

ANALYSIS 7 WORKING CLASS UPRISING

MONEY 8 GLOBAL CUES, EARNINGS TO SET MARKET TREND

SPORTS 12 SALIVA BAN ONLY AN INTERIM MEASURE

HYDERABAD, MONDAY MAY 25, 2020; PAGES 12 & 3



the pioneer

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PK, PARTY DISOWN NAGA BABU'S 'GODSE' COMMENT

Page 11

NEW YORK TIMES' FRONT PAGE LISTS VIRUS VICTIMS

The New York Times has devoted Sunday's entire front page to a long list of names of people who have died in the coronavirus pandemic. The names and brief descriptions culled from obituaries from around the country fill six columns under the headline "U.S. Deaths Near 100,000, an Incalculable Loss."



DELAWARE VARSITY SAYS LAYING OFF OVER 1,100 PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

The University of Delaware says it is laying off more than 1,100 part-time employees, mostly students, in a move to cut costs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The News Journal reports that students account for 805 of the 1,146 part-time employees who were notified of their layoffs on Thursday.



ALLIGATOR RUMOURED TO HAVE BEEN HITLER'S DIES IN MOSCOW

An alligator that many people believe once belonged to Adolf Hitler has died in the Moscow Zoo. The zoo said the alligator, named Saturn, was about 84 years old when died on Friday. According to the zoo, Saturn was born in the United States and later sent to the Berlin Zoo, from which he escaped when the zoo was bombed in 1943.



MOON SIGHTED, EID TODAY



Muslim cleric and Markazi Chand Committee Chairman Maulana Khalid Rasheed Firangi Mahali looks through his binoculars to sight the moon, at Lucknow on Sunday



Kavitha helps Gulf migrant attend last rites of relatives

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'PADU' ROW OVER WATER KCR PREFERS MUTUAL SETTLEMENT WITH JAGAN

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is learnt to be making calculated attempts to rustle up a mutual settlement between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana State with regard to the recent row over the Pothreddypadu project, instead of having to make it to the upcoming Apex Council meeting in Delhi called by the Centre to resolve the dispute between the two states.



- Hopes to upstage Apex Council meet
- Plans to invite Jagan to Pragathi Bhavan for talks soon
- Cites the 'failure' of the first Apex Council meet, involving KCR and Chandrababu Naidu, in Sep 2016

KCR wants to talk things over directly with his AP counterpart Jagan Mohan Reddy by convening a meeting at Pragathi Bhavan here soon. After becoming Chief Minister in May 2019, Jagan has already visited Pragathi Bhavan thrice to hold talks with KCR on resolution of bifurcation-related issues between the states.

The 2016 meeting yielded nothing, forcing both of them to end the meeting abruptly and take independent decisions on irrigation projects thereafter. The Union Jal Shakti Minister as well as the Chief Ministers of TS and AP are members of the Apex Council.



It was wrong to impose lockdown suddenly: Thackeray

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HEALTH MIN ON INTL ARRIVALS

Travellers shall give 14-day quarantine undertaking

The Health Ministry on Sunday issued guidelines for international arrivals, saying that before boarding, all travellers shall give an undertaking that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days.

Record 6,767 new cases in India in last 24 hours

NEW DELHI: COVID-19 cases in India saw the biggest spike for the third consecutive day on Sunday with 6,767 new infections reported in the last 24 hours, taking the tally to 1,31,868, while the death toll due to the disease rose to 3,867 after 147 more fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry.



Reforms do not mean abolition of labour laws: Rajiv

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TTD to auction 50 properties in AP, TN

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has decided to auction 50 immovable properties located at different places in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Rishikesh in Uttarakhand, a top functionary of TTD said on Sunday.

TS records 41 new cases, four deaths

Telangana State on Sunday reported 41 more coronavirus positive cases and four deaths related to Covid-19. The overall number of coronavirus cases has now gone up to 1,854, with Covid-19 related fatalities in the state being 53. The four deceased are Ch. Chennaiah 75/Male, Jagtiyal, Jagtiyal, Bee 48/F, Bahadurpura; Sakkubai 72/F, Puranapur; and Lingappa 60/M, B. a. b. i. g. u. d. a., Motiguda.

Twenty-three of the fresh cases were reported from areas under GHMC and one from Ranga Reddy district, while 11 cases pertained to migrants and six to foreign evacuees

evacuees who tested positive came from Abu Dhabi, Muscat and Saudi. On Sunday, 24 Covid-19 positive patients who had recovered were discharged. The total number of positive patients discharged upon recovery has gone up to 1,092, reflecting a recovery rate of 59 per cent.

Home guard suspended for vexing medical intern

A home guard attached to the traffic police was on Sunday placed under suspension by the Hyderabad police chief for allegedly sending personal messages and harassing a medical intern. The Traffic Police home guard, Venkatesh has been placed under suspension with immediate effect for his misconduct. Hyderabad police remains committed to exemplary conduct of its officers and protection of dignity of all its citizens' said the Police Commissioner of Hyderabad, Anjali Kumar.

Uttam warns against OU encroachments

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and Nalgonda MP Capt N Uttam Kumar Reddy has warned of "serious consequences" if even an inch of land belonging to Osmania University is encroached upon by powers that be. He was speaking to media persons after a visit to DD Colony in the wake of reports that there have been encroachments on OU's lands. He was accompanied by CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, former PCC president V. Hanumantha Rao, TPCC working president Ponnamp Prabhakar, AICC secretaries Ch. Vamschandra Reddy and A. Sampath Kumar and other leaders. They interacted with OU students and teachers and assured them that the Congress party would launch an agitation to protect OU lands.



Sex on false promise of marriage not rape: Orissa HC

In a significant observation, a judge of the Orissa High Court has observed that indulgence in sexual intercourse on false promise of marriage does not amount to rape. Justice S K Panigrahi also raised questions about whether rape laws should be used to regulate intimate relationships, especially in cases where women enter into a relationship by choice. Justice Panigrahi made the observations on Thursday while allowing the bail application of a rape accused, setting aside a lower court order. The case related to the arrest



of a student from Koraput district of Odisha under rape charges on a complaint by a 19-year-old tribal woman in November last year. According to the case records, the young man and the woman of the same village were in a

Justice S K Panigrahi also raised questions about whether rape laws should be used to regulate intimate relationships, especially in cases where women enter into a relationship by choice

physical relationship for about four years and she got pregnant twice during that period. The woman later lodged a police complaint alleging that the man had established physical relations with her taking advantage of her innocence and promising that he will marry her. The woman had claimed that she was coerced by the accused into terminating her pregnancies by consuming abortion pills. Police registered a case and arrested the man, who was in jail for the last six months. The high court on Thursday allowed his bail application on the condition that he will cooperate with the prosecution and shall not threaten the alleged victim.

Baby boy sold for Rs 22k

A two-month-old baby boy, who had been allegedly sold by his parents for Rs 22,000, was rescued by the police in Jedimetla on Sunday. The couple, identified as Madan Singh and Saritha, both construction labourers from Bathukamma Basthi in Jedimetla, had a son (their second child) two months ago. Police officials said that the couple sold the baby "due to some financial problems". "The couple had been living on a meagre income and thought it would be difficult for them to

raise another child. A woman named Sheshu, who is known to the couple, recently approached them with a proposal to sell their child for Rs 20,000 to a childless couple," police said. Acting on a tip-off, a police team rescued the baby from a woman-buyer and handed over the baby to the Child Welfare Committee, a police official said. "The couple sold the baby for Rs 22,000 to a woman, who stays in their neighbourhood and it seems she wanted to give the child to her sister who has no issues."

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Jyeshtha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam

Tithi: Tritiya: 01:17 am (Next Day)

Nakshatram: Mithuna: 06:10 am

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 07:22 am - 08:59 am

Yamagandam: 10:36 am - 12:13 pm

Varjyam: 02:52 pm - 04:31 pm

Gulika: 01:50 pm - 03:27 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Anritakalam: 08:40 pm - 10:20 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 am - 12:39 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 41/28

Humidity: 70%

Sunrise: 05:41 am

Sunset: 06:44 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated May 24, 2020 5:00 PM

The Telangana State government's studied move to implement regulated farming from the upcoming Vanakalam, ostensibly with the aim of making agriculture a profitable venture through scientific cultivation, seems to have cut no ice with farmers, especially those in southern parts of the state. Farmers in these regions are maintaining stoic silence, in contrast to the keen efforts of the state administration to regulate the entire cropping pattern in the state.

Farmers in regions like Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda had hoped that paddy transplantation would be encouraged in the wake of increased irrigation potential. As things stand, that is unlikely to happen as the Agriculture Department's babus are keen on determining the cropping pattern. The relaxation during

Regulated cropping: Farmers not as keen as babus

lockdown was seen as a period for making preparations for the next crop; yet, the talk of regulation has silenced farmers who have their own apprehensions. Many of them say regulated cropping may help provide for a variety of yields. Still, farmers never opt for differing crops in adjacent fields. This may ultimately prove a major challenge. "At this point, we choose to be silent," they say in private.

No lasting change from Covid-19

Both optimists and pessimists are upset that their predictions concerning the potential of Covid-19 to modify people's behaviour have failed to stand the test of time.

Optimists hoped that impact of the virus would change the world totally, though pessimists maintained that nothing would change, come what may. Optimists expected people to imbibe values and change their attitudes in terms of ethics, but were surprised to find little or no change after nearly two months of lockdown. At least money would lose its importance, they thought. Even that did not happen.

A homemaker in Boduppal says: "I expected that people would give value to ethics and not to money-based activities. Even during lockdown days, some invested their time in earning money, name and fame by hook or crook. I am



really upset as there is no impact of corona virus. In the beginning, people discussed that God sent coronavirus to balance the good and the bad as bad dominates over good." Pessimists are happy that nothing has changed. They assert that human beings' minds will remain rotten. Be it coronavirus or any other virus, the greediness among human beings will only spike. What beats them is the size-

able charitable activities that supplement government efforts to reach out to the marginalized communities, including migrant labour who bore the brunt of Covid-19-induced disruption of livelihood options.

Things may change if as Brahman garu said: "The days will come as one village will remain out of seven villages on the earth... Means the number of human beings will remain 1000 out of 7000."

Farewell to Corona

Come what may, the relaxations in the fresh phase of lockdown have given a feeling that the administration is slowly preparing to forget the threat posed by coronavirus.

No wonder, people are back to their routine and that routine has approximated pre-lockdown patterns. Only eateries and hotels are yet to resume operations. The official machinery has resumed regular work. Covid warriors are being felicitated by their colleagues. In many families, people are reconciled to beginning their life afresh.

Private universities may surpass state ones

The newly approved private universities in Nalgonda and Warangal, once established, may surpass existing state varsities in terms of infrastructure, faculty and other endowments as varsities like the Nalgonda-based Mahatma

Gandhi University are tiny compared to the private varsity of Anurag institutions. The Anurag institution is owned by MLC Palla Rajeshwar Reddy. Similar is the case with the varsity owned by A. Varda Reddy of Warangal in terms of equipment and facilities. Since private universities possess maximum infrastructure, the student community is expected to opt for them. This in itself may help them outclass state varsities.

Welcome dash and dab

Following the outbreak of coronavirus, the Central and State governments implemented a slew of measures to contain the spread of the virus in

line with WHO and ICMR guidelines. That apart, the prolonged lockdown ensured that the virus is largely under control. With no vaccine in sight, leaders and governments have started urging people to learn to live with the virus. The best part of all this is that people have changed traditional ways of welcoming their near and dear ones. These days, much before offering manchi neelu, visitors are welcomed with a dash of sanitiser and a dab of handwash. Cool water or juice comes later in this hot summer.

(Contributed by Avinash Deepak Puli, K Venkateshwarlu, P V Kondal Rao, Bakka Tennyson, Ch Pradeep)

Charity could not show impact on leaders' performance graph

AVINASH DEEPAK PULI
MAHABUBNAGAR

Charity programmes and distribution of groceries to the needy during the Coronavirus lockdown could not show any impact on the performance graphs of the MLAs and MPs in rural Telangana districts.

More than 70 per cent of the MLAs in the rural parts, in spite of their presence in the programmes organised by several MLAs were facing the wrath for distributing the groceries donated by other non government organisations and charity trusts.

Twelve MLAs of the north and south Telangana districts were regarded as the non performers by the people during the lockdown. Since the charity programmes in their segments were organised by the independent units, the people show their respect towards the foundations and charity organisations.

There was a keen contest to donate the essentials to needy in the rural districts, Mahabubnagar in particular,



Twelve MLAs of the north and south Telangana districts were regarded as the non performers by the people during the Coronavirus lockdown

but Marri Janardhan Reddy of Nagarkurnool, Minister V Srinivas Goud and Minister Krishna Reddy assumed positive response from the public for their support to the needy.

Similarly MLAs Guvvala Balaraju, Lakshma Reddy and Krishna Mohan Reddy of Gadwal along with Patnam Narendar Reddy were seen as performers by the public in their respective segments. The graph of at least three four legislators in this part is below average and people feel that the legislators have not even performed anything for the well-

fare of needy.

Minister Jagadishwar Reddy, MLAs Chirumarthi Lingaiah, Saidu Reddy and Bhupal Reddy of erstwhile Nalgonda district performed upto the expectations while other representatives simply stayed as mute spectators in spite of their presence at the programmes.

Similarly in Khammam district, Minister Ajay Puvvada topped the performers list, while others failed to live upto the expectations. The performance of MLAs and Ministers in Warangal is gauged with their programmes but the two

urban legislators Nannapuneni Narendar and Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar could not fare upto the expectations of the public as per the intelligence reports.

Palakurthi legislator Dayakar Rao, the Minister of PR and Rural Development continues to enjoy considerable support base even in the performance of charity and his performance is taking him a top of all the members in the district.

Former Deputy Chief Minister Dr T Rajaiah is lagging behind two leaders in the Station Ghanpur segment while the Congress in this part is far behind the MLA with 3 per cent support base. The sup-

port base of Kadiyam Srihari and his daughter Dr Kadiyam Kavya is way ahead of Dr T Rajaiah in this constituency as per the reports.

Similarly the performance of Bhupalpalli legislator Gandra Venkata Ramana Reddy is not upto the mark, while Mahabubabad MLA Shankar Naik is vying for the last position with the Ghanpur legislator Dr Rajaiah.

In Karimnagar the performance graph of MLAs is giving positive results for Ministers Gangula Kamalakar, Etela Rajender, KT Rama Rao and Koppula Eeshwar while all others are falling short of the 50 per cent mark among the public.

In Adilabad the performance of Minister Indrakaran Reddy is also not matching the counterparts of other districts. Similarly Nizamabad Minister Prashant Reddy though succeeding in garnering support base for Kalvakuntla Kavitha, the daughter of Chief Minister in the MLC polls, his performance was not upto the mark according to the public.

GOLD SHOWS AN UPSWING

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Even as the graph of COVID-19 positive patients and its victims has been continuously scaling new heights all over the world, the battle cries between the US and China have become louder. With both the sides on alert, the situation is really worrisome.

Gold showed an upswing and finally closed at US \$ 1,734.07 (per ounce), while silver followed suit and closed at \$ 17.18 (per ounce). Platinum and palladium also marched forward and closed at Rs.21,000 (per 10 grams) and Rs.46,029 (per 10 grams) respectively.

Other economic parameters continued their journey upward. Brent closed at US\$ 35.12 (per barrel), while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs.2,517 (per barrel). Whereas Gold MCX declined and stood at Rs.46,928 (per 10 gms).

The MCX Silver moved up and closed at Rs.48,250 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 30,672.59 and 9,039.25 points respectively. Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were US \$: Rs.75.95, British Pound: Rs. 92.43, Euro: Rs. 82.85, Singapore \$: Rs.53.33, Swiss Franc: Rs.78.23, Australian \$: Rs.49.66, Saudi Riyal: Rs.20.22, New Zealand Dollar: 46.34, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs.245.99, Omani Rial: Rs.197.40 and UAE Dirham: Rs.20.68.

At home, trading continued to be dull. However, following the global trend, both the precious metals surged ahead. Standard gold (24 carats) flared up and closed at Rs.48,690 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold too, moved in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs.44,780 - 44,880 on the closing day. Similarly, Silver (0.999) also recorded hand some gains and closed at Rs. 48,350 (per kg).



WEEKLY MARKET REVIEW

Home guard suspended for vexing...

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The victim is an intern at the Maternity Hospital in Sultan Bazaar.

According to reports, the intern alleged that she was stopped by the home guard at the Musheerabad circle in the first week of April. She had then given her mobile phone number during the checking process. "I was stopped by this traffic cop at Musheerabad circle. I did not wear a helmet, so he checked my identity card and pass. He also claimed that his wife was pregnant and that he needed my number, in case of any emergency. I gave him my number," she told the media. Subsequently, the home guard sent two videos and numerous voice notes, trying to establish a rapport with her.

She received some messages on April 19, to which she did not reply. "Later, he asked for my work phone number and made random enquiries like 'Where are you? When are you coming back to Hyderabad?'. He also began to send voice messages and do video-calling. I had to block him after that," the intern added.

KCR prefers mutual settlement with Jagan

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It may be recalled on May 20 the Centre had called for an Apex Council meeting to discuss various issues pertaining to KRMB and the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB) and directed the Governments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to send in their meeting agenda points immediately. The Centre further said that, as per the minutes of the meeting held on January 21, 2020 under the Chairmanship of Secretary Department of Water Resources to discuss various issues under KRMB and GRMB, both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh had agreed to submit agenda points for the

next meeting of Apex Council. "However, these are still awaited from both the States," he said, and requested them to send the agenda points for the next meeting of the Apex Council treating the matter as urgent. An urgent Apex Council meeting was necessitated following the recent order of the AP government for augmenting the capacity of Pothireddypadu Head Regulator and constructing a 3TMC capacity lift to take water from Srisailem Reservoir.

Subsequently, the Telangana government took up the issue with KRMB. The AP government too lodged a complaint against the Telangana government alleging that the upper

riparian State was building seven new projects, including Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS), to utilize 450 TMC without consent of the Apex Council. Both the states are supposed to send meeting agenda points by May 26.

Official sources said that recently when irrigation officials brought to the notice the Chief Minister the meeting agenda points that could be sent to the Centre, KCR asked them not to go ahead on this issue as he was exploring 'alternative options' on how to resolve the row without the need to attend the Apex Council meeting. Hence, officials halted the process and are now awaiting KCR's next move.

Travellers shall give 14-day quarantine undertaking

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All passengers shall be advised to download Arogya Setu application on their mobile devices, the guidelines said.

At the time of boarding the flight or ship, only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to board after thermal screening, the health ministry said.

Passengers arriving through the land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, and only those who are asymptomatic will be enabled to cross the border into India, it said.

Self-declaration form in

duplicate shall be filled by the person in the flight or ship and a copy of the same will be given to health and immigration officials present at the airport, seaport or landport, the guidelines said.

The form may also be made available on Arogya Setu application, they said.

Suitable precautionary measures such as environmental sanitation and disinfection shall be ensured at the airports as well as within flights, the health ministry said.

During boarding and at airports, all possible measures to ensure social distancing should be ensured, it said.

Nine migrants were murdered, confirm police

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The expert, Dr.Raza Malik, revealed that, going by what emerged during post-mortem of the bodies, the victims were pushed into the well from a height and all the victims were in an unconscious state then. While drowning the victims swallowed water, which entered their lungs prior to their death. The doctor said the dead bodies bore traces of poison in their throat and stomach.

TTD to auction 50 properties in AP, TN

Continued from page 1

The immovable properties which are set to be auctioned include tiny houses and house plots measuring between 1 cent and 5 cents and farming lands between 10 cents and below one acre, said YV Subba Reddy, chairman of TTD Board that governs the famous hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala.

He said properties donated by devotees to the hill shrine several decades ago were non-maintainable and non-revenue generating for TTD as they were very petty and unviable. Andhra and Tamil Nadu

have 26 and 23 such properties respectively and one land in Rishikesh, he added.

A total income of about Rs 24 crore is expected to be fetched from the auctions, Reddy said. The TTD Chairman alleged that some vested interests including some sections of the media and political parties in Andhra Pradesh have been deliberately making false propaganda among the devotees against the Board's move to auction unviable properties.

He further said that in the past too on several occasions TTD during different regimes in the state had auctioned tiny properties.

TS records 41 new cases, four deaths

Continued from page 1

The total number of coronavirus cases reported in the State so far is 1,854; of which, 1,092 patients have recovered and 53 persons succumbed. Presently, there are 709 active cases. They are undergoing treatment at Gandhi Hospital.

According to the health officials, 25 districts in the State have not reported a single coronavirus positive case in the last 14 days. The districts include Karimnagar, Sircilla, Kamareddy, Mahabubnagar, Medak, Bhupalpally, Nagarkurnool, Mulugu, Peddapally, Siddipet, Mahabubabad, Mancheril, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Suryapet, Narayanpet, Warangal urban, Gadwal, Jangaon and Nirmal.

Spare not a contemnor; even if he is a retired judge

HC UPADHYAY
HYDERABAD

Judges are judged not only on the basis of their judgments but also by their behaviour, interaction with fellow judges, lawyers and other members of the legal fraternity. Society expects them to be like Caesar's wife who must always be above suspicion. Any erratic behaviour of a judge not only would discredit him alone but also bring disrepute to the entire judiciary. History is replete with examples. However, an efficient and reliable judiciary always takes care to create a built-in, self-correcting mechanism to rectify such sordid aberrations.

Seen in this context, the recent outbursts of Justice PSwaroop Reddy, former Judge of the Telangana High Court, attributing personal prejudice against him to the sitting judge, Justice M.S.Ramchandra Rao, are highly objectionable, unwarranted, and unbecoming

of a person of his stature. Justice Rao, on the other hand, has done what he ought to have done like a dignified member of the judiciary by recusing himself from the case in question and transferring the same to the Chief Justice.

In turn, though the High Court has pulled up Justice Swaroop Reddy for levelling false and motivated allegations against a sitting judge of the High Court, it has shown mercy on the disrespectful former judge and refrained from initiating contempt proceedings. In fact, this is not a correct approach to the issue. It was fairly expected of the High Court that it would adopt a tough stand against Justice Reddy for his unwarranted comments calculated to malign the sitting judge by assailing deliberately upon his honesty and integrity.

The no-holds-barred war was declared by Justice Swaroop Reddy, who is the chairman of the Telangana Admission and Fee Regulatory Committee (TAFRC), against Justice M.S.Ramchandra Rao, who, along with Justice K.Lakshman, was to hear the petitions on the fee hike for medical courses.

Justice Swaroop Reddy strangely filed a memo, instead of a regular petition, seeking recusal of Justice Rao on the unsubstantiated, imaginary, and highly defamatory grounds.

Letting go the delinquent former judge by the High Court, even after concluding that the retired judge had made "false and motivated allegations" against a sitting judge sends out a wrong message especially, to the legal fraternity and the world at large. By adopting tough posture, the



LEGAL ROUNDUP

The Telangana HC on May 14 declined to direct the govt to conduct Covid-19 tests on a massive scale as it would be a huge financial burden on the exchequer and added that forcing people to undergo tests without their consent would be a direct infringement of their rights.

High Court would have served itself well as the message would have gone loud and clear that in the scheme of our jurisprudence, the rule of law shall prevail and nobody will be spared if he or she attempted to denigrate the judiciary, howsoever high he or she may be. In fact, judicial propriety demands that the higher the stature of an offender, the higher should be the scale of punishment. Fortunately, some Bar Associations have taken the matter very seriously and it is likely to turn into a cyclone of discussion in the corridors of judiciary and the government the effect of which will be felt

quite for some time to come.

BCI decries selectiveness in hearings

The regulatory statutory body of lawyers under the Advocates Act, the Bar Council of India (BCI), has decried the tendency of select law firms and lawyers having high-level connections to take undue advantage of the lockdown situation. In a resolution adopted recently, the BCI has said "Public and advocates are in the dark as to what is really going on in the various courts of the country... litigants are unable to get justice through the process of virtual courts...due to unsatisfac-

tory Wi-Fi and other technical problems...we cannot expect an effective hearing in this process."

Therefore, the BCI has decided to consult State Bar Councils and Bar Associations right from the Supreme Court to the District Court levels to find out their opinion on the functioning of courts and how to streamline it. The BCI then will submit its report based on the response received by it to the Chief Justice of India within a week.

In another development, the BCI took potshots at the advocates indulging in advertising through social media. It also named and shamed particularly two advocates. Advertising in any form being in violation of the conduct rules, the BCI is likely to come down heavily on the erring advocates, advocates' firms and owners and providers of the websites who make available cyber space for

advertising, in a near future. Though some may find reasons for differing, but the provision banning advertisements by advocates cannot be faulted either on legal or moral grounds. In fact, in the rapidly changing times, much more needs to be done to restore the past glory of legal profession.

The BCI also resolved to 'again' request the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers to assist the needy lawyers and help them overcome their professional loss as they have suffered and are still suffering. "If the lockdown is going to continue after 31st May, 2020 and functioning of the courts are not resumed even then, then the Union and State governments should suomotu come forward and extend substantial and financial assistance to all the needy advocates, their clerks, and their families. In a welfare state, it is the duty of the state to do so", the resolution added.

CAPSULE

Violation of quarantine rules alleged

HYDERABAD: As the lockdown rules relaxed, those who have been quarantined in their homes have been roaming on streets removing the home quarantine stamp on their hands, thanks to officials slackening their vigil. Inter-state travellers and those who arrive here from other states are being stamped on their hands advising them to undergo 14 or 28-day home quarantine. The list of the quarantined is sent to the GHMC, police stations and medical and health departments. Officials to verify whether the home quarantined are really staying in their homes observing the rules or not. As the officials stopped verification, the home quarantined are reportedly roaming free outside. Nobody will be able to identify them, unless someone identifies them by virtue of their stamp on their hand. Some people who feel it is inconvenient to roam outside with the stamp are understood to be removing the stamp using chemicals. The people want officials to have a hawk eye on such elements.

Guv, KCR extends Ramzan greetings

HYDERABAD: Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao conveyed his greetings to the people of the state on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. The Chief Minister, in a message on the eve of Eid on Sunday, hoped that the sacred Ramzan month will usher in happiness among the people. KCR appealed to the people to celebrate Ramzan indoors, and said the festival reflects communal harmony and religious tolerance besides displaying the great Ganga-Jamuna tahrzeb of Telangana State. Meanwhile, the Governor extended warm greetings and good wishes to all Muslim brothers and sisters. The Governor said, the teachings of Holy Quran have shaped the lives of the society over the ages. The holy Ramzan is a reminder to us of the purpose of life as ordained by God that only through rigorous self-discipline it is possible to realise the eternal life. On this holy Eid-ul-Fitr day, let us redeem our pledge to respect the dignity of human being, the sanctity of life and essence of religious preachings. Let this auspicious occasion helps us to face and come out of the critical situation of Covid-19.

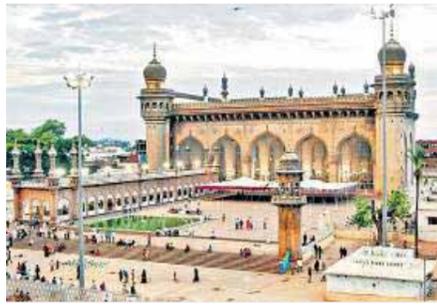
No Ramzan gifts for poor Muslim families this year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Poor Muslim families in Telangana were this year deprived of Ramzan gifts which the state government has been distributing among them every year on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr since 2015. The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government, led by K. Chandrashekhar Rao, apparently cancelled the programme due to the financial crisis caused by the two-month-old lockdown imposed to check the spread of Covid-19.

However, it was officially stated that since the distribution of Ramzan gifts could have led to violation of social distancing norms, it was decided not to conduct the programme this year. The government, in the budget for 2022-21, had allocated Rs 66 crore for iftar dinners at mosques across the state and for distribution of clothes among the poor. It had also allocated Rs 1.83 crore for the customary iftar party hosted by the Chief Minister in Hyderabad every year.

Since the Chief Minister's iftar party and iftar dinners at mosques were cancelled due to the lockdown, there was a proposal to use the entire amount for distribution of ration kits. This was expected to help more than four lakh poor families.



The Minorities Welfare Department had also submitted a proposal that instead of giving clothes as Ramzan gifts, the government may distribute food packets as this would take care of the much-needed requirement of the poor families during the ongoing lockdown.

However, the proposal was not approved by the officials in the Chief Minister's office. They pointed out said since the government distributed free rice and Rs 1,500 to every white ration card holder or below poverty line family as a lockdown relief measure, there was no need for a separate programme to distribute ration kits among poor Muslim families.

TRS' friendly party All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) had also appealed to

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao to distributed ration kits among poor Muslim families instead of clothes.

AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi had written a letter to Chandrashekhar Rao to divert the funds allocated for iftar parties at mosques for distribution of ration.

He wrote that in view of the unprecedented situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which has affected the livelihood of daily-wage earners in the state, a large section of Muslims, who are all engaged in the informal or unorganised sector, required timely assistance during the fasting month of Ramzan.

The state government has been distributing Ramzan gifts and hosting iftars at mosques since 2015.

Owaisi had written a letter to Chandrashekhar Rao to divert the funds allocated for iftar parties at mosques for distribution of ration.

Last year, about 4.5 lakh gift packets were distributed among poor families through 832 mosques across the state.

The government had also provided Rs 1 lakh each to these mosques to host iftars or post-dusk meals to break the fast.

Each Ramzan gift packet comprised a salwar, kameez, saree and blouse, all valued at about Rs.525.

The TRS government has been distributing gifts among poor families on the occasion of festivals of other religions as well. Every year, it is also distributing gifts among 2.35 lakh poor Christians families and hosting Christmas dinners.

Similarly, the government has been distributing sarees among poor women on the occasion of Bathukamma, a folk festival which was declared as the state festival in 2014.

Last year, the government spent Rs 313 crore to distribute over one crore sarees on the occasion of Bathukamma.

Domestic air travellers with no symptoms can go home

Thermal scanning for all domestic passengers at RGIA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All passengers arriving at Shamshabad airport in domestic flights from Monday will be subjected to thermal scanning by the State health officials.

Following fresh guidelines on screening of domestic and international air travellers issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Sunday, Health Minister, Etela Rajender directed health authorities to ensure all the guidelines were strictly implemented at the RGIA airport.

The Minister also directed the officials to take steps to implement the revised guidelines pertaining to the lockdown and observing quarantine.

The Minister was reviewing the new guidelines issued by the Centre on lockdown conditions with officials of his department here on Sunday.

Domestic air travellers with no symptoms will be allowed to go home with an advice to self-monitor their health condition for 14 days, the Minister said.

The fresh guidelines on international travellers also provide relief to foreign evacuees who came back to Hyderabad in international flights as part of Vande Bharat Mission and are still in 14 day quarantine.

Last week, Etela while interacting with Union Health Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan



The fresh guidelines on international travellers also provide relief to foreign evacuees who came back to Hyd in international flights

had urged for relaxations of 14 day quarantine period for international evacuees.

As per the new rules of the Centre and Indian Council for Medical Research, the foreigners stepping on the state's soil should serve only seven days in institutional quarantine and another seven days in home quarantine facility.

Pregnant women and patients suffering from chronic diseases like cancer and those and those visiting the dead in the state from overseas can be directed to undergo home quarantine facility, Etela

said thanking Union Minister for Health Harsha Vardhan for effecting changes in the revised lockdown rules as suggested by the Centre.

Those who arrive here by domestic flights, trains and road will be directed to go to quarantine facility if they have Covid symptoms otherwise they are allowed to go home but observe self-regulations.

In case, they have any health services, they should contact helpline services or 104 or 108 services. Etela asked the officials to implement the new rules in the state.

SCR rolls out 43 Shramik trains in a span of 12 hours

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Starting with the first Shramik special train being rolled out from the zone on May 1, 2020, the South Central Railway has run 196 Shramik special trains transporting over 2.40 lakh migrant workers to their native destinations till date.

As part of the operations, a record number of 43 Shramik Special trains were run within a span of 12 hours from various railway stations on SCR's jurisdiction. The big scale operation was undertaken between 04.00 pm on May 23 and the early hours of May 24. 40 of these trains have run from railway stations in Telangana, with Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Kacheguda, Ghatkesar and Lingampalli mainly serving the purpose. In addition Mahbubnagar and Kazipet stations also handled the train.

Destinations include Bihar, Jharkhand, UP, Odisha and others. In a simultaneous



SCR General Manager Gajanan Mallya gives instructions to the train driver and personally monitors operations in the division.

move, three trains commenced journey with migrants from Nambur and Kadapa stations in AP and Aurangabad station in Maharashtra, taking the tally of rail operations to 43 shramik special trains within 12 hours, with a single day record total of around 40k

workers availing the transport facility on the zone. Gajanan Mallya, General Manager of SCR has been personally monitoring the entire operations in close co-ordination with the principal head of departments at the HQ and divisional railway managers of various divisions.

140 domestic flights to take off from RGIA in first phase

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Airport Authority of India (AAI) director for Hyderabad C Pattabhi disclosed that the Centre has permitted to operate 140 domestic air services in the first phase from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport.

The Centre also permitted to run training planes from Begumpet airport as well.

Generally, at least 575 to 600 aircrafts take off or touch down at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad.

During the lockdown period, only cargo airplanes were operated, Pattabhi said adding that airplanes being operated under the Vande Bharat Mission will most probably continue till the month-end. During normal days, at least 40 persons work at the Air-Traffic Control department. The number has come down to mere 15 during the lockdown period, he compared.



IT Minister KT Rama Rao water logged utensils and buckets at his residence and surrounding areas as part of 10 minutes at 10 am programme on Sunday

KTR wants 10 mins at 10 am to continue

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Municipal Administration KT Rama Rao inspected the gardens in Pragati Bhavan to find whether the water has logged in the surroundings as part of the programme 10 minutes at 10 am on Sundays.

The Minister also cleaned various flower pots and utensils present there. The Minister

wanted the 10 minutes at 10 am on Sunday programme should be continued for 10 more Sundays. Spending 10 minutes in a week, one can keep at bay seasonal diseases like dengue, malaria, chicken-gunya and others. He sought the people's cooperation to the government programmes. He wanted every citizen to spend 10 minutes in a week to keep his or her surroundings clean.

RTC likely to run city services after May 26

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Traffic Corporation (TSRTC) officials of Greater Hyderabad Zone have put the depot managers in the city to be on the alert since the RTC has plans to run its city services after May 26.

Precautions to be observed by drivers and conductors have been put on display board at various depots in the city. Meanwhile, the bus drivers and conductors have been asked to be ready to report for work. It has been decided to limit the passengers accordingly to the seating capacity of the buses prohibiting travel by standing in them.

Also, the RTC Greater Hyderabad Zone commenced its services in the city for the benefit of doctors, sanitation personnel and other government employees from Saturday onwards. In all, 92 city services are being operated in the city.

ICMAI with its Hyd Chapter holds webinar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICMAI), jointly with its Hyderabad Chapter has organised a webinar on "The challenge of corona crisis - economic and financial issues" which was addressed by the former Governor of RBI Duvvuri Subbarao.

This event was initiated by the Hyderabad Chapter, organised by the Institute on online platform and was attended by international participants as well. This event was attended by CMA Balvinder Singh, the President of the Institute,



Duvvuri Subbarao

Central Council members CMA Dr K CHAVSN Murthy, CMA H Padmnabhan, CMA Chittaranjan Chatopadhyaya and chairperson of the Hyderabad Chapter CMA

This event was initiated by the Hyderabad Chapter, organised by the Institute on online platform

KVN Lavanya on the video conference.

Dr Subbarao has dealt on 10 issues in the current scenario starting from the 20 trillion stimulus package, its accomplishments, reforms, focus on saving lives and livelihoods and the fiscal numbers and issues

faced by the government. He also elaborated on the decisions taken by RBI in the present situation of fiscal stress which is around 6.5 per cent of GST for both Center and states together.

The package "Atmanirbhar bharat" will give a big push for Make in India and is a welcome step for placing India on the world market at the earliest.

Owing to the large size of the Indian market, India is a natural alternative to China and our reforms have to be made more effective in ensuring international shareholders in our companies.

Installation of traffic signals goes for a toss

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The engineers of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) have been laying new roads and expanding existing ones without any respect for installing traffic signals and pelican signals at various places increasing the scope of road accidents.

For the past two years, installation of 155 road signals in new roads laid and pelican signals at 98 places has been neglected increasing the risk of

road mishaps.

In fact, there are 221 road signals in the city. The GHMC takes care of their installation and maintenance.

The traffic police department has been requesting the GHMC to install the signals, but the GHMC has been postponing the same on one pretext or the other.

As the situation became hazardous, the GHMC com-



missioner Lokesh Kumar reviewed the situation with top brass of the police department on installation of road signals. He kicked off installation of traffic signals and modernisation of traffic junctions.

The GHMC standing committee approved a resolution in February to install 155 new road signals and 98 pel-

ican signals for pedestrians in the city at a cost of Rs 59.86 crore.

The road works commenced then have come to an end, but the installation of signals remained non starter.

The Pelican signals installed at Rytu Bazar in Mehdiapatnam, JNTU junction, Tarnaka and other regions are working. For want of more and more such signals, the pedestrians most importantly physically challenged are facing problems.

Lockdown relaxation is the time to be extra cautious

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the increased movement of people on roads and other public places following relaxation of lockdown norms by the Central and state governments, one must be extra cautious to avoid being contracted by the Coronavirus, say doctors.

According to them, people need to be especially careful by taking all preventive measures while using public places.

"This is the time when one must stay extra cautious to ensure they do not contract the Coronavirus from carriers," said Dr Arabind Panda, senior consultant urologist, KIMS Hospitals.

He believes that there is an added responsibility on the

people who operate stores and public places to ensure the surroundings are disinfected on a continuous basis.

Office spaces should be cleaned after office hours. If the contact surface is visibly dirty, it should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection.

"Covid-19 is transmitted in most instances through respiratory droplets, direct contact with cases and also through contaminated objects. Though the virus survives on environmental surfaces for a varied period, it gets inactivated by chemical disinfectants. All indoor areas to a shop or office should be mopped with a disinfectant like sodium hypochlorite or phenol twice daily," he said.

Disinfectants with 70 per



A sanitation worker sprays disinfectant near Charminar

cent alcohol can be used to wipe down surfaces like metal where the use of sodium hypochlorite is not suitable. The doctor said masks are

effective if worn according to instructions. It is important not to touch the masks or the face. Disposable masks should be discarded if they become phys-

Disinfectants with 70% alcohol can be used to wipe down surfaces like metal where the use of sodium hypochlorite is not suitable.

ically damaged or soaked. Reusable cloth masks should be washed daily with detergents and water and then dried thoroughly before being reused.

Dr Saji Dsouza, Chairman of KSAC group of Hospitals said with life slowly starting to fall back to rhythm with lockdown relaxation, a 'new normal' set of guidelines for everyone to follow has taken birth.

"Wash your hands for 20 seconds when and where possible. Face and its parts should be covered with appropriate masks and should not be touched frequently. Sanitize your hands before and after every contact. 'Namaste' is the best way to greet anyone, maintain physical distancing of at least one meter from the next fellow being," he said.

Dr Saji is of the view that people should avoid any form of crowd. "Any purchases should be thoroughly washed with baking powder mixed in hot water or hot saline before consumption. Drink your own beverages from home to keep you hydrated and eat dishes made of amla, ginger, garlic, black pepper, turmeric and others.

Early bird scheme nets Rs 310 cr property tax

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There is a remarkable increase in property tax remittances in the city as the GHMC extended the early bird incentives to commercial establishments too. The property tax remittances under the early bird scheme rose to Rs 310 crore in 14 days from Rs 128 crore. On an average, the daily remittances are put between Rs 13 crore and Rs 14 crore. The GHMC officials predict that the remittances cross Rs 500-crore mark by May-end.

In fact, the early bird incentives offer up to a discount of 5 per cent is announced in April for tax payers because of the commencement of new financial year. The benefits are applicable to those who pay off their taxes by April 30.

Because of the lockdown, the last date has been extended up to May 31. The state government for the first time imposed conditions to derive benefit under the early bird offer. Only those residential houses with an annual tax assessment of Rs 30,000 and less are eligible to derive benefit under the offer. The officials predict remittances of another Rs 200 crore in the next one week. However, they are apprehensive of dampening affect of the remittances in case the lockdown conditions continued.

Is Covid-19 spread high for taking things easy?

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

The novel Coronavirus is showing its strength by spreading quickly in Telangana, especially in the state capital.

About 90 per cent of the cases were registered in Hyderabad in the last two weeks. The total cases registered in the state were more than 500 for the last two weeks. Hyderabad registers an average of 50 cases per day. People are scared as the cases were increasing by the day in Hyderabad. Many people were seen coming out of their houses without following physical distance and not wearing masks after the relaxations were given.

Residents followed lockdown strictly for almost 45 days. However, the lockdown relaxations changed the scene severely and cases are increasing quickly in greater Hyderabad though the government is taking all possible steps.

For the last five days, the



Several residents were seen not following the restrictions at petrol bunks, business firms, kirana shops and meet shops.

cases were increasing very quickly besides the increase of Coronavirus deaths in Hyderabad.

Several residents were seen not following the restrictions at petrol bunks, business firms, kirana and meet shops.

Recently, a mutton shop owner was tested positive for Coronavirus in Borabanda.

more concerned about the increasing cases when compared with the lockdown and relaxed lockdown.

"I am afraid to roam freely as the situation is turning serious after the relaxations. Hyderabad is also registering more cases after relaxations. The conditions may force the government to impose lockdown once again in near future," he opined.

Sudden spike in Coronavirus positive cases in Hyderabad particularly in Old City are scaring the people living in the area.

V Shivani Reddy from Madannapet Colony said that a family near their house was tested positive for the Coronavirus few days ago and they are afraid to go out to buy essentials even.

She said, "People are violating night curfew restrictions here. Even the police officials are not serious about the violations. Most of the youth in the area are roaming on bikes without wearing masks," she lamented.

Ajay Kumar distributes Ramzan gift packs

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Transport Minister P Ajay Kumar on Sunday distributed Ramzan gift packs to the poor among Muslims at various municipal divisions under Khammam Municipal Corporation.

He distributed the gift packs consisting of 10 types of essential commodities and dry fruits under the aegis of Puvvada Foundation in 11, 21 and 26 divisions on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion he informed that as many as 5000 families so that every Muslim celebrates Ramzan in festive mood.

Unlike previous years this year essential commodities were included in Ramzan gift packs in view of lockdown, he said.

Several leaders of the Muslim community have appreciated the kid gesture of the minister. He was accompanied by Mayor G Papalal, and his deputy B Murali.

TikTok video reunites hearing and speech impaired man with kin

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TikTok may have been in the news for all the wrong reasons in recent times, but the video-sharing social networking service has helped reunite a hearing- and speech-impaired Telangana man with his family after two years.



The happy reunion came about through one of the many video clips shared on TikTok to highlight food distribution among the needy during the lockdown in Punjab.

Roddam Venkateshwarlu, a resident of Bhadradi Kothagudem district, had gone missing in 2018 and his family had given up hopes of finding him.

However, R Peddiraju and his siblings could not believe their eyes when they saw their missing father in a TikTok video in Ludhiana three days ago.

In the video, made by a Punjab Police as part of the social service to distribute food among beggars, two men were seen handing out a food packet to Venkateshwarlu.

Peddiraju approached his state's police, who got in touch with their Punjab counterparts and after confirming that the man featured in the video

issued the former a pass to travel down to Ludhiana in a car on Saturday.

Peddiraju said his father had gone missing on April 27, 2018, when he left the house in search of daily-wage job.

The family lodged a police complaint but gave up hope after a futile search. "It looks like in an inebriated condition he boarded a truck and found himself in another state," said Peddiraju.

Expired beer bottles seized

PNS ■ PARIGI

Wine shop owners have been selling outdated beers without any hindrance and playing with the lives of consumers. On Saturday, some youth bought beer bottles from New Parigi wines in the town. They found that the date on the beer bottles expired in March and April months. They have lodged a complaint with the excise personnel here. Responding to a complaint lodged by one of the consumers, excise personnel reached the wine shop and identified that the date of some beer bottles has expired. They seized 12 beer bottles from the shop and seized the shop. A case has been registered against the wine shop owner.

Several have been questioning why the excise officials have failed to identify the expired beer bottles since they daily record the stock particulars in shops. They allege that the mischief is going on as the excise officials look the other way. The local people are breathing fire on excise personnel for paying no attention to liquor bottles brought out of the shops through backdoor methods during the lockdown period.



Komatireddy Venkat Reddy laid foundation stone for check dams on Alair Vagu at Parupalli village in Athmakuru (M) mandal on Sunday.

Komatireddy lays foundation stone for check dams

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MP from Bhongir Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has said that the Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao is giving Rythu Bandhu amounts from the taxes paid by the people but not from his pocket.

Venkat Reddy alleged that the Chief Minister introduced Rythu Bandhu scheme for the sake of elections but not with the love on farmers.

Parupalli village in Athmakuru (M) mandal with Rs 4.56 crore and at Kamunigudem with Rs 1.37 crore along with government whip and Aler MLA Gongidi Sunitha on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, Komatireddy said that the government has to see all regions equally. But the government is taken away the water supposed to come to Alair to Janagoan. The state government is adopting negligent attitude towards completion of Bunadigani Kalva construction through several years were gone.

It is atrocious on the part of the government as it failed to give money to the farmers. He said that the people were observing everything and hence the Chief Minister has to work for the welfare of farmers and people at least now on wards.

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TRAC to monitor cropping pattern across TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

For effective implementation of the proposed regulated farming in the State, the Agriculture Department is all set to collaborate with Telangana State Remote Sensing Application Centre (TRAC) to remotely monitor cropping pattern across the State. The project will commence with compilation of crop data for the ensuing Vaanakalam season.

Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy, held a meeting with TRAC additional director general Srinivas Reddy at the Ministers' Quarters on Sunday, discussed the feasibility of deploying the latest remote sensing technology to monitor cropping patterns. He directed the TRAC official to prepare a detailed report which will be submitted to Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara



Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy holds a discussion with TRAC additional director general Srinivas Reddy at Ministers' Quarters on Sunday

extent of area under cultivation in each survey number, and also estimate yield using crop cutting experiment data. Besides being able to estimate nature of soil, the TRAC can suggest types of fertilisers and their quantity to be used for any crop using soil health card data.

About 1.6 crore acres of cultivable land belonging to more than 56 lakh farmers' families will be linked to TRAC soon, the Minister said.

"Commencing from the ensuing monsoon crop season, we will collect and provide field level crop data to the TRAC which will record the cropping patterns for future purposes. These data will simplify regulated farming in future," the Minister said. About 1.6 crore acres of cultivable land belonging to more than 56 lakh farmers' families will be linked to TRAC soon, he added.

Kavitha helps Gulf migrant attend last rites of relatives

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

Former Nizamabad MP Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Sunday came to the rescue of a Dubai returnee who lost his wife and daughter in an accident. She helped the Gulf migrant reach his hometown and to take part in rituals held at Luxettipet mandal centre.

She responded swiftly when Kiran Kumar Peecharla, member of Emirates Telangana Cultural Association (ETCA), brought the plight of the migrant to her notice in a tweet. Potarajula Srinivas, a native of Luxettipet mandal centre, who was working in Dubai, managed to meet his family members and paid tributes to his wife Sujatha, 40, and daughter Kavya, 18, who were killed in a ghastly accident at Mandamari on May 15. He was escorted by local police and returned to quarantine as per lockdown norms.

He was provided with a special vehicle by Kavitha.



Kavitha helps the Gulf migrant reach his hometown and to take part in rituals held at Luxettipet mandal centre

The migrant was devastated when he saw his daughter and other family members. He rued that the road accident ruined his family for whom he had migrated to Dubai. He, however, maintained physical distancing dur-

Former MP Kavitha responded swiftly when Kiran Kumar Peecharla, member of ETCA, brought the plight of the migrant to her notice in a tweet.

ing his visit and kept a safe distance from his younger daughter. He expressed gratitude to Kavita and members of the ETCA for coming to his rescue.

Srinivas was given permission to fly back to India following the intervention of Kavitha who spoke to DGP Mahender Reddy and Chief Secretary Suresh Kumar. Stranded in Dubai, he had to view the final rites of his wife and daughter over mobile phone on a video call. An autorickshaw driver, he migrated to the gulf country in search of livelihood in 2019.

Indrakaran: New agri policy for ryots' welfare

PNS ■ ADILABAD

Minister for Forests, Environment, Endowments and Housing Allola Indrakaran Reddy asserted that the government was implementing a new agricultural policy for the welfare of agrarian community.

He was presiding over an awareness programme on regulatory crop pattern in Vaanakalam held on Sunday.

Indrakaran Reddy said that the district administration should motivate farmers to adopt regulatory farming. He stated that the government was giving paramount importance to agriculture sector.

He cited quality power supply to this sector and implementation of Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima schemes. He added that Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao extended a helping hand to farmers by waiving crop loans.



Minister G Jagadish Reddy along with other elected representatives shopping handloom products in Nalgonda on Saturday.

Minister: CM efforts to revive handloom industry bear fruit

PNS ■ YADADRI-BHONGIR

Energy Minister G Jagadish Reddy on Sunday said the State government had initiated several measures to help weavers and the handloom sector in view of lockdown, and urged people to purchase handloom products to help the weavers in the pandemic time.

Jagadish Reddy, accompanied by elected representatives from erstwhile Nalgonda district, visited Bhudhan Pochampally to shop handloom products to set an example for others. He said Minister for IT and Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao had already announced measures to extend a helping hand to weavers during the lockdown. The relaxation given to withdraw thrift fund in advance would benefit a total of 26,500 weavers in the State to the tune of Rs 90 crores, he said.

Stating that weavers of Telangana have great skill in weaving international standard handloom designs, he said weavers and handloom sector in the State faced worse times in united Andhra Pradesh due to the attitude of Andhra rulers. Moved by the

The Minister stating that weavers of TS have great skill in weaving international standard handloom designs

suicide of seven weavers then, as leader of Telangana movement K Chandrashekhara Rao went begging for donations and collected Rs 4 lakhs, which was sent to the families of deceased weavers in Pochampally during Telangana agitation, the Minister recalled.

"The measures initiated by Chandrashekhara Rao as Chief Minister after 2014 restored the earlier glory to weavers and the handloom sector in Telangana State," he said, adding that marketing facilities were set created for handloom products at international level. Rama Rao succeeded in creating a brand image for the handloom products of Telangana weavers with some serious promotional programmes, he pointed out.

Madhavi demands state to hand over her husband

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Coronavirus victim Madhusudhan's wife Madhavi on Sunday demanded the state government to hand over her husband. Madhavi spoke to Sanjay Kumar over video conference. She told Bandi Sanjay that the doctors informed her that they were providing treatment in intensive care unit (ICU).

Telangana BJP Chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar has said that he will felicitate Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao if handed over Coronavirus victim Madhusudhan to his wife Madhavi alive. He said that if

something happened to Madhusudhan it would be considered as murder of government. Stating that nobody will wish the increase of deaths, Sanjay alleged that there is no comparison between the arguments of government and Gandhi Hospital records.

Sanjay Kumar alleged that the state government is trying to hide the details of the impact of the Coronavirus in Telangana. He found fault with the government for not conducting tests to the staff extending their services related to Covid-19. He questioned the government to tell as to what was the objection the state government had in con-

ducting tests to the suspects. He said that the Coronavirus cases were increasing due to non conduct of tests in the state.

"Where has gone KCR stated Corona-free Telangana. The state government has to reveal full details of Coronavirus impact in the state at least responding now," he said.

It may be recalled that several members of Madhusudhan family got contacted with the coronavirus. The government shifted them to Gandhi Hospital. However, Madhavi got discharged after recovering. She was shocked when her husband was not at their residence.

Uttam warns against encroachment on...

Continued from page 1

Speaking to media persons later, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the State Government should stop the illegal construction activities of private persons on lands belonging to Osmania University. He demanded a high-level probe into the encroachments and stern action against all those involved in land grabbing. He said Osmania University was the heartbeat of people of Telangana. It was established in 1918 by the then ruler Mir Osman Ali Pasha to provide higher education of international standards to not only the people of Hyderabad State,

but also students from across the globe. Osmania University has a rich history and the Telangana statehood agitation prospered and gained strength from OU premises. Students and teachers of Osmania University had made several sacrifices for the formation of Telangana State.

Instead of strengthening OU, Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's "wrong approach" had been causing huge damage to all universities in the State. Afraid of students and their agitations, KCR had sabotaged universities in a systematic manner by starving them of funds and depriving them of faculty and facilities.

Harish: Target to raise cotton in Sangareddy is 3.60 lakh acres

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday said that the government brought in comprehensive agriculture policy to enable farmers lead dignified life and recalled how the farmers encountered shortage of seeds and fertilisers when the Opposition was in power.

Speaking at an awareness programme on comprehensive agriculture policy, the target for raising cotton in Sangareddy is 3.60 lakh acres as the demand for cotton would be high next

year. As the maize cultivation in rainy season is not profitable, he advised the farmers to raise it in rabi. He said that the area under maize in Sangareddy district is 25,000 acres and wanted the farmers to think of alternative for this. He exhorted the farmers of the district to apply chemical fertilisers in less quantity.

The government allocated Rs 20 lakh for building Rythu Bandhu Vedikas in the district. He wanted the officials to complete them within four months.

Baby boy sold for Rs 22k

Continued from page 1

The couple also signed on a bond paper and handed over the baby to the woman on Saturday night," the police official said.

The woman was nabbed on Sunday while she was taking the baby to a hospital. The baby's parents and the woman buyer were detained. Efforts were on until late in the evening on Sunday to nab three other absconding accused who had signed as witnesses on the bond paper.

SHORT READS



It was wrong to impose lockdown suddenly: Thackeray

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said it was wrong to impose the lockdown suddenly and now it cannot be lifted all at once. Amid the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Maharashtra, Thackeray also said there was a need to be extra cautious during the upcoming monsoon. It was wrong to impose the lockdown suddenly. It will be equally wrong to lift it in one go. It will be a double whammy for our own people," he said in a televised message. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a nationwide lockdown from March 24 midnight to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection. It was later extended, and currently the fourth phase of lockdown, with some relaxations, is on and will continue till May 31. Thackeray, whose party Shiv Sena parted ways with long-term ally BJP last year, said though the Union government has been of little help, he would not indulge in any political mudslinging.

Train carrying 1,600 migrants from Bihar leaves Dimapur

DIMAPUR: A special train carrying 1,600 migrant workers from Bihar has left for Motihari in East Champaran district from here, an official said on Sunday. The train, the first one for migrant workers stranded in Nagaland, departed from the Dimapur railway station at 9 pm on Saturday, he said. Most of those on the train are auto-rickshaw drivers, the official added. The Nagaland government paid for their tickets. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of Dimapur Lovitoly Sema said. Officials said 15 buses from Kohima district ferried 339 migrant workers to the Dimapur District Sports Complex, while five buses from Mokokchung district reached there with 158 workers. The district medical team conducted thermal screening of the migrant workers there, they said.

Karnataka doubles number of COVID-19 tests, says Minister

BENGALURU: Karnataka has doubled the number of coronavirus tests conducted from one lakh to two lakh, state Minister for Medical Education Dr K Sudhakar said on Sunday. "After clocking one lakh tests on May 8, we have doubled the number of tests in just 16 days. As on this morning, we conducted 2.03 lakh tests across our 57 ICMR COVID-19 testing labs. I congratulate doctors & lab technicians on this achievement," Sudhakar tweeted. Till Sunday morning, 2,056 people were tested positive for COVID-19, including 42 deaths and 1,378 active cases and 634 discharges. Till now, 1,96,196 samples have been tested of which 1,92,127 have tested negative.

States told to ensure thermal screening at airports, stations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Health Ministry on Sunday issued guidelines for domestic travel, advising passengers to download the Aarogya Setu application on their mobile devices and asking states to ensure thermal screening at departure point of airports, railway stations and bus terminals.

Asymptomatic passengers should be permitted to travel after being asked to self-monitor for 14 days, the ministry said. Dos and Don'ts shall be provided along with tickets to travellers by agencies concerned, said the ministry's guidelines for domestic travel (air/train/inter-state bus travel).

All passengers shall be advised to download the Aarogya Setu application on their mobile devices, it said.

The guidelines come after the Indian Railways last week issued a list of 100 pairs of trains that it will operate from June 1, putting in operation popular trains such as



The states/UTs shall ensure that all passengers undergo thermal screening at the point of departure and only asymptomatic passengers are allowed to board the flight, train or bus

Durontos, Sampark Krantis, Jan Shatabdis and Poorva Express.

Also, after a two-month hiatus, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has announced resumption of domestic flights from May 25.

In its guidelines for domestic travel, the health ministry said suitable announcement about COVID-19 including precautionary measures to be followed shall be made at airports, railway stations and bus terminals as well as in flights,

trains and buses.

The states/UTs shall ensure that all passengers undergo thermal screening at the point of departure and only asymptomatic passengers are allowed to board the flight, train or bus.

During boarding and travel, all passengers shall use face covers or masks and will also follow hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and maintain environmental hygiene, the ministry said in its guidelines.

At airports, railway stations and bus terminals, required measures to ensure social distancing shall be taken, the guidelines said. Airports, railway stations and bus terminals should be regularly sanitised or disinfected and the availability of soaps and sanitisers shall be ensured, the health ministry said. Thermal screening at exit point shall be arranged and asymptomatic passengers will be permitted to go with the advice that they shall self-monitor their health for 14 days, the guidelines said.

Health infra must be ramped up to ensure preparedness: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Health infrastructure should be ramped up to ensure preparedness for the next two months in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has conveyed to authorities of 11 municipal areas that have accounted for 70 per cent of the country's coronavirus case load.

Eleven municipal areas from Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Rajasthan account for 70 per cent of the active caseload, the Union health ministry said in a statement.

The government has asked the 11 municipal areas to step up monitoring in old cities, urban slums and other high density pockets like camps and clusters for migrant workers for management of COVID-19 cases.

Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan, who held a high-level meeting on Saturday through video conferencing with principal health secretaries and municipal commissioners along with other officials from the 11 municipal



areas, urged them to focus on prevention through active screening of high risk and vulnerable population along with effective and sturdy clinical management of the admitted cases to reduce fatality rate.

COVID-19 cases in India saw the biggest spike for the third consecutive day on Sunday with 6,767 new infections reported in the last 24 hours, taking the nationwide tally to 1,31,868, while the death toll due to the disease rose to 3,867 after 147 more fatalities, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday.

The active cases of the coronavirus disease rose to 73,560. While 54,440 people have

recovered, one patient has migrated to another country, according to the ministry's bulletin.

During the meeting on Saturday, a presentation was made to highlight the trend in case trajectory with respect to the total confirmed cases, case fatality rate, doubling time, tests per million and confirmation percentage, the ministry said.

"It was told that a major challenge lies in those corporations having shorter doubling time, higher mortality rate and a higher confirmation rate than the national average," the ministry said in its statement.

HC asks police to delete AIMIM supporter's hate speech video

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has directed police to delete a video uploaded by AIMIM supporter Abu Faizal that allegedly incites violence and hatred between two religious communities.

A division bench of Justices R D Dhanuka and Abhay Ahuja gave the direction on Friday while hearing a petition filed by one Imran Khan, seeking a direction to police to take action against Faizal for uploading a hate speech on social media.

The plea sought deletion of the video uploaded by Faizal two weeks back, and also a



permanent ban to be imposed on him from posting anything on social media.

The video would incite violence between two religious communities. In the video, Faizal is seen asking members of a particular community to assault doctors from other communities working to fight the pandemic.

Over 2.6 lakh migrant labourers sent home in special trains, buses

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

More than 2.6 lakh migrant labourers have so far been sent back to their native states by the Haryana government in 60 special trains and over 5,000 state transport buses, an official spokesperson said on Sunday.

Those migrant labourers who have expressed their willingness to return to their native states during the COVID-19-triggered lockdown are being sent back, he said.

On Saturday, ADGP, CID, Anil Kumar Rao interacted with passengers onboard a Shramik Special train at Ambala Cantonment Railway Station, which was going to Barauni in Bihar.

He said the migrant labour-



ers were given packed food, fruits, juice, and water for their journey after their medical check-up and thermal screening was conducted.

A team comprising Anil Kumar Rao, Director, State Transport Haryana, Virender Kumar Dahiya, Deputy

Inspector General of Police, Law & Order, Rakesh Arya have been deputed by the state government to monitor transport arrangements and coordinate with nodal officers of Indian Railways and Transport Department for sending migrants to their home states.

4 new COVID-19 cases in Assam; tally rises to 350

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

A day after Assam recorded the highest of 87 COVID-19 cases on a single day, four fresh cases have been reported in the state on Sunday, a senior minister said.

With this there are total 350 COVID-19 positive cases in the state. Of the 350, 286 are active cases, while 57 have recovered, four have died and three migrated out of the state.

"Four new #COVID19+ confirmed. Two from Chirang, at Tezpur quarantine centre; two from Jorhat with travel history to Chennai", Health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma tweeted.

The state has so far carried out 55,862 tests which the minister claimed was higher than that of Kerala.

"In a strong testimony to excellent team work and our steady resolve to do the best in a crisis like #COVID19, I am humbled to share that #Assam has carried out 55,862 tests so far. This is higher than Kerala's (52,771), a state known for its healthcare excellence", the minister said in another tweet.

Guwahati Medical College Hospital recorded the highest of 15,807, followed by 12,096 at Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College Hospital, Barpeta, 7,276 at Regional Medical Research Centre, Lohaloh, 6,716 at Tezpur Medical College Hospital, 6,334 at Jorhat Medical College Hospital, 5,140 at Silchar Medical College Hospital and 2,502 at Assam Medical College Hospital, Dibrugarh, the minister said.

Cops register abetment to suicide case against unidentified people

PNS ■ BIKANER/JAIPUR

The police here have registered a case of abetment to suicide against unidentified people after the SHO of Churu district's Rajgarh Police Station ended his life by hanging himself, an official said on Sunday.

The body of inspector Vishnu Dutt Vishnoi was handed over to family members after post-mortem on Sunday. The family has taken the mortal remains to Sriganganagar for the last rites.

On the basis of a suicide note and allegations of family members that Vishnoi was "under pressure", a case under section 306 of IPC (abetment to suicide) was registered late on Saturday night at the Rajgarh Police Station.

Vishnoi's relatives were promised a judicial inquiry into the matter and a government job to a family member on com-



passionate grounds.

The staff of Rajgarh Police Station gave a written application to Inspector General of Bikaner range Jose Mohan requesting him to transfer them elsewhere due to the "pressure" created by local Congress MLA Krishna Poonia, who keeps lodging "unnecessary complaints" against them to senior police officials.

BJP leaders including deputy leader of opposition Rajendra Rathore and others have accused Poonia of pressuring Vishnoi. The Congress legislator could

not be reached for comments over the issue. Meanwhile, Superintendent of Police, Churu Tejaswini Gautam said that she was talking to the staff of Rajgarh Police Station to ascertain the facts.

"I am talking individually to all staffers to ascertain the facts. Some have said that it was an emotional decision to sign the application," she said. The SP said that the SHO's family has been assured that the collector will refer the matter for a judicial inquiry to the state government and a family member will be given government job on compassionate grounds despite the cause of death being suicide. "The family members were pacified. The body was handed over to the family members after post-mortem today," she said. The SHO was found hanging from the ceiling in his quarter on Saturday morning.

People stay indoors, shops wear deserted look on eve of Eid amid lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The festive atmosphere was missing on the eve of Eid in the national capital on Sunday as people preferred to stay at their homes to offer namaz and most shops wore a deserted due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown.

Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, will be celebrated across the country on Monday.

The old city areas, which are usually crowded during Ramadan as people go for shopping to buy new clothes for the festival, wore a deserted look.

With religious places shut due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been advised by Shahi Imams of Jama Masjid and Fatehpuri Masjid to stay indoors and



offer Eid namaz at their homes.

Mohammad Mohsin, a footwear trader in Ballimaran, said, "You cannot imagine celebrating Eid without participating in Eid namaz at a mosque. Besides, people also don't have money due to paralysed commercial and business activities in the past two

months." With coronavirus cases increasing in the city, people have been staying at their homes and observing social distancing norms by avoiding crowded places.

"Main markets, where it would be difficult to move during normal days, more so on

the occasion of Eid, are deserted. Shops are not opening because the entire supply chain has been disrupted in the country and also because people do not have money to spend," Akram Qureshi, president of Bazar Matia Mahal Traders Association, said.

However, some people in inner parts and narrow bylanes of the old city areas of Matia Mahal, Chandni Chowk, Ballimaran visited shops to buy food items and new clothes for their children to celebrate Eid.

In Shaheen Bagh, which was a protest venue for a section of people opposed to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) earlier this year, a few shops were open as per the guidelines of the Delhi government in view of the lockdown.

IIT-Bhubaneswar develops tech to hold online exams

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The IIT-Bhubaneswar said it has created a state-of-the-art method of conducting online examinations in a comprehensive manner, plugging the loopholes in existing systems.

This method can be used for holding all types of examinations, including class tests and end-semester examinations of an institute, the premier institute said in a statement.

This method uses the currently available commercial systems such as the Wheelbox as a part of it.

The new method will overcome several limitations of holding only computer-based tests, lacking the robustness, reliability of invigilation and connection faced by the commercially available online examination systems, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) said. According to RV Raja Kumar, Director, IIT-



Bhubaneswar, the proposed online examination system is robust and can be used for holding tests of wide-ranging nature from simple computer-based ones to detailed conventional examinations.

The system uses a virtual examination hall, actual invigilators, question paper distribution online and submission/reception of soft copies of answer books which may be printed, if needed, he said.

The system uses two or more network connections for the reliability of the connection and additional facility for proctoring for reliable invigilation.

May 25 to be observed as Jhiram tribute day in C'garh

PNS ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government will observe May 25 as 'Jhiram Shradhanjali Diwas' to pay tribute to Congress leaders who were killed in a Maoist attack in Bastar district on this day in 2013 as well as other victims of Naxal violence, a senior official said on Sunday.

In a letter to state departments and district collectors, the General Administration Department said May 25 will be observed in the memory of senior Congress leaders and security personnel killed in Jhiram Naxal attack on May 25, 2013.

Staff of all government and semi-government offices must observe two-minute silence and take oath to re-establish peace and harmony in the state, the official said.

In a first, Uttarakhand releases report on conservation of endemic, threatened floras

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Uttarakhand has become the first state to release a unique report highlighting its conservation efforts to save over 1,100 rare plants from extinction.

Herbs like 'Ashwagandha', 'Gilo', 'Kalmegh' and 'Chitrak', which are presently part of scientists' research to find a possible cure to coronavirus, are included in this conservation programme executed by whistleblower forest service officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi.

As many as 1,145 plant species have been conserved out of which 46 species are endemic to Uttarakhand and 68 species are rare, endangered or threatened, under red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) or under state biodiversity board, under this project by the research wing of the



state forest department.

The report, one of the largest repositories of conserved plants, was released on Sunday. Chaturvedi said this project is aimed at germplasm conservation so that species remain conserved with the forest department even if they disappear from their natural habitat in the wild.

Conservation of endemic species is considered to be particularly important as they

exist in one geographical region only.

'Brahmkamal', an endangered plant named after Hindu god Brahma, and mythological 'Sanjeevani' herb are also among the conserved floras under this programme.

Brahmkamal (scientific name: Saussurea obvallata), found at over 12,000 feet altitude in the Himalayan region bordering China, is the state flower of Uttarakhand and

Chaturvedi said this project is aimed at germplasm conservation so that species remain conserved with the forest department even if they disappear from their natural habitat in the wild

considered a very sacred flower. It also has tremendous medicinal properties, is used as antiseptic and for treatment of other ailments.

Sanjeevani (Selaginella bryopteris) is another rare herb which has found a mention in Ramayan.

Similarly, Thuner (Taxusbaccata), a tree found at very high altitude in Himalayan region and at the verge of extinction because of extraction of 'taxol', used in treating breast cancer, and Bhojpatra -- a holy tree on the bark of which ancient scriptures were written -- being the

last species in tree line, are also conserved by the Uttarakhand forest department.

Bhojpatra (Betulaulis) is found in the Himalayan region at around 10,000 ft altitude, before the start of glaciers.

The conservation programme covers all classes of plants - tree, shrub, herb, bamboo, wild climbers, fern, orchid, grass, cane, alpine flowers, palm, cycad, cactus, succulent, aquatic species, insectivorous plants and even lower plants like moss, lichen and algae, which have been documented, classified and conserved for the first time.

PAPER WITH PASSION

RBI move means little

The Central bank wants to lend more but there are few borrowers and banks are wary of piling up NPAs



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may have done another repo cut, hoping banks will lend more, but the cold truth is nobody is borrowing. Certainly not in these stressed times, when there is no stability about the future and businesses are struggling to keep their noses above water. Clearly, they wouldn't want to pile up bad loans or part with whatever they have given such critically. So though RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced a 3.35 per cent reverse repo rate, in the belief that banks will no longer park their surpluses with

the Central bank, which is what is happening now, but get aggressive about lending, banks may not be too enthused and are expected to simply drop interest rates on deposits. Even before the pandemic, loan growth was about 6.5 per cent consistently. Besides, banks would also want to be sure of the credibility of the loaner and not take undue risks. This risk aversion is typical of banks even when they have liquidity. So, even now, mostly the bigger companies will likely get the loans instead of struggling MIMEs, most of which may still go under and increase a bank's NPA burden. As it is, banks are still bearing the burden of corporate loans that went bad. Besides, the moratoriums for another three months may offer temporary relief to borrowers but for the banks, this would mean a disruption in credit culture as monthly instalments and accumulated interest charges can only be recovered late or not at all should the business concerned is not able to survive at all. Many MIMEs are having a tough time since the grace period does not mean a waiver, as banks will still charge interest for the unpaid amount. So NPAs are expected to shoot up from the current level of around ₹10 lakh crore. Available data suggests that nearly 25-30 per cent of bank loans have come under moratorium so far with micro-finance borrowers facing extreme stress, followed by automobile finance, MIMEs, corporates and retail. While the bigger banks may still survive, it is the smaller banks, especially those into micro-credit, that are in danger of keeling over. Therefore, a one-time restructuring of loans as a relief measure, as suggested by many experts, would have been a better option in a bleak scenario. In fact, Das himself sounded a warning saying the GDP growth in 2020-21 is likely to be in the "negative territory."

In the end, the RBI can only do so much and the Government's fiscal stimulus so far has been credit-based than about fund infusion. No matter how many loans we give, without upping demand and liquidity, the economy will grunt to a freeze. So far the incentives announced have a long-term gestation and are particularly aimed at the rural poor. But the sizeable urban economy is where demand needs to pick up to get the train moving. British economist John Maynard Keynes, who had studied the Great Depression of 1929, was of the view that Governments should become spenders of the last resort. He had even suggested that governments should give people money to dig holes and fill them up. The money thus earned and spent would help revive the economy. This certainly isn't the guiding principle of our stimulus package. For all the grandiloquence, the actual fiscal outgo is just a bit over one per cent of the GDP, which is hardly enough to battle an unprecedented crisis such as this, when the economy is expected to contract to 12.5 per cent. Our structural reforms are there in place but can only be actualised in the long term. The pandemic is the perfect opportunity for the Government to go for big bang reforms and bold initiatives without being hemmed in and timing is of the essence. Seemingly done for the poorest, the Government just rescues them temporarily without providing them long-term comfort as growth is projected to dip in key sectors. Right now, the focus seems to be on attracting investment but boosting demand means innovative responses and financial interventions to declog the economy as a whole. Cheaper rates may not encourage thousands of businesses to start borrowing but the government doling out money to millions of Indians and boosting their spending power might get things going.

Wonder girl

Desperation drove 15-year-old Jyoti Kumari to pedal 1,200 km to Bihar with her father. She is now up for cycling trials



If the pandemic has shown our ugly side, with a rampant class divide apparent in decisions taken by the Government vis-à-vis the lesser privileged, namely migrants, it has also revealed the true grit of survivors. People are walking thousands of kilometres in their long march home, helping and supporting each other along the way. One among them is a young girl, Jyoti Kumari, who set out on a 1,200-km journey back to Bihar on her second-hand bicycle with a single mission: Bring her injured, out-of-work migrant father home.

With no money and little food and thanks to generous Samaritans along the way, she pedalled on with her father on the pillion. For eight days, the father-daughter duo moved down long roads under a scathing sun and some undesirable comments by passersby. Yet undeterred, she reached her home in Bihar and has now quarantined herself. With the media hailing her as the "lionhearted" girl, the reports did not fail to draw the attention of the Cycling Federation of India. Having noticed her immense talent, it has invited her to New Delhi for a tryout with the national team. There's much more. Her amazing journey has also grabbed the attention of Ivanka Trump, US President Donald Trump's daughter, who took to the social media to salute what she called a "beautiful feat of endurance." But Jyoti must not make the same mistake as Srinivas Gowda, the "kambala jockey" or Karnataka's Usain Bolt, who, too, was invited by the Sports Authority of India to take part in a track and field trial after his record-setting performance in a traditional foot race but failed to seize the moment. Nor should she be like Rameshwar Gurjar, a farmer from Madhya Pradesh, whose fame was short-lived because he failed to prove his mettle on the ground. If passion and desperation drove her, she must keep that hunger alive for a sportswoman's career if she indeed wants one badly enough.

She must possess the same zeal as that of sprinter Dutee Chand, boxer Mary Kom and archer Deepika Kumari among others, who, coming from tribal and marginalised backgrounds, were less magnificent than they are today. Standalone feats like that of Jyoti's from the hinterland are also proof of talent, stamina and determination that we are somehow not able to tap into and develop as Olympic medallists. We need to put in place quality and effective grassroots rural sports development programmes uniformly across States and ensure sports nurseries are set up at the school level along with nutrition packages for the young. Imagine what Jyoti could do with a little bit of encouragement and support.

KK PAUL

A pandemic invariably leads to a health crisis, which has an economic fallout, too. This has been the trend in almost all countries that are reeling under the impact of Coronavirus. The additional crisis posed by the mass exodus of the migrant labourers is more or less specific to our country and is bound to have some far-reaching consequences.

For a long time to come, heart-rending images of the migratory efflux will be the defining moment of the Corona-inspired lockdown. Having lost their livelihood, without any savings and no hope for the future, lakhs of workers left for their hometowns and villages. In the absence of any transportation during the first month-and-a-half, out of sheer desperation, they set out with meagre belongings on roads and highways. Some even covered more than a thousand kilometres on foot. Though their decision must have been voluntary, the fact is the prevailing circumstances left them with little option.

The present crisis is a multi-dimensional one but for now, the focus has shifted almost entirely to the economy and less on health. In the long run, this may also emerge as a major social issue. The migratory process, its effects and the growth of slums in urban areas have been studied comprehensively but the instant case is that of reverse migration. Earlier, this phenomenon was attributable to individual behaviour and decisions but in the present context, it has assumed the shape of a mass efflux. Individuals and families, who are suffering, having been uprooted physically for no fault of theirs, are not only bound to be unhappy but also bitter. Given the present situation, this bitterness does not appear to be disappearing anytime soon. The reason as to why these people were forced to leave their villages in the first place might, perhaps, confront them in a more aggravated form now as they get back to their home States.

Under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, the Government had ordered on March 24 that all employees — be it industry, shops or commercial establishments — will have to pay wages to their employees even when they are not in operation during the lockdown. Landlords, too, were asked not to charge rent or get the premises vacated from their worker-tenants. Pursuant to a judgment from the Supreme Court, this order was withdrawn on May 18, without any alternative arrangement, thus leaving the migrants high and dry. The Supreme Court ruled that the Ministry of Home Affairs' order was violative of Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution with respect to the rights of private firms. It's another matter that prior to its withdrawal, the order was being observed more in violation. Perhaps the case for the migrant workers could have been present-

ed more effectively. More glaring is the non-implementation of the Interstate Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1979. Known as ISMW, rules under the said Act were framed and notified in 1980. The implementing authorities for this Act are the respective chief labour commissioners. Perhaps they could not foresee the enormity of the situation and, thus, could not react in time. Also, the efflux of the workers was only initially prevented.

In fact, some action was taken against erring officers, who tried to facilitate their movement but after some time, the decision was reversed, leading to confusion in making arrangements for their safe transportation. The registration for workers wanting to migrate has begun only now and that, too, at selective places. The ISMW has specific provisions for such registrations in the normal course of working of the labour department, which, perhaps, was being neglected.

It is true that in its original form, the Act applied to migrants of only certain classes. With a small amendment, it could have been extended to all categories. Complete neglect on the part of the ISMW appears to be one of the factors that may have widened the difference between the workers,

More than a health crisis

Experience shows that we cannot bring the economy on track if our working classes are unhappy. It is the Government's greater responsibility to make them feel at home



labour, migrants and the administration.

Ever since the liberalisation of the economy and pro-labour legislations coming into force, unrest among the wagers had become a thing of past. The well-known trickle-down effect came into full play and a record number of people could move away from poverty. Some of these pro-labour legislations are now in the process of being abandoned with States like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan undertaking major changes in them to woo investment. In fact, the higher judiciary has already taken cognisance of this and has asked some pertinent questions on behalf of the workers and their rights.

Experience shows that bringing the economy back on the rails cannot be achieved if our working classes are unhappy. The role of the trade unions will have to be considered afresh in the changed circumstances. Unions have more or less remained dormant during the last two decades and are now coming back with a cause, which may not augur well for the industry as a whole.

An extremely important question that has not been debated so far is: What next? For how long will the migrant workers stay on and whether this efflux is for good. Whatever be the status of a

worker in society, he/she did have access to a certain level of facility in urban areas. All of them became used to their lives and would certainly miss them badly back home. So does this mean that this efflux is a temporary phenomenon and that things will normalise in due course?

Considering the alienation that they have undergone, it does not appear that the workers would be coming back too soon unless some confidence-building measures are taken. This should entail a review of some of the regressive laws that work against the interests of the labourers. Alienation of the workforce has several manifestations but one of the worst forms is estrangement of man from man. It would have pained them where it hurts the most to see a complete lack of empathy among sections of society who could have helped them tide the crisis. Only a handful of NGOs stepped in to help. Generally, Government agencies were a big letdown. This may have further aggravated the situation.

The Government's decision to increase the allocation for MGNREGA up to ₹40,000 crore is a step in the right direction. Though in a limited manner, this can certainly help the migrants tide over the immediate crisis when they reach their home States. Our MPs

and MLAs, who could have undertaken immediate relief measures, are handicapped in the absence of funds that have been already diverted.

Additionally, existing resources of the State Governments have come under severe stress. Their borrowing capacity needs to be enhanced further. In the event where a bulk of the migrants would not want to go back to their original workplaces, focus will have to be on the creation of appropriate levels of employment opportunities in the vicinity. Obviously, investment in the area of rural development and employment would have to be increased in affected districts where there has been a sudden influx of population. The Providing Urban Facilities in Rural Areas (PURA) model, as suggested by former President Abdul Kalam, can also be taken into consideration.

Today, a much greater responsibility lies with the State Governments, who have to not only provide the arriving migrant force with medical care but also treat them with empathy and help absorb them in the existing social milieu, physically, psychologically and economically.

(The writer is a former Governor and a Senior Advisor at the Pranab Mukherjee Foundation)

SOUNDBITE

Only *naam ka satya not kaam ka*. He (Satya Pal Malik) never tires of lying. He lied to the people of J&K before August 5 and is lying even now.



NC leader
—Omar Abdullah

Violence can be sexual, mental, physical and it bothered me. It frightens me that there are people stuck in those situations. I can't fathom the pain and fear.



Actor
—Sandhya Mridul

COVID-19 pandemic is moving the world toward increased technological innovation and online collaboration but cybercrime is also on the rise, too.



UN disarmament chief
—Izumi Nakamitsu

Every country has brought in a basket of things, some fiscal, some monetary... They have also gone into liquidity being infused. We are not different from them.



Union Minister
—Nirmala Sitharaman

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Modify rules

Sir — Central Government employees, posted outside their home towns, are facing a huge problem because of great risks involved while living in hotels or guest houses because of the spread of the Corona pandemic. Even finding a rented accommodation is extremely difficult in these times.

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) should revise its advisory. Those desiring to be posted in their hometowns must be allowed to move to their native places. The revised system should be applicable for Government employees in each cadre and services like administrative service, police service or international service as far as practicable. The Corona era is a time when living with the family has become a necessity for all practical reasons. It's difficult for many to maintain mental health during long periods of self-isolation? If citizens have to learn to live with the virus, the Government must amend the rules, too.

Madhu Agrawal
Delhi

A pandemic and a cyclone

This refers to the editorial, "Bengal battered" (May 23). People of West Bengal and Odisha have had to face the double disaster of a raging pandemic and a devastating cyclone, the strongest ever recorded in the Bay of Bengal. Tapping their reserves of inner strength and resilience, they are sure to get over the twin calamities — the bio-threat and the natural calamity. It was a great relief that the emergency evacuation was in place, which saved the lives of thousands of people, mostly from vulnerable areas. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) must be commended for having taken several steps to modernise and upgrade the cyclone early warning systems. This is the reason why it could act in time and prevent large-scale loss of life.

Nevertheless, both States have a huge task ahead to provide relief and rehabilitation to those affected and at the same time prevent overcrowding to contain the spread of COVID-19. It was encouraging though that the Central and State Governments are making joint efforts to mitigate the situation, thus reviving hopes of "cooperative federalism" in the process. However, it should be more than just "seeming cooperation." The Prime Minister's announcement of a ₹1,000 crore for disaster relief should be followed up with more financial support without delay. This to help the affected people rebuild their lives. If "central assessment" is "mandatory", it must be done without procrastination. Meanwhile, scientists are studying if cyclone Amphan and its destructive power are linked to climate change — a major existential challenge for the world to address for self-preservation.

G David Milton
Maruthancode



ter relief should be followed up with more financial support without delay. This to help the affected people rebuild their lives. If "central assessment" is "mandatory", it must be done without procrastination. Meanwhile, scientists are studying if cyclone Amphan and its destructive power are linked to climate change — a major existential challenge for the world to address for self-preservation.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Eid reflections

Sir — The month of Ramzan is considered to be auspicious for Muslims all across the world. They fast from dawn to dusk for a month to remind themselves of the suffer-

ing of the less fortunate and to bring the followers closer to god.

The sighting of the crescent moon marks the end of the holy month of Ramzan and the arrival of Eid. The festival is all about sharing happiness and joy. This year, however, celebrations have

been stifled due to the pandemic, which has forced us to inculcate changes in life. We must be more humane and empathetic. And social distancing doesn't mean emotional distancing.

Jubel D'Cruz
Mumbai

The other problem

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Finally, the takeoff" (May 22). The Union Government's decision to partially resume air travel is welcome. But it would have been much appreciated if the Civil Aviation Ministry could have taken steps to refund fares for flyers, who had made domestic and international travel bookings during the lockdown period.

Although the Aviation Ministry had asked airlines to issue a full refund to customers, it was an ambiguous directive as the cancellations did not apply to tickets booked before the lockdown for the travel period between the lockdown or after it. Surely the aviation industry is going through its worse time since 9/11 and grounded flights mean no money made. Still, holding money of passengers is both morally and legally wrong. The Government must come to the rescue of hapless people.

Abhinav
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Impenetrable barriers

Borders around the country remain closed, no matter what the compulsion of those trying to cross them



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Any territory around the world, right from a street to a State to a city or a region, has its characteristics. The word "territory" has one of its most common usages in the field of sports and athletics where identities compete from a defined piece of land without having a sovereign status. Thus, it is that Scotland, as a territory, can field a team without having a sovereign status. However, this cannot be the place to resolve these concerns or indeed debate them. The use of the word "territory" in the first sentence of this column is in terms of identity. COVID-19 has changed many things in our world. How many of them will remain altered and how many will relapse to their original form once the virus leaves us is anybody's guess. However, if one can survive the stress of the possibility of being a Coronavirus suspect and being put in quarantine, then there are some very interesting processes at play.

A former civil servant, who for some reason had to travel by car from Almorata to Delhi, thus traversing through the three States of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, expressed genuine anxiety at being stopped, grilled and monitored for the virus at the numerous checkpoints he was bound to pass during his journey. He was quite worried about the possibility of being put into quarantine as reasoning usually does not work in such cases. He was convinced that given the state of mind prevailing around the country regarding the pandemic, even his status as an ex-Secretary of the Government of India would not change anything and he would be put in isolation. And given the horror stories coming out of quarantine centres, one can quite understand his reluctance to be put in one. But that's another story for another day.

More to the point, for the first time ever, in modern Indian history, State boundaries have acquired the status of a phenomenon. Consider the birth of the concept of the National Capital Region (NCR). The city of Noida came up in the late 60s in select sectors, as a retreat for the rich and famous, especially the ruling class in Delhi. Freelancing educational entrepreneurs and others, particularly the three forces, also penetrated Noida. It became a "hub" of sorts.

Subsequently, when commercial spaces in Connaught Place, Khan Market, Nehru Place and others started running short, the done thing was to move to Gurgaon, now known as Gurugram. Corporate offices moved to places such as Cyber City, which coincidentally had no special "cyber" identity save being a fanciful noun. Many multinational corporations moved their offices there and those who couldn't get into the cyber bubble, lined up National Highway 8. The Big 4 consulting companies, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Ernst & Young, Deloitte, and KPMG, were not far behind. Pioneering zeal and everything else in between led the way. The Metro followed and a modest four-lane link between Mehrauli and Gurgaon was created. The price of real estate skyrocketed, with many of the rich and powerful boasting of substantial properties in Gurugram. It became a centre of high living, much spending and social standing. A new "territory" was born. Some people lived in Gurugram and worked in Delhi because "the gram" gave the veneer of country living. Others lived in Delhi and worked in Gurugram because Delhi had the advantage of being a social hub where the movers and shakers of society did the rounds of the Delhi Gymkhana, the Delhi Golf Club, the Delhi Race Course, the India International Centre, the India Habitat Centre and much else. In these havens, life pulsed and social elitism flourished. Art and culture were not far behind.

In fact, this intermingling and frequent commuting between the two territories reached such a crescendo that even toll plazas had to be abolished. Straight roads were converted into multiple U-turns. Few if any, complained. And then suddenly, COVID-19 struck the world and walls went up across the country almost overnight.

Haryana discovered its boundaries and passing the non-existent toll plaza became next to impossible. The Delhi-Gurugram border was so heavily monitored that even swanky cars were chased away by the humble stick of the nondescript policeman. The usually unconcerned and cooperative police had finally begun policing to keep Gurugram (and Haryana by implication) safe from the Coronavirus. Unfortunately, the writer of these lines still had his medical care anchored in an institution in Delhi. It didn't matter that his regular monthly dosage of medicines would run out and his symptoms could not be attended to by random doctors who had, in any case, shut their clinics, because as one doctor pointed out: "Even the potential Corona patient doesn't tell the truth about foreign travel as there is a serious possibility of being put into quarantine." Somebody high up in the Haryana administration was spoken to. He gave a very diplomatic reply: "Sir, we will arrange for your medical care in Gurugram. But you know how it is. We make one exception for you and people will push that aperture to their advantage." So, the borders remain closed, no matter what the compulsion of those trying to cross them. At least, the country has been secured from the Coronavirus. To give everyone his due, the sceptic will ask: "Has it really?"

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

WE THE SONS OF JAMAL KHASHOGGI PARDON THOSE WHO KILLED OUR FATHER DURING THIS HOLY MONTH OF RAMZAN.
 —JAMAL KHASHOGGI'S SON
 SALAH KHASHOGGI



HIS AMBUSH AND HEINOUS MURDER DOES NOT HAVE A STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS AND NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO PARDON HIS (JAMAL'S) KILLERS.
 —JAMAL KHASHOGGI'S FIANCEE
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Working class uprising

The new labour laws being enacted by the Centre and various State Governments might create another lockdown even as the economy limps back to normalcy after having all but collapsed



AMIT SENGUPTA

In what is perceived as possibly the last phase of the lockdown, with States being given the powers to implement relaxations to the Centre and economic activity once again being started across urban and rural India, a wave of resentment is brewing among the organised sector of the working class and trade unions in the country.

Indeed, images of tens of thousands of migrant workers in dire straits, walking without food and water in this scorching heat on highways and streets to unknown destinations, especially in the Hindi heartland, have shocked the national conscience, even while death and highway accidents of the workers seem to have become routine.

It is in this context that the new labour laws being enacted by the Centre and various State Governments might create another lockdown, even as the economy limps back to normalcy after having all but collapsed, especially in the urban sector, with the agricultural economy on the threshold of a disaster despite a very good harvest. Indeed, the almost 77 million tonnes of foodgrains lying in the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns, and the huge output post-harvest season, especially in States like Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Maharashtra, are bound to lead to another crisis, especially when the monsoon season sets in.

With the BJP-led Central Government refusing to release the overflowing foodgrain for the jobless and homeless migrant workers, or the poor, even while rejecting the proposals of several top economists like Amartya Sen, Raghuram Rajan and Abhijit Banerjee, the rural economy will yet again find itself in a Catch-22 situation. Already, the crisis of the past has not been resolved: For instance sugarcane farmers in Western UP have largely not been paid the minimum support price while their payment from the mills is still pending. A similar situation might erupt in Maharashtra with onion farmers among others.

The migrant workers, who have gone back to their hometowns and villages, are not returning anytime soon despite the booster announced by the Union Finance Minister, Ms Nirmala Sitharaman. Sources say that the financial "bonanza" announced by the Centre might just prove to be yet another "jumla" while largely benefiting certain industrialists close to the Delhi regime. The real estate and construction industry has not recovered and even the cream of the industry, Information Technology has faced retrenchment of employees.

Almost 10,000 workers of a successful and cheap brand of biscuits like Parle G had to be sacked just because there was no purchasing power in small towns and rural India to buy these glucose biscuits. Hundreds of employees have been sacked in media organisations in recent times with not even a whimper of protest.

With coal mines and airports being privatised, among other public sector units (PSUs), a collapsing economy, faced with a gigantic unemployment problem among the organised and unorganised workers, including among the educated and white-collar professionals, the country can slip into a major crisis yet again. Almost 40 million workers are slated to lose their jobs. Indeed, post-demonetisation and Goods and Services Tax (GST), the small and medium-

THIS KIND OF A NATIONAL TRAUMA ON SUCH A MASSIVE SCALE AND AS A DAILY AND RELENTLESS PUBLIC SPECTACLE FOR ALMOST TWO MONTHS HAS NOT BEEN SEEN IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD DURING THE PANDEMIC, NOT EVEN IN THE SUB-CONTINENT, IN AFRICA OR THE MIDDLE-EAST. MAY 22 MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW CHAPTER IN THE WORKING CLASS' STRUGGLE IN INDIA, EVEN AS THE TRAGIC NARRATIVE OF MASS MIGRATION OF THE UNORGANISED WORKERS CONTINUES RELENTLESSLY. WILL IT MARK A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE CURRENT SCENARIO? ONLY TIME WILL TELL. BUT FOR NOW THE WORKERS ARE NOT GIVING UP



scale industry had virtually shut down, affecting tens of thousands of daily wagers and small and medium entrepreneurs.

Even flourishing industrial zones like Surat in Gujarat had risen in revolt before the last Lok Sabha elections. It took major maneuvering and persuasion by Home Minister Amit Shah to get the pro-BJP traders to the polling booths. Indeed, sociologists had earlier predicted that the mass protests against the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) all over the country were also triggered by mass joblessness and a state of perpetual anxiety about a stable future.

Besides, after the shocking and horrifying images of the poor and starving migrant workers, men, women and children, have hit social media, and the Western media, the international image of the country has taken a big beating. This kind of a national trauma on such a massive scale and as a daily and relentless public spectacle for almost two months has not been seen in any part of the world during the pandemic, not even in the sub-continent, in Africa or the Middle-East. Surely, India is on a sticky wicket not only in terms of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or growth rate and per capita income. Its moral and ethical core has been disrupted and proved crudely transparent in front of the whole world.

It is in this pessimistic context that the one-day hunger strike by the leaders of 10 Central Trade Unions on May 22 against the new labour laws rattled the Central Government, which is still to find its economic scaffolding.

The demands of the unions included restoration of labour laws that have

been changed or their implementation put on hold in about 10 States consisting of both BJP and non-BJP ruled ones. In a joint petition to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the union leaders sought immediate relief to stranded workers and arrangements for safe return to their homes. They also demanded immediate halt to indiscriminate privatisation of PSUs. Even as the trade unions approached the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Government refused to engage in a dialogue with the leaders and they were detained for violating the restrictions of the lockdown. However, the trade unions have said that this protest was just the beginning and their struggle would continue.

Amid all this chaos, experts have declared that the latest Government booster for the small and medium enterprises is just not enough. It should be noted that the majority of the working class in India do not even fall under the organised or formal sector. They constitute almost 93 per cent of the workforce, have no trade union cover or other rights such as work guarantee, fixed-wage hours or wages, maternity leave, provident fund, pension and so on. They are just "free labour" out to be exploited by all concerned. Half of them are women, Dalits, extremely backward castes, landless labourers and the poorest of the poor. Understandably, the labour laws have been declared draconian by the unions, whereby the lockdown has been used to bulldoze them.

Some of them are outrageous, like increasing the work hours per day from eight to 12 hours, something the labour movement had gained after the famous May uprising in the Hay Market in

Chicago in the 1830s, celebrated all over the world as May Day. The suspension of a large number of labour laws for three years by UP and the Madhya Pradesh Government's decision to allow companies to "hire and fire" workers coincided with Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Bihar, Odisha and Maharashtra increasing the daily working hours. Significantly, the BJP trade union, BMS, did not join the protest while the Congress trade union, INTUC did, though the Congress State Governments, too, are tagging along on the new labour laws.

Among the "draconian measures", the Yogi Adityanath Government in UP has made 38 laws meaningless for almost three years, including the Industrial Disputes Act, Trade Union Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Act on Occupational Safety and Health, Interstate Migrant Labour Act and the Contract Labour Act.

The BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh Government has ushered in serious changes in the Factories Act, Contract Act and Industrial Dispute Act. Hire and fire seems to be the new pandemic doctrine, with most workers' rights being taken away, including regarding wages, safety and compensation, and contractors and industry running without any regulations. May 22 marked the beginning of a new chapter in the working class' struggle in India, even as the tragic narrative of mass migration of the unorganised workers continues relentlessly. Will it mark a paradigm shift in the current scenario? Only time will tell. But for now the workers are not giving up.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

Pandemic as a threat to national security

Thankfully, all the casualties that the world has been witnessing have not permeated the defence community in a major way so far. But, what if the defence community is targeted by an enemy country? Or if the virus falls into the hands of terrorists?



GAUTAM KUMAR JHA

A pandemic like COVID-19 can be a threat to the national security of a country which is not prepared to tackle such a disaster. The impact of the pandemic can be even more severe if such a virus is not natural but biologically altered by a country for its personal gains. The pandemic caused by COVID-19 is a result of the increasing conspicuous consumption in society. The ever-

increasing need in almost every field of human consumption has given birth to a situation where the definition of a new-normal never stops.

The greed of individuals is reflected in the proliferation of new products to be marketed with great conviction that inadvertently control the behavioural pattern of the majority of the consumers of the globe. One principal reason for this are the global commodity chains that have fostered greater movement of goods and people across continents. The impact of the contagion on the world economy is huge because the global North often seeks to subsidise its commodity consumption by outsourcing it to countries with weak labour laws and economies of scale with low manufacturing costs. Hence, China's crisis became the world's

crisis even before the disease hit Europe and America. The present pandemic has proved that every human effort is defeated when it is a question of how to balance between natural and artificial ecosystems, given the increasing fluctuations in the climatic disorder.

One of the possible answers can be reducing the ever-increasing need, consumerism and production and the establishment of sustainable infrastructure where humans and nature can complement each other. For the last four decades the whole world was on the path of globalisation, where every country understood the needs of the other and a symbiotic trade system was established. This resulted in alleviation of poverty, betterment of healthcare facilities and better lifestyles globally, to a certain degree. However, these developmental indices have

been realised at the expense of natural resources. The increasing demand for foodgrain invited abundant use of pesticides that finally permeated into the human body, causing fatal diseases.

Similarly, the demands for security and defence-related products have further harmed nature, impacting the air, water and soil. However, the massive production lines in China have not only impacted the global community but the country itself has faced the negative impact of global greed and consumerism. A World Bank and Scottish Environment Protection Agency report says that around 7,60,000 people die prematurely each year in China because of air and water pollution.

This increasing imbalance in nature has been reflected in such catastrophes and the possibility of

their recurrence cannot be denied if the global community does not wake up. No one can deny the fact that the COVID-19 virus originated from Wuhan province of China and the Wuhan Institute of Virology does research on most dangerous pathogens. There is a huge wet market for animals and seafood located in Wuhan. The bush meat, which may be termed as a cultural preference, may be detrimental for humans and is often a source of such pandemics.

No one can also deny that China hid the initial outbreak and failed to warn the world community of the severity of the virus, despite the fact that it knew how contagious it was and Wuhan is well-connected with the capitals of many countries around the globe.

As a result, the pandemic has affected 53,32,323 people and there

have been 3,40,590 casualties till now, globally. However big this count may be, the economic and emotional implications of the outbreak are unfathomable. There is a global lockdown amid chaos and fear and there is a threat to the current world order. At times like this, the question of national security becomes very important.

Thankfully, all the casualties that the world has been witnessing have not permeated the defence community in a major way so far. But, what if the defence community is targeted by an enemy country? Or if the virus falls into the hands of terrorists? The 9/11 attack on US soil 20 years ago redefined the security infrastructure of the global community and so far, more or less every country's security design has been impacted by terrorism.

The spread of the Coronavirus has raised a big question on global security and now every nation has to redefine its security. The search for biological weapons by the US in Iraq in 2002 and further consequences were based upon the programme of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction from 1962 to 1991, aimed at attacking Iran, the Kurds and other purposes. There has been biological espionage between the West and the Soviet Union and so on.

In this manner, as confronted by the outcomes of the Coronavirus on most of the world networks, there is a need to again restore an elective power which might resemble the NAM, reboot the United Nations Organisation and reclassifiy worldwide security.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, JNU)

CAPSULE



OnMobile acquires 25 pc stake in Technologies rob0

New Delhi: OnMobile Global Limited has acquired 25 per cent equity stake in Technologies rob0 Inc (rob0) through its Canadian subsidiary for 1 million Canadian dollar (about Rs 5.4 crore), a move aimed at adding new technologies for growing mobile games subscription business of the group. "OnMobile has acquired a 25 per cent equity stake in rob0, through its subsidiary, Onmobile Global Solutions Canada Ltd, in exchange for an investment of CAD 1,000,000. This transaction will allow rob0 to accelerate its growth as the most innovative AI-powered visual retention analytics solution for video game developers," OnMobile said in a statement on Saturday. The company will have the option of investing an additional CAD 1 million within 9 months after closing, OnMobile said in a regulatory filing. "We are very excited about this strategic investment. The combination of OnMobile and rob0 will provide immediate business value and will be the springboard to our enriched mobile gaming offering," OnMobile Global Ltd Chairman and CEO François-Charles Sirois said.



Present situation due to Covid not suitable for raising funds overseas: Exim Bank

Kolkata: Premier export finance institution Exim Bank said on Sunday that the present scenario arising out of the COVID-19 outbreak is not suitable to raise resources from overseas markets. Under such circumstances, the lender had requested the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a credit line of USD two billion. "The mandate for Exim Bank is to raise resources from overseas markets primarily for disbursement under concessional finance programme on behalf of the government," he said. Due to COVID-19 outbreak, the market now is not suitable for raising funds abroad, the official said. "We requested for USD two billion credit line from RBI, equivalent to around Rs 15,000 crore, which the apex bank has agreed to," he told PTI. The Reserve Bank on Friday announced a Rs 15,000-crore line of credit to the lender. "How and in what form this money will come is not yet clear. Raising resources from overseas markets is now a challenge. There is a regular need for disbursements in foreign currency," he said.

Global cues, earnings to set market trend

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Trajectory of the spread of COVID-19, global cues and quarterly earnings would be the main drivers for the equity markets in the holiday-shortened week ahead, analysts said.

Markets will be closed on Monday for 'Id-ul-Fitr'. "The market is feeding off expectations, expectations of more boosters from the government and RBI, expectations of business normalisations post easing of lockdown sanctions, expectations of infections peaking out.

"However, the time frame or the quantum of support is unknown and may not be determinable. Any news regarding the slowdown in number of infections or specific sectoral news will have an impact on the markets," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

COVID-19 cases in India saw the biggest spike for the third consecutive day on Sunday with 6,767 new infections reported in the last 24 hours, taking the nationwide tally to 1,31,868, while the death toll due to the disease rose to 3,867 after 147 more fatalities, according to the health ministry.



Any news regarding the slowdown in number of infections or specific sectoral news will have an impact on the markets

"Tightening of geopolitical tensions between US and China would also be key to watch out for apart from the trajectory of spread of COVID-19," said Shibani Sircar Kurian, Executive Vice President, Fund Manager and Head - Equity Research, Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company. HDFC, Dabur India, Lupin, TVS Motor Company and Voltas are some of the major companies scheduled to report their quarterly earnings this week.

"We may see some rebound this week due to oversold positions in banking and financial space but sustainability would be difficult at the higher levels," Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

During the last week, the Sensex declined 425.14 points or 1.36 per cent.

"In the coming truncated week, US jobless claims and Q1 GDP numbers are expected on May 28," said Deepak Jasani, Head - Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Rural mkts to sharpen focus on value items in FMCG sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus-induced lockdown is expected to sharpen the urban-rural divide in demand pattern of FMCG products, with consumers in big cities opting more for large size product packs, while in smaller towns and villages value pack rules the roost, according to industry players. FMCG companies like Nestle, Dabur, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), Parle Products and Wipro Consumer Care expect consumption of low priced affordable packs or popular price products (PPP) to go up in non-metro markets after supply chains and accessibility of product improves.

On the other hand, in urban areas, the companies say, they are witnessing a trend of consumers buying larger pack items and increase in volumes



The companies also said sales of larger pack sizes will continue to be on the rise for some months, as people would continue pantry loading.

of purchases per visit to stores, although the frequency of buying has gone down as customers prefer lesser visits to crowded places such as hypermarkets and retail stores.

The companies also said sales of larger pack sizes will continue to be on the rise in metros for some months, as people would continue pantry

loading, fearing reversal of pandemic.

Nestle India sees this pandemic to be an opportunity for the popular price products (PPP) in the market as sales of value packs in the rural markets is going to increase, where buyers are likely to hold their discretionary spends due to economic turmoil.

"It is possible that in the semi-urban and probably in some rural market, you would start seeing the smaller packs to do better," said Nestle India Chairman and Managing Director Suresh Narayanan.

Moreover, this PPP would also be sought after by the people, who "unfortunately due to their limited budgets like to have benefits of the product which they were used to," he noted.

Take advantage of initiatives, step up investment: Thakur to India Inc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur has exhorted India Inc to take advantage of the recent government initiatives and step up investments to make the country "Atmanirbhar Bharat". In these difficult times, local industries should become

the flag-bearers in showcasing that India is an attractive investment destination, he said. As part of the Rs 20.97 lakh crore package, Thakur said the government has announced long-pending structural reforms concerning the industry, especially land, labour and laws, in a bid to improve investment climate.

Hyundai's three employees at Chennai test positive for Corona

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) on Sunday said its three employees at Chennai-based manufacturing plant have tested positive for COVID-19.

The second largest carmaker in the country had resumed operations at Irungattukottai-based plant (near Chennai) on May 8.

"In the first week of our plant operations, three of our employees have shown mild symptoms of cough and cold and were immediately asked to meet medical expert team for further evaluation. They subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 and immediate medical attention was provided to them," HMIL said in a statement.

All three employees are recovering fast towards normalcy and as per the safety protocol, essential information was shared with the district health authorities, it added.



In addition to that all the necessary measures are being taken for contact tracing, self-isolation and complete sanitation, the South Korean firm said. Well-being of employees is of utmost priority to the company and as a responsible brand it is adhering to all the guidelines set by the Centre, state and district health authorities, HMIL said.

On Saturday, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) had stated that an employee at its Manesar-based manufacturing plant has tested positive for COVID-19.

The company is also investigating a second case of infection at the facility. MSI had reopened Manesar facility earlier this month after around 50 days of closure due to coronavirus-led lockdown.

India's crude steel output declines 65 pc to 3.13 MT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's crude steel output declined over 65 per cent to 3.13 million tonnes (MT) during April, according to the World Steel Association.

The government imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 25 to prevent spread of the coronavirus pandemic which has impacted production, demand and supply of steel in India.

The country had produced 9.02 MT of crude steel during the same month a year ago, the World Steel Association (worldsteel) said in a report.

India had posted a 14 per cent decline in steel output at 8.65 MT in March as compared with 10.04 MT in March 2019.



Global steel output also declined 13 per cent to 137.09 MT as compared with 157.67 MT in April 2019.

"Due to the ongoing difficulties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, many of this month's (April) figures are

estimates that may be revised with next month's production update," the global industry body said.

China, which had for the first time in many months reported a 1.7 per cent fall in its output in March at 78.97

Global steel output also declined 13 per cent to 137.09 MT as compared with 157.67 million tonnes in April 2019.

MT, has started showing growth in production, the data showed.

The country, which has a sizeable share in global output, produced 85.03 MT steel in April, a marginal rise of 0.2 per cent as compared with 84.87 MT in the corresponding month of 2019, according to data from the report.

Lockdown: D-Mart April revenue declines 45 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Avenue Supermarts, which owns and operates retail chain D-Mart, has witnessed a 45 per cent decline in its April revenue, as more than half of its stores remained closed during the lockdown.

The company's margins also slipped as sales of general merchandise and apparels were not allowed during the initial first two phases of the lockdown.

"Our revenue for April was down by more than 45 per cent as compared to April 2019," said D-Mart in a post earnings statement.

Cargo volume at major ports slip 21% to 47 MT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's 12 major ports recorded a 21 per cent decline in cargo volumes to 47.42 million tonnes (MT) in April this year, mainly due to coronavirus outbreak, according to Indian Ports Association (IPA). Ports like JNPT, Chennai, Cochin and Kamaraj witnessed huge decline in cargo handling, as per the latest data.

India has 12 major ports under the control of the Centre - Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla); Mumbai, JNPT; Mormugao, New Mangalore; Cochin, Chennai, Kamarajar (earlier Ennore), V O



Chidambarnar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia) that handled 705 million tonnes (MT) cargo in the last fiscal.

These 12 major ports handled 47.42 MT cargo in April, down 21.08 per cent as compared to the corresponding month of 2018-19, as per the latest figures released by the port body IPA.

WAREHOUSING Tier II, III cities emerge as preferred destinations

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Restricted movement due to the nationwide lockdown has underscored the importance of in-city warehousing, with tier II and III locations emerging as preferred investment destinations, say industry experts.

The warehousing sector, which was mainly concentrated in tier I cities - especially the major eight metros, had started shifting to tier II locations after certain policy initiatives, according to the experts.

Due to various reasons of urbanisation, warehousing has been more focused in the top eight metros. Later, due to certain policy initiatives, some of the tier 2 cities also emerged as preferred locations.

Telcos approach Trai seeking early decision on floor price

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom players have urged regulator Trai to move forward quickly on the issue of fixing floor price for tariffs, saying the matter is imperative to ensure that the sector is sustainable and in a position to bear the deferred spectrum and AGR dues.

The Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) - whose members include Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Reliance Jio -- has written to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) seeking an open house discussion on the issue "at the earliest".

"Given the financial pressure on the sector and the fact that ARPU (Average Revenue Per User) and tariffs of the Indian telecom sector are the lowest in the world, floor pricing is imperative to ensure that the sector is sustainable, and is in a position to bear the deferred spectrum and AGR



(Adjusted Gross Revenue) dues, while continuing to invest in world class networks and services," COAI said in its letter to Trai Chairman R S Sharma.

The association said the industry looks forward to an early decision by the authority on having floor tariffs for data services.

"While, we acknowledge that the recent situation on account of COVID-19 might

have caused some constraints, however the Authority has started conducting the OHD (open house discussion) through online process on various other topics. Accordingly, we request the Authority to kindly hold an OHD on this issue at the earliest," COAI said.

The industry is seeking an early conclusion on this important matter with great interest, COAI said.

Fipola eyes Rs 55 cr revenue in FY2020-21

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Fipola, an online provider of fresh chicken and mutton, would focus on tapping technical operations, contactless deliveries besides expanding product line, according to a top official.

The company also planned to enhance its presence in the digital platform and increase delivery footprint, Fipola Managing Director Sushil Kanugolu said. According to him, the company was well on its way to more than double its revenues in financial year 2020-21.

"We are focusing on technology enabled operations, contactless deliveries, expanding product line and better online experience," Kanugolu said

Asked whether the company saw a new trend among consumers opting to eat meat, he said people were buying more quantity per bill and more frequently.

AirAsia India opens bookings for 21 destinations

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Low-cost carrier AirAsia India has started bookings for 21 destinations ahead of resumption of domestic flights from Monday.

In a release, the airline said it would strictly follow the SOPs (standard operating procedures) and guidelines laid out by the regulatory bodies to enable safe travel.

AirAsia flights are open for booking for travel to all its 21 destinations where it flies in the country, the release issued on Saturday said.

"We are appreciative of the government working collaboratively with all stakeholders to define the new protocols to help open up domestic flying in a calibrated manner keep-

Passengers would have to web check-in, complete their self-declaration form and download the Aarogya Setu app



ing the health and safety of passengers and the airline crew in focus.

"The new SOPs and guidelines will pave the way for ensuring and instilling a sense of confidence amongst passengers," Sunil Bhaskaran, AirAsia India Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, said.

Among other measures, the airline would facilitate regular

disinfection procedures to control or kill infectious agents using cleaning, sanitising and disinfecting products approved by the public health authority and aircraft manufacturer.

According to the release, passengers would have to mandatorily web check-in, complete their self-declaration form and download the Aarogya Setu app before they arrive at the airport. They have also been advised to report two to four hours prior to the departure time to allow enhanced health and safety processes to take place.

Reverse zone boarding process starting from the rear of the aircraft would be followed, it added.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid concerns over changes in labour laws in various states, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar on Sunday said reforms do not mean complete abolition of labour laws and that the central government is committed to protecting the interests of workers.

In recent weeks, various state governments, including Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, have either made amendments or proposed changes to existing labour laws as part of larger efforts to help businesses that have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

"I have just noticed that the Union Ministry of Labour is firming up its stance to tell the states that they cannot abolish

labour laws because India is a signatory to the International Labour Organization (ILO)," Kumar told PTI in an interview.

"Therefore, it is clear that the Union government does not believe that the reform of labour laws implies complete lack of labour laws... The government is committed to protecting the interest of workers," he said.

He was replying to a query on whether labour reforms by states like Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat can be done without creating some kind of social safety net for workers.

Recently, the U t t a r

Pradesh government approved an ordinance to exempt various industries from certain labour laws for three years to revive the state's economic activities.

Madhya Pradesh has also tweaked some labour laws amid the nationwide lockdown to spur economic activities. Some other states are also likely to follow suit.

About the country's

macroeconomic situation, Kumar said that just like the rest of the world, India is also suffering from the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

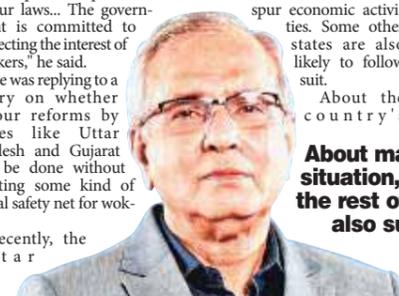
The pandemic has resulted in serious loss of economic activities in the first two months of the first quarter of fiscal 2020-21, he said.

Referring to RBI saying that the country's growth is likely to remain in the negative territory in the current fiscal, Kumar said, "the extent of that (negative

growth) cannot be forecast at this point of time because there are too many unknowns, both in the domestic scene and in the global scene".

On Friday, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the impact of COVID-19 is more severe than anticipated and the GDP growth during 2020-21 is likely to remain in the negative territory. According to Kumar, the objective of the Rs 20 lakh crore-economic stimulus package announced by the government was to revive aggregate demand and not just consumer demand.

"Huge amount of liquidity has been infused by the RBI and the Finance Minister's encouragement to all the banks to improve their credit flows means that it will help revive aggregate demand in the economy.



About macroeconomic situation, Kumar said just like the rest of the world, India is also suffering from the negative impact of the Covid-19

BREWING LOVE IN TIMES OF ISOLATION



There have been moments in all our lives when we have hated something about ourselves or someone else. And feelings like that

aka Komet is a Hyderabad-based dancer, TED Talk speaker, and the director of Happy Hours Dance Place. Harsha began her initiative

love themselves no matter what.

Due to the current pandemic crisis, where all of us are asked to stay isolated at our homes, Harsha found an opportunity in the silver lining. She began a new initiative on her Instagram called Heal not Hate sessions where in she invites select artists and speakers around the city to discuss certain important topics and inspire people through Instagram live.

About her 'Heal not Hate' initiative, Harsha says, "The idea of Heal not Hate was something very personal at the beginning it was a journey I took for myself because I used to hate so many things in my life I was never really content. After having so many things perfect I was never satisfied. It started with no makeup and then shaving my head, talking openly about the stuff I never thought I would. And a lot of people reached out telling their stories and how they faced the same things and related to it, that when it became big for me."

We all have something that we hate about

ourselves for no particular reason and ignoring that only makes it worse. This COVID-19 lockdown has brought a lot of problems into our lives but has also given us the time and opportunity to connect with ourselves again and find the reason for that hate and heal those flaws.

She continues talking about her Instagram live Heal not Hate sessions. She says, "So basically I made a list of all the people who inspired me and have great content on Instagram and doing creative stuff in this lockdown period. So I thought to connect with them and interview them about how they practice healing and share that with all the people on Instagram. With all the interviews I did so far the major thing we talked about was finding ourselves. Like when I interviewed Ryan Martyr — a teacher, dancer, and choreographer. The topic was about mental health and we spoke about how we should take out some me-time every once in a while and spend time with ourselves only then we can know our true potential. And when I

interviewed Akila Venkat a photographer. she spoke about unleashing her powers, this is interesting because whenever I come across her content it made me question things about myself. The best thing about her is she makes people question certain things like 'Why is it this way? Do you want it? Or are you following because someone else is?'

She adds "My latest interview was with Kausar Sultana a poet and a speaker on the topic of body shaming which has been one of the major objectives of Heal not Hate. She made a clear point as to how body shaming has become an illness and can affect a person not just mentally but also physically and also highlights the importance of respecting yourself and your body. All in all the objective of these interviews was how these people are trying to bring a change in themselves for a better living which has brought a very high impact on people around. It is a lot of self-work and sitting with yourself analyzing what you don't like about yourself and solv-

ing. I am going to conduct a lot more interviews like these with different people on different subjects. I am trying my best to do this as long as I can. because talks like these can have a major positive impact on people."

Harsha has a lot more to offer. About what she's doing next, she says, "One of my upcoming topics is how we pressurize the people we idolise or look up to with the burden of our expectations. We should be inspired by them but not scrutinise them when they fail because at the end of the day they're humans just like us who make mistakes and learn from them." she concludes.

Taking inspiration from Harsha and many like her, let's learn to love ourselves and enjoy the time we have because life is too short and way too precious to spend it on hate.

As human beings, we are complex social creatures with a mixture of emotions that makes us expressive and fragile at times. And with these emotions making or breaking the most us during this time of isolation, *The Pioneer's* SIDDHESH SUMAN speaks to Harsha Komet, a dancer and TED Talk speaker on how she's making the right use of social media to spread love

sometimes can make us feel bad about ourselves or make us feel less of who we truly are. Harsha Maheshwari

#Heal_not_Hate on her Instagram handle to inspire people and spread positivity around and motivate people to

The idea of Heal not Hate was something very personal at the beginning it was a journey I took for myself because I used to hate so many things in my life I was never really content. After having so many things perfect I was never satisfied. It started with no makeup and then shaving my head, talking openly about the stuff I never thought I would.



'Bringing positivity back into our lives'



host an illuminating talk by Brahma Kumari Sister Shivani. These are troubled times and we are all looking to bring positivity and well-being back into our lives. Her talk gave us many useful suggestions on how we can change our perspective in channeling that core of spiritual strength that lies dormant in all of us."

Speaking about her vision for the year Usha said, "My vision for FLO this year is 'Live Empowered. Engage. Enrich. Enable.' The overarching objective of this vision statement is to develop confident female leaders equipped and passionate about leading companies, businesses, and institutions, providing exposure and mentorship for women at all levels to develop them

into socially conscious global citizens, identifying and improving women's ability to be a catalyst for community development and influence the direction of social change and placing the ability of self-reliance in the hands of the less privileged women through education and income generation opportunities.

A well-conceptualised, multi-faceted melange of events have been planned this year that will cover key sectors such as industry, Health, Motivational, Sports, Fashion & Glamour, Politics, Finance, Wellness & Nutrition, Inner Healing, Public Speaking, Narrative Building, Art and Literature with conclaves on the topics connected with Legal, Travel, and Tourism.

COVID-19 impact: Depression rate higher among Ophthalmologists

One of the basic precautions one has to follow to protect themselves from COVID-19 is to not touch their eyes or face. But the job of an ophthalmologist revolves around doing this very thing. This has led to them worrying about their safety.

Results of an online study conducted by LV Prasad Eye Institute in collaboration with the All India Ophthalmological Society (AIOS) and the George Institute for Global Health India to evaluate the psychological impact of the COVID-19 crisis on trainees and practising ophthalmologists in India during lockdown demonstrated that a significantly high proportion of ophthalmologists were affected psychologically as they are at an increased risk of close contact with the patient's eyes and face.

The survey was conducted on 2,355 ophthalmologists and ophthalmologists-in-training in the age group of 25 to 82 years. Depression was significantly higher in younger ophthalmologists. It was also higher in non-practising ophthalmologists, as also those who were considerably worried about their training or professional growth, and those with difficulty in meeting living expenses.

The research, which was conducted primarily by Dr Rohit C Khanna, Dr. Santosh G Honavar, Asha LathaMetla, Amritendu Bhattacharya, and Dr Pallab K Maulik showed that 32.6% had some degree of depression, 3.2% of the ophthalmologists had suicidal/self-harm ideations during more

than half of the period over the last two weeks. This was much higher than the 10% prevalence for common mental disorders reported from the general population in India.

COVID-19 outbreak has affected millions

ate/severe depression and/or suicidal/self-harm ideations. This study showed that even the health workers who are not in the forefront of COVID-19 care and at less risk of

globally, both physically and mentally, causing psychological impacts such as stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, denial, anger, and fear. Psychological implications can be attributed to the direct or indirect effects of the illness on livelihood and living conditions. Asymptomatic transmission of the disease causes fear and anxiety. In addition, lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and social discrimination increases the stress and anxiety levels among healthcare professionals.

Stigmatisation of health care professionals during an epidemic is common. There is a need for personalized mental health care from psychologists and psychiatrists, especially for those with moder-

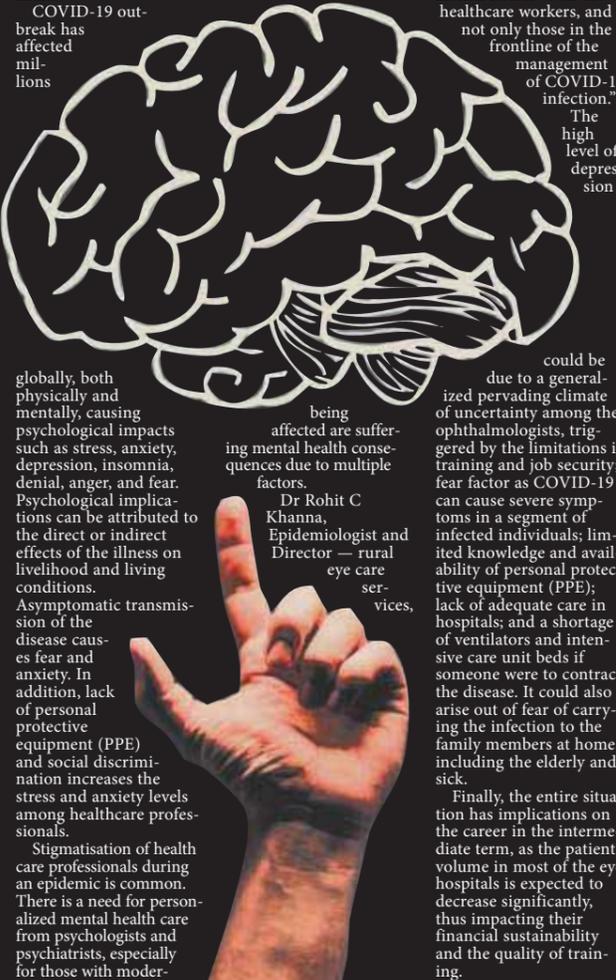
ate/severe depression and/or suicidal/self-harm ideations. This study showed that even the health workers who are not in the forefront of COVID-19 care and at less risk of

LV Prasad Eye Institute says, "The national and state ophthalmology societies, health administration, and the government should be cognizant of the need to support the mental health of all the healthcare workers, and not only those in the

frontline of the management of COVID-19 infection." The high level of depression

could be due to a generalized prevailing climate of uncertainty among the ophthalmologists, triggered by the limitations in training and job security; fear factor as COVID-19 can cause severe symptoms in a segment of infected individuals; limited knowledge and availability of personal protective equipment (PPE); lack of adequate care in hospitals; and a shortage of ventilators and intensive care unit beds if someone were to contract the disease. It could also arise out of fear of carrying the infection to the family members at home, including the elderly and sick.

Finally, the entire situation has implications on the career in the intermediate term, as the patient volume in most of the eye hospitals is expected to decrease significantly, thus impacting their financial sustainability and the quality of training.



FICCI FLO, Hyderabad chapter hosted an inspiring talk, digitally, on the topic "Channeling negative emotions for a positive life" by renowned Brahma Kumari Sister Shivani. Members of the Hyderabad chapter attended the digital event. Usharani Manne, Chairperson, FICCI FLO Hyderabad Chapter, and Founder-Director, Polmon Instruments Pvt. Ltd. said, "We are indeed fortunate to have had the opportunity to

NURSES, HEROES ON THE FRONTLINE

Nurses are like the axel of a wheel to keep it in place. Take away the axel and everything falls apart. Nurses play a crucial role in health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and care, and are the heroes on the frontline during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

For the past 18 years, the public has ranked Nurses as the No.1 profession when it comes to honesty and ethics in Gallup's annual poll, so nurses have held the public's respect for almost two decades. But this year, Nurses have gone above and beyond what the population worldwide imagines they do.

Throughout the past few days and weeks, I have witnessed remarkable levels of nursing care unfold, incredible displays of professional unity, and an amazing sense of commitment and dedication from all those who are fighting the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic from the frontline.

Nurses manning the frontline in the war against corona virus are giving their all to take care of COVID-19 patients, despite the physical, mental, and emotional toll. Never have we experienced a global health crisis of this magnitude. During these uncharted and uncertain times, their hard work shines as a beacon of hope. Many nurses across the globe have been working day and night to protect us from the deadly virus even at the cost of their own health.

As a bedside ICU nurse, when you add personal protective equipment (PPE), your whole routine changes. It is hot. It is hard to talk. Your glasses fog up when you have a mask on. You are motioning to others outside the room in a kind of horrible game of charades (to get) what you need. You must cluster your care. You worry about every step you take and everything you

touch inside and outside the room, and you wash your hands they are raw. You face insomnia and stress due to extended shifts. You get less time for family or you are completely out of touch for long. Yet, Nurses have consistently cared for frightened and severely ill patients.

Each day they go into work, they go in with the intent of giving patients the best care they can in order for them to recover from the virus (and other illness and diseases). When patients go on discharge, the brightest hidden smile behind the mask but spark in eyes reveals the happiness a nurse enlighten her heart with. Even when patients die despite nurses' best efforts, they must process a tsunami of emotions, including sadness and grief.

While the situation continues to change and evolve every day, I would recommend the following to be taken care by all our nurse leaders and nursing organisations through the COVID 19 pandemic.

Show strength in leadership: Now more than ever Nurse leaders need to be present and collaborate and work together as a team. Teamwork is the key. The decision-making cycle is rapid from resource preparation and planning to necessary improvements, process changes and more. Executive nurse leaders are present on all system wide executive phone briefings and incident command briefings, completed with action items and deliverables. Building an infection control team along with nursing leaders is said to be an effective system in raising infection control profile and changing practice in clinical areas, especially during such health crisis.

Communicate timely and accurate information to nursing caregivers: Communicating in real time and with transparency is the safest way to manage the situation. With new challenges

emerging by the minute, it is especially important that nursing caregivers are made aware of the steps and actions being taken by their leadership team to remedy issues and maintain safety for themselves and their patients. At Fortis Memorial Research Institute all our COVID-19 messaging is appropriately aligned with our four care priorities: care for patients, care for caregivers, care for organisation and care for the community.

Ensure Nursing caregivers safety: In times like these, nurse leaders should be actively partnering with leaders from other departments for multidisciplinary approach towards better outcome, as well as communication and coordination with state and local officials. At Fortis Memorial Research Institute, we are continually updating our PPE guidelines.

Clearly and precisely convey intended caregiver safety behaviors: With a goal to limit exposure to COVID-19 appropriate caregiver safety behaviours should be reviewed daily which includes social distancing, proper sneezing, and coughing etiquette etc.

Another important recommendation to nurse leaders is to actively use predictive modeling to prepare for future challenges so you and your teams can continue to provide patients with the safe, high-quality care they deserve. Now is the time to take action-Do not wait.

Our leadership teams are communicating round the clock and came up as a strong team to fight against COVID-19. It began with meticulous planning to ensure the safety of the nurses and medical teams including covid and non-covid areas. Many nurses opted to work voluntarily in these wings. Skill mix was kept in mind. Preparedness is the key and healthcare needs to transform itself to tackle extreme situations like these by bringing about infrastructural and process changes, like pre-holding areas, specialized isolation units, negative pressure areas, Creating Green corridor as safety measure, availability and efficient utilization of manpower and PPE, frequent hand washing, regularly disinfecting surfaces, push buttons in lifts, door handles and knobs, frequent mock drills, patient flow management drills etc. At FMRI we are also encouraging telemedicine or virtual visits when possible.

Up-to-date and frequent communication to nursing caregivers by nurse leaders brings caregivers together, encourages con-

fidence, helps clarify any confusion, ensures high quality, safe care continues and shows ongoing support and appreciation.

In the inpatient setting, another strategy we have implemented is care bundling, which is intended to limit the number of times nurses, nursing assistants, care managers and other caregivers enter a patient's room. Multiple tasks are being completed with one caregiver visit to the room. Care Managers also give calls to patients from outside patient's rooms, developing more of a telephonic relationship with patients, they review discharge instructions via phone, email regulatory paperwork to the patient and more. With this more streamlined approach to care, FMRI is also seeing added efficiencies to care delivery and discharge processes, as well as reductions in patient length of stay.

Today we are more grateful than ever to all our nurses as they work, round the clock, putting themselves at risk, to fight the ravages of this pandemic. With that in mind this Nurses Week, I am not just going to say "Happy Nurses Week" to my nurses Instead I am joining hands with our FMRI Team to echo that.

es they work, round the clock, putting themselves at risk, to fight the ravages of this pandemic. With that in mind this Nurses Week, I am not just going to say "Happy Nurses Week" to my nurses Instead I am joining hands with our FMRI Team to echo that.

You are Strong
 You are amazing
 You are indispensable
 You are role models
 A Big Thank You!

Look ahead to continue providing safe, high quality patient care with our team of great frontline warriors.

(Lt. Lalitha Thambi is Chief of Nursing-Fortis Memorial Research Institute)



FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8		9	10	11
12				
13				
14	15	16	17	18
19				

NANCY

SUDOKU

9		3						
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2	7		1			6	4	
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Yesterday's solution
 7 9 8 4 5 1 2 6 3
 2 3 4 9 7 6 1 8 5
 1 6 5 3 2 8 4 9 7
 6 5 3 2 9 4 8 7 1
 4 2 1 7 8 5 6 3 9
 8 7 9 1 6 3 5 4 2
 3 8 2 6 1 7 9 5 4
 5 1 7 8 4 9 3 2 6
 9 4 6 5 3 2 7 1 8

Rules
 • Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
 • The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

GINGER MEGGS

ACROSS

6 Broken down; not working properly (3,2,5)
 8 A word for a taxi driver
 10 A sung musical drama
 13 Saying you are sorry
 14 Light soft modelling wood
 17 Part of a poem or song
 19 Follows seventeenth

9 These ring at churches with this
 11 Stick wallpaper on with this
 12 The number of years someone has lived
 15 Use these when running
 16 Small busy insects
 17 An opinion
 18 Animals like large mice

DOWN
 1 A round underground part of some plants
 2 A small type of horse
 3 A toy that spins around a held string (2-2)
 4 The part along the side or end
 5 Three-sided figures
 7 A way of cooking eggs

SOLUTION
 S T A R T I S I D O L
 I U B E R I
 C A G E S H O U T S
 K U N A M A T
 I S R A E L I E
 O T U L D E N
 X I G N O R E D
 Y H E M P C
 G U E S T H A L L
 E A N R A
 N I N E P A I S T R Y

PK, party disown Naga Babu's 'Godse' comment

Mega brother Naga Babu's comment on Godse and Gandhi has become the talk of the town. On the occasion of Nathuram Godse's birthday, Naga Babu tweeted that Godse's patriotism shouldn't be questioned and that his action of assassinating Gandhi was "debatable". Naga Babu, a member of the Jana Sena Party's

Political Action Committee, had his own party members disowning his comments. Now Jana Sena Chief Pawan Kalyan came forwards and termed Naga Babu's comments as his individual opinion, which doesn't reflect the party's view. Jana Sena Party released an official statement to the media and stated that it has no connection with their party leader's personal opinions and comments.

Party Political Affairs Committee member Naga Babu are solely his personal and are not concerned with the Jana Sena party. We have been informing the opinions of the party through official documents and the official social media handle from time to time. I appeal to take only them into consideration."

Party chief Pawan Kalyan added, "I would like to clarify one thing to everyone belonging to Jana Sena Party, that this is a period where people are confronting unprecedented difficulties. I appeal to move forward to serve the people without violating discipline."

The statement reads: "The opinions expressed by Jana Sena



SAMEERA REDDY: I UNDERSTAND WHAT IT TAKES TO BE NEW MOM

There is so much beauty and love present in our world today. This is the start of something new and truly is the best time to be born, the actress says

Actress Sameera Reddy, a mother of two, says she understands what it takes to be a new mother, especially during this difficult time.

The actress, who was last seen in *Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum* gave birth to Hans in 2015 and welcomed Nyra in July last year. "Every time I look at my baby girl, I feel a sense of joy and optimism. There are so many stories that I will be telling her about the unconditional love and efforts that doctors, nurses, police forces, and the community at large are putting in to ensure our safety and protection," she said.

"I understand what it takes to be a new mother, especially during this time. I have always championed that we mothers are imperfectly perfect — the ups and downs, constant worry, disconnec-

tion, these feelings are normal and I am confident that we will come out stronger," she added.

Diapers brand Pampers' new film *#WelcomeToTheWorld* struck a chord with her.

"There is so much beauty and love present in our world today. This is the start of something new and truly is the best time to be born," said Sameera.

Building on the insight that no matter the uncertainty that surrounds her, a mother is engulfed with hope and a deep sense of positivity when she holds her baby for the very first time, the film shares a mother's wish for her child during this time of uncertainty. This film hopes to spread a ray of reassurance that babies are being born into a world that is filled with love, courage, and unity.



Sam's workout secret, 'all in 60 seconds'



Super star Samantha Akkineni says she works out till she burns out.

The star took to Instagram Stories to share her way of working out along with a picture of the gym she has at home.

"We work out till we burn out... All in 60 seconds," she wrote along with the image.

Samantha Akkineni is known for her witty social media posts. On Friday, she again showed off the trait while showing off her "handsome" husband, actor Naga Chaitanya, to the world.

Samantha took to Instagram to share a smiling picture of

Chaitanya, where he looks dapper

in white chequered shirt and brown pants.

"After sending mommy, aunts, sister, friends, very straight male friends it's now Instagram's turn.. See ee my husband looks so handsome no (husband is somewhere digging a large pit to jump into right now)," she captioned the image.

The two were attending actor Rana Daggubati's roka ceremony with Miheeka Bajaj.

Samantha shared a photograph from the ceremony and wrote: "Thank you for bringing us the best news of 2020 @ranadaggubati @miheeka ... here's to your happily ever after."

She also took to Instagram Stories, where she shared a photograph of herself dressed in a yellow suit. On the image, she wrote: "When you get to dress up after 2 months."

Samantha has made a name for herself in Tamil and Telugu film industries. She is known for her performances in films such as *Ye Maaya Chesave*, *Eega*, *Oh Baby* and *Rangasthalam*. She impressed all with her role in *Super Deluxe* last year.

Bigg Boss fame Himaja bags key role in ACHARYA

Himaja, one of the participants on the controversial reality show *Bigg Boss 3* Telugu, will now be seen playing a crucial role in an upcoming social message-oriented film *Acharya*, better known for being Megastar Chiranjeevi's next.

The actress, who has been part of a few other Telugu films including *Nenu Sailaja*, *Shatamanam Bhavathi*, *Vinaya Videya Rama*, *Next Nuvve*, *Dhruva* and *Chitra Lahari*, shot to fame with *Bigg Boss 3* last year. The young beauty is now being flooded with movie offers, including a couple of films in which she will be playing the female lead.

Himaja confirmed her playing a crucial role in the Megastar Chiranjeevi's highly-anticipated film, which is being helmed by Koratala Siva, during a media interaction recently. She said the shooting of the film was stalled due to the lockdown just before she joined the shoot. She added that she was dying to work with Chiranjeevi as soon as the shoot resumed after the lockdown.

Kajal Aggarwal has been roped to play the love interest of Chiranjeevi, which is being produced by Mega Power Star Ram Charan. He is also expected to play a cameo in this big-budget film.

HIMAJA CONFIRMED HER PLAYING A CRUCIAL ROLE IN CHIRANJEEVI'S HIGHLY-ANTICIPATED FILM, WHICH IS BEING HELMED BY KORATALA SIVA, DURING A MEDIA INTERACTION RECENTLY



Aadi's next titled Black

Young actor Aadi Saikumar's upcoming film that is

being directed by debutant GB Krishna and bankrolled by Mahankali Diwakar under the banner Mahankali Creations finally has a name now. The movie that was

launched in December last year with a formal pooja ceremony has now been titled *Black*.

GB Krishna was an assistant director for *Smart Shankar* fame Puri Jagannadh, and the film *Black* marks his directorial debut.

Sources say that when GB Krishna approached Aadi Sai Kumar to narrate the story, he immediately gave his nod to the project since he liked the subject very much. Tipped to be a suspense thriller drama, the film has Dharshana Banik in the female lead, who debuted with *Aatagadu*.

The shoot of the film *Black* has been stalled due to the lockdown. According to the makers, they have already wrapped up over 70 per cent of the film and are planning to resume shoot and complete the remaining portion once the lockdown is lifted.





SALIVA BAN ONLY AN INTERIM MEASURE

It will be back to normal once Covid situation under control, says ICC cricket committee chairman Kumble

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ICC cricket committee chairman Anil Kumble says the recommendation to ban saliva for shining the ball is only an interim measure and "things will go back to normal" once the Covid-19 pandemic is brought under control.

The Kumble-led panel recommended a ban on saliva to minimise the risk of infection. On Friday, the ICC, in its guidelines for resumption of the game, also suggested a ban on the practice.

"...This is only an interim measure and as long as we have hopefully control over Covid-19 in a few months or a year's time then I think things will go back to normal as it can be," Kumble told *Star Sports* show *Cricket Connected*.

"If things get back to normal within three-four months and we are able to stage matches like we used to do in February and March, then these rules won't apply."

"As long as the medical advisory doesn't change, the rule will stay," he added. The legendary former spinner, however, acknowledged the bowler's dependence on saliva.

"Of course we all know saliva has been a part and parcel of cricket for so many years. As bowlers, we used to apply saliva on ball, sometimes for grip also, we applied saliva. But with this disease, it can also be asymptomatic, that is why we decided to ban it," he

explained.

There have also been discussions on whether the ICC would allow usage of external substances like wax to shine the ball. Kumble said there were discussions on usage of external substances but .

"Using wax is not allowed, we have never used external substances. We can use sweat. Everyone is talking about (how) it will affect the pacers, grass should be left. Why not leave it dry and play two spinners?" he quipped.

"...If you look back at the history of the game, I mean we have been very critical and we have been very focused on eliminating any external substances coming into the game," Kumble added addressing the speculation.

He cited the 2018 ball-tampering scandal, which led to bans on Australian cricketers Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft.

"Whether you are literally legalising, if you are looking to do that now which obviously has had a great impact over the last couple of years," he said.

"ICC took a decision but then cricket Australia took, even a more tougher stance on what happened during that series between South Africa and Australia, so we did consider that," he said.

ICC must ensure bowling-friendly pitches in Tests: Pathan



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India pacer Irfan Pathan reckons that the ban on using saliva for shining the ball is a significant blow to bowlers and authorities should ensure preparation of bowling-friendly Test wickets to prevent complete domination of the game by the batsmen.

"You will have to make sure that pitches are more suitable to the bowlers than batsmen to negate the

advantage (of not being able to use saliva). If you are not able to shine the ball properly, you will not be able to cut the air because of scientific reasons.

"And if you are not able to swing it, the batsman will have it easy because nobody fears just pace, it is the combination of pace and swing that troubles them," Pathan, one of the best exponents of swing bowling in Indian cricket said.

"It (ban) will affect bowlers a lot in Test matches. It won't be an issue in white-ball cricket as the bowlers anyway don't shine the ball after the first few overs, they want to make it soft (to make strokeplay tougher for the batsman)."

"But in red-ball cricket, whether you are a fast bowler or spinner, you need to shine the ball. Spinner relies on shine to drift the ball. That will be a big advantage for batsman. The game will become even more batsman friendly," said the first Indian pacer to take a Test hat-trick.



Rohit Sharma & Manish Pandey watch other players train during nets. BCCI

Rohit to clear fitness test before resuming training

MUMBAI: India's limited-overs vice captain Rohit Sharma says he has fully recovered from the calf injury that forced him to leave the tour of New Zealand midway earlier this year but the fitness test has been continuously delayed because of the Covid-19 lockdown.

"Before the lockdown happened, I was almost ready to play. That whole week was going to be my fitness test but that's when the lockdown happened and I had to push back everything now," Rohit told *LaLiga's Facebook Live* session on Saturday night.

"Once everything opens up, I have to first go to the centre (NCA) and give my fitness test and once I pass the fitness test, I will be allowed to go and resume my duties with the team."

The Indian limited overs deputy said he is missing hanging out with his teammates and is looking forward to training with them when things get back to normal.

"Yes, I miss my teammates, hanging around with them and having a banter with them. Although as friends we are trying to stay in touch through the video calls to see what's one been up to, things like that and we manage that pretty well," he said.

"When you are playing together, almost from 365 days, we are together for 300 days, we are playing, travelling together, so it's like a family. So the first thing I want to do is to catch up with all these guys and try hit some balls as soon as I can."

Mumbai is one of the worst affected by the contagious disease and Rohit said it might take more time for him to resume training.

"I am assuming that those (other) places might open up lot earlier than Mumbai, the city where I stay and which is the most infected. I feel the other guys will send me videos of catching up with each other a lot earlier than I do," he said. PTI

BLESSING IN DISGUISE

PTI ■ LONDON

England captain Joe Root feels the ban on using saliva might improve the skills of the bowlers, who will have to work harder to get something out of the pitch.

"It could work in our favour and up skill levels."

"Not having the assistance that you might normally have means your accuracy has to improve," he was quoted as saying by *metro.Co.UK*.

"Guys will have to find another

way to get something out of the surface, whether that's a bit more effort, changing angles on the crease, using the wobble seam they might not have in their locker."

"It could develop our bowlers in a four or five-week period."

Taylor urges ICC to decide WT20 fate this week



PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia captain Mark Taylor does not foresee the T20 World Cup scheduled in October-November going ahead and wants the ICC to take a decision during its Board meeting this week.

Taylor also feels that if IPL takes place during the window the T20 World Cup was to be held, the Australian players are likely to be cleared by their Board to take part in the cash-rich league in India.

The ICC Board meets on May 28 to discuss a host of issues, including a revamped schedule and the fate of the men's T20 World Cup in Australia.

"My feeling is the World T20 won't go ahead in Australia in October as planned. Is it going to be viable to have a world tournament in October or November? The answer to that is probably No," Taylor, also a former Cricket Australia director, was quoted as saying by

Nine Network.

"It would probably be good (if a decision is made this week). Because then everyone can start planning and we can stop sitting here and saying 'well ifs, buts or maybes'."

Taylor also said the CA wants to keep BCCI happy so the Australia players are likely to be cleared for the IPL if it happens in October.

Pat Cummins, who was bought for a record amount of \$15.50 crore in last year's IPL auction, is among the Australians keen to take part in this year's competition.

"The Cricket Australia board will want to keep India happy. So they may want to let the players go to India if the IPL goes ahead," Taylor said.

"Because they want India to come here this summer and play, which will be our biggest summer in terms of dollars. That's the sort of discussion going on. No doubt."

Don't postpone T20 WC in haste: Misbah

KARACHI: The authorities must not postpone the T20 World Cup in haste since the showpiece event is the best product to highlight cricket once activities resume, Pakistan head coach and chief selector, Misbah-ul-Haq has said.

Misbah said though logistics is a huge challenge due to the prevailing circumstances, the authorities must deliberate enough before arriving at a decision.

"The logistics of hosting 16 teams is not easy but the authorities should give it time and wait for a month or more before taking any decision," Misbah said in an interview to *Youtube* channel.

"Everyone wants to see the T20 World Cup. It would be the best product to highlight cricket once activities resume," he said.

Misbah also said that their



upcoming tour to England will not be easy for either the players, coaches or anyone as circumstances are not ideal for cricket.

Pakistan & England Boards have discussed a tour by the *Green*

Shirts from July to play three Tests and three T20 matches.

"The idea is to first have one to one training then increase the number of players to groups. We need to get together and train to be prepared for a comeback to cricket. It is not going to be easy also getting used to new rules like not applying saliva sweat to shine the ball. I am hoping a three-week camp in Pakistan and then more practice in quarantine in England should get the players prepared."

The Pakistan coach had no doubt the players will face difficulties adjusting to the new laws and bio-security environment. "We will be taking a group of 25 to 27 players to England because we can't ask for replacements and we all have to be together from start to end so that no one catches the virus." PTI

Bicycle girl Jyoti wants to appear for trials but studies first priority, says father

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Bihar school girl Jyoti Kumari, who cycled 1200 km with her injured father from New Delhi to Darbhanga, will appear for Cycling Federation of India trials once the lockdown ends even though finishing matriculation is her primary aim.

"We will surely send for the trials after the lockdown is lifted. She was enrolled into class nine yesterday (Saturday). At the moment, we want her to complete her matriculation," her father Mohan Paswan said from Sirhull near Darbhanga.



Rendered jobless and penniless because of the extended Covid-19 lockdown, the 15-year-old was forced to ferry her

father who was unable to walk properly after a surgery to his left knee following an accident.

As the story went viral, the CFI duly took note of Jyoti's incredible feat of cycling more than 1200-kilometres spanning over a week.

"Yes we received the call from New Delhi (Cycling Federation of India). We said she needs rest now may be after two-three months we will see," Paswan, who fractured his leg in an accident while driving his auto-rickshaw in January, said.

In her village Jyoti had earlier regularly cycled 5 kms to reach to her school. PTI

IT'S TIMO TIME

Liverpool bound Werner nets hat-trick in Mainz rout

AFP ■ BERLIN

Timo Werner bagged a hat-trick as RB Leipzig routed Mainz 5-0 behind closed doors on Sunday to climb to third in the German league table as the striker moved to within three goals of the Bundesliga's top-scorer Robert Lewandowski.

It was the 24-year-old's third Bundesliga hat-trick having also netted three times when Leipzig romped to an 8-0 home win against Mainz last November.

Werner's treble leaves him on 24 goals, while Bayern Munich striker Lewandowski claimed his 27th Bundesliga goal this season in the league leader's 5-2 win over Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday.

Leipzig's victory was the tenth win for the visiting team in 17 matches since the Bundesliga restarted last weekend.

Werner opened the scoring in Mainz after 11 minutes when he converted a low cross.

Yussuf Poulsen then marked his 250th appearance for Leipzig by heading home a Marcel Sabitzer cross on 23 minutes.

The pair reversed roles for the third when Poulsen laid a pass off to Sabitzer who showed great finishing to make it 3-0 at the break.

Werner grabbed his second goal three minutes into the second-half when Kevin Kampl played him into the area.

The visitors were attacking at

will when Kampl had a goal ruled out for offside soon after.

With 15 minutes left, Poulsen floated free-kick was met by Werner who volleyed past Mainz goalkeeper Florian Mueller to wrap up his hat-trick.

The win leaves Leipzig third and seven points behind leaders Bayern. Augsburg also enjoyed an away win with a 3-0 romp at Schalke.

SCHALKE LOSE AGAIN

Heiko Herrlich enjoyed a perfect first Bundesliga game on the touchline as Augsburg coach, a week after he missed the loss to Wolfsburg because he broke quarantine rules to buy toothpaste.

David Wagner's Schalke continued their slide down the table, falling to eighth following another poor defensive display.

Eduard Loewen, Noah Sarenren Baze and Sergio Cordova scored as Augsburg moved seven points clear of the relegation

Dortmund waiting on Hummels

DORTMUND: Borussia Dortmund is waiting on the fitness of defensive chief Mats Hummels for Tuesday's Bundesliga top-of-the-table showdown at home to leaders Bayern Munich.

The 2014 World Cup winner aggravated his Achilles tendon in Saturday's 2-0 win at Wolfsburg which kept second-placed Dortmund four points behind leaders Bayern.

Hummels came off at half-time on Saturday, but Dortmund still hope he can lead the hosts' defence against his former club Bayern.

"Mats has a problem with his Achilles tendon and we hope he can play on Tuesday," said



Dortmund sports director Michael Zorc.

"He has had the problem for a while."

Hummels was treated at Dortmund's training ground on Sunday and if he is not fit, Emre Can, who replaced Hummels in Wolfsburg, will deputise against Bayern.

In the Munich squad,

there are question marks over midfielder Thiago Alcantara and defender Jerome Boateng.

Alcantara sat out Saturday's 5-2 thrashing of Eintracht Frankfurt in Munich with a groin strain.

Boateng came off late in the second-half with a muscular knock. AFP

Clijsters determined to press on with comeback

AFP ■ BRUSSELS

Kim Clijsters is looking forward to returning to the US Open even though the coronavirus pandemic means that since her second comeback from retirement she has spent more time with her family.

"I'm still motivated," the four-time Grand Slam winner told a Belgium newspaper on Sunday.

"I hope we can still play this season. But even if we don't, I intend to keep going," the Belgian tennis star, who turns 37 in June, told *Het Laatste Nieuws*.

Clijsters had spells at number one before and after her first retirement, from 2007-2009.



She had her daughter in 2008. She won the US Open before that break and the Australian Open and two more US titles when she came back. She retired

for a second time after the US Open in 2012. She has since had two sons.

"I always felt I was fulfilled," Clijsters said in an earlier interview with the *Tennis Hall of Fame*. "After I had our third baby, I started travelling to tournaments. I did commentary."

"But I still felt more like a player. A little itch started."

Returning to the tour poses a challenge for a mother of three. "I'm away a little bit, which turned out to be not so much in the last few months," she said.

She began her second comeback in February in Dubai, where she lost to Garbine Muguruza in the first round. She

then lost to Johanna Konta in her opening match in Monterrey, the last tournament before the women's tour shut down at the start of March.

She was in the United States when the tournament in Indian Wells, where she planned to play singles and partner Venus Williams in the doubles, was cancelled.

Clijsters told *HLN* that the break had allowed her to rest her body and allow injuries in her knees to improve.

"If the US Open can happen, I want to be ready," she said in the *Hall of Fame* interview. "I would also be happy if I had to play on court 18. I don't have to be out on Arthur Ashe."

French Open to be pushed to end of Sept

PARIS: French Open director Guy Forget indicated that the clay court Grand Slam may be pushed to the end of September and can spill over into early October.

"The official announcement has not been made yet. It (the French Open) will probably be between the end of September and the beginning of October," Forget told French radio *Europe 1*.

"We've been working closely with the ATP, the WTA and the ITF to make a global announcement on what the circuit will be like until the end of the year," he said. IANS

Zidane changed my idea about football: Ancelotti

IANS ■ LONDON

Carlo Ancelotti said that French great Zinedine Zidane gave him the chance to move beyond the 4-4-2 formation. Ancelotti managed Zidane when he led Juventus from 1999 to 2001.

"With Zidane, I tried to change my idea about the system. Zidane is the first player who gave me the possibility to change the system and play in a different way," Ancelotti, who currently manages Everton in the Premier League, told former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher on *Sky Sports*.

"So when I had Zidane, in the first year at Juventus, I played with a system of 3-4-1-



2, having (Alessandro) Del Piero and (Filippo) Inzaghi up front and Zidane a little bit behind. The second year, I played with a back four but keeping two strikers in front and one No 10 like Zidane.

"Zidane changed my idea about football. I was so focused before Juventus on 4-4-2 and after with Zidane, I changed, I wanted to put him in the best position for him to let him be more comfortable on the pitch," he added.

Ancelotti would later go on to work with Zidane when he coached Real Madrid and the latter was his assistant manager. Zidane took over from Ancelotti and led Real to three consecutive Champions League titles.