

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Wednesday filed 15 fresh chargesheets against 294 foreigners for attending a religious congregation at Nizamuddin Markaz in a Delhi local court following a violation of visa conditions and indulging in missionary activities amidst the Covid-19 outbreak in the country.

According to police, on Wednesday they have filed 15 charge sheets against the foreigners belonging to 14 different countries, including Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and several African nations and Metropolitan Magistrate Saema Jamil has put up the matter for further hearing on June 17.

Earlier on Tuesday, the police had filed 20 chargesheet against 85 foreigners from 20 countries in the case.

“The foreign nationals have been booked for violating visa rules, violating government guidelines issued in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic and regulations regarding Epidemic diseases Act, Disaster Management Act and



prohibitory orders under section 144 of Code of Criminal Procedure,” police said in its chargesheet.

“They have also been booked for the offences under sections 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (Negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), 270 (Malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and 271 (Disobedience to quarantine rule) of the Indian Penal Code,” police stated in its chargesheet.

According to the charge sheet, four of the accused

were from Afghanistan, seven each from Brazil and China, five from US, two from Australia, Kazakhstan, Morocco, UK, one each from Ukraine, Egypt, Russia, Jordan, France, Tunisia, Belgium, eight from Algeria, 10 from Saudi Arabia, 14 from Fiji and six each from Sudan and Philippines.

Police said that the foreign nationals violated government guidelines issued in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic and regulations regarding Epidemic diseases Act, Disaster Management Act and prohibitory orders under section 144 of Code of Criminal

Procedure.

After being exposed to a large gathering in March amid the COVID-19 or coronavirus lockdown many members of Tablighi Jamaat from Markaz Hazrat Nizamuddin were taken out by the authorities and lodged in different quarantine centres in Delhi. Some of them were sent to the centres a few days later after being detained from various mosques.

The other members were directly taken to quarantine centres to contain the spread of COVID-19. At least 9,000 people, including the foreign nationals participated in the religious congregation in Nizamuddin. Later, many of the attendees travelled to various parts of the country.

According to police, these foreign nationals had entered India on tourist visa and had participated in the gathering at Markaz illegally.

Besides, violating the provisions of visa, these foreign nationals also led to a situation where a highly infectious disease Covid-19 infection spread and threatened the lives of the inmates and the general public at large.

The police also said that

more than 900 foreign nationals who are accused in the case belong to 34 different countries and charge sheets are being prepared country-wise, under sections of Foreigners Act, The Epidemic Diseases Act, Disaster Management Act and section 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (Negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), 270 (Malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and 271 (Disobedience to quarantine rule) of the Indian Penal Code.

The punishment for various offences under penal provisions ranges from six months to eight years of imprisonment.

On March 31, Delhi Police’s Crime Branch lodged an FIR against seven people, including Tablighi Jamaat leader Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, on a complaint by Station House Officer Nizamuddin for holding a religious congregation here allegedly in violation of the lockdown orders and not maintaining social distancing to contain the spread of coronavirus.

NDMC seals two dept after four staffers test corona +ve

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■

NEW DELHI

New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Wednesday sealed its Accounts department and commercial department at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Place after four of its staff tested Covid-19 positive.

Fourteen others staff who had come in their contact, are also suspected to have infected with Coronavirus, a senior NDMC official said, adding that contact tracing is being done to identify persons came in contact of them.

According to an order issued by director (coordination) Virender Singh on Wednesday, who is nodal officer for Covid-19, directions are issued with the approval of competent authority in NDMC to seal account department and commercial department at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Place.

The employees working in the accounts department (6th floor) Palika Kendra and commercial department at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Place are directed to work from home during this period, according to the order.

The civic body has also

approached the district authorities to carry out contact tracing as per standard operating procedure.

“Staff members, who had come in contact of affected persons, have been directed to observe home quarantine and to report to district authority in case they develop any symptoms.

Public health and civil department have been instructed to carry out extensive sanitization drive for three times daily to disinfect the building and surrounding areas, it said.

The order came after a letter written by Suresh Aggarwal, AAO of ‘Computer Billing Section’ (CBS) informing NDMC authorities about cases. “One of our staff (peon) in computer billing section tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday. He visited Ayushman Hospital, Dwarka with fever where he was tested positive and later shifted to Najafgarh quarantine Centre. He attended office last on Friday and many other staff came in his contact,” the letter stated.

A senior assistant of accounts branch has also tested positive for Covid-19, it said.

The other staffs of billing section have also informed that they have also developed symptoms and not feeling well,” it stated, adding that some of them advised to rest after they informed that their family members have also shown similar symptoms.

However, other staff of computer billing section continue attending offices but scared of getting infected themselves by working in such circumstances, it said.

With this, the number of staff infected with life-threatening Coronavirus has reached to seven till now. Earlier, this month one sanitation worker and an engineer of the civic body had tested positive for Covid-19.

Last week, the NDMC had sealed a dispensary at Palika Kendra after an allopathic doctor tested positive for Covid-19.

A senior NDMC official said that the dispensary was sealed but now it is opened for public.

Twenty other staff including doctors and other medical staff deputed at the dispensary was placed under home-quarantine and they all tested negative.

Power demand surges to season’s highest so far

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi peak power demand clocked 5,464 MW, seasons’ highest and expected to touch a record high of 7500 MW in July.

A senior BSES official said that power demand recorded 5,464 MW on Tuesday which is marginally more than the peak power demand (5236 MW) recorded on May 26 last year.

Tata Power Delhi

Distribution (Tata Power-DDL) successfully met the peak power demand of 1556 MW on Tuesday Night, the hottest day in 18 years without any network constraint and power outage as Delhi touched season’s high of 5464 MW amidst the ongoing heat wave.

Ganesh Srinivasan, CEO of Tata Power-DDL “We witnessed the hottest day since 2002 on Tuesday in Delhi. This has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the

The official further said that arrangements have been firm up by BSES discoms to source adequate electricity to meet the power demand of over 44 lakhs consumers

power demand as more and more consumers switched on their air conditioners. However, we were successful in meeting the peak demand without any

constraints,” he said.

“Adequate arrangements of power of up to 2500 MW along with contingency plan, through long-term tie-ups, bilateral imports & power banking arrangements with other states and assure our consumers 24x7 power supply this harsh summer season,” he said.

Meanwhile, a BSES official said that on their part, BRPL and BYPL successfully met the peak power demand of 2542 MW and 1174 MW respec-

tively. Last year, peak power demand had clocked 7409 MW in the National Capital.

“Being in essential services, BSES is always geared-up to ensure quality and reliable power supply to its consumers. We are closely watching the evolving Corona Virus situation in the national Capital and taking all appropriate measures to ensure reliable power supply to our consumers without compromising the safety of our employees,” he said.

The official further said that arrangements have been firmed up by BSES discoms to source adequate electricity to meet the power demand of over 44 lakhs consumers. These arrangements include long term PPAs and banking arrangements with other states. In case of unforeseen contingencies because of low generation and outages in power plants, the discoms will purchase short-term power from the exchange.

Fireman hurt while battling flames in Vikaspuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A fireman was injured while trying to douse a fire that broke out in an office in West Delhi’s Vikaspuri. The incident was reported on Tuesday night.

According to Delhi Fire Service (DFS) official, after a call regarding fire in Vikaspuri was received on Tuesday night two fire tenders were rushed to the spot. “LPG cylinders kept in the office exploded during the fire-fighting operation and one of the firemen got trapped and suffered injuries, said Atul Garg, Director, DFS.

The fireman identified as Murarilal was taken to a nearby hospital from where he was referred to the Safdarjung hospital. The fire was later doused.

In other incident, the DFS rescued 20 people safely from a building in Gujatawala Town part-2.

“On Wednesday at 5.10 pm, the fire department received information regarding a blaze in electric meter board at the ground floor of a building in Gujatawala Town part-2,” said Garg.

“Three fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The building was comprises of ground plus three floors. Total 20 people rescued from first and third floor,” he added.

Shops raided for selling spurious hand sanitisers

NEW DELHI: Raids are being conducted in Bhagirath Palace, Delhi’s biggest market for medicines, against shops selling inferior quality and fake hand sanitisers. The Drug Control Department of the Delhi Government on Wednesday collected samples of hand sanitisers from several shops in Bhagirath Palace and raided several others.

Atul Kumar Nasa, head of the Drug Control Department, said about the action being

taken that “The team has been sent by the department to raid the shops selling inferior hand sanitisers. This team of drug control department is raiding shops selling substandard products here,” he said.

“Samples have also been collected from many shops here to know the quality of sanitisers,” he said.

In Bhagirath Palace, sanitisers of unnamed and dubious firms are available in five-litre

cans at many shops. On asking shopkeepers about the price of these, IANS found that a five-litre can of sanitiser is available for just Rs 400. One such shopkeeper giving his name as A.K. Jain, said, “We are selling 5 litre cans of hand sanitiser for Rs 400. When taken in bulk, we are selling for Rs 350 for 5 litres.”

Blue-coloured sanitiser filled in white boxes is available at many shops here. No information about manufacturer

address, batch number, licence or formula is given on many of these sanitiser-filled cartons.

Many shopkeepers have cleverly placed such sanitisers in stalls or on the streets right outside the shops instead of keeping them inside their shops.

When asked about the sanitiser manufacturing company and the quality, a shopkeeper named Sanjay Sharma said, “This is a locally made hand sanitiser. It is made in fac-

tories in and around Delhi. However, we do not know about its quality and its effectiveness against coronavirus.”

Many shopkeepers are selling hand sanitiser in bulk for only Rs 60 per litre.

“This information has now come to our notice. We are taking immediate action on it. The concerned authorities have been asked to investigate such shops and products,” Nasa said.

IANS

Govt allows reopening of 66 pvt liquor shops

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Excise Department has allowed seven more L - 7 private shops to resume operations from Wednesday.

The fresh order is in continuation to the previous order of permitting 66 of 239 eligible liquor shops.

These shops are allowed on alternative days between 9AM to 6:30 PM irrespective of their shops having both odd and even numbers and shall deposit 70 percent of Corona fee.

The order read, “They (vendors) shall deposit 70 percent Special corona fee on the total sales daily, which will be



balance in their ledger account.”

“In case, any L-7 licences/ship allowed to operate under the containment zone in future the same shall be close permanently.”

According to excise department data, Delhi government has earned over Rs 110 crore from the cess and is expecting even more in the coming days with the opening up of more shops.

Delhi has more than 850 liquor shops, of which around 150 are located in malls not be allowed to operate, from May 5, the government imposed a special corona fee on liquor.

Delhi Police officers felicitated for service

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Commissioner, SN Shrivastava, on Wednesday awarded 230 police officers and personnel with ‘Utkrisht Seva Padak’ while 160 officers and personnel were awarded with ‘Ati Utkrisht Seva Padak’.

Ministry of Home Affairs has instituted new medals, Utkrisht Seva Padak and Ati Utkrisht Seva Padak for the police personnel, who have completed 15 years & 25 years respectively of service, to promote professionalism and excellence among police forces.

According to police, this year’s awardees for Utkrisht Seva Padak include Rajesh Khurana, Special CP, Intelligence, Dvesh

Shrivastava, Joint CP, Southern range, Bhisam Singh, M A Rizvi and Rajeev Ranjan, the Deputy Commissioners of Police are among 230 officers and personnel.

“Around 34 inspector, 16 Dub-Inspector, 25 Assistant Sub-Inspector, 100 head constables and 50 constables have been selected Utkrisht Seva Padak,” said police.

Meanwhile, Dr Ajit Singla, the Additional CP and Rajender Singh, ACP Dwarka are among 160 police personnel selected for Ati Utkrisht Seva Padak.

“Personnel with service of 15 years will be eligible for the Utkrisht Seva Padak, while those with clean record of 25 years of service will be eligible for Ati Utkrisht Seva Padak.

IRS officer commits suicide in Chankyapuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 57-year-old Indian Revenue Services (IRS) officer on Wednesday allegedly committed suicide by hanging from the ceiling fan in his house in upscale in Chankyapuri area.

The victim has been identified as Keshav Saxena, a resident of Babu Dham, Chanakyapuri.

According to a senior police official, police received information that the victim was taken to Primus hospital by his

family where he was declared brought dead.

“A police team was dispatched for the hospital. During investigation, it was revealed that Saxena hanged himself from the ceiling fan in his study room around 7 am on Wednesday with the help of a bed sheet,” said the senior police official.

Family said that the victim was under depression. “A suicide note has been recovered from the spot and further investigation in underway,” said police.

BJP flays Rahul for ‘jeopardising anti-corona’ efforts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a repeat attack against Rahul Gandhi in last 24 hours, the BJP on Wednesday denounced him for alleging that lockdown was ineffective, BJP on Wednesday charged him with playing a “negative” role and weakening country’s resolve in its fight against the pandemic.

Addressing a press conference, senior BJP leader and union Minister Ravishankar Prasad said since the break-out of the pandemic, Congress leader was telling “lies, distorting and misrepresenting facts”.

Maintaining that lockdown was very timely and manged to restrict death to 4,345 only in country of 137 crore people. On the other hand, Prasad said barring China, 15 big-countries including the USA, Italy, Germany, UK, France, Russia and Iran, with total population of 142 crore had by

May 26 had casualties to the tune of three lakh forty three thousand and five hundred and sixty two.

This he said happened under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who he claimed was “Playing on the front foot”. Rahul in his criticism of the government had said that Modi was not playing on the backfoot while taking measures to contain pandemic.

Prasad accused Rahul of spreading negativity, engaging in falsehood, fake news and incorrect representation of the facts.

He said Rahul had ridiculed symbolic gesture of ringing bells, striking ‘thalis’, clapping and lightening of ‘Diyas’ saying this will not defeat coronavirus even though these were aimed to boost morale of Corona warriors, he said.

Taking a swipe at the Congress leader, Prasad said

while his Lok Sabha constituency Wayanad is declared as “hot spot” by the health ministry, Rahul was congratulating himself for ‘succeeding’ in containing pandemic in his LS seat.

Prasad also accused Rahul of taking credit for the success of Bhilwara model of lockdown in Rajasthan which effectively contained coronavirus in the district in the early phase of the pandemic and levelling false charges against ICMR.

He also condemned Rahul for congratulating three Pulitzer prize winner who he alleged were awarded for giving an insight into the so-called freedom struggle in the valley.

Similarly, he said the Congress leader wants Government to bring back Nirav Modi , businessmen accused of bank fraud, from England, one of the Congress member and former high court judge Abhay Thipsay was backs Modi in the case and

Rahul continues talk shows with health experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after he dubbed India’s lockdown a failure citing increase in Covid-19 cases during the period, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday continued with his talk shows with experts from across the world on issues related to the pandemic. Professor Ashish Jha of Harvard University and Professor Johan Giesecke of Sweden’s Karolinska Institute told him that “lockdown is not a goal” but a time to separate infected persons

gives the fugitive a clean chit. “This is the difference between what he says and what he does”, said Prasad.

Union Minister said Congress leader was running

from non-infected ones, when you can’t test aggressively and that a severe lockdown can cause more deaths than the illness.

“Lockdown buys you time, but lockdown is not the goal unto itself. You can use that time to prepare a really fabulous testing, tracing, isolation infrastructure. You want to use that time to communicate with people,” said Jha.

The Harvard Professor further said that vigorous testing, tracing and isolation is helpful, “but if you can’t do that, then you have to lock everything

away from his party’s responsibility in running the ShivSena-led government in Maharashtra which has the highest number of coronavirus cases in the country

down”. “Can you slow down the virus from a lockdown? Of course you can. But it has very substantial economic repercussions,” he said. Left unchecked, the virus will grow exponentially, he stressed.

“And the way to stop it is to take infected people and separate them from un-infected ones,” advocated Jha adding life will be very different when lockdown ends.

“This is not about going back to what life was like last May or June. That life over the next 6-12-18 months is going to look very different,” he said.

The BJP leader said Rahul has been tweeting on the need to provide trains for the stranded migrant workers even though the Centre was already providing them for

In his interaction with Prof Giesecke, Rahul said, “Most places that are affected (by the pandemic) are nerve centres of globalisation. If people say 9/11 is a chapter, coronavirus is a book.”

Rahul began his series of conversations via video conferences with experts last month. Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and Nobel Prize winner Abhijit Banerjee were among his first few guests.

“India would ruin its economy if it has a very severe lockdown”, Professor Giesecke said adding that coronavirus, which

taking them to their native places.

On Tuesday, another Union Minister Prakash Javadekar had claimed that the lockdown had

is a “very mild disease”, will affect “almost everyone in the world”.

“The disease is very mild. Most people who have it are not even aware. While the old and vulnerable need to be protected from the disease, you may cause more deaths due to a severe lockdown than the illness,” he added as Rahul spoke about the plight of the migrants.

As the Gandhi scion questioned both the experts on an exit strategy for the lockdown, he was told that a “stepwise exit” is more advisable.

Ministry for maternal, newborn, other cares in restricted manner



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

It’s in Lockdown 4.0 that the Union Health Ministry has finally focussed its attention on the health services related to reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescents, or RMNCAH+N, saying that these should be continued in a restricted manner in areas defined as containment and buffer zones and that coronavirus testing is not mandatory in such cases.

There have been several reports of people facing problems in availing such services at their doorsteps. The Guidelines have come amidst UNICEF report that an estimated 20 million mothers and newborns will receive pregnancy and newborn care in India in the nine-month-period following declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic. It advocated high priority to maternal and child health services as countries respond to the disease.

The Ministry guidelines said that home delivery of folic acid, calcium and zinc tablets, oral rehydration solution sachets and contraceptives can also be arranged in the containment zones.

Areas where multiple coronavirus cases are reported have been classified as containment zones and its surrounding areas are called buffer zones.

“In India, with the second-largest global population, the growing epidemic of coronavirus requires that special efforts have to be made to continue the essential routine RMNCAH+N services,” the Ministry said in its guidelines. “Covid testing is not mandatory for RMNCAH+N service. ICMR testing guidelines need to be followed.”

The Ministry added that it is important to ensure that essential health services for vulnerable population are continued during the pandemic. “Critical services for women, children and adolescent should be provided irrespective of their Covid status,” it said. “Under no circumstances should there be a denial of essential services.”

In its guidelines, the Ministry said that a mother and her newborn should be nursed together as far as possible and breastfeeding must be initiated within one hour of delivery, irrespective of the coronavirus status. However, the mother must wear a face

mask and practice hand hygiene before feeding the child, it added.

The advisory noted that services such as antenatal and newborn care, immunisation, family planning and adolescent health, among others, are to be provided at different levels in accordance with the zonal categorisation of containment zones, buffer zones and beyond these zones. “Any area exiting a “containment/ buffer zone” can start RMNCAH+N activities as listed in “areas beyond buffer zone” after a minimum gap of 14 days following delisting,” it added.

The health ministry also said private sector hospitals can be involved in non-coronavirus essential services if the public sector needs to be supported. “Practices of physical distancing, handwashing, and respiratory hygiene need to be maintained at all service areas by all beneficiaries and service providers.”

As per the UNICEF, India will see 20.1 million child births in the nine months since the pandemic declaration, followed by China at 13.5 million, Nigeria at 6.4 million, Pakistan (5 million) and Indonesia (4 million)

NHAI issues policy guidelines to expedite maintenance, repair work of national highways



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To take up maintenance and repair work of national highways on a priority basis before monsoon, NHAI has issued policy guidelines to fast-track such work, the Government said on Wednesday.

All regional officers of NHAI have been delegated sufficient financial powers to take quick decisions regarding maintenance activities.

“In order to keep the national highways in patchless and traffic worthy condition, National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has directed its Regional Officers (ROs) and Project Directors (PDs) to undertake maintenance of the National Highways on top priority-basis considering ensuing monsoon season,” Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said in a statement.

The aim is to facilitate timely action and keep the highway stretches traffic-worthy ahead of the monsoon season i.e. latest by June 30, 2020, it added.

“NHAI has issued new policy guidelines to help its ROs/PDs plan and prioritize better; and then expedite the process of highway maintenance in the desired manner.

The target is to ensure thorough planning of the requisite activities and the implementation of the same in a time bound manner,” the statement said.

It said ROs of NHAI have been delegated sufficient financial powers to take quick decisions regarding maintenance activities, while PDs have been advised to make assessment of the condition of highways supported by technology driven tools through car mounted camera/ drone/ Network Survey Vehicle (NSV) etc for identification of various highway distress (like depression, rutting, cracking etc.) and plan rectification measures.

All field officers have been directed to adhere to the time-lines, regularly monitor the progress of maintenance work and keep reporting the same to the authority at regular intervals.

The Government said the NHAI headquarters will be monitoring the progress closely through its project management software – Data Lake where pictures of before and after repair works would be uploaded, apart from other repair related information.

51 temples taken over by U’khand Govt illegal, embarrassment to BJP: Swamy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Subramanian Swamy on Wednesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to direct Uttarakhand Chief Minister to withdraw the recent Act, which took over 51 temples including Badrinath and Kedarnath temples. Terming the takeover of temples is illegal, Swamy in a letter, told Modi that the 51 temples taken over by the State Government is an embarrassment to BJP and its policy. Swamy has already challenged the controversial Char Dham Devasthanam Management Act of 2019 in High Court and the Court has issued notice to the State Government on February 25. The State Government has not yet responded to the High Court Notice.

“The Uttarakhand BJP Government has brought a legislation to take over almost all the temples of the State and

also appointed the Chief Minister as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. This move is not only against the policy of our party and ideology of Hindutva, but also illegal and against the Judgment of the Supreme Court (now widely known case as Subramanian Swamy Vs State of Tamil Nadu judgment by the Supreme Court in 2014). In this the Supreme Court has laid down clearly that the Government under Article 25 of the Constitution, cannot take over the administration of any temple, except for the brief period when there is a documented misappropriation of funds of the temple,” pointed out Swamy, adding that there was no misappropriation found in temples of Uttarakhand.

The controversial Act passed by the BJP-ruled State Government in 2019, intending to take control of more than 51 temples related to the Char Dham circuit has already

invited severe criticism from the Sangh Parivar organizations. This Act enables the Government to take control of the temples currently by priests, local trusts and the new Act say MPs, MLAs, and representatives appointed by the State Government will run the temples. As per the Act, the head of the Devasthanam Board will be the State Chief Minister and many Government officials are placed in the administration. The Act says, if the Chief Minister is not a Hindu, senior-most Hindu Minister will be the head of the Board.

“Rather than waiting for the Court to deliver Judgment against the takeover, it would be in the interest of our Party if you as Prime Minister gives a direction to the Chief Minister to restore the position which has existing before the takeover of the temples. It is also politically sensitive to do so,” said Swamy.

Hotel quarantine for foreign returnees only for 7 days, States told

The MHA asked the States to ensure that the foreign returnees who paid advance amount for 14 days are refunded their balance amount without any delay

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With rampant complaints from quarantined persons, the Union Home Ministry on Tuesday directed all States to ensure that the hotels are charging only for seven days of quarantine from the foreign returnees and that they refund the remaining amount in case they have charged in advance for 14 days of quarantine.

In a letter issued to the Chief Secretaries, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla noted that as per the guidelines issued by the Health Ministry for international arrivals, protocol for institutional quarantine has been revised to seven days followed by seven days of home quarantine after medical assessment.

“It has been brought to the notice of this ministry that Indian nationals who were quarantined in hotels after their return from abroad were made to pay advance for 14 days. Since they can now leave for home quarantine after seven days, the amount paid by them for the remaining seven days needs to be refunded to them, which some hotels are refusing to refund,” the statement said.

The MHA asked the states to ensure that the foreign returnees who paid advance amount for 14 days are refunded their balance amount without any delay. There are many complaints that hotels were not returning the money collected when 14 days quarantine was mandated and later cut short to seven days only hotel quarantine.

CBI books Karnal-based Shakti Basmati Rice Ltd, its 3 directors for forgery

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked Karnal-based Shakti Basmati Rice Pvt Ltd and its three directors in a case of cheating and forgery for causing loss to the public sector State Bank of India (SBI) to the tune of over ₹100 crore.

The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered the case on a complaint from SBI against the private rice company based at Karnal (Haryana) and its three Directors and unknown others including unknown public servants.

“It was alleged that the accused, engaged in the manufacturing of grain mill products (rice), obtained credit facilities from commercial branch of State Bank of India, Karnal (Haryana), by misrepresentation of facts,” the CBI said in a statement.

It was further alleged that the accused had cheated the Bank by diverting the loan

amount for introduction of share capital, inflating the sale and purchase figures and devaluation/decrease of stocks to show losses.

The “losses” were cited for diverting the funds by selling the stocks out of the books.”

It was also alleged that the accused failed to repay the loan amount resulting in the loss of about ₹100.46 crore) to the Bank.

Besides the firm, the directors named as accused are Shyam Lal, Parveen Kumar and Suresh Kumar.

In its complaint, the SBI alleged that the fraud came to light when a forensic audit was conducted by a firm and report was submitted on March 7 last year.

The alleged fraud was committed at Commercial Branch of SBI at Karnal.

The accused persons are alleged to have siphoned the funds by diversion of credit limits for introduction of share capital and round-tripping of funds.

Centre ties up with Super 30 to help poor crack JEE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major boon to students living in rural areas who are preparing for IIT JEE entrance exams amidst the COVID 19 lockdown, the Centre on Wednesday tied up with Prof Anand Kumar of the Super 30 fame to impart coaching to IIT JEE aspirants in association with Common Service Centre (CSC) for a fee of just ₹1

With the help of CSC which has now countrywide reach, the online study material for children living in rural areas who cannot afford expensive coaching will be

The study materials will ensure rural students’ interest in Mathematics and Science subjects at an early age

shared through innovative teaching modules.

The study materials will ensure rural students’ interest in Mathematics and Science subjects at an early age.

To begin with, Prof Anand Kumar on Wednesday interacted with poor students from rural areas on various social media platforms of CSC through video conferencing at lakhs of CSC centres across India.

Trouble for Uddhav

Given his inept handling of COVID-19, both his coalition allies and the BJP are keen to make him the fall guy



True leadership is tested when a crisis such as the one caused by the COVID-19 pandemic leaves you desperately looking for answers and clutching at any straw in the wind. Except in politics, it is not about finding answers but asking questions of those who can be blamed. And so it is that the Uddhav Thackeray-led coalition Government in Maharashtra is in trouble as it seems to be fast losing its grip on containing the viral spike, which is the highest in the country and amounts to 30 per cent cases nationwide. With a monolithic leader, there is at least a semblance of a man/woman being in charge and good or bad, he/she mostly manages to override scrutiny. But when you have somebody as vulnerable as Uddhav Thackeray, then the barbs keep flying thick and fast. Needless to say that the Shiv Sena chief got the Chief Minister's chair with zero administrative or grassroots experience by parting ways with a bossy State BJP and choosing the ideologically divergent National Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress. He did get to form a coalition Government but the wily Maratha warrior and NCP chief Sharad Pawar ensured that he cornered key Ministries and called the shots in the alliance, being its architect. The Congress, too, got some but as a C-team was never interested in making itself felt in governance. Battling such internecine pressures and keeping his numbers, with an unforgiving BJP smelling the slightest opportunity to topple him, Thackeray Junior may have fulfilled his father's dream of a Shiv Sainik being the Chief Minister but has been nothing more than a paper tiger. Yet, by virtue of being the face of a Government, he also has exposed himself to being the fall guy. And now that Maharashtra emerges as a COVID hotspot that seems to be spiralling out of control, he is desperately mobilising resources to manage the public health crisis while the BJP keeps on pointing out his flaws daily. In fact, the Shiv Sena may have historically controlled the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) but has nothing to show for its clout there in times of COVID-19. If anything, the BMC is struggling to contain the virus and the Sena itself is hopelessly out of depth as numbers of the sick keep increasing by the hour. This has partly got to do with the Sena's inexperience in governance. It has always been the "remote control" of power and with the BJP taking the lead in its earlier coalitions, has never had to bear the brunt of decision-making. Neither has it tapped into the administrative depth of Pawar or the Congress. And realising that this bad PR could backfire on them, his ruling allies are not too happy either, with Uddhav desperately reassuring them. So much so that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi intemperately forced a crisis, saying while the party could speak for COVID management in States ruled by it, in Maharashtra it was not a party to decision-making. Though Pawar stepped in to dispel fears of serious dissension within the coalition Government, the fact is some Ministers and legislators have been deeply disapproving of Uddhav's functioning and reliance on fossilised bureaucrats. He doesn't have the aura of his father, Bal Thackeray. Besides, Thackeray senior didn't have to combat a crisis such as this. So Uddhav is not only expected to deliver but come up with a practical and implementable plan in the current context. For years, the public health infrastructure in Mumbai has been neglected to accommodate private players, which aren't willing to lead the fight against the dreaded disease, leaving it to the already crumbling Government hospitals. The Sena has promoted many of these private facilities but they are not delivering for Uddhav. Besides, the Chief Minister has badly bungled the migrant exodus compared to his counterparts in other States. In fact most returnees from Mumbai have unanimously said that the Maharashtra Government didn't care about their food and shelter and had just let them loose without any compassion. And to complicate matters, now that the Sena's old and nativist constituencies like the Dharavi slums, whose dwellers service the economy of Mumbai, are under a viral siege, Uddhav has no *manas* left to back him up. With such a hydra-headed attack, he naturally seems the easiest man to take the fall.

So what's in it for the BJP's Devendra Fadnis? For a leader of the single largest party, who has some confidence of the people on the basis of his past performance, this is the most opportune moment to reclaim his relevance. And now that he has former Shiv Sena Chief Minister Narayan Rane with him in the party, he met Governor BS Koshiyari and sought President's rule in the State on the pretext of ensuring better COVID management. Rane, who accompanied him, sought Army intervention to arrest the slide in Mumbai. Besides, Fadnis is projecting himself as a BJP leader who can renegotiate Centre-State relations better and get things moving for an aggressive containment strategy with Central resources. He is leveraging the "one party in State and Centre" logic to wangle a better relief package for the State. The only question is the morality of Operation Lotus as the city heaps its dead.

Hong Kong erupts again

China is resorting to 'wolf-warrior' diplomacy for 'great rejuvenation' of the State as the world corners it on COVID-19



If Chinese President Xi Jinping's "be prepared for war" cry to protect the nation's sovereignty is any indication, then China, blamed by much of the world for the COVID-19 nightmare, is hitting back even as it has been browbeaten by the virus. This warning call has been seen as anti-West, indicating China is not willing to let go of the Asian domination of the world economy it has crafted all these years. So it is turning belligerent again on the West-modelled Hong Kong and Taiwan, which it sees as bases of surveillance and destabilisation of Chinese authority. Although it had been patient with the first round of protests in Hong Kong over repressive laws, fearing global opinion and depleted returns from the island economy, it is unapologetic and determined now as it has been roundly condemned for the Wuhan contagion. So it has decided to impose a new anthem Bill and national security laws in Hong Kong, totally bypassing the semi-autonomous territory's own legislative process. The new Bill would make it a criminal offence to "disrespect" the Chinese national anthem and ensure that it is taught in Hong Kong schools and sung by organisations. The city is also on the edge over Beijing's plans to impose the national security legislation on May 28, which aims to tackle alleged secession, subversion and terrorist activities. Citizens fear that the legislation could see Chinese intelligence agencies set up bases in the city and begin a new era of State repression. Protests, which had petered off due to the pandemic, have returned to the streets. But for Xi, demonstrable muscularity is about the survival and stability of the Communist Party.

The fact of the matter is that this Chinese aggression is not just limited to Hong Kong. Chinese ships swarmed an offshore oil rig operated by Malaysia and its Coast Guard sank a fishing boat in disputed waters off Vietnam. It denounced the second inauguration of Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen, and nixed the word "peaceful" from its annual call for unification with the island nation. All this goes to show the "wolf-warrior" diplomacy that can happen with an unbridled China, no longer restrained by the fear of international rebuke and led by a leader who is pursuing a "great rejuvenation" of the Chinese State. Besides, Xi knows from past experience that though the global community has often spoken out against China's excesses in Hong Kong, it has not really counteracted the mainland on the ground. The international community has just stood by and tut-tutted over violations of human rights. It has to do better than just unleash US President Donald Trump's fury.

No silver in this playbook

The Government announced a slew of reforms for the agriculture sector. But it will do well to learn from the example of the US, where similar initiatives after WW-II backfired



INDRA SHEKHAR SINGH

With a stimulus package of ₹8.4 lakh crore for the agriculture sector, the Finance Minister sought to usher in an economic "green revolution" based on providing credit guarantee to MSMEs, stocking up capacity at the farm gate and opening this sector for business. In short, the Government aims to strengthen rural banking networks, provide additional loans and expedite the goal of doubling farmers' incomes. A report by the Niti Aayog appears to be the lodestar for the Finance Minister's presentation. It included suggestions on improving farm gate infrastructure, dismantling of APMC and even linking farmers to agri-business directly or through contract farming, among others.

Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar even said that "the Essential Commodities Act" is a hindrance to agri-exports and had called for its removal way back in 2017. With several States regulating the stock and supply and various food items being removed from purview, the said Act is vestigial. Even with the spread of the Coronavirus, this sector is functioning with a pre-Corona agenda. New steps though include the grant of additional funds to galvanise Niti Aayog's vision of reforming the agri sector and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of a New Property Card, which would stand as collateral for loans or advances from banks and financial institutions.

The Government was swift to link farmers' lands to banking institutions in a bid to allow more credit flow into rural India. The Indian Government is unsure about farm statistics. Does it know how many destitute farmers are connected to the rural banking system? Even if incentives are there, can loan subversion help them? Can a boost in infrastructure or market liberalisation uplift our rural sector?

Maybe the US has an answer. Agriculture was a major industry in America in the era before World War-II. Overwhelmingly, small and medium family farms dominated the country. After a slight spike post-war, farms in America soon boomeranged to overproduction. Farm incomes were "low" compared to the "costs." Sounds familiar?

With liberalisation, the US was quick to enact the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) Act and the Disaster Loan Act of 1949 to ensure "loans" to farmers. Direct farm ownership loans were being provided to



secure farmlands. Emergency crop and the "feed loan programme", too, were launched to help the farmers with interim financing. Investments in rural infrastructure and easy loans were encouraged. All such measures are very much similar to the economic policy adopted by the Indian Government to tackle the ill effects of the Corona pandemic.

Given the extra flow of cash, stressed farmers were quick to buy more land, farm equipment and modernise infrastructure. In fact, for some years, the yearly land inflation price overtook bank investments. Overall, the business was running good but this ascent was artificially sustained by way of fiscal manipulation. Speculation was high and credit was being used to re-finance other mortgages. This caused a financial crash. Between 1950 and 1971, real farm income decreased from \$18 billion to \$13 billion. The number of farms, too, decreased by 50 per cent. But income per farm rose by 46 per cent as against a national average of 76 per cent. Meanwhile, the total mortgage debt on US farms rose from \$8 billion in 1950 to \$24 billion in 1971.

In former US Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz's style, either "you got big" and doubled your income or "got out" of farming. Is India, too, aim-

ing at doubling farm incomes the same way? Well, one sparrow does not make a summer. Consider this: The Committee on Economic Development (CED), in its "An Adaptive Programme for Agriculture of 1962 and Doubling Farmers Incomes" report of 2017 had presented an ably and carefully-prepared design, leading to the abandonment of all farm programmes at the end of five years. It proposed to "shift cultivators out of the farm to non-farm activities" as too many farmers were a problem.

Post the implementation of an adaptive land management programme, over one million small-medium family-size farms were lost. Farmer suicides along with small and medium farm foreclosures sky-rocketed as most farmers were unable to pay back their loans. The agrarian crisis worsened depression among farmers. They have vociferously been asking for loan waivers. A NABARD study pointed out that 52.5 per cent of the rural households had a debt of \$1,470 (over ₹1.11 lakh) each in 2018. Compare this to the average monthly rural household surplus of ₹1,413.

Providing more credit (yes, more loan schemes are to follow) will put additional burden on the farmers and the entire rural economy will be in a spiral of huge debt. With contract farm-

ing, agri-commodity trading and agri-business among others, Indian farmers will have no other option than to be hired in their own farms as was seen in the US. History has a strange way of repeating itself.

The Government's decision to open the farm gate and dismantle regulated APMC *mandis* will open the doors of agribusiness to Indian farmers. Farmers in the US are at the end of the tunnel. This is where the Indian Government aspires to be. In his book, *Merchants of Grain*, Dan Morgan describes the journey of how "market access for farmers" led to the consolidation of elevator shafts and storage by giant companies. This was followed by the takeover of farmers' co-operatives. All of this culminated into a new grain monopoly in the US, which now controls 70 per cent of the world's supply chain. Farmers in America have no market left, just the corporate markets of Cargill and the likes.

In 2006, the Bihar Government rescinded the APMC Act to attract private investment. What followed next is shocking. Farmers received even lower prices for their produce. Meanwhile, "traders" carted truckloads of produce to APMC *mandis* all the way to Punjab and Haryana to sell at Minimum Support Price (MSP). Private investment never came.

The human cost of "liberalisation" of farm gate has been huge. Violence, drug abuse and insanity encircle the American rural towns all along the "dust bowl." Joel Dyer's book, *Harvest Of Rage: Why Oklahoma City Is Only The Beginning*, acts as the dot-connector between the post-World War-II reforms and the current dismal state of American farmers. Home-grown militia movements had led to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. The US farm debt this year stood at \$425 billion. Yet, mostly large and company farms get the benefits of relief packages.

Meanwhile, thousands of American farmers are waiting to be goaded out of farming again. What started out in the post-World War as a liberal reform, has completely changed American agriculture to become a farming system with minimal farmers.

Currently, India is trying to tread the same path. As an American playbook is applied to the Indian crisis, how soon before artificial fiscal measures fail, debt quadruples and foreclosures become the norm? As we come out of the war against Corona, the Government is only repackaging its agenda and opting for Cargillisation for a few agri-dollars more.

(The writer is Director, Policy and Outreach, National Seed Association of India)

SOUNDBITE

Bumrah's consistency to bowl at decisive lines and take wickets has made him an unmovable player in the Indian cricket team. He instills fear in the mind of the batsmen.

Former West Indies fast-bowler
—Ian Bishop



Of course, as an actor, I want to be on sets but at the same time, I feel we also have to think about the larger issue at hand.

Actor
—Vicky Kaushal



Right now, we're not in the second wave. We're right in the middle of the first wave globally. We're still very much in a phase where the disease is actually on the way up.

WHO's executive director
—Mike Ryan



China is under scrutiny, the whole world is accusing it of spreading Covid-19. Many firms are shifting from China. It is trying to create distraction.

Union Minister
—VK Singh



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A messy start

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Up in the sky" (May 28). Domestic airlines resumed services after two months but both the flyers and airlines had to tide over significant barriers along the way. The passengers were hit hard by unstable schedules and abrupt cancellation of flights.

Complications in the wake of doubts and ambivalence harboured by States over allowing inbound flights have hampered travel operations. The capping of the number of flights to operate in some of the busiest airports like Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata, with varying quarantine protocols adopted by various States, is proving to be a dampener.

Fear of imported cases is genuine but walling off completely can't be an option if the economy is to restart. States consistently complain about the tanking of revenues during lockdown and then contradict it by worrying over the risk of reopening the economy. Transport and unhindered movement of people, commodities and services are the lifeline of the economy.

High time the Opposition unites

This refers to the article, "Divided Opp still failing in its duty" (May 2) by Kalyani Shankar. The writer has rightly highlighted the Achilles' heel of Opposition parties. Disunity among them made things easier for the BJP. It successfully exploited the situation and successfully retained power for a second consecutive term with a huge mandate. Ironically, the grand old party, which had been in power for the longest time since independence, too, failed in its duty of being a bulwark against the rise of the BJP. The author has attributed this failure to some obvious reasons, which have forced bigwigs such as Mulayam Singh Yadav, Deve Gowda and Lalu Prasad to take a backseat. Their heirs/successors are not on the same page with them, which is why they are detached from the voters. Some regional satraps fancy personal aggrandisement and have driven a wedge among various political parties. The Opposition meeting called by Congress chief Sonia Gandhi to launch a coordinated attack against the Centre's handling of the ongoing Coronavirus crisis and the lockdown saw 22 Opposition parties in attendance. Such meetings have taken place in the past, too, but have served little purpose.

Above all, lady luck is smiling on the BJP even



Azhar A Khan
Rampur

A new normal isn't possible without reasonable compromises in these areas. Fear psychosis, stemming from unpreparedness, can't be an excuse.

N Sadhasiva Reddy
Bengaluru

Improper handling

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Up in the sky" (May 28). It was expected that with the resumption of domestic flights,

there would be an eventual return to normality. On the contrary, the sudden cancellation of some domestic flights led to utter chaos at the airports. Improper handling of the situation on the part of the Central and State

Governments as well as the airlines cannot be denied. Ultimately, the passengers had to bear the brunt for no fault of theirs. Most States were reluctant to accept the Centre's decision. Before opening the skies for air travel, the Aviation Ministry should have consulted various States to formulate standard operating procedures.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao
Hyderabad

Lagging behind

Sir — With India registering 1,51,876 confirmed Coronavirus cases, we are yet to flatten the curve. Patchy implementation of lockdown guidelines in some States may have led to a sudden spike in the number of cases. The exodus of migrant labourers from metro cities to their villages was avoidable. Insufficient aid led to this situation. Had they come at the right time, precious lives would have been saved.

Shambhavi
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Trump ‘displeased’ with China’s new security law for HK

Washington: US President Donald Trump is “displeased” with China’s new national security law for Hong Kong, the White House has said, amid rising tensions between Washington and Beijing in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

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, an economic powerhouse, 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.

The US over the last few days has expressed concerns over the new Chinese law on Hong Kong and has indicated of taking steps against it.

“He (Trump) is displeased with China’s efforts and that it’s hard to see how Hong Kong can remain a financial hub if China takes over,” White House Press Secretary

Kayleigh McEnany told reporters at a news conference on Tuesday.

As many as 16 Congressmen have introduced a resolution in the Congress to condemn the Chinese Communist Party’s proposed national security law in Hong Kong. The proposed law bans secession, subversion, and foreign interference, and would radically upend the “one party, two systems” structure.

In addition to denouncing the proposal, the resolution calls for the world to stand with Hong Kong and states unequivocally the proposal puts Beijing in direct violation of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Hong Kong Basic Law.

“The Chinese Communist Party’s so-called ‘national security’ law is not only a violation of their previous agreements, it’s also a direct attack on Hong Kong’s freedoms,” said Congressman Markwayne Mullin.

“We cannot let the CCP get away with this power grab. I am proud to cosponsor this resolution with my colleagues and stand with Hong Kong in their fight against tyranny,” he added.

“Hong Kong has flourished as a bastion of liberty,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said ear-

lier in a statement.

“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,” he said.

Congressman Chris Smith, author of the House-passed Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, condemned Beijing’s efforts to destroy Hong Kong’s freedoms of press, speech and assembly.

“We are witnessing the death knell of the ‘high degree of autonomy’ that China’s communist rulers had promised and are guaranteed under both the Basic Law and the Sino-British Joint Declaration,” he said.

“Should Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam continue to follow the dictates of Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping and fail to protect the rights of the people of Hong Kong, she will have presided over the death of ‘One Country, Two Systems,’ and the United States will be forced, by statute, to reassess the status of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and our relationship with it,” Smith said. **PTI**

300 arrested as thousands protest In Hong Kong

Hong Kong: Police in Hong Kong fired pepper pellets and made 300 arrests as thousands of people took to the streets on Wednesday to voice anger over national security legislation proposed by China, that has raised international alarm over freedoms in the city.

In the heart of the financial district, riot police fired pepper pellets to disperse a crowd, and elsewhere in the city police rounded up groups of dozens of suspected protesters, making them sit on sidewalks before searching their belongings.

A heavy police presence around the Legislative Council deterred protesters planning to disrupt the debate of a bill that would criminalise disrespect of the Chinese national anthem. The bill is expected to become law next month.

Angry over perceived threats to the semi-autonomous city’s freedoms, people of all ages took to the streets, some dressed in black, some wearing office clothes or school uniforms and some hiding their faces beneath open umbrellas in scenes reminiscent of the unrest that shook Hong Kong last year.

“Although you’re afraid inside your heart, you need to



Riot police detain a young protester as a second reading of a controversial national anthem law takes place in Hong Kong on Wednesday

AP

speak out,” said Chang, 29, a clerk and protester dressed in black with a helmet respirator and goggles in her backpack.

Many shops, banks and offices closed early. The latest protests follow the

Chinese government’s proposal for national security legislation aimed at tackling secession, subversion and terrorism in Hong Kong.

The planned laws could see Chinese intelligence agencies

set up bases in Hong Kong.

The proposal, unveiled in Beijing last week, triggered the first big street unrest in Hong Kong in months on Sunday, with police firing tear gas and water cannon to disperse protesters.

The United States, Britain, the European Union and others have expressed concern about the legislation, widely seen as a possible turning point for China’s freest city and one of the world’s main financial hubs. **Agency**

Twitter labels Trump tweets with a fact check for first time

Washington: For the first time, Twitter put a warning label under two posts by Donald Trump, prompting the US president to accuse the popular social media platform of “interfering” in the presidential election scheduled in November.

Twitter highlighted two of Trump’s tweets on Tuesday that falsely claimed mail-in ballots would lead to widespread voter fraud in the elections, appending a message the social media giant has introduced recently to fight misinformation or unverified claims.

“There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Main-in Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people,

anyone.....,” Trump tweeted.

Twitter’s notification displays a blue exclamation mark underneath the two tweets, suggesting readers “get the facts about mail-in ballots”.

Trump, who has some 80 million followers on Twitter, responded by tweeting again, saying the social media company “is completely stifling free speech.” “Twitter is now interfering in the 2020 Presidential Election. They are saying my statement on Mail-In Ballots, which will lead to massive corruption and fraud, is incorrect, based on fact-checking by Fake News CNN and the Amazon Washington Post....,” a visibly upset Trump tweeted.

“Twitter is completely stifling FREE SPEECH, and I, as President, will not allow it to happen!” he said in another tweet. **PTI**

Trump threatens to close down social media

Washington: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday threatened to close down social media platforms after Twitter labelled two of his tweets “unsubstantiated” and accused him of making false claims.

“Republicans feel that Social Media Platforms totally silence conservatives voices. We will strongly regulate, or close them down, before we can ever allow this to happen,” Trump tweeted.

Twitter targeted two tweets the president posted on Tuesday in which he contended without evidence that mail-in voting would lead to fraud and a “Rigged Election.”

Under the tweets, Twitter posted a link which read “Get

the facts about mail-in ballots” — a first for the social network which has long resisted calls to censure the US president over truth-defying posts.

Trump pushed back again on Wednesday saying “we can’t let large scale Mail-In Ballots take root in our Country. It would be a free for all on cheating, forgery and the theft of Ballots.

“Whoever cheated the most would win. Likewise, Social Media. Clean up your act, NOW!!!!” The president also accused social media platforms of interfering in the last election, saying “we saw what they attempted to do, and failed, in 2016.” **AFP**

Rebel groups kill at least 40 in attacks in eastern Congo

Beni (Congo): Rebels have killed at least 40 people in several attacks in Congo’s eastern Irumu territory, a local civil rights group says.

Members of the Allied Democratic Forces and an Islamic State-linked group known as MTM staged the attacks Tuesday in Samboko, Bandavilemba and Walese-Vukutu in Ituri province, the Centre for the Promotion of Peace, Democracy and Human Rights said in a statement Wednesday.

The rebels, who recently began carrying out attacks together, used machetes and looted food and other valuables, the group said. CEPAD-HO said at least 627 civilians have been killed by ADF forces since Oct. 30.

Most attacks have occurred in response to large-scale offensives by Congolese armed forces in the region. **AP**

Oz police won’t charge reporter after leak probe

Canberra: Australian police announced on Wednesday that they had decided against charging a journalist over a newspaper article she wrote more than two years ago following a high-profile investigation that triggered a national storm over press freedom.

Australian Federal Police Deputy Commissioner Ian McCartney said he had decided that no one would be charged following an investigation that spanned 25 months because of a “lack of evidence.”

Annika Smethurst’s article, citing “top secret letters” between the heads of the Defense and Home Affairs departments, reported plans to create new espionage powers that would allow an intelligence agency to spy on Australian citizens for the first time. It was published in News Corp. Australia’s Sunday papers on April 29, 2018.

Australian Federal Police responded with raids on

Smethurst’s Canberra home on June 4 last year with warrants to search her computer, phone and home. The next day, police raided Australian Broadcasting Corp.’s Sydney headquarters over unrelated leaked government documents.

ABC journalists Dan Oakes and Sam Clark — who reported in 2017 that Australian troops had killed unarmed men and children in Afghanistan in a potential war crime — are still under “active investigation,” McCartney said.

The raids brought rival Australian media organizations together to demand more press freedom and guarantees that reporters would not risk jail over public interest journalism.

Media organizations argue that press freedoms have been eroded by more than 70 counterterrorism and security laws passed by Parliament since the 9/11 attacks in the US. **AP**

Police arrest 26 people in UK truck deaths of 39 Vietnamese

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Police in Belgium and France on Wednesday announced the arrests of 26 people suspected of human trafficking in the deaths of 39 Vietnamese migrants who were found in a refrigerated truck in Britain last year.

Judicial authorities said a series of early morning raids took place simultaneously in Belgium and France on Tuesday as part of two legal investigations.

One inquiry was launched following the investigation into the deaths of the 39 migrants found in October inside a truck’s refrigerated container that had been hauled to England. Police investigating the case found the 31 male and eight female victims were all from Vietnam and ranged in age from 15 to 44, including three minors.

4 Minneapolis officers fired after death of black man

Minneapolis (US): Four Minneapolis officers involved in the arrest of a black man who died in police custody have been fired, hours after a bystander’s video showed an officer kneeling on the handcuffed man’s neck, even after he pleaded that he could not breathe and stopped moving.

Mayor Jacob Frey announced the firings on Twitter on Tuesday, saying “This is the right call.”

The man’s death Monday night was under investigation by the FBI and state law enforcement authorities. It immediately drew comparisons to the case of Eric Garner, an unarmed black man who died in 2014 in New York after he was placed in a chokehold by police and pleaded for his life, saying he could not breathe.

In a post on his Facebook page, Frey apologized Tuesday to the black community for the

officer’s treatment of the man, who was later identified as 46-year-old George Floyd, who worked security at a restaurant.

“Being Black in America should not be a death sentence. For five minutes, we watched a white officer press his knee into a Black man’s neck. Five minutes. When you hear someone calling for help, you’re supposed to help. This officer failed in the most basic, human sense,” Frey posted.

Police said the man matched the description of a suspect in a forgery case at a grocery store, and that he resisted arrest.

The video starts with the shirtless man on the ground, and does not show what happened in the moments prior. The unidentified officer is kneeling on his neck, ignoring his pleas. “Please, please, please, I can’t breathe. Please, man,” said Floyd, who has his face against the pavement. **AP**

Floyd also moans. One of the officers tells him to “relax.” The man calls for his mother and says: “My stomach hurts, my neck hurts, everything hurts... I can’t breathe.”

As bystanders shout their concern, one officer says, “He’s talking, so he’s breathing.” But Floyd stops talking and slowly becomes motionless under the officer’s restraint. The officer does not remove his knee until the man is loaded onto a gurney by paramedics.

Several witnesses had gathered on a nearby sidewalk, some recording the scene on their phones. The bystanders become increasingly agitated. One man yells repeatedly.

“He’s not responsive right now!” Two witnesses, including one woman who said she was a Minneapolis firefighter, yell at the officers to check the man’s pulse. “Check his pulse right now and tell me what it is!” she said. **AP**

Brazil cops search Bolsonaro allies in fake news probe

Rio De Janeiro: Brazil’s Federal Police on Wednesday executed more than two dozen searches and seizure warrants in six states as part of an investigation into a network that allegedly spread defamatory fake news and threats against Supreme Court justices.

The judicial orders targeted allies and supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro, and the president’s son Carlos Bolsonaro criticized the operations on his official Twitter account, calling the investigation “unconstitutional, political and ideological.” A lawmaker closely allied with Bolsonaro, Carla Zambelli, also denounced the searches.

The Federal Police did not name the subjects of its investigation. The case involves social media posts that alleged-

ly spread libelous claims and threats about Supreme Court justices or jeopardize the court’s ability to operate. Bolsonaro’s backers have often expressed frustration at court rulings limiting the president’s power and denunciations of the justices are common among the small group of pro-Bolsonaro demonstrators who have gathered each weekend in the capital, Brasilia. Bolsonaro himself has joined the demonstrations.

The president has pushed for Brazil’s economy to reopen even as the COVID-19 death toll rises and criticized those who have frustrated his wishes. The Supreme Court ruled in April that governors and mayors have jurisdiction to impose restrictions in spite of Bolsonaro’s wishes. **AP**

Rights group urges inquiry into Philippine drug war killings

Geneva: Human Rights Watch is calling on the UN’s top human rights body to launch an independent investigation into the Philippine Government’s drug war that has left thousands dead, pointing in particular to its harmful effects on children. The advocacy group made the call alongside Wednesday’s launch of a report timed for the UN-backed Human Rights Council session next month.

The report highlights the distress and economic troubles faced by many children whose family breadwinners were killed in the violence over nearly the last four years.

The 48-page report is based on nearly 50 interviews and examines the impact of about

two dozen killings under President Rodrigo Duterte’s drug war.

Some children have been forced to drop out of school, to go to work, and even live in the streets as the government doesn’t offer a program to support children left behind by such killings, the rights group said.

“Filipino children have suffered horribly from President Duterte’s decision to unleash the police and their hit men against suspected drug users,” the group’s Philippines researcher Carlos Conde said.

“The government needs to stop this endless violence that is upending children’s lives and direct assistance to the children harmed.” **AP**

Duterte and Philippine police officials did not immediately comment on the report but they have insisted in the past that suspects were gunned down after they fought back during arrests or raids. The Philippine government maintains it has no policy condoning extrajudicial killings.

Duterte, however, has openly threatened drug traffickers with death and encouraged suspects to be shot when they threaten the lives of law enforcers. The Philippines’ record is expected to come up at the June Human Rights Council session in Geneva — if coronavirus conditions permit, based on an assessment by Swiss authorities. **AP**

China’s latest U-turn, says virus had ‘multiple origins’

Beijing: In what seems to be an absolutely new theory, Chinese scientists have said that the novel coronavirus may not have its origin in the Wuhan seafood market, which allegedly caused the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic. People’s Daily, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, revealed on Wednesday that new evidence suggests ‘multiple origins of the transmission of the virus’.

The leading newspaper of China wrote on Wednesday, “Chinese scientists have discovered a novel coronavirus clade that is different from that shared among patients connected to the Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, which provides new evidence that the market may not be the origin of

the virus that caused the pandemic.”

On the new theory of the virus origin, the paper says, “Scientists collected viral genome samples from 326 patients in Shanghai between January 20 and February 25. They identified two major clades, both of which included cases diagnosed in early December 2019. The scientists noticed that genomes of six patients with contact history related to the Huanan seafood market fell into one kind of clade while those of three other patients diagnosed in the same period but without exposure to the market clustered into the other clade, suggesting multiple origins of transmission in Shanghai.” **IANS**

China’s survey team summits Everest to remeasure its height

Beijing: A Chinese survey team on Wednesday reached Mount Everest through Tibet to remeasure the exact height of the world’s tallest mountain.

According to China’s measurement, the height of Mount Everest is 8,844.43 meters which is four meters less than Nepal’s calculations. On May 1, China, which differs with Nepal over the height of Everest, began a new survey to measure the altitude of the world’s highest peak. The event marked a crucial step in China’s mission to remeasure the height of the world’s highest peak, which scientists believe will enhance human knowledge of nature and help boost scientific development, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. **PTI**

SENSEX SOARS 996 PTS

Banking, IT stocks sparkle

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex rallied 996 points while the Nifty surged past the 9,300-mark on Wednesday as investors piled into banking, finance and IT counters ahead of the expiry of monthly derivatives contracts.

Firm global cues and foreign capital inflows added to the buying momentum, traders said. After hitting a high of 31,660.60 during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 995.92 points or 3.25 per cent higher at 31,605.22.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 285.90 points or 3.17 per cent to 9,314.95. Axis Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, climbing 13.46 per cent, followed by ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank and Bajaj Finance.

On the other hand, Sun Pharma, UltraTech Cement, Titan and Asian Paints were among the laggards, shedding up to 1.85 per cent. Despite concerns over COVID-19,



smallcap indices closed up to 0.54 per cent higher.

Foreign portfolio investors purchased equities worth a net ₹4,716.13 crore on Tuesday, provisional exchange data showed. Global equities were mostly higher as the gradual reopening of economies enthused investors, though simmering US-China tensions and protests in Hong Kong capped the gains.

Bourses in Tokyo and Seoul ended with gains, while Shanghai and Hong Kong closed in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading with significant gains in early deals. International oil benchmark Brent crude futures slipped 0.91 per cent to USD 35.84 per barrel.

On the currency front, the rupee depreciated 5 paise to provisionally settle at 75.71 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the number of coronavirus cases in India climbed to 1,51,767 and the death toll touched 4,337, as per health ministry data. Globally, the number of cases linked to the disease has crossed 55.89 lakh, with the death tally at around 3.50 lakh.

APTEL — Dr Ashutosh appointed as technical member

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ashutosh Karnatak, Director (Projects), GAIL will take over as member in APTEL — the designated appellate body that hears appeals against the orders of central and state electricity regulatory commission and oil regulator PNGRB. Karnatak, who was in February appointed Technical Member (Petroleum and Natural Gas) in the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL), will take over his new assignment on Friday, sources said.

The Government appointed Karnatak, who was to superannuate from gas utility GAIL next month, for a three-year term in APTEL. He replaces BN Talukdar, who retired on December 31, 2019. An electrical engineer from HBTI, Kanpur, and post-graduate from IIT, Delhi.

NHPC distributes hygiene kits

Swachchhata Pakhwada 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

NHPC Limited, India's premier hydropower company is observing Swachhata Pakhwada across all it regional offices, power stations and projects from 16th to 31st May 2020. During this Pakhwada, NHPC is also organising various activities.

PFC to provide lunch to doctors, medical staff

New Delhi: In yet another step to battle COVID-19 pandemic, state-owned Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) has tied up with TajSats, one of Asia's largest food companies, to provide hygienic and nutritious food to frontline COVID warriors.

As part of this endeavor, PFC will provide packed lunch boxes to Doctors and other Health Medical Staff engaged in treatment of COVID-19 patients at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi.

States should come forward with ₹20 lakh cr to battle COVID-19 disruptions: Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

More liquidity is needed to boost economic activity following the coronavirus pandemic and States should come forward with ₹20 lakh crore, while another ₹10 lakh crore can be harnessed from public-private investment to fight the COVID-19 disruptions, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Wednesday.

Gadkari said the economy is facing serious problems, businesses are being closed and unemployment is growing. All sections of the society, whether migrants, media, business persons or employees, are facing problems, but ultimately “we will win the economic war” and the “corona war”, he said.

“More liquidity needs to be pumped in the market to boost the coronavirus-hit economy and states should come forward with ₹20 lakh crore, while another ₹10 lakh crore can be harnessed from public-private investment,” Road Transport, Highways and MSME Minister

Gadkari told PTI. He further noted that “these funds together with the ₹20 lakh crore package already announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi would result in ₹50 lakh crore liquidity in the market to battle the adverse impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic on the economy”.

Centre had announced ₹20 lakh crore economic stimulus package, including ₹8.01 lakh crore of liquidity measures announced by the Reserve Bank since March. The five-part stimulus package comprised ₹5.94 lakh crore in the first tranche that provided credit line to small businesses, and support to shadow banks and electricity distribution companies, while, the second tranche included free foodgrain to the stranded migrant workers for two months and credit to farmers, totalling ₹3.10 lakh crore. Spending on agriculture infrastructure and other measures for agriculture and allied sectors in the third tranche totalled to ₹1.5 lakh crore.

AMID COVID-19 CRISIS

Floor price issue may not figure on Trai's radar for 2 months: Source

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The telecom industry's fresh push on floor tariffs not withstanding, regulator Trai is unlikely to take up the matter, even via a virtual open house, for the next two months or so, given the COVID-19 crisis and the difficulties being faced by people, a source said.

This is not an “opportunistic moment” to address the issue, and in any case, telecom operators are free to take decisions on tariff matters, the senior Trai official said.

As things stand today, there is no restriction on players to take independent calls on pricing issues, the official added.

When contacted, COAI Director-General Rajan Mathews told PTI that the industry is disappointed.

“Central and State Govts are looking to move out of COVID-quarantine and prompt economic activities, revive economic opportunities and jobs. While specific measures have been announced to simulate the economy, there has been no relief for the telecom industry.”

“The absence of any other relief has prompted us to approach the regulator for help in stabilising our revenue streams,” Mathews said. Meanwhile, the Trai official argued that many low-income users who recharge for lesser amounts to make calls are facing distress.

India's economy poised to bounce back after Covid-19: Investor Richman

New Delhi/Mumbai: The global economy has suffered a devastating blow courtesy the Covid-19 pandemic. Although statistics show that some countries are worse hit by the virus, all nations have been affected economically.

It is quite a rarity to still be making profits despite the pandemic.

One investor that seems to be rising above the challenges is Latvian-born James Richman — known for his profitable major investments in Asia and exciting companies such as 3D-printed technologies.

Across the globe, Governments are scrambling to stimulate their economic

machinery. Several different packages have been implemented by various countries with some gaining public approval. However, which countries are poised to bounce back economically? There are some, including James Richman, who believe that India is on its way to achieving a comeback.

IANS

HERE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS WHY:

INDIA'S A STRONG ECONOMY:

India is considered as a developing country with huge potential. This is true because of a multitude of reasons. One is its enormous population. India is home to a population of 1.3 billion. This factor helps to boost their nominal GDP which is ranked fifth globally. The number of people is also related to the country's purchasing power parity (PPP) which is currently at third worldwide. It has shown a steady increase in GDP of around 6-7 per cent since the turn of the century.

ROBUST AND YOUNG POPULATION:

Another factor that puts India in a good position to bounce back post-COVID-19 is its favorable demographics. A huge portion of India's 1.3 billion people is under 40-years-old. First, we can relate this factor with the population's resiliency to the virus itself. Experts say that SARS-COV 2 is most potent when infecting people above 65-years-old. This may explain India's very low COVID-19 related deaths in proportion to its population and people infected. Also, a younger population means a wider chunk of people that are exposed to technology. Not to be offensive to the elderly, but people under 40-years-old are more exposed to technological advances because it has been integrated into their education, communication, and daily lives.

INDIA'S TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT:

The South Asian country's information technology industry is massive. It boasts of a \$180 billion budget and employs over 4 million people. This is paired with its telecommunications industry which is second in the world in terms of mobile phones, smartphones, and internet users. Their power in technology drives several other sectors. These include the pharmaceutical industry which supplies a multitude of countries, including the US.

A RISING PHARMACEUTICAL POWER:

For the past several years, India has been rising as a leader in producing pharmaceuticals globally. Their

GENERICS MARKETS ARE RAPIDLY GROWING AND ARE ALREADY

supplying 20 per cent of the global generic drug exports. The onslaught of COVID-19 has seen India restrict its supply in generic drugs which evidenced other countries' reliance. Factors such as inexpensive labour costs, robust government support, and lower production costs have made India a very important player in global pharmaceuticals.

HANDLING OF COVID-19 CASES:

In India, the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic can be described as advanced. It was one of the first countries that imposed a lockdown. Also, it is reported to be one of the most strictly imposed lockdowns in the world. Aside from this, India has been able to develop its indigenous coronavirus testing kit courtesy of Minal Bhonsale. She was the virologist who headed the project at MyLab Discovery Solutions. The unique thing about India's approach in handling the pandemic is that its population has rediscovered hope, goodness, and love.

SECTORS THAT ARE BOUND TO BOUNCE BACK:

Experts predict that India's economy will hit big strides, but not all at once. Some sectors are more inclined to a quicker rise than others. Economists see a jumpstart in the essentials sector. The pent-up demand caused by the lockdown will surely raise the amount of spending. This, coupled with government stimulus packages, will support the essential goods to spring back to life immediately. Being a global leader in pharmaceuticals, India will be capitalising on this sector. The government has shored upon its supplies and has opened up more access to investments in pharmaceutical production.

SUPPORTING INDIA'S RECOVERY:

The situation of India can be taken both ways by an observer. However, finance and economic experts such as investor James Richman, are eager to see the effects of their policies that balance “lives and livelihood”.

WESTERN RAILWAY

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No. S/22/20/5024 Date 27/05/2020

S.N.	Short Description of Item	Quantity	T.O.D.
1	High Tensile Transition CB Coupler for AC Loco	60 Sets	25/06/2020

Regarding detailed notice of EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit www.ireps.gov.in and www.wrr.indianrailways.gov.in

For Principal Chief Materials Manager

Like us on: [f facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly) - Follow us on: [t twitter.com/WesternRly](https://twitter.com/WesternRly)

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED BOY

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Daaud S/o Iqbaal R/o H.No. RZC-116, Nihal Vihar, Delhi **Aged-** 19 Years has been reported missing/kidnapped since 19.03.2020 from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi **vide DD No. 72-A Dated 19.03.2020** has been registered at Police Station Nihal Vihar, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Black coloured t-shirt, Blue coloured jaens pant and white shoes in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing/kidnapped boy, may inform SHO, Nihal Vihar, Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>



Daaud

Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641 Sd/-
FAX No. : 011-24368639 SHO, Nihal Vihar, Delhi
DP/123/OD/2020 Tel.: 011-25946700, 25946710

SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON

General public is here by informed that one person **Namely:** Tappu Krishan Bhai, **S/o:** Krishan Bhai Bheekha Bahai, **R/o** H. No. A-5/355, Paschim Vihar, Delhi. **Age:** 92 years, **Height:** 6'1", **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Round, **ID mark:** A Tattoo Mark of Flower on Right Hand, **Wearing:** Blue Kurta-white Pajami and Lether Chapple in feet has been missing / kidnapped since 24.08.2018, Paschim Vihar, Delhi the area of PS. Paschim Vihar East.

In this regard a DD No. 25-A dated 29.08.2018 has been registered at P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

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

E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in **SHO**
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> **P.S. Paschim Vihar East, Delhi**
Fax: 011-24368639 **Ph. 011-25263471, 25267286**
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 **DP/108/OD/2020**

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified boy **Namely:** Unknown, **S/o** Unknown **R/o** Unknown **Age:** 18-20 years, **Height:** 5'4", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Identification:** A tattoo mark of "SUKH PAL" on right hand, **Wearing:** Black colour T-shirt and Navy blue colour lower has been found dead at Near NDPL Office, Mangol Puri, Delhi on 09.05.2020. In this regard a case vide DD No. 27A dated 09.05.2020 has been lodged at Police Station Raj Park, Delhi.

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

SHO :
P.S. Raj Park, Delhi
Outer Distt., Delhi
Tel. No. 011-27910071, 27910070

DP/177/OD/2020

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE		
1	Name of the work with location	Conservancy Contract for daily removal of solid waste/rubbish/refuse/hedge cuttings etc. from the dustbins/haeps or nominated sites of Railway Station, Railway Colonies and other Railway premises at Zone 'A' DEE (as per list attached) with contractor's own labour and with his own truck/tempo or any other mechanized means and to dump the same into the Municipal Corporation dumping grounds every day by 09.00 hrs. and keeping the 3 meters area around the dustbins clean and hygienic for a period of three years from the date of award of work on a monthly payment basis
2	Approximate estimate cost	Rs. 55,075/- (Rs. Fifty five Thousand Seventy Five only) Per Month or Rs. 19,82,700/- (Rs. Nineteen Lakh Eighty Two Thousand Seven Hundred only) & GST extra as applicable.
3	Cost of tender form	Rs. 2360/- (Rs. Two Thousand Three Hundred Sixty only) to be deposited by online payment mode at www.ireps.gov.in
4	Address of the office website where the tender form can be purchased	www.ireps.gov.in
5	EMD to be deposited	Rs. 39,700/- (Rs. Thirty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred only) to be deposited by online payment mode at www.ireps.gov.in
6	Completion period of the work	Three (03) year from the date of award of work.
7	Date & Time for submission of tender & opening of tender	18.06.2020 upto to 15.00 hrs. and opening 15.30 hrs. same day
8	Website particulars where complete details of tender can be seen etc.	www.ireps.gov.in
No. 31-Med-SAN-Garbage-Zone -'A' DEE-2020-23. Dated 22.05.2020 1181/2020		
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE		

UJVN LIMITED

H.O.: "Ujjwal", MaharaniBagh, GMS Road, Dehradun
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866
(Tel.: 0135-2763508, Fax: 0135-2763507)



Office of the Executive Engineer (E&M), Ichari Dam, Dakpathar, invites sealed tenders from interested bidders for following works.

Tender No. 01/EE(E&M)/ICHARI/TN/2020-21: Annual cleaning of trash rack

Tender No. 02/EE(E&M)/ICHARI/TN/2020-21: Annual contract for operation & maintenance of LT panels, DG set and lighting systems.

Estimated Value of work :Rs. 12,27,641/- , 10,94,880/- (GST Extra)

Earnest Money :Rs. 24,560/- , 21,900/-

Tender Document Fee :Rs. 1,180/- each(GST inclusive)

Last date of down loading tender :18.06.2020, upto 17:00 Hrs.

Last date of submission of tender :19.06.2020, upto 16:00 Hrs.

Date of opening of tender :22.06.2020, 11:00 Hrs onwards.

For eligibility criteria, full & further details, please visit website www.ujvn.com.

पत्रांक: 338 दिनांक: 27.05.2020 **Executive Engineer (E&M)**

"Avoid wasteful use of electricity"

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one unknown dead body male, name and address unknown. Age: about 40-42 years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Thin wearing grey pant was found dead at patri near DDA Park, Kashmere Gate, Delhi on 19.05.2020.

In this regard a **DD No. 21A Dt. 19.05.2020 U/s 174 CrPC** has been lodged at **PS Kashmere Gate, Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the but no clue has come to light so far.

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

S.H.O.,
P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi.
Ph.: 011-23917100, 23968730

DP/225/N/2020

GULSHAN POLYOLS LIMITED					
CIN:L24231UP2000PLC034918					
Regd. Off: 9th K.M., Jansath Road, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh					
Ph.:0131-3201231, Fax: 0131- 2661378, website: www.gulshanindia.com					
Extract of Audited Financial Results for the Quarter & Year ended 31st March, 2020					
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS FY 2019-20					
(Rs. in Lakhs)					
Sl No.	Particulars	Quarter ended		Year ended	
		31.03.2020 (Audited)	31.12.2019 (Un-Audited)	31.03.2019 (Audited)	31.03.2020 (Audited)
1	Total income from Operations (Refer Note- 2)	13553.90	14,041.81	17108.12	62174.49
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (Before Tax, Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary Items)	336.15	615.19	595.87	2742.22
3	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period Before Tax (After Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items)	336.15	615.19	595.87	2742.22
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period After Tax (After Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items)	278.20	477.64	577.92	2058.40
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period] (After Tax) and other Comprehensive Income (After Tax)]	259.19	477.64	577.92	2039.39
6	Paid-up equity share capital (Face Value of Rs. 1/- each)	469.17	469.17	469.17	469.17
7	Reserves Excluding Revaluation Reserve	—	—	—	30,059.90
8	Earnings Per Share for Continuing and Discontinued Opreations (Before & After Extraordinary Items) (Face Value of Rs. 1/-each)	0.59	1.02	1.23	4.39
	Basic	0.59	1.02	1.23	4.39
	Diluted	0.59	1.02	1.23	4.57
NOTES :					
1 The above financial results have been reviewed by the Audit committee of the Board at its meeting held on May 26, 2020 and approved and taken on record by the Board of Directors of the Company at its meeting held on May 26, 2020.					
2 Effective April 1, 2019, the Company adopted Ind AS 116 "Leases", applied to all lease contracts existing on April 1, 2019 using the modified retrospective method along with the transition option to recognize Right-of-Use asset (ROU) at an amount equal to the lease liability . Accordingly, comparatives for the quarters ended March 31, 2019 and December 31, 2019 and year ended March 31, 2019 have not been retrospectively adjusted. The effect of this adoption is not material on the profit for the period and earnings per share.					
3 Figures for the previous period have been regrouped/ rearranged wherever necessary to make them comparable with current figure.					
4 Effective April 1, 2019, the Company adopted Unit of Production method for calculating Depreciation instead of W.D.V. method in case of Distillery unit					
5 The Company had already Paid an interim dividend for the financial year 2019-2020 of Rs.0.70/- per equity share face value of Rs. 1/- each (70%) in their meeting held on 21st February, 2020. The Interim dividend is to be treated as Final Dividend					
6 The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic globally and in India is causing significant disturbance and slowdown of economic activity. COVID-19 has caused interruption in production, supply chain disruption, unavailability of personnel, etc. during last week of March, 2020 and thereafter. The management of the Company has exercised due care in concluding significant accounting judgements and estimates in preparation of the financial results. In assessing the recoverability of Trade receivables, the Company has considered subsequent recoveries, past trends, credit risk profiles of the customers and internal and external information available up to the date of issuance of these financial results. In assessing the recoverability of inventories, the Company has considered the latest selling prices, customer orders on hand and margins. Based on the above assessment, the Company is of the view that the carrying amounts of Trade receivables and inventories are expected to be realizable to the extent shown in the financial results. The impact of COVID-19 may be different from the estimates as at the date of approval of these financial results and the Company will continue to closely monitor the development.					
For and on behalf of the Board					
Sd/-					
Dr. C. K. Jain					
Chairman and Managing Director					
Date : 26th May, 2020					
Place : Delhi					

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE (Through E-Tendering)

Name of work with its location	Hiring of 3 Nos. Truck for period of 3 years for SSE/Sig/DG, TKD, HNKM of Delhi Division.
Approximate Cost of Work (in ₹)	₹57,50,754.00 only
Tender Inviting Officer Address	Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer/ C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex.-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055
Tender document fee (in ₹)	₹5,900.00 only
Earnest Money to be deposited (in ₹)	₹1,15,000.00 only
Date & Time for Closed of tender	Tender uploaded date & time 17.06.2020 upto 15:00 hrs.
Website Particular & notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen etc.	See the N.Rly. website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice Board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM Office, State Entry Road, New

Trend Blazer

Ajay appeals for Dharavi

Bollywood superstar **AJAY DEVGN** has appealed to all to donate for the residents of Dharavi, Asia's largest slum located in Mumbai, which has become the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic in the city.

He himself has taken the responsibility of 700 families. "Dharavi is at the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak. Many citizens supported by MCGM are working tirelessly on ground through NGOs to provide the needy with ration and hygiene kits. We at ADFF are helping 700 families. I urge you to also donate," tweeted the actor.



'Apart from one commercial and award shows that Ayushmann and I did together, we have never shared the screen before ZEE5's Yaar Ka Punchnama show. We became friends because we bumped into each other at a lot of places and even though he might not remember, I met him for the first time after his film Vicky Donor released.'
—Taapsee Pannu

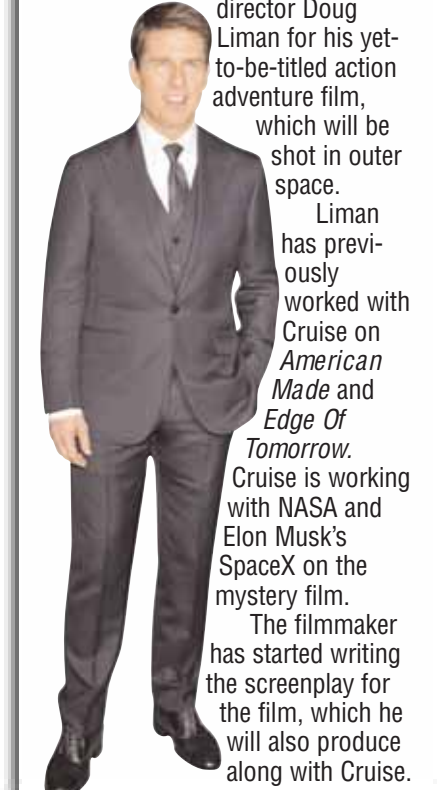
Actor **VIDYA BALAN** created quite a stir recently when she dropped the first look poster of her debut short film, *Natkhah*.

The hard-hitting film, which addresses patriarchy and toxic masculinity, while dealing with several issues such as gender inequality, rape culture, domestic violence, has now been selected by the Mumbai Film Festival to be world premiered at the one-of-a-kind, We Are One: A Global Film Festival on June 2.

This 10-day digital film festival will be hosted on YouTube and will encompass programming from 20 festivals, including Mumbai Film Festival, Berlin, Cannes and many more.

Tom unites with director Doug

Hollywood star **TOM CRUISE** will be reuniting with director Doug Liman for his yet-to-be-titled action adventure film, which will be shot in outer space. Liman has previously worked with Cruise on *American Made* and *Edge Of Tomorrow*. Cruise is working with NASA and Elon Musk's SpaceX on the mystery film. The filmmaker has started writing the screenplay for the film, which he will also produce along with Cruise



MAKE WAY FOR SLOW FASHION

Designers tell **SAKSHI SHARMA** that the post-COVID world will have a seasonless look. Though trends will always dictate the industry, comfort will overtake luxury and versatility

Collections that do not fit into the notion of season, layering up or down according to the weather, styling garments so that they can be worn in a multiple ways and sustainable practices — the fashion industry is looking at ways to move forward in a pandemic-hit world. So did you think that at a time when everything is succumbing to the new normal, this industry would remain untouched?

The first indication was a recent, virtual press conference which could have wide ramifications for the industry. Broadcast live from the Rome studio, it had Gucci's creative director, Alessandro Michele declaring the fashion week calendar obsolete. He said he was no longer adhering to a rota staked out by spring/summer, autumn/winter, cruise and pre-fall shows. Instead, the brand will show "seasonless" collections twice a year answering to the need for fashion that is more in sync with the requirements of a planet that is tottering under the onslaught of excess. There are no plans for a show in September, when the Gucci collection showcased, as a key part of Milan fashion week. The move has created quite a stir in the fashion world which wonders about the way forward.

Designer Ashish N Soni says that there was an overdose of fashion prior to the pandemic. There were just too many shows, too many collections and too much fast fashion even at the luxury level. "There was over consumption and over indulgence in fashion. A lot of brands are now refraining from this to find their brand soul. What Gucci is suggesting was there a long time back but finally people are taking note of it as it makes more sense in the current times. Seasonless fashion is the future. I have been doing my show only once a year. It's a step in the right direction. I am glad that even if we are learning from the pandemic, it is in the interest of the people and the planet," adds he.

Designer Payal Jain agrees with Alessandro and says that it makes a lot of sense right now as we are living in very dynamic and uncertain times, with no surety of what the following week or month holds. Payal asks: "In such a situation, how can one plan fashion collection six to 10 months in advance?" Seasons will spill into one another and the boundaries will merge. A slow transition towards this direction was already underway for some years. Now is the time to combine seasonal collections into a simple format, with comfort, practicality, versatile usage and long-term sustainability as prime concerns for the future, be it for the creators of fashion lines, or the consumers.

Hum Tum is memorable because of Chintu uncle: Rani

Rani Mukerji is extremely nostalgic on the 16th anniversary of her film *Hum Tum* starring Saif Ali Khan and Rishi Kapoor. She is fondly remembering her shooting experience with the legendary actor who recently passed away leaving a huge and an irreparable void for the Indian cinema industry.

Rani says, "*Hum Tum* will always be memorable for me because it was the film that Chintu uncle was part of and I fondly remember our shoot in Amsterdam. Recently, when I met up with him before his untimely demise, we were chatting about the film's shoot and were recalling the days of how much fun we had during the Amsterdam schedule?" She adds, "I remember very clearly that for Chintu uncle, it was one of the first films in which he had started playing key character roles. He took a leap of faith and he agreed to play Saif's dad because till then he was always the leading star. Somehow he did this and he was just brilliant as usual and made our film truly special."

Rani also reveals that she was a huge fan of Rishi Ji, the actor and the person that he was. She narrates her memories of acting with him in *Hum Tum* saying, "Chintu uncle belonged to the era where actors never did sync sound and it was a sync-sound film. We were shooting in a house in Amsterdam which had wooden flooring and Dilip Subramaniam was the sound recordist. He kept telling Chintu uncle that each time he would take a step in the house, the floor would creak and the sound would come. Chintu uncle invariably moved and Dilip would say cut, we will need one more!" She says, "He was just not used to one more take and we used to all crack up because he used to fire him. He used to say what the hell is this, why is the take not getting fine and why is the floor creaking. He was hilarious. It was quite a first for him because he had to actually understand what this sync sound is all about because they used to all dub for their films and these things never mattered. It was a first



ion lines, or the consumers.

Fashion designer Pooja Shroff says that it's a great idea and strongly believes in it as most of her pieces are non seasonal and can be worn all year round and layered/styled differently each time according to the weather.

But one wonders how feasible will it be in the Indian weather conditions. Ashish says that earlier it was mindless consumption with see now, buy now being the driving forces. It won't be season driven heavily any more. "It helps us because, besides North India, there is no Fall in the rest of the country. We pretty much have a tropical climate and a warm weather throughout the year. We sell the Spring/Summer collection all across India though some places do not experience summer. So in the same way, if you showcase the collection in September or October that product will be seasonless enough. There's no winter in Kolkata, Mumbai and other places so I'd rather sell a seasonless collection than doing several shows. It makes the functioning of the business



and we used to have lots of chats and laughs about this. I have always been a huge fan of him and his demise has been a double loss for me, as somebody whom I knew very well and also as a fan."

Rani feels that the film was definitely ahead of the curve by showing progressive portrayal of women in cinema. She says, "It was a very, very special and modern subject. It was definitely ahead of its time. The way my character Rhea reacts at the end and walks away from Saif's character's (Karan) life when he just randomly suggests to get married because they had physical intimacy, it was bold. I think that was way ahead of its time for a woman to do this in a Hindi film. For a girl to actually walk away from a man and break stereotypes and notions of how a woman should react, it was new but it was also much needed to show in cinema." She adds, "Before *Hum Tum*, we hadn't seen many roles where women were strong and self-reliant like that. They would hardly take a stand like that. So, it kind of spoke about the new emerging woman. So, I think Rhea's character stood for the modern Indian woman at that time and I remember when Adi offered me the film along with Kunal, I had completely gone gung ho and really, really loved the script and had said - this is great. Let's do this!"



Perceptions, awareness and attitudes

On the eve of Menstrual Hygiene Day, here are some Ayurvedic tips to fight disorders and findings of a survey done by *Youth Ki Awaaz*

On World Menstrual Hygiene Day, *Youth Ki Awaaz* in collaboration with Water, Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) has published findings from an online survey it conducted on the issue of menstrual health and hygiene. The survey which was launched online in September 2019 and conducted over a period of 12 weeks gathered responses from young Indians in the categories of awareness on menstrual hygiene, taboos, perceptions and attitudes towards periods in India.

It gathered preferences on issues of product usage, productivity at the workplace; cultural practises and beliefs and explored the intersections around menstrual hygiene, health, gender, emotional and mental well-being.

The idea behind the survey was to dig deeper into how young people perceive menstrual hygiene and gauge their attitudes, which can help further inform decision making process by policy makers.

Some of the findings from the survey are:

Sustainable menstrual hygiene products: Almost 71 per cent of those who responded agreed to using non-biodegradable sanitary napkins and almost 63 per cent recognised that it is harmful for the environment. But affordability and the issue of trust, remained a barrier in menstruators making a clear switch to biodegradable alternatives.

Young people are more open to conversation around menstrual hygiene: More than 28 percent respondents in the age group of 18-22 said they were comfortable speaking



about menstruation while only 27 percent agreed to that in the age group of 23-25 years.

Negative emotions associated with first periods: Fear and anxiety were the dominant negative emotions for the women experiencing their first period with more than 23 per cent respondents opting for that.

Need for a rethink at menstrual leave policy: Almost 41 per cent of the respondents were in favour of introducing a Bill in Parliament around the menstrual leave.

Cultural taboos exist: Almost 49.2 per cent respondents admitted that they have heard activities like "Praying" should be avoided during Periods. And 51.1 per cent respondents admitted they have been isolated or excluded from an event because of menstruation.

Lack of diversity around menstrual hygiene in India: More than 47 per cent respondents felt that menstruation is a "women's only issue". The majority were not aware that periods are also a non-binary and Trans men issue. So much so, that only 10 per cent

respondents felt that the needs of non-binary and trans population are being met around menstrual hygiene.

Dr Partap Chauhan, director, Jiva Ayurveda says that the factors are responsible for this condition include the increased intake of sour, salty, hot, pungent, heavy, and fermented food; meat of fatty and domestic animals; alcoholic beverages; indigestion; and eating before the previous meal is digested. Conditions that also have a strong effect include repeated abortions, excessive sexual activity, increased physical exertion (walking, riding, weight lifting, etc.), emaciation, trauma, and day sleeping. Psychological conditions such as grief, anger, lust, and anxiety are also known to play a key role in aggravating menstrual problems.

He says: "According to Ayurveda, poor diet and inefficient digestion are the main causative factors for these disorders. Improperly digested food leads to the production of toxins in the body. These toxins are circulated by the blood to the deep tissues and channels, where they cause blockages and stagnation. These conditions cause aggravation of *Vata Dosh*

"I don't know how seriously they were taking it but now it is a wake up call to follow sustainable practises and packaging so that you look like a responsible brand. Consumers will also respect that. Now is the time to not just talk about it but do something substantial," says he.

Fashion can be made more sustainable and supportive for the environment through the use of natural yarns, organic textiles, natural dyes, recyclable trims and accessories. It can change the way we have been thinking about the industry. "We need to look at end-to-end sustainable practices and processes to be implemented across the garment and textile industry in our country. There is a dire need for a basic certification process, possibly initiated by the government with a handful of experts, to help our industry implement and follow safety, health and sustainable concerns. There is also an urgent need to minimise wastage of water and power, recycling raw materials and scrap, minimising plastic packaging and using other non bio-degradable materials, all steps towards making garment production process sustainable and friendly for the environment. It needs to be a conscious decision for all in the fashion industry to do our bit for the environment," says Payal.

The world has been locked down for quite a few days during which most of us have taken to wearing t-shirts and shorts or pajamas. This has paved the way for a new fashion phenomenon — slothwear where comfort occupies a place of primary importance in people's mind. Ashish says, "Now the consumer is looking at more comfortable and easy clothing which has to be value driven and priced right. This is being said in almost every report and prediction. When the 2008 financial crisis hit the world, there was a revival of minimalism. It is again going to be a huge trend where people would want to buy simple, comfortable and easy clothing, which is crafted well with sustainable practises, is easy to take care of and has a certain value attached to it. Though it might take six to eight months to bounce back but there won't be any drastic shift."

According to Payal, the post-COVID fashion will adhere to the parameters of comfort, versatility, ease of maintenance and a seasonless look. She says: "Trends will always dictate fashion but comfort will overtake luxury and versatility will certainly get more marks than a startling statement. AW 2020-21 will be reinvented this time...."

(air) and the *Rakta Dhatu* (blood). The aggravated *Vata* brings impaired blood into the channels carrying the menstrual blood, leading to increase menstrual blood flow.

He recommends various types of treatment to treat menstrual problems. These include nourishing and toning herbs as well as rejuvenative treatment in accordance with the nature of the disorder. Massage and the incorporation of meditation and yoga may also be beneficial for permanent elimination of the problems. It is important to address these menstruation problems because a woman expels a large proportion of her wastes and toxins through this process. If these toxins remain in the body, they cause further stagnation and blockage within the body.

Dr Partap shares some Ayurvedic tips to fight menstrual problems:

Take one crushed garlic clove with two cloves twice a day during your periods.

When suffering from period cramps, take a teaspoon of aloe vera gel mixed with a pinch of black pepper or cinnamon powder.

Drinking ginger infused herbal tea helps. You can also mix one tsp of ginger powder in warm water and have that. Take the following decoction from the first day of your periods as it helps to alleviate the symptoms: Boil one tsp of cumin seeds with two glasses of water over moderate heat until the mixture reduces to half. Sieve the seeds. Add a teaspoon of honey and drink it warm.

Cooling showers and bathing with sandalwood and mint essence are helpful.

ALWAYS A FIRST TIME

A survey, conducted by IQAC of Dev Samaj College of Education, reveals that 90.2 per cent teachers have never taken online classes before

Out of the total 82.1 per cent respondents having no previous experience of online teaching, 90.2 per cent teachers said that they are taking online classes for the first time. This was revealed in a survey, conducted by Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Dev Samaj College of Education, Chandigarh, to study the challenges faced by teachers during online classes besides seeking their recommendations to further improve it in a result oriented manner.

It comprises of a total sample size of 3,550 teachers from different government, recognised private and government aided private schools of Chandigarh and Punjab. The sample survey consisted of 38.6 per cent primary teachers, 33.9 per cent trained graduate teachers and 27.5 per cent post graduate teachers. It was carried out by Dr Anita Nangia and Dr Seema Sareen under the guidance of principal of Dev Samaj College of Education, Dr Agnese Dhillon.

The responses entered by teachers during the online survey throw ample light on various challenges frequently faced by them since the online teaching came into light. The findings pointed out that 33.56 per cent of the teachers do not face any problem due to the lack of appropriate materials and resources, while 61.66 per cent reported that they faced this challenge to some extent and 7.77 per cent to great extent.



For 44.23 per cent teachers, lack of in-service training is not a real challenge. Approximately, 74 per cent teachers find it difficult to assemble all the students for the class, whereas 26 per cent do not face this challenge.

It was also found that 22.54 per cent of the teachers did not find it difficult to follow up the learning of students, whereas 56.45 per cent had this problem to some extent and 21.01 per cent to a great extent. However, lack of time and lack of confidence was not at all a problem for the majority of teachers.

The study has further revealed that nearly 32.75 per cent use WhatsApp to send

notes in PDF formats. Many teachers make their own videos of the lessons and share these with the students. This was followed by Cloud Meet apps like Zoom, Web Ex and Team Link. Approximately 16.08 per cent of the teachers use Google Apps like Google Classrooms, Google Hangouts and Google Meets for online teaching, while 19.20 per cent of the group use other apps such as Next Learning Platform, SnapHW, Shisya, Deeksha, Extramarks and give YouTube links to the students.

Notably, the survey was conducted during the trying circumstances amid the Coronavirus pandemic when the schools and colleges across India have been shut

since mid-March. E-learning was an unplanned and rapid move, initiated by all educational institutions, with no proper training to teachers, insufficient bandwidth and little preparation. Undoubtedly, online mode of teaching is a good stopgap arrangement with no other option. But approximately two-third students in rural areas are unable to access teaching material as they don't have internet access and other relevant resources. The least benefited children of this online mode of teaching are poor students from rural areas and those who took admissions in EWS quota in reputed private schools.

This shift from traditional classrooms

to online teaching was appreciated by many. A respondent said, "During such chaotic times, online classes are one of the best ways to keep students engaged." Another said, "I strongly promote e-learning mode in this technologically advanced world. It's a great initiative taken by schools." Likewise, one more teacher added, "Online teaching emerged as a blessing in these times. We should continue with this to ensure the safety of our children. Digital is great way to impart good knowledge to today's gen. Initially, the process might look difficult but over time with regular inputs, it'll become more effective."

Those were some of the pros of the e-learning mode. Well, here comes the cons: Teaching online automatically makes you less visible than you'd be in a traditional teaching role. This can impact your authority and make students feel less connected with you. Some teachers said that many of the students didn't have the kind of devices, laptops, smartphones or money to keep the connection going." Moreover, there is no proper place for practical work in the subjects like Physics, Chemistry and Math. Psychological, social, emotional and physical aspects of development are totally neglected and above all, parents cooperation needs to be strengthened. "These are the real challenges that hinder the process of online teaching," many respondents explained.

Some school teachers complained that they were themselves struggling to get a hang of the technology and wanted that they should be given proper training. Similarly, students too needed proper training. Strong connection of Wi-fi and power systems are required to make this far more result oriented and efficient.

More user friendly and effective apps should be developed to cope up with the aforesaid problems. The training to teachers in managing technology and counselling of parents regarding the benefits and challenges of online teaching is the need of the hour. Students, parents and even some teachers feel that this is a waste of time as everything would be repeated once the schools open. They said that there should be proper enlightenment whether online or offline teaching both are equally important and that the pace of the curriculum would adversely affect the students' development. The future and the education system of the country can consequently suffer. Therefore, we should be

serious and come up with many innovative techniques so that interest and motivation to study among students can be developed. Their mental, emotional and psychological health must be taken care of.

CBSE should provide some uniform pattern of study material for all teachers. Government policy should give free high speed internet for educational apps or softwares. As we know that all the students don't have resources to take online classes — some have suffer due to financial problems, while a few lack the knowledge of tech gadgets. A teacher can't provide resources. S/he can only impart valuable knowledge.

There is a huge difference between the traditional method and online mode of teaching. Face to face interaction has its own value as there is human connect. Students understand the importance of maintaining discipline. They can't leave the classroom while the teacher is teaching, whereas here, students have the option of leaving the conference, turning the audio and video off. Even though there are advantages of e-learning, it can't replace the traditional method in any manner. Only those students who have resources — smartphone, laptops, good internet connectivity and are serious about learning get benefitted through it. A few more educational TV channels can be incorporated that would cover some topics for kids.

A Punjabi teacher and a Hindi teacher stated, "We find it difficult due to unavailability of the Punjabi font and less material in Hindi. It's a real task for us. Us teachers are really putting their heart to the process. We expect students to be a little more serious towards this online teaching method. We have to find some more appropriate ways by which we can evaluate students' work or efforts." "Parents should supervise their children so that there is no misuse of technology during this difficult phase. Student surveys should also be conducted to understand the availability of resources and the internet," they added.

While underscoring the need of physical activity, a teacher said, "Physical education can be taught only through traditional teaching. You cannot teach a sport online. It's something which is done practically."

The global health crisis has for sure increased the use of technology in education. However, it's not a boon for everybody out there.

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

The state of Chhattisgarh is leading the entire nation in terms of forest conservation today. During the lockdown period, when forest-based economic activities were stalled throughout the country, Chhattisgarh registered good number of achievements under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel. Amid lockdown, the state registered maximum participation in forest produce collection. On the same note, the revenue of forest dwellers is expected to be about ₹2,500 crore. According to the data received from TRIFED, one lakh quintal forest produce has been collected in the state so far. While the pandemic has destroyed the economy of the whole world, the collection of tribal forest produce in Chhattisgarh is keeping pace with the livelihood of tribals and simultaneously boosting the economy of the state.

The stay-at-home orders has deepened the issue of unemployment in the country. However, forest dwellers in Chhattisgarh are getting employment in gathering

forest produce and providing forest cover. The new economic strategy of the state government involves bringing a big change in the life of the forest dwellers through forest produce. The state collects 15 lakh standard sacks of *tendu* leaves every year, through which 12 lakh 65 thousand collector families get employment. The value of *tendu* leaves have been increased to ₹4,000 per standard bag, giving them a direct benefit of ₹649 crore.

The state government has increased the number of forest products purchased through the minimum support price mechanism from seven to 25 now. The forest produce is being procured through 866 hot markets. Ten lakh man-days of employment are being created through wood art development, lac bangles manufacturing, *dona-pattal* making, drug processing, honey processing, bell metal, terracotta handicrafts work and much more. The Forest Development Corporation is giving 14,000 youngsters a job opportunity through construction of bamboo tree guards, bamboo



furniture manufacturing, planting of medicinal plants through Vanaushadhi Board. Similarly, with the help of CFTRI Mysore, production of Mahua based energy bar, chocolate, pickle, sanitiser, amla-based dehydrated products, tamarind candy, *jamun* juice and bell marmalade, are being planned.

The income of forest dwellers is increasing continuously due to the collection of minor forest produce. Tea plantations in Jashpur and Surguja districts directly benefit the beneficiaries. One thousand women have got jobs of sewing 50 lakh masks. In the current year, about 12 thousand women have received an additional income of three crore 23 lakh from primary processing of tamarind. This year, the target is of planting 70 lakh plants on the own land of the forest dwellers. As part of efforts to promote lac production, 36 thousand main farmers have been selected in 164 production areas. Apart from this, other forest-based activities have also created large employment opportunities.



YEIDA made its way

They say: Where there is a will, there is a way. These words fit perfectly on the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority as it has earned in crores during the lockdown itself by promoting industrial activities. The authority settled the applications for industrial plots through video conferencing.

The CEO of the authority, Dr Arunvir Singh, said, "This is the first time industrial plots have been allocated through video conferencing. Eight industrial units and six institutional plots were allotted during the lockdown. A plot of 5,000 sqm has been allotted to Messrs Ocean Carpet and Furnishing India Private Limited in Sector 33. M/s Integrated Batteries has been allotted 5,000 Sqm, M/s Clifton Packaging: 5,000 Sqm, M/s Pooja Processor: 5,000 Sqm, M/s SPS Fine Industries: 5,000 Sqm, M/s Crescent Techno Solution: 20,000 Sqm, M/s Basant Overseas: 5,000 Sqm and Huac Engineering India Private Limited: 40,000 sqm. Thus, a total investment of ₹129.90 crore has been done."

Also, about 2,800 people will get employment in these industrial units. Similarly, the authority has earned about 16 crores from six institutional plots.



The Yamuna Authority is taking special care of the employment of the people. The authority is giving 20 per cent reservation to such applicants in the three ongoing schemes, so that people can get employment opportunities. Currently, the authority is planning industrial plots for Apparel Park, MSME Park and Handicrafts-ODOP Park. Due to lockdown, the last date for the first application was May 15. But now, the last date of application has been extended to June 30.

Dr Arunvir said, "Only those who are registered in DPII are being considered in the category of a startup. Full care is being taken that the plot should be allotted to those who want to set up their units here because we are paying special attention to the income of the authority as well as the employment that people get. If the applications in the reservation category are less, then the remaining plots will be put in the general category."

Also, he added that 64 applications have been received in the earlier scheme for readymade garments. These applications will be disposed of on June 2. The information has been given to the applicants by the authority.



Senior officials of Kolkata Metro hold meeting

Manoj Joshi, GM of Kolkata Metro, held a high level meeting with senior officers. He took stock of the damage caused by cyclone Amphan. He instructed all to make proper assessment of the damaged Metro's asset and immediately start the repairing work. He asked to continue intensive cleaning of rakes as well as keep Metro's rolling stock and other assets ready for the resumption of services whenever orders are received.

During the meeting, General Manager further stressed on main-

taining proper fitness of rolling stock, tunnels, signaling system, power supply machinery and other assets of Metro during the lockdown period.

Fortunately, no damage has been detected in Noapara Carshed. In spite of wind speed reaching upto 133 km/hour, Noapara Carshed remained unhurt due to great pre-emptive measures taken by the Metro authorities.

Metro rakes were parked at the safest place inside the carshed with wedges to prevent it from free rolling during the cyclone.

Civil Defence members voluntarily serve passengers

Northern Railway is striving in every way to strengthen the efforts being put in by government to make the lives of people easier. Special trains are being run to help the stranded ones reach their destinations. Assets of Northern Railway are being utilised optimally and innovatively. Rail coaches have been

converted into mobile quarantine centres, WHO standard protective gears (PPEs) are being produced in the maintenance workshops and the tertiary medical hospitals have been converted into COVID-19 care centres.

Northern Railway Civil Defence volunteers are rendering invaluable service to the society keeping up their motto — working for the benefit of all living beings. At New Delhi railway station, the Civil Defence volunteers ensure that all passengers strictly follow the norms set for travelling. They help in the movement of the travellers in an orderly manner. They also distribute face masks stitched by the volunteers themselves to the passengers who need them. The volunteers also help in sanitising the platforms and the train coaches.



Indian Railways run 'Shramik Special' trains

Indian Railways operationalise 3,060 'Shramik Special' trains across the country and transport more than 40 lakh passengers to their home states.

These trains were originated from various states. The top five are Gujarat (853 trains), Maharashtra (550 trains), Punjab (333 trains), Uttar Pradesh (221 trains), Delhi (181 trains). The number of trains that were terminated in various states across the country are Uttar Pradesh (1,245 trains), Bihar (846 trains),

Jharkhand (123 trains), Madhya Pradesh (112 trains), Odisha (73 trains).

The rail route congestion which was being witnessed on May 23 and 24 is over. The congestion had occurred due to convergence of more than two third rail traffic on routes to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and late clearance of the terminals due to health protocols that needed to be completed by state authorities. The matter has resolved through active consultation with state governments.

PFC signs MoU with NBPCL



Government-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and NBFC entered into an agreement with Narmada Basin Projects Company Ltd. (NBPCL), a company of Government of Madhya Pradesh. The agreement has been signed to fund projects worth ₹ 22,000 crore for 225 MW hydro-electric and multipurpose projects in Madhya

Pradesh. The MoU was signed on a virtual platform by Rajeev Sharma, CMD, PFC and ICP Keshari, Managing Director, NBPCL. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has conducted the pre-feasibility study of these projects and has provided approval for their execution. The disbursal of the amount will be linked to the execu-

tion of the projects. Some of the major multipurpose projects that will be financed under the MoU are Basaniya Multipurpose Project Dindori, Chinki Boras Multipurpose Project Narsinghpur Raisen Hoshangabad, Sakkar Pench Link Narsinghpur Chhindwara and Dudhi Project Chhindwara Hoshangabad.

WT20 stares at postponement to 2022

ICC likely to take call on T20 World Cup in board meeting today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The postponement of this year's T20 World Cup in Australia to 2022, which might open up a window for the lucrative IPL in October, is expected to be formalised when the International Cricket Council's all-powerful board holds a tele-conference on Thursday.

The decision, if it is formalised, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic will give members a chance to chalk out their bilateral blue-print in the coming months.

"There is a good chance that postponement of World T20 will be decided during Thursday's board meeting. Whether there will be a formal announcement or not is the question," an ICC board member said.

"There is very little chance of World T20 going ahead in this situation. I don't think either Cricket Australia or the top boards will mind," he added.

It was reported that ICC's Events Committee — led by Chris Tetley — might present multiple options and one of the options that members are likely to seriously contemplate is shifting the tournament to October-November, 2022 while India hosts its edition in 2021. An ICC spokesperson said



reports stating that a decision to postpone the World Cup has been taken as "inaccurate".

However, the spokesperson acknowledged that a "number of contingency plans are being explored in light of the rapidly changing public health situation caused by the Covid-19 virus."

It can also be safely concluded that India will be touring Australia at the end of the year as members are likely to give more precedence to bilateral engagements to recover from the financial losses

incurred during the pandemic.

The board member also said that the Indian Premier League would be a "great fit" for the October window if the T20 World Cup is postponed.

"If that opens up a window I think the IPL would be a great fit," Cummins, who was bought by

IPL would be a great fit if WT20 is delayed: Cummins

SYDNEY: Australia's premier pacer Pat Cummins on Wednesday said that the Indian Premier League would be a "great fit" for the October window if the T20 World Cup is postponed.

"If that opens up a window I think the IPL would be a great fit," Cummins, who was bought by

Kolkata Knight Riders for a whopping ₹15.5 crores, told reporters.

"You have millions and millions of people watching that tournament around the world... Potentially even more after a long break off cricket. There's a lot of reasons why I would want it to go ahead but the main one is it's a great tournament." **PTI**

cast deals said.

"So we are looking at three big-ticket tournaments in six months. In this current economic scenario, that will be a very bad call," he added.

He also listed the bilateral engagements that the BCCI will agree to.

"India is most certainly going to Australia and England is coming for a five-match series in India. As far as South Africa T20 series is concerned, let Cricket South Africa decide where they stand as far as ICC policy matters are concerned," the source said.

"With Chris Nenzani, BCCI will only believe when he puts pen to paper," he added.

The organisation of the Indian Premier League will largely depend on India's Covid-19 situation during that

time but with the central Government trying to bring in normalcy, the cash-rich league could get a five-week condensed window to go ahead.

Some of the issues that BCCI as well as all other stakeholders will be dealing with include, limited or no spectators as per ICC regulations.

Limited number of venues and increase of double-headers could be the way forward. Also the organisation should be in such a manner that all foreign players coming in might need to go for a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

In that case, when do they arrive? Also when India tour Australia, they might also have to quarantine themselves which means the team needs at least three weeks before playing the first Test.

India to start Aus Test series on December 3 in Brisbane

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Cricket Australia has locked in four venues for the financially crucial Test series against India and the first match is tentatively set for a December 3 start in Brisbane, as per local media reports.

Two Australian media outlets — *7news.com.au* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* — reported that the schedule for the four Tests has been finalised. According to reports, CA Chief Executive Kevin Roberts will make it official on Friday and the plan does not include any quarantine hub or bio bubble for the visitors.

"Cricket Australia (CA) on Wednesday ticked off on the Test series beginning in Brisbane on December 3 before heading to Adelaide from December 11 and Melbourne and Sydney for the traditional Boxing Day (December 26) and New Year Tests (January 3)," *7news.Com.Au* reported. It is expected that the second Test in Adelaide will be

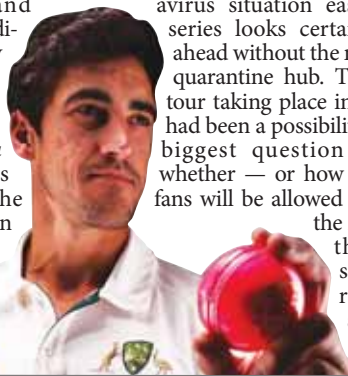
Day/Night affair as BCCI president Sourav Ganguly had committed earlier.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: "Perth is scheduled to kick off the Australian Test summer with a pink-ball match against Afghanistan but Brisbane has won the right to host world powerhouse India in the season's marquee series."

According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, "CA will on Friday announce the international schedule for the 2020-21 season, which will feature as many as five international men's sides, though this will be subject to change due to the global health crisis."

The *7news.Com.Au* report also stated that there will be no quarantine hub or bio bubble required as of now.

"With Australia's coronavirus situation easing, the series looks certain to go ahead without the need for a quarantine hub. The entire tour taking place in one city had been a possibility but the biggest question now is whether — or how many — fans will be allowed to attend the matches," the website's report stated.



Bishop compares current Indian pace unit to Windies bowlers of past

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The burning desire to succeed abroad acted as a stimulus for India to consciously create a fear-some pace battery, says former West Indies speedster Ian Bishop, who compared the current unit to intimidating Caribbean bowlers of the past.

Bishop said the trend started with the likes of Zaheer Khan, RP Singh, Munaf Patel following in the foot steps of Javagal Srinath and Kapil Dev in the 2000s.

"It is perhaps the best generation of talents of fast bowling India have produced. And it started a while ago," Bishop said on *Cricbuzz in Conversation*.

"We can go back to Zaheer, RP Singh, Munaf Patel and that little cluster that came through after Srinath, who followed Kapil Dev. It's great to see," he added.

Led by Bumrah, India has one of the most fear-some pacers. Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Ishant Sharma add variety to the attack.

"It seemed to me from the outside that there was a deliberate attempt by India to recognise that 'batsmen were good, but if have to win overseas, we have to get players from the *MRF Pace Foundation* and the NCA coming through, try to prepare pitches to encourage these faster bowlers rather than dusty turners" the 52-year-old said.

Bishop, who took 161 wickets in 43 Tests for West Indies, in a huge compliment, said the current Indian bowling unit reminds him of the West Indian pace battery that included the likes of Andy Roberts, Michael Holding, Joel Garner Malcolm Marshal and Colin Croft.

"And now when you have three fast bowlers, sometimes four and an excellent spinner, it takes my mind back to the West Indies pace quartet before my generation — the Marshalls, the Holdings, the Garners, the Roberts — I'll stick Colin Croft in there," he said.

"There is no release point, two come out, two come on. There is no flow of runs, and there is always a threat of penetration and physical harm to a lesser extent. That is one of the things that makes this group of fast bowlers excellent," he added.

Aggression can't be taught to bowlers: Ambrose

MELBOURNE (PTI): Aggression can't be taught to bowlers as it's a trait they ought to be born with, says West Indies legend Curtly Ambrose, who tormented batsmen in his glorious career.

Ambrose said though he was naturally aggressive, it was fellow legendary Antiguan bowler Andy Roberts, who encouraged him to embrace it while bowling.

"One of the things he mentioned to me was to always be aggressive, to always get under the skin of batsmen. That stuck in my mind coming from a great man like him," Ambrose said on a *Sky Sports* podcast.

"I don't think you can teach a bowler to be aggressive — it has to be something within you. You can try but if a bowler doesn't have it inside of him, it probably won't work. For me it worked because I am naturally aggressive while I am competing. It naturally flowed for me."

Ambrose, who took 405 wickets in 98 Tests, said if one can



make the ball talk, there is hardly any need to sledge the batsmen. "...If you are good enough at what you do, you let the five and a half ounces (the cricket ball) do the talking for you.

"If you keep sledging, you probably aren't any good. That wasn't the West Indian way. Five and half ounces coming at you at 90mph is more than enough!"

It's time to embrace split-coaching: Lehmann

LONDON: Split-coaching is the way forward for Indian cricket and rest of the world since it is becoming increasingly difficult to balance work and family, reckons former Australia coach Darren Lehmann.

Lehmann said dividing responsibilities format-wise should increase the longevity of the coaches.

Talking alongside former England World Cup-winning coach Trevor Bayliss on *BBC's Tuffers and Vaughan Show*, Lehmann said being away from the family for more than half a year is too much pressure on a coach.

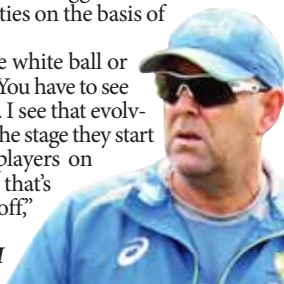
"I think split coaches is the way to go in India as well as here. You just can't be away for 200 days a year. It's too much for the family and it's too much pressure on a single coach," Lehmann said.

"I think to get longevity out of your coaches you have to have split roles," he added.

The 50-year-old suggested dividing responsibilities on the basis of formats.

"It might be white ball or red ball cricket. You have to see how that works. I see that evolving and maybe the stage they start talking to the players on the ground but that's probably way off," Lehmann said.

PTI



BWF Oly qualification process to start next year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An extended qualification period for the Tokyo Olympics will be introduced next year and ranking points earned at tournaments during the original qualification phase will be maintained, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) said on Wednesday.

With the Covid-19 pandemic disrupting the international calendar, the BWF was unable to complete the last six weeks of its one-year qualifying period, which ended on April 28.

But with the Tokyo Games postponed, the governing body of badminton has decided to extend the Olympic qualification period to next year.

"An extended Olympic qualification period will be introduced from Week 1-17 in 2021 and includes the select number of tour-



naments that were postponed, cancelled or suspended due to Covid-19," the BWF said in a release.

"These eligible tournaments

within the new qualifying period must be completed by Week 17 in 2021."

The BWF also said that the postponed Olympic qualifiers is likely to be held in the same week next year as originally planned in 2020.

"Such eligible tournaments within this new qualifying period should preferably take place in the same corresponding week from 2020 to 2021.

"If this is not possible, the BWF will allow sanctioning another date within Week 1-17 in 2021 subject to approval."

The BWF also said that the ranking points gathered by players in the completed tournaments during the qualification phase which was between April 29, 2019 to April 26, 2020 will be maintained.

The governing body had last week unveiled a revised calendar for

the remainder of 2020 to salvage the disruption-hit season.

However, the BWF made it clear that those tournaments won't be included in the Olympic qualification.

"Tournaments rescheduled for the end of 2020 outlined in the revamped BWF Tournament Calendar 2020 released last week will not count towards qualification. Only the 2021 editions of each tournament," it said.

The BWF also said that "players from China and Hong Kong will be eligible to earn points from the 2021 Badminton Asia Team Championships as they "were not able to participate in the 2020 Badminton Asia Team Championships in Manila due to Covid-19 travel restrictions imposed on athletes from those nations and territories by the Government of the Philippines."

Eight in a row

Bayern close on Bundesliga title after 1-0 win against Dortmund

DORTMUND (AFP): Joshua Kimmich described his winning goal as "brutally important" after Bayern Munich took a huge step towards an eighth straight Bundesliga title on Tuesday with a 1-0 win at Borussia Dortmund to leave them seven points clear at the top with just six games left.

Kimmich's brilliant effort came just before half-time behind closed doors at Signal Iduna Park as hosts Dortmund missed the chance to turn up the heat on the Bavarians without



the backing of their huge support.

"It was brutally important: I looked around to see if everyone understood how important it was," Kimmich said of his deft chip. Kimmich's captain Manuel Neuer echoed the defensive midfielder's thoughts.

"That was a very important sign," said Neuer. Bayern won 4-0 when the teams met in Munich in November and they

kept up their excellent recent record against second-placed Dortmund.

"Now only Bayern can decide what happens," said frustrated Dortmund captain Mats Hummels.

Dortmund's star teenage striker, Erling Braut Haaland, who had scored ten goals in as many league games, failed to make an impact against Bayern's watertight defence before going off injured

in the second half.

Jerome Boateng and David Alaba gave him no room, while Kimmich and Leon Goretzka in midfield made sure passes intended for him rarely met their mark. The Norway forward limped off with 20 minutes left after a heavy tackle from Boateng.

Elsewhere, Bayer Leverkusen dropped to fifth after being routed 4-1 at home by Wolfsburg, whose defender Marin Pongracic claimed two goals. It was a shock defeat at home for Peter Bosz-coached Leverkusen who had won their previous 12 games.

Moenchengladbach climbed over Leverkusen into fourth with a goalless draw at second-from-bottom Werder Bremen, who are two points from safety.

Eintracht Frankfurt took a point at home in a 3-3 draw with Freiburg thanks to late goals by Timothy Chandler and Japan striker Daichi Kamada.

Serie A meeting Italian Govt to discover season fate

AFP ■ ROME

Serie A's hopes of following Germany and Spain back onto the pitch will be decided on Thursday in a meeting with the Italian Government which will determine the fate of the season in Italy.

Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora will tell representatives from the Italian football federation and Lega Serie A if the health conditions are right to return to action after nearly three months.

Clubs returned to group training on May 19 but competitive action remains suspended until mid-June.

The indications are that Spadafora and the Government's Scientific Technical Committee will agree to both implementing a health protocol and to resume the season.

If there is a green light on Thursday, Lega Serie A will meet on Friday to examine "the different calendar hypotheses" for the remaining Serie A and Italian Cup matches.

The league wants competition to resume on the weekend of June 13-14, starting with four postponed fixtures — Atalanta-Sassuolo, Verona-Cagliari, Inter

Milan-Sampdoria and Torino-Parma.

They hope the season will resume fully on June 20, with the goal of awarding the league title, defining promotions and relegations, before playing Italian Cup semi-finals, with the final in early August.

The closing stages of the European club competitions could also be played in August. Three Italian clubs are still in the Champions League and two in the Europa League.

On Friday, the Plan B will also be analysed at the Lega Serie A meeting, a format with short playoffs to determine the title, European places and relegation, if the season is again suspended, or all the matches not played.

Mbappe praises Klopp

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe has lavished praise on Premier League giants Liverpool and their manager Jurgen Klopp amid rumours that he wants a move away from Parc des Princes.

Mbappe feels Klopp has converted Liverpool into a ruthless machine that keeps on churning out positive results day in day out.

"This season, Liverpool have been a machine in the Premier League. They have made winning look easy but the truth is that it is never easy," Mbappe was quoted as saying by *mirror.co.uk*.

"Performances like they have been having don't just happen. To be as ruthless as they have been would come from lots of hard work in training and from having a very good manager," he added. **IANS**

