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MORE THAN A
HEALTH CRISIS

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VIRUS PUSHING TIES WITH US
TO BRINK OF 'COLD WAR': CHINA

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LEIPZIG BEAT MAINZ
IN BUNDESLIGA

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DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 13 Issue 140
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RANCHI, MONDAY MAY 25, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

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VARUN
LEARNS
SPANISH
10 VIVACITY

Actual corona number tenfold!

Only a fraction of cases/fatalities detected for want of adequate tests, worldwide, says former director of WHO's Health Action in Crises

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

On March 27, Daniel Lopez-Acuna, former director of healthcare in crisis situation with the World Health Organization (WHO) said the number of people currently affected by coronavirus is very, probably "ten times", higher than the official confirmed case, both in Spain and worldwide.

Nearly two months ago, when coronavirus spread was in its mid-way stages, Lopez-Acuna's warning failed to create any stir, both in Europe and elsewhere. After all, a Spanish citizen was speaking primarily in the context of the Spanish outbreak. Two months down the line, the entire world is haunted by the fear that the number of actual cases could be many times more than the reported ones. The death count could be equally manifold.

Various studies conducted across the globe have shown that only a fraction of the infection and fatalities are being detected due to inadequate testing. This means the number of people who have been quarantined is far less than those out in the streets or filling up work places and spreading the virus. These undetected "carriers" may be the single biggest hurdle in preventing the spread of coronavirus, more so



A monk uses a digital probe thermometer to measure the body temperature of a roadside vendor in Dharmasala on Sunday AP

in India, where testing has been far less than other equally affected nations.

Take the case of the United Kingdom, which has 2,57,154 cases till date. A study by the researchers at Stanford University estimated that the virus kills 1.04 per cent of affected patients in the United Kingdom. Since on May 19, the day the study was published, the UK had reported 48,417 deaths, it is estimated that the total infection stood at 4.65 million, nearly 19 times more

than the tally of 2,40,00 cases on that day.

Similarly, researchers from the University of Bonn have said the number of coronavirus infections in Germany could be 10 times higher than currently thought.

The researchers tested 900 persons at Gangelt in Heinsberg district in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The finding published on May 3 showed that out of 900 persons from 404 households who were test-

ed, around 15 per cent were found infected. This was five-time higher than the number of confirmed cases reported officially by the Robert Koch Institut.

The infection rate corresponded to fatality rate of 0.37 per cent. If this fatality rate is applied on a national scale, it would mean ten-time more infection than the reported ones in Germany.

Similarly, way back on March 24 itself, a top Italian Government official who head-

ed the agency collating the Covid-19 data, confirmed that the number of cases in the country could be ten-time higher. "A ratio of one certified case out of every 10 is credible," Angelo Borrelli, the head of the Civil Protection Agency, told La Repubblica newspaper.

Let us now take a look at the US scenario. According to the Worldometer --- the foremost global website that 24x7 tracks down the countrywide number of new cases and fatalities --- since a large number of cases are asymptomatic and that testing is sparse, only a fraction of the infection is detected.

"The number of actual cases is therefore estimated to be at several multiples above the number of reported cases. The number of deaths also tends to be underestimated, as some patients are not hospitalised and not tested," it said.

"If we base our calculation (deaths/cases) on the number of reported cases (rather than on the actual ones), we will greatly overestimate the fatality rate," it said.

The Worldometer analysed the data provided by New York City, the New York State antibody study, and the excess deaths analysis by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and said that the number of actual cases is 10 times the number of confirmed cases.

States allow domestic flights with conditions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

Maha allows only 10% flights from Mumbai from today; air travel in Bengal from May 28



A view of 'Scan & Fly' kiosk outside T3 departure gate of Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi on Sunday PTI

The States have agreed to allow a limited number of domestic flights operations from Monday with several riders while West Bengal will resume flight operation from May 28. Maharashtra, which has been unwilling to reopen its airports for passenger flights has agreed to allow 25 flights to and from Mumbai on Monday instead of proposed 250 flights. West Bengal will allow flights from Kolkata and Bagdogra airports from May 28 instead of May 25.

The Tamil Nadu Government also allowed air travel but mandates 14 days home quarantine for passengers and who don't have facility for home quarantine will be moved to institutional quarantine. According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Hyderabad airport has agreed to allow 15 arrivals and 15 departure flights while airports Vizag and Vijaywada in Andhra Pradesh have agreed to resume flights from May 26. Meanwhile, pilots and first officers seem to be concerned over lack of clarity on quarantine requirements for them.

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are home to some of the busiest airports in terms of passenger traffic.

According to Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, it has been a long day of hard negotiations with

various State Governments to recommence civil aviation operations. Except Andhra Pradesh which will start on May 26 and West Bengal on May 28, domestic flights will recommence across the country from Monday. "For Tamil Nadu, there will be maximum 25 arrivals in Chennai but there's no limit on no. of departures. For other airports in Tamil Nadu flights will operate as in other parts of country," the Minister said.

Meanwhile, confusions prevailed on Sunday as different States imposed their own set of conditions on reopening airports.

Many States like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bihar, Punjab, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu were opposed to opening up of their airports and have announced their respective quarantine measures for passengers arriving at their airports.

India pips Iran to be 10th worst-hit nation

Maha crosses 50K cases; with 7,107 new cases total in India at 1,38,532

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maharashtra on Sunday crossed 50,000-mark, reporting the highest-single day coronavirus surge with Mumbai recording 30,542 cases as States of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Delhi also followed it with high spike in their coronavirus counts. With the addition of around 7,107 new cases and 156 deaths, the total coronavirus cases in the country rose to 1,38,532 and death count crossed 4,024. After today's spike India on Sunday pipped Iran to emerge as the tenth worst affected country in the world.

Maharashtra led all States in the count of those infected by the virus and crossed 50,231 numbers with 3,041 new cases. The State recorded 58 new deaths taking the total toll in the State to 1,635. Besides Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu recorded 765 rise in the cases with total count of

16,277. With 8 new deaths, total toll in the State reached 112. Tamil Nadu Capital Chennai itself has registered total 10,582 cases with 587 new cases and with six deaths on Sunday the toll in the city has reached at 81.

In view status of coronavirus cases in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, the Governments there have sought more time to resume large-scale domestic flight services in their respective States on Monday. West Bengal witnessed spike of 208 cases taking total number of affected people in the State to 3,667 with 272 casualties. The State Capital Kolkata witnessed 52 new cases and total affected in

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	50,231	1,635	14,600
Tamil Nadu	16,277	112	8,324
Gujarat	14,063	858	6,412
Delhi	13,418	261	6,540
Rajasthan	6,894	161	3,816
Madhya Pradesh	6,665	290	3,408
Uttar Pradesh	6,268	161	3,538
West Bengal	3,667	272	1,339
Andhra Pradesh	2,780	56	1,841
Bihar	2,574	11	653

TOTAL CASES: 1,38,532

DEATHS: 4,024

RECOVERED: 57,643



Migrants undergo thermal screening after arriving from Bhubaneswar via special train to reach their native places at Prayagraj railway station on Sunday PTI

the city numbered 1,665 with 180 deaths.

Gujarat, among top three States in the coronavirus count, recorded a rise of 394 cases tak-

ing the total number of those affected with the virus to 14,063 and 29 fresh deaths taking toll figure in the State to 858. Delhi recorded total of

13,418 cases with 508 new cases. With 30 new deaths on Sunday, the National Capital stood at 261 deaths as on Sunday. Other States witnessing spike in cases include Karnataka with 130 new cases taking its count to 2,089 with total 42 casualties, Bihar with rise of 117 cases reaching the count at 2,511 with 11 deaths as on date.

Rajasthan witnessed 152 new cases with total count at 6,894 and 161 fatalities in the State, while Madhya Pradesh recorded 294 new cases for a tally of 6,665 cases and 290 deaths. Odisha addition of 67 cases took the count of coronavirus affected to 1,336 with seven deaths and Assam in the North-East recorded six new cases taking total number of virus affected people to 353 with four casualties.

Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had earlier claimed that return of natives from southern and western regions of India to the Northeast region has led to a sudden rise in Covid-19 positive cases, especially in Assam.

The Central Government has claimed that around 50 lakh stranded migrant labourers have reached their homes.

All travellers need to self-quarantine for 14 days: Govt

7-day institutional quarantine for those arriving from abroad

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Sunday issued guidelines covering entire gamut of travelling, including international arrivals, domestic flights, train and bus for inter-State travel making clear that asymptomatic domestic passengers will be allowed to travel with a further rider that on arrival they will need to go for 14-day self-quarantine.

In case of international arrivals on the resumption of flights, the travellers will have to mandatorily check into an institutional quarantine for seven days at their own expense followed by another seven days of home isolation while only asymptomatic passengers will be allowed to board the flight, train or bus for inter-State journey. Specifying guidelines for

the international arrivals, the Ministry said before boarding, all the travellers would have to give an undertaking that they would stick to the above rule to ensure least chances of Covid-19 transmission.

However, exceptions will be for cases related to those in distress, pregnancy, death in family, serious illness and parents accompanied by children below 10 years of age. They will be asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days.

All international passengers arriving would also be advised to download Aarogya Setu app on their mobile devices. At the time of boarding the flight or ship, all the asymptomatic travellers would be allowed to board after thermal screening. A list of dos and don'ts would also be provided along with the ticket by the agencies they were travelling with.

Also, 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/landport.

Corona cases in State jump to 370

20 new cases surface

PNS ■ RANCHI

At least twenty fresh cases of coronavirus infection surfaced in Jharkhand on Sunday from seven districts, health officials said. Out of the 20 cases, four cases each are from Jamshepur and Hazaribagh districts, three cases from Garhwa, West Singhbhum and Ramgarh districts respectively, two from Koderma and one from state Capital. In last few days, Koderma and Garhwa districts have reported growth in Covid-19 cases, due to influx of migrant workers returning to their home districts.

Sources said that most of the cases which were reported on Sunday have travel history as all have return from outside. With the report of 20 fresh cases the figure of coronavirus has gone up to 370. Health secretary, Nitin Madan Kulkarni said, "Most of the cases have travel history as they have returned home from other states." However, at the same time seven

patients were discharged after they recovered from infection. The Sunday's discharged patients included five from RIMS and two from Giridih.

The four cases in Jamshepur also included a JAP Jawan. After conducting the test of all persons at MGM lab they have been admitted at TMH. The four cases which were detected from Jamshepur had travel history and their residences are at Baridih, Sidgoda, Vidhyapatnagar which is at the distance of one to one and half kilometre. The JAP Jawan who is infected with the virus had recently returned from Ara in Bihar, second patient is a young student who had returned from Kolkata. The third person too had returned from Kolkata, while the fourth patient had return from Ranchi. All these persons whose report was found positive were sent to 14 days home quarantine.

On Saturday too, 20 new positive corona cases were found from state. The maximum 11 patients were found from Koderma, four from Simdega, three from Jamshepur and two from

Ranchi. Also on Saturday a patient in Koderma died.

Sources said that the eastern Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha have seen the fastest growth in Covid-19 cases since May 1, when the railways started bringing back stranded migrant workers, compared to any other state in India, shows Covid-19 data from different states.

However, compared to the western Indian states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan and southern state of Tamil Nadu, the absolute number of the cases in the eastern states is still very low. A reason for this could be the very low number of tests per million of the population conducted in these eastern states compared to the more developed western states.

As per health bulletin, out of total 370 cases 196 cases in from migrant workers who have reached state from May 5. Sources said that the Covid-19 cases are going to witness spike as from Monday air travel across country is going to resume. Ranchi too is in air map which is going to start flight operations.

Iconic trade union leader RP Singh breathes his last

CONDOLENCES POUR IN MRITUANJAY KUMAR ■ RANCHI

Iconic trade union leader and veteran Congressman, Rajendra Prasad Singh breathed his last on Sunday in Delhi.

The Six times MLA from Bermo constituency of the State and former Minister in the State Government, Singh was admitted to Rampyari Hospital in Ranchi after complaining of lung infection. Later, he was taken to Delhi for better treatment by air ambulance, where he was admitted at Fortis Hospital for the last twenty days. The 73-year-old is survived by his widow, eight daughters and two sons.

Chief Minister, Hemant Soren expressed grief over the demise of Bermo MLA and senior Congress leader Singh. The Chief Minister said that he was hurt by the news of his death. "Today Jharkhand lost a hard-working leader and true servant. May God grant peace to his soul and give the family the

strength to bear this hour of sorrow," he added.

Singh was an iconic trade union leader in the coal belt of the State and he was General Secretary of Indian Trade Union Congress. He also held various ministerial berths in the State Government. Singh was elected six times as the MLA of Bermo constituency in Jharkhand. In addition to the two-time minister in Bihar, he was the Minister of Energy, Health, Finance and Parliamentary Affairs in Hemant Soren's Government in 2014.

A tribute will be paid to the Congress leader Rajendra Prasad Singh by the Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee on Monday at 11.45 am. A tribute meeting will be held in the presence of State Congress Committee president, Rameshwar Oraon.

Congress Committee spokesperson Alok Kumar Dubey said that the body of Singh will be brought from New Delhi to his home district of Bermo on Monday and the funeral will be



completed at Damodar Kargali Ghat in Bermo on Tuesday.

As soon as the news aired, many leaders from all parties started expressing their condolences. Former Indian National Congress, president Rahul Gandhi said that he was saddened to hear the news of death of senior Congress leader and former Minister of Jharkhand and Bihar, Rajendra Prasad Singh. He extended his condolences to Singh's family and loved ones in hour of his great grief.

Expressing her sorrow on the

moment Jharkhand Governor, Droupadi Murmu also expressed deepest condolences on Singh's death. Despite political differences, Singh was amicable with leaders from opposition parties. Former Chief Minister, Raghubar Das also expressed deep sorrow on Singh's death and said that despite differences in ideology, Rajendra Babu was looked up to. "His death is a personal loss for me. Jharkhand has lost a leader attached to the soil. It will be very difficult to fill this vacuum," said Das. Union Minister, Arjun Munda, the State BJP president Dipak Prakash also expressed their condolences on Singh's death.

JPC Chief Rameshwar Oraon said that it is his personal loss and irreparable loss to the party. State Agriculture Minister Badal Patralek expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of Singh and said in his condolence message that the voice of the workers has come to an end. Singh was the architect of Patralek's political career.

Over 16,000 migrants return to Hazaribag

Two trains reach Bokaro

PNS ■ HAZARIBAG/BERMO

More than 16,000 migrant labourers have reached Hazaribag by now, while the number of Covid-19 infections here has increased to 41, officials said on Sunday. Out of the patients, three have been discharged from Hazaribag Medical College and Hospital. As many as 16,236 migrant labourers have reached Hazaribag so far. On Saturday 1236 migrant labourers reached Koderma railway station by train. They have been asked to report to St. Colamba's College ground for registration and primary checkup.

Hazaribag deputy commissioner Bhuvnesh Pratap Singh said in a press meet on Saturday that all the 7 migrant laborers came from Mumbai in the different blocks like Ichak, Muffsil, Gurhat, Choparan and nearby areas of the town. Singh appealed to the resident of Hazaribag that they must be watchful and take all the action to save their lives. No extra relaxation has been given by the administration on the eve of Eid. DC has instructed all the Block Development Officers to show daily menu in every quarantine center on notice board, so that everyone knows the food items along with quantity. He has appreciated the role of mukhiyas in the villages, where positive cases came to light.

Hazaribag Superintendent of Police Kartik S said that in last 24 hours police have lodged cases on 36 persons, out of them two have been sent to jail. Police have lodged total 132 cases in the district on 448 persons. Police have also collected fine of Rs.15,14,000 from violators of lockdown. More than 1856 migrants reached Bokaro Steel railway station in Jharkhand by two Shramik special trains from Bengaluru and Delhi respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile, more than 13,000 migrants, including 2,000 students, have by now been brought back by 15 special trains from across the country since May 24. In Bokaro, a train ferrying 1649 migrants from Delhi and one from Bangalore district in



Karnataka arrived at Bokaro Steel railway station late night on Saturday while the second train reached Bokaro from Bengaluru early in the morning at about 5:40am. Senior district administration officials Vijay Kumar Gupta, station Superintendent K.K. Haldar and others were at the station to ensure safety protocols were followed as the passengers disembarked the train before being sent to their home districts after being provided with masks, sanitizers and food packets. Of the passengers, 1856 are from different districts of the Jharkhand, Bokaro Adl Collector Vijay Kumar Gupta said, "The migrants were received following social distancing norms and were sent to

their destinations in vehicles provided by their respective district administrations. Station Superintendent in Bokaro, said, "The special train departed from Bengaluru on Friday evening and reached Bokaro on Sunday at 4:30 am." While first train ferrying, 1649 migrants from different locations of Delhi reached Bokaro railway station at 00:20. The same protocol was followed before they were sent to their destinations on 34 buses. Majority of the passengers were from Palamu, followed by Garhwa and Latehar, Giridih and Deoghar. They were sent to their respective districts by buses, said Adl Collector.

Six Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment at CCL Ramgarh Hospital

PNS ■ RANCHI

Central Coalfields Limited (CCL), a subsidiary of Coal Limited, is sparing no effort to support the Government in the fight against Corona Pandemic. Six Covid-19 patients are undergoing treatment at CCL Ramgarh Central Hospital, in adjoining District. Three patients have been admitted last Sunday and another three infected on Thursday. In addition to CCL Gandhinagar Hospital, Ranchi and CCL Ramgarh Hospital, other two central hospitals of the Company are ready to deal with both the suspected and confirmed cases of highly contagious virus. These hospitals of CCL have beds with assured oxygen support, basic life support Ambulances with sufficient oxygen support 24 x 7 and other facilities. On 16 May, 11 Coronavirus patients were discharged from CCL Gandhinagar Hospital after their fast recovery from the illness.



In addition to CCL Gandhinagar Hospital, Ranchi and CCL Ramgarh Hospital, other two central hospitals of the Company are ready to deal with both the suspected and confirmed cases of highly contagious virus

CMD, CCL Gopal Singh said that these are challenging days for the Country and their priority is to help the needy section of the society which will help mitigate the disastrous impact of this pandemic. He stressed on the fact that despite these challenging circumstances the employees of the Company are working at their utmost capacity to ensure that there is no shortage of coal supply. Singh reiterated that the workforce of CCL will continue to work with utmost dedication to ensure that the help and support is available to the people and nobody has to sleep hungry because of lack of resources. CMO In-charge, Ramgarh Central Hospital Dr VK Singh and his team is working under the supervision and guidance of CMS, CCL Dr CP Dham so that best treatment is given to the patients.

Covid Crisis: Need for Multi-Pronged Strategy by the State

DR. SHRUTI PRIYA

The outbreak of covid-19 has exposed the country to challenges- economic, social and political- never thought of. On one hand it has led to plummeting demand while on the other hand has caused disruption in production and supply chains. It also serves as a lesson for any government in power in the country to revive expenditure on health sector which stands one of the lowest in the world at hovering around 1.5 percent of GDP as against more than 12 percent by OECD countries. Although the pandemic has hit the entire economy the dire consequences are faced by those living at the margin who have little or no resilience to mitigate the impact both social and economic. Around 72 percent of men and 62 percent women working in non-agriculture sector are informal workers who do not have access to employment/social security benefits provided by the employer. The total proportion of unorganized work-



the hands of the people to generate effective demand and the multiplier effect. Further the immediate need of the hour is procurement of food to people. The total stock of rice and wheat held by FCI as on 1st March, 2020 was 77.7 million tonnes and the procurement of rabi crops has begun. This provides FCI enough room to disburse food-grains to almost 80 percent of the country's population after maintaining the minimal stock of 24 million tonnes by making these transfers universal in the backdrop of the crisis. The disruption in production and return of distress migrants poses pressure on agriculture and rural economy. An allocation of rupees 40,000 crore to MGNREGA is a welcome step considering the fact that budgetary allocation of rupees 61,500 crore for the cur-

rent fiscal was 13 percent lower than the 2019-20. However, these were already obligations of the government and should not be clubbed under relief measure to tide the crisis. Again, far greater demand work would be generated on account of collapsing informal employment and return of migrant workers. This would call for far greater amount of allocation. Moreover, similar programmes are needed for urban enclaves as well. The MSMEs in the informal sector employs around 1109.8 lakhs employees. While focusing on MSMEs is an important area being considered however credit flow to galvanize production would not be realized until demand for products stay afloat and that is possible only through compensation to workers to maintain demand in the first place that has dropped suddenly. Moreover, the tax reliefs announced addresses only the formal sector workers and not the informal workers who outnumber them. Further there is issue of migrant labourers who don't

have access to social security schemes at the places of their work since they usually belong to different states. Ensuring access to social security schemes and other safety nets to the migrants at the place of their work without the need to linking with Aadhar or furnishing a card with a local address would enable maintaining both demand and also labour supply. Moreover, direct money transfers shall help the maintain the demand momentum. Thus, a multi-pronged strategy ranging from food distribution, cash transfers, generating rural employment under MGNREGA, addressing issues of migrant labour and agricultural infrastructure development is required to ameliorate the impending economic, social and political challenge posed by the pandemic. (The writer is an Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Gaya College, Gaya, Bihar. Email-shrutipriyaeco@gmail.com, Contact-9304312123)

57th Anniversary of Africa Day: India Unites with Africa to Fight Corona



DR. NEHA SINHA

It's the 57th Anniversary of Africa Day! Commemorated every year on 25th May, the day asserts Africa's dignity and contributions to human civilisation. On this day, Africans pay tribute to their founding fathers who established the Organisation of African Unity, now known as the African Union. The day was established after the heads of state of thirty-two independent African nations signed a charter in Ethiopia in 1963. Celebrated widely across the continent, the day also honours heroes who died in the struggle to liberate their countries from colonial rule. The day has more relevance today, because the world is facing one of the most challenging crises as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. It's time for Africans to fasten their seat belts to mitigate the present health

crisis - which has turned more of a human crisis in recent times. As the healthcare system in Africa is extremely fragile and the continent is facing numerous challenges, it also gives India an opportunity to cooperate with the continent. India's partnership with Africa is based on a model of cooperation which is responsive to the needs of African countries. Hence, a sharp focus is being given on the continent's health systems by cooperating in areas such as telemedicine, pharmaceuticals, capacity building and healthcare services. Agriculture sector is another area where there can be cooperation to ensure food security on the continent. The relationship between India and Africa is rooted in shared values and principles mirrored in close bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The Coronavirus pandemic recently has augmented India's image as a capable international partner. In this time of global crises, India's proactive approach to reach out to the African continent has been appreciated by many African nations. The challenges posed by the pandemic have made

the India-Africa relationship even stronger. Africa is a region where medical facilities are among the least developed globally. Besides Covid-19, several other diseases like cholera, TB, Malaria, Ebola are widely prevalent on the continent. The Indian government has shifted its focus to Africa by sending essential drugs to several African countries to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Essential drugs include Paracetamol, Hydroxychloroquine and Ibuprofen, besides antibiotics, anti-diabetic, anti-cancer, anti-asthmatic and cardiovascular drugs. The list also includes other medical devices like injections and thermometers. In addition, India has extended telemedicine support by partnering with top Indian Institutions with local African institutions to engage and train health care workers of Africa to mitigate the crisis. To meet the common challenge in this difficult time, India has also supplied essentials to Madagascar, Seychelles and Comoros under 'Mission SAGAR'. This medical diplomacy is built on historical goodwill shared between India and Africa. In addition, India

has also reached out to the Indian Diaspora in Africa by maintaining close contact with the community. They have been assured of all possible help within the limitations posed by the pandemic. Africa is poised to be India's priority. A few weeks ago, Prime Minister Modi took personal initiative to call several President's on the continent to assure India's support to Africa in combating the pandemic. Despite the fact that our own country is adversely affected by the pandemic and is going through a tough time, we have acted as a responsible stakeholder towards Africa; conveying our ability and support to deepen our relation with the continent as we move ahead. Our relationship with Africa, thus goes beyond strategic reach and economic interest. It is more to do with the emotional connect that we share and solidarity that we feel for each other. On this day, it's an affirmation to the continent that India has shifted its gears of engagement with Africa, and both will together fight against this pandemic.

Panic grips steel city as Covid cases rise to 24

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Panic gripped the Steel City as the novel coronavirus positive cases rose to 24 with four cases tested positive in the city on Sunday alone. One of the positive cases reported in the city from Baridih was home quarantined and had returned from Ranchi on May 12. The health team took sample on May 17 and result was tested positive today. The other two cases reported today also belonged to Baridih and one case came from Sidhgora. The authority has already sealed residential areas in Baridih. Though Jamshedpur was under a green zone but with rising cases it has come under orange zone. After the news of four new positive cases, people are under shock. A government employee stated that the decision to bring back migrant workers from various parts of the country was premature. "It is really very surprising to see cases rising with every passing day. The corona situation in the city may worsen after people who are stranded outside the State are transported back. Once they arrive,



these people should be quarantined for at least 28 days and the administration should monitor their movement," said the employee. The first positive case of Covid-19 was also reported from West Singhbhum at Chaibasa. The youth is of 22 year old and had returned from Chennai on May 14. Most of the cases reported in Kolkhan Division are that of migrant labourers. The administration has asked the authorities to ensure strict screening of the people coming back to the city. Special focus is being laid on the screening. The administration has also set a screening centre at Loyola School where the swab is being collected from those sus-

pects returning back to the city. The administration has formed teams at block-level and also in three civic bodies of Jamshedpur, Jugsalai and Mangro for strict vigil on suspected cases. "The is taking every step to control the situation. The people should continue to follow the lockdown norms and must not come out of their houses because the lockdown has been relaxed. I don't think that anybody is loitering on the streets without any reason. The city is under orange zone than the people will come out of their houses according to those guidelines," said an official. The vigil has been stepped up at Tatanagar Railway Station. All the passengers are undergoing thermal screening, and have to fill up their travel history and contact details at the Tatanagar Station. Meanwhile, the administration is keeping close vigil on those returning back to the city. An official informed that vigil on those returning have been increased in order to ensure that suspects are identified.

Stay home, use face mask, maintain social distancing on Eid

PNS ■ BOKARO

The Deputy Commissioner, Mukesh Kumar urged the people of Muslim community to pray in their homes on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr at the time of this global calamity. It is necessary to curtail the spread of Coronavirus, he said. "Simultaneously support the administration by following social distance during 'Sahri' and 'Iftar' in their homes," he added. Kumar appealed people to stay in their homes during Eid, wish all your relatives for the best from your own homes and also recite the Quran at homes respectively so that spread coronavirus infections can be avoided.



Kumar also urged people should pray for a prosperous and healthy nation on this pious day of Ramadan by following all health instructions to prevent corona epidemic.

Fighting Covid-19: TMH initiates sample pool technology for testing

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Tata Main Hospital (TMH) over the last one month, has conducted 1650 Real-time Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) diagnostic test for COVID-19. In view of the increased demand for testing as a result of migrant workers reaching Jamshedpur, TMH has initiated sample pool technology for RT-PCR testing as per the ICMR guidelines. The pooled testing technology involves the PCR screening of a specimen pool comprising multiple individual patient specimens, followed by individual testing only if a pool screens positive. As on date, there are 19 COVID positive cases admitted in TMH and the medical condition of all the patients is sta-

ble. "COVID-19 has brought communities closer in ways more than one. Under Tata Steel Foundation's (TSF's) ten-point Combat COVID19 programme, this proximity is strengthened through the ongoing programmes including meal distribution, aligning farmers to households, and bridging communication gaps within communities, to name a few," said an official. In the last 54 days, TSF has reached out to 4.46 lakh people in 24 states. About 25 lakh meals have been distributed since the beginning of the first lockdown which started on March 25, 2020. TSF has reached out to 9500 migrant workers across the country in the last couple of months. 1000 people have been identified for cash for work programme for



short term income creation. TSF has engaged with alumni members of the Tribal Leadership Programme to try and understand the situation of migrant workers returning to East Singhbhum district and the various issues being faced through its programme called Hope Springs. The team has been providing a kit having essential items to the migrant workers crossing NH-33 to ease out their journey to home-

lockdown period in the peripheral rural areas of Jamshedpur. Tata Steel, leveraging radio and print media, is creating awareness in the community on commitment to 4S - Safety with mask, Social distancing, Self-hygiene and Sanitisation. The intent is to propagate and reinforce the message that anyone travelling to Jamshedpur from any other district/state/country should first report to the COVID-19 screening facility available at MGM or TMH hospital directly upon arrival. The family members should not receive the individual(s) at the railway station and the individual(s) must not interact with anyone till declared medically safe. Meeting family members before the traveller is screened puts everyone at serious risk of corona infection.

7 flights to take off from Ranchi today after 2 months

Ferry passengers to Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad

PNS ■ RANCHI

At least seven flights will ferry passengers from Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi to New Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad on Monday after a lull of two months, officials from the Ranchi Airport said on Sunday. However, the schedule was likely to undergo changes as some states are not in favour of resuming domestic flights and some airline companies have decided to delay the resumption of services, they added.

"As per the latest information received from AAI (Airport Authority of India)

and private airline companies, around seven flights will ferry passengers to Hyderabad, Delhi and Bangalore on Monday," said Airport Director Vinod Sharma. "Earlier, we were supposed to get nine flights on Monday, but two of them got cancelled," he added.

Private airline companies Indigo, AirAsia and GoAir will resume services at the Ranchi Airport on Monday. Air India, which was scheduled to fly from Birsa Munda Airport here on Monday, has decided to resume services from June 1, sources from the Ranchi airport said. A flight to Mumbai was also scheduled for Monday, but it had to be cancelled as Maharashtra Government decided against resuming

domestic flight services, they added.

"By 6.30pm on Sunday, seven flights to three cities - Delhi, Hyderabad and Bangalore - were confirmed. Further changes in the schedule may occur by tomorrow morning," said the Airport Director. The Airport, he said, was ready with all the arrangements for maintaining social distancing and following the guidelines issued by the AAI. "We have all the equipment and manpower ready to follow the rules," said Sharma.

The AAI, which has control over most of the airports across India and takes decisions regarding domestic air connectivity, has issued elaborate and strict guidelines in order to



Ranchi DC Rai Mahimapat Ray along with others officials inspects the Birsa Munda International Airport for a calibrated resumption of flights from May 25, announced by Civil Aviation Minister, during the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown, in Ranchi on Sunday

prevent transmission of COVID-19 virus during air travel. As per AAI's SOP, all passengers have to wear masks and gloves while traveling. Passengers above 14 years of

age should also download the Government's Aarogya Setu App, and the ones who do not show a green signal in the app

will not be allowed in the airport.

Besides, all passengers will have to undergo thermal screening at the airports and get trolley facility only on special demand, AAI's SOP said. All mats will be soaked in bleaching powder and all baggages will be sanitised, it added. Many airport staff will also have to wear PPE kits and the staff at restaurants and shops will have to wear masks. Besides, regular announcements about social distancing will be made in all the airports across India.

-All passenger flights to and from Ranchi have remained suspended since March 24 in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic - a pre-

ventive measure that has cost airline companies, airport authority and even third party ticket booking apps dearly, sources said.

The Birsa Munda Airport, officials said, is still on the path of expansion, and a crisis in such circumstances may show its impact on the airport's long-term development goals.

The Birsa Munda Airport is fast growing in terms of connectivity with other cities. The largest airport in Jharkhand has 30 flights connecting Ranchi to important cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad. The airport also has an international bay, but is yet to get any international flights.



Members of Mukund Nayak Foundation, All Jharkhandi Artists Association, India Parivar and India Young Foundation distributes food packets among folk artists during nationwide Covid-19 lockdown at Saali Sereng village of Barla Hazam Panchayat of Silli block 70 KMs from Capitol Ranchi, on Sunday. Nandalal Nayak, Jairam Mahato, student leader Devendra Nath Mahato, Manoj Chanchal, Aryan ji, Kishore and Bareshwar are also present this occasion

Only 12 active Covid-19 cases in Ranchi now

DC inspects Airport

PNS ■ RANCHI

With five more Covid-19 patients recovering in Ranchi, the district is left with only 12 active cases of the viral infection, Deputy Commissioner Rai Mahimapat Ray said on Sunday.

Ranchi was declared a Covid-19 red zone last month by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the wake of the rapidly rising count of infected people here. With Ranchi losing the red zone tag, Jharkhand now has 21 orange zones and three green zones, said health officials. The district will become a Covid-19 green zone if no fresh cases of the viral infection are reported in the next 21 days, they added. Ranchi was the only Covid-19 red zone in Jharkhand so far.

At least nine Covid-19 patients recovered in Ranchi in the past 48 hours, said Rai. Ranchi has shown the fastest recovery rate of patients in Jharkhand despite having to face an unprecedented surge in cases last month and being home to Hindpiri - the only large containment zone in the State.

The doubling rate of Covid-19 infection has also gone up in Ranchi from 3.5 a few days ago to 57.92, said the Deputy Commissioner. Doubling rate, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), is the time taken for the number of cases to double. This means that earlier the number of Covid-19 cases doubled here in 3.5 days, and now the count doubles in 57.92 days, officials said.

The Covid-19 testing rate in Ranchi is also higher than rest of the country, said Rai. The rate of testing in India is 205 per 1 lakh population, whereas in Ranchi it is 285 per 1 lakh population, he said. More than 10,000 Covid-19 tests have been conducted in Ranchi so far, and the case positivity rate here is 1.8 per cent, added Rai.

A team led by the State Transport Secretary, K Ravikumar, Ranchi Deputy Commissioner Rai Mahimapat Ray, Ranchi SDM Lokesh Mishra visited the airport to inspect the ongoing preparation work.

India can benefit from promoting local industries: Indresh

PNS ■ RANCHI

The National Security Jagran Manch organized National India webinar. The speaker of the event was Indresh Kumar, chief patron and mentor of Forum for Awareness in National Security (FANS).

Kumar who is also national executive member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh shared his thoughts among intellectuals and other dignitaries stating that despite India being affected by the Covid 19 epidemic, Country is strong. Speaking on the occasion, Indresh Kumar in his address said that the economic package announced by Prime Minister Modi will benefit the cottage industries, small-scale industries, workers, farmers and the middle class. Also, the economic package will also give new strength to the Indian industry.

Speaking on the use of products manufactured in the country to meet the economic challenges posed by the Corona virus, Indresh said, "It is a pleasant departure from the

current policy based on globalization and liberalization, especially on the foreign capital based model of development."

He said that through his 'Swadeshi Swalamban Abhiyan', the platform will create awareness on the importance of 'Swadeshi' and self-reliance in the country.

The RSS member said that self-reliance can be achieved by revitalizing indigenous industry including small industries, small traders, artisans and rural industries and its goal is to increase inclusiveness with speed in employment generation. Blaming the past policy makers for their dependence on imported products in country, he said that his organization never relied on indigenous intelligence, resources and knowledge and placed excessive emphasis on foreign capital and multinationals.

He said that "We call upon all patriotic citizens and industry to join enthusiastically with this Swadeshi Swalamban Abhiyan" to infuse the economy of the country on the basis of local intelligence, resources,



He emphasised on the issue of adopting local goods and food products, living a balanced life in his family and developing the minimum cost of living. With the help of society and Government, people did not die of starvation in India

said Indresh. "PM is having constant talks and discussion with the Chief Ministers. Giving them leadership. Communicating with diverse sections on their behalf," said Indresh.

Chairman of FANS Pawan Bajaj gave a welcome speech introducing the speakers and topic. He expressed the role of emergency services rendered by doctors and other authorities in critical times. Sandeep Kumar, Vice President of FANS and associate professor of Sarla Birla University, Ranchi introduced Indresh Kumar the Chief Speaker of the National Webinar.

Treasurer of FANS, Rathin Bhadra gave a vote of thanks. In this program, the National Organization Minister of Fans, Golak Bihari, Dr. Amar Kumar Chaudhary, National Secretary, Bihar and Jharkhand, Honourary Secretary Saket Modi, Joint Secretary Raja Bagchi, Dr. Hariharan, Dr. Raghavendra Kumar, Dr. Shivendra Prasad, Ex Judge Ramesh Kumar Merathia and large number of people were present.

This future cop personifies versatility

PNS ■ RANCHI

He is not Leonardo Da Vinci, the Italian Renaissance polymath and 'genius' in drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, science, music, mathematics, engineering, literature and others, but despite scaling new heights in his professional career he has pursued his hobby in music, sports, acting and mountaineering. Meet Pradeep Pranav, the topper in State Police Service category in the sixth JPSC examination the results of which was declared last month.

Pranav, who is presently posted as Statistical Officer at National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Hazaribag has cleared the JPSC examination with flying colours. In JPSC examination, Pranav has secured second rank and first position in Hindi medium.

He is likely to be posted as DSP. Pranav before clearing the JPSC test is credited with clearing several examinations such as bank probationary officer (PO) at Union Bank of India, Intelligence Bureau (IB), Income Tax among others. However, the real talent of Pranav not lies on clearing these toughest examinations, but pursuing his dream and hobbies despite having busy schedule.



Pranav, an avid mountaineer has the record of scaling ten mountain peaks of Himalayan range.

Pranav, whose role model is Bachendri Pal- the first Indian woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest has done mountaineering course (adventure, basic, advance and expedition) from Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI). Pranav is gold medalist in mountaineering. Not only mountain, Pranav has also has the training in underwater diving in Indian Ocean.

Pranav said, "My interest in sports was from my school days. I always wanted to excel in sports activities and this interest has helped me to scale new heights in sports. When I was in Class X I got black belt second dan from Shotokan Karate Federation." He said, "After getting black belt in Karate, I went ahead and pur-

sued my dreams in other sports activities such as mountaineering, water driving and other."

Pranav's talent not only lies in sports, but in music he can play more than 42 musical instruments which includes several foreign musical instruments. He can play Ocarina an ancient Italian wind musical instrument, Zimbabwean mbira (thumb piano) is an instrument, African kazoo which is a wind instrument, Guitar and others.

Not only sports and music, Pranav has also shown his talent in acting as he had worked in several Nagpuri musical albums such as Kale Dil Ke Churale, Kajal and Bikhare Moti.

He is also numismatist (coin and currency notes collector) as he had store of coins and currency notes of more than 180 countries. He is also found of stamp collection or philatelist. He is also Palaeographer as he had collected old documents dating back to British rule.

Pranav comes from Purnanagar in Rahe block of Ranchi district. He did his schooling from St John's School Ranchi, than intermediate from St Xavier's College, Ranchi and post graduate and doctorate in Mathematics from Ranchi University.

Stepping up awareness with Folk Art forms in rural areas

DIVYA MODI ■ RANCHI

With an aim to educate the masses in urban as well as rural areas of the State, folk artists across Jharkhand have joined hands virtually and launched a cultural campaign.

As many as 70 artists from Bhartiya Lok Kalyan Sansthan (BLKS) have come together and initiated the drive not just to entertain the public but also tell them about the various ways to prevent the virus from spreading further.

"Due to the lockdown since everyone is house bound, we thought it would be a great opportunity to make use of our talent in such a way that it not only entertains people but also conveys a strong social message about the pandemic which has gripped the entire world. What started with two or three artists now involves 70 of them from all the 24 districts across the State," said BLKS Secretary Chandradeo Singh.

Started on the day of Janta Curfew- March 22, the group till date has composed and designed close to 60 songs in



Chandra Deo Prasad Singh show puppet at an awareness camp during nationwide Covid-19 lockdown, at a village near Ranchi

the various regional languages including Nagpuri, Santhali, Kortha, Mundari and Kharia. Singers like Shiv Ratan Thakur, Csilia Soren, Preeti Gupta, Sunitra Kido among others have been a part of it. The organization has been using popular social media platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to reach the urban and rural public.

The artist has also staged two short dramas titled 'Jaagte Raho' and 'Pravasi' where the

former focuses on the precautions that need to be followed as a protection against the virus and states that prevention is better than cure and the latter talks about the migrants coming home.

A puppet show titled 'Corona ka jaanch karao, shanka aur sankat dono ko mitao' informs about the various symptoms of the virus and also urges people to come forward and get themselves tested.

"The response received from the public has been overwhelming and extremely encouraging.

The songs, dramas and puppet show all highlight the fact that the virus does not affect a person on the basis of caste or religion but human beings in general. Through our work, we are also trying to bust the numerous superstitions and request everyone to follow social distancing norms and adopt basic hygienic practices," added Singh.

A Chau Dance featuring 'Bharat Mata' titled 'Chau Nritya Corona vaddhi' has also been made where Mother India can be seen fighting and eventually defeating the virus in order to protect the country.

BLKS has also started a 'Panchsutra Awareness Campaign' which highlights the importance of wearing face masks, not hugging or shaking hands but doing a 'Namaste' in greeting, washing hands at regular intervals, intake of nutritious food and consulting a doctor if suffering fever, cough and breathing problems.



सभी झारखण्डवासियों को
ईद-उल-फितर
की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

शांति और एकता के प्रतीक का त्यौहार है ईद
अमीर-गरीब का भेद मिटाने का त्यौहार है ईद
हर्ष उल्लास व उत्साह का त्यौहार है ईद
यह त्यौहार आपके जीवन में लाए
सुख, समृद्धि और खुशियां अपार

लॉकडाउन का पालन करें
घर में रहें. सुरक्षित रहें

द्रौपदी मुर्मू
राज्यपाल, झारखण्ड

हेमन्त सोरेन
मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड

सूचना एवं जनसंपर्क विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार

Cong seeks probe into use of 'poor' ventilator

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday demanded a judicial probe into the use of a ventilator on Covid-19 patients in Gujarat that, it said, has not been approved by the DCGI. It alleged the mortality rate was highest at the hospital where these machines were installed. The party alleged that the low vulnerable quality ventilators were provided under CSR funds by the same businessman who had donated the ₹11-lakh suit worn by Modi during the visit of the then US President Barack Obama.

The Congress also lashed out at the Gujarat Government over the State's alleged "sick healthcare system" and targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the issue.

The party said almost six weeks after Dhaman-1 ventilators were installed at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital on April 4, doctors there sought more ventilators claiming these machines did not work on patients and were not capable.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara alleged the machines were donated under CSR funds by a company in which a Surat-based businessman, who donated the monogrammed suit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi which was worn by him during former US President Barack Obama's visit to India, has a stake.

The Dhaman-1 ventilator has been developed by Rajkot-based firm Jyoti CNC which "donated" 866 of them to the State Government last month in view of acute shortage of the machines, according to senior Gujarat government official.

A row erupted when the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital wrote to the Government, stating that the ventilators were not up to the mark, and sought sophisticated machines.

Khara alleged the Vijay Rupani government projected the mechanised AMBU (Artificial Manual Breathing Unit) bag as ventilator, "playing with the lives of patients."

○ Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara alleged the machines were donated under CSR funds by a company in which a Surat-based businessman, who donated the monogrammed suit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi which was worn by him during former US President Barack Obama's visit to India, has a stake

○ The Dhaman-1 ventilator has been developed by Rajkot-based firm Jyoti CNC which "donated" 866 of them to the State Government last month in view of acute shortage of the machines, according to senior Gujarat Government official

"Why was Dhaman-1 approved and installed when it had been tested on just one patient? Why was Dhaman-1 approved and installed without a licence by DCGI (Drug Controller General of India), he asked.

"We also want to know if the PM Cares Fund was used to buy 5,000 pieces of Dhaman-1 through HLL Lifecare. All these answers can only be found through an independent judicial inquiry," Khara said.

Training his guns on Chief Minister Rupani, he asked why Gujarat had "such shocking data" on COVID-19 patients as 11 per cent of the total coronavirus cases in the country were in the state, but 22 per cent of the deaths related to COVID-19 in the country were from Gujarat.

"Why this high mortality? Why the high mortality in Ahmedabad in particular? Why the highest mortality is in the civil hospital, where these machines were installed," he asked.

He asked why Dhaman-1 was marketed within and outside the state as a "ventilator when it is not a ventilator." The Congress leader asked why was Dhaman-1 allowed to be sold to other states and why was HLL Lifecare, a PSU, allowed to order 5,000 pieces.

Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi said: "Today, we don't have a healthcare system (in the state); we have a sick system. The inefficiency of the Gujarat Government in handling Covid crisis shows that it is undermining, underconfident, and under-achieving."

"It is my sad duty to bring to the country's attention the deplorable and indefensible

plight of medical and health facilities in Modi's home state and in part of Shah's constituency (4 assembly segments of Ahmadabad fall in Gandhinagar parliamentary constituency)."

Singhvi, Rajya Sabha member, said: "We would respectfully ask the PM, HM, GOI, and Gujarat CM -- Are you even aware of what is happening in your own home state? If so, have you ever intervened, chastised or punished the Gujarat government or does the latter have Covid immunity vaccine because they belong to the BJP?"

Singhvi said if such powerful people who control the levers of power were unable to provide justice on their home ground to the poor and needy, what could the rest of India's teeming millions expect from them.

The Congress leader referred to Gujarat High Court observations on the "lack of PPE, shortage of ventilators, ICUs and isolating wards..." and "pathetic" conditions at the Civil Hospital, Ahmedabad.

He said that even the High Court had observed that state Health Minister "does not seem to be aware of what is going on, nor appears to have ever visited the hospital".

The party also questioned why private testing of coronavirus suspected cases, even by authorised private institutions, was stopped by the Gujarat government which ordered that coran tests can be conducted only at government hospitals.

Singhvi pointed to "proactive" role of the Bengal Governor but the "silence" of the Gujarat Governor on coronavirus situations in their respective States.

MHA issues revised travel guidelines for intr'l arrivals, persons stranded in India



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Sunday issued revised guidelines for the international arrivals and persons stranded in India for travelling to their country or having visa to a particular country. Indians having visa to a foreign country would also be allowed to travel.

The new guidelines are basically issued for those stranded in other countries and wanted to visit India in medical emergencies or death of the family members.

The circular issued by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said that the expenses should be borne by the travellers and the travel list will be prepared by the concerned Indian missions.

The passengers must consent to being subjected to the quarantine norms on arrival, it said adding that the travellers' list must be finalized two days in advance.

"Priority will be given to compelling cases in distress, including migrant workers/labourers who have been laid off, short term visa holders faced with expiry visas, persons with medical emergencies/pregnant women/elderly, those required to return India due to death of family member, and students," the MHA said.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) will have nodal officers to oversee the arrival of stranded persons to India.

Based on the registrations received, MEA will prepare flight/ship wise database of all such travellers and their full details. MEA's digital platform will display the details of select-

THE PASSENGERS MUST CONSENT TO BEING SUBJECTED TO THE QUARANTINE NORMS ON ARRIVAL, IT SAID ADDING THAT THE TRAVELLERS' LIST MUST BE FINALISED TWO DAYS IN ADVANCE

ed persons in two days advance. "All travellers will also be required to give an undertaking that they are making the journey at their own risk. Passengers arriving through land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol and only those who are asymptomatic will be enabled to cross the border into India," said the new guidelines.

MHA said that those persons who wanted to go abroad have to get in touch with Civil Aviation Ministry's designated agency. "Only those persons shall be allowed to travel to the destination countries, who are citizens of that country or who hold visa of at least one year duration of that country or green card holder of that country or OCI (Overseas Citizenship of India) card holder. In cases of medical emergency or death in the family, Indian Nationals holding six months visa can also be allowed," said the MHA's new guidelines allowing people to travel abroad.

Indian seafarers and crew working in foreign firms would also be allowed to travel.



Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan visits Chaudhary Brahma Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, Delhi, which is functioning as a dedicated Covid Health Centre (DCHC), to oversee the preparedness to manage Covid-19 cases. He visited the various facilities and wards and witnessed first-hand the treatment being provided to Covid-19 patients, through a holistic approach as per the directions of Ministry of AYUSH. Pioneer photo

Min says 4 of 14 vaccines may enter trial stage within 5 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Sunday said that at least four of the 14 candidate vaccines for novel coronavirus in the country may enter the clinical trial stage within five months. However, he cautioned that it is too early to expect any vaccine against the disease because there is a long due procedure involved in its development.

In a social media interaction with BJP leader GVL Narasimha Rao, the Minister said within five months, four of the vaccine candidates in the country may enter the clinical trial stage.

The Minister said, "The whole world is trying to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. There are over 100 candidate vaccines which are at different levels of development. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is coordinating the efforts. India is also actively contributing in it. There are 14 candidates in India also which are at different levels..." Vardhan said.

He said the Department of Biotechnology of the Ministry of Science and Technology is helping the academic world and industry in all manners

such as giving regulatory clearances, grants or financial support, among other things.

"As far as I know, four of our fourteen vaccines will soon be in the clinical trial stage, within 4 to 5 months. All the 14 are right now at the pre-clinical trial stage."

It will take minimum one year for the development of any vaccine even if it is developed earliest. Therefore use social distancing, masks and follow hand and physical hygiene -- the biggest safeguard against the disease- till any vaccine or cure is found, said the Minister.

On Sunday, the Minister also visited the Dedicated Covid-19 Health Centre (DCHC) at Chaudhary Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan (CBPACS), Najafgarh, a first Ayurveda hospital in the country engaged in providing care to the Covid positive patients on the basis of principles of Ayurveda as per protocol of Ministry of AYUSH. In addition to the Ayurvedic and herbal treatments, the holistic approach also includes yoga, meditation, pranayam, etc.

Till date a total of 201 patients have been admitted in the CBPACS Centre. Of these, 37 patients have been cured and 100 patients have been advised

home isolation. 19 patients have been shifted to Specialty hospitals on review of their medical condition. There has been no casualty in this Centre, said the government statement here.

Dr. RK Manchanda, Director (AYUSH) of the Delhi Government, Dr. Vidula Gujjarwar, Director-Principal, CBPACS along with senior faculty and doctors and Ministry officials were also present during the review meeting at the Ayush hospital.

Overall, the Minister said, the fatality rate in the country stands at 2.9% while recovery rate has improved to 41.2%.

Talking about the health-care infrastructure setup across the country, he said, a total of 968 Dedicated Covid hospitals have been identified across the country with 2,50,397 beds (1,62,237 isolation beds + 20,468 ICU beds); 2,065 dedicated Covid health centres with 1,76,946 beds (1,20,596 isolation beds + 10,691 ICU beds); and, 7,063 Covid care centres with 6,46,438 beds."

He further informed that States/UTs as well as central institutions have been provided with around 109.08 lakhs N-95 masks and around 72.8 lakh Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as per the statement.

Al Qaeda ditches Pakistan on Kashmir

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After Taliban, the Al Qaeda has now ditched Pakistan on the Kashmir issue by not even mentioning the region in a document circulated to top leadership of the global terror outfit.

The document titled "The Way Forward: A Word of Advice on the Coronavirus Pandemic" and circulated by Al Qaeda Central talked about the hardships of Uyghurs and Syrian Muslims besides the community members residing under hostile regimes but has been conspicuously silent on Kashmir which was earlier on the agenda of these terror groups.

Assessments here suggest the outfit could be frustrated due to the bickering between various terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir, especially the Kashmiri groups like Hizbul Mujahideen on whose inputs a number of terror commanders have been killed by the security forces after integration of the erstwhile State into the

Indian Union. Infighting between Pakistan-backed groups and their masters in the ISI and Pak army could also be a reason behind the outfit's change in stance.

This could have led to the distancing of the Al Qaeda from the issue as also a realisation of the changed realities on the ground post-abrogation of Article 370 wherein top terror commanders have been neutralised by the forces.

Sources, however, did not rule out that Pak deep state could have advised both the terror groups to disown the Kashmir issue for now so that India does not stop funding in Afghanistan for reconstruction. The cash starved groups might be eyeing to take control of such funds as Pakistan economy is in shambles.

"Before the great disaster (Covid-19) struck, obscenity and moral corruption had already become widespread in Muslim countries. In fact this phenomenon had extended its dirty tentacles to the vicinities



of the purest site on the face of the earth, the Haram in Makkah....The despots ruling over the Muslim World, specifically in the Arab World, have been guilty of committing the most unimaginable forms of torture and rights abuses against Muslim scholars and Mujahideen in secret torture cells that have become a norm across the Muslim world," it said.

It further said, "To make matters even worse, Islamic causes have been consigned to

oblivion across the Muslim world, especially Syria, Iraq, Waziristan, Palestine, East Turkistan, Libya, Islamic Maghreb, and Somalia...Muslims must learn some serious lessons this calamity (Covid-19) and start taking practical steps for the liberation of prisoners for the liberation of prisoners and missing persons across the Islamic World."

"Let us not forget that Covid-19 emerged from one of the filthiest places on earth, the

markets of Wuhan (China), where all known norms of decent and humane dietary practices tramples upon. From insects to rodents and reptiles, in short everything unsafe for human consumption, or the consumption of which is prohibited in all revealed religions, was sold and consumed there," it said in an indication of its disapproval of the atrocities on the Uyghurs.

"The very technological advancement and globalisation that man took immense pride in has become his undoing. Today, if someone sneezes in China, those in New York suffer from its consequences," it claimed.

Earlier, the Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen had said that "the policy of the Islamic Emirate is clear that it does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries." Considering Kashmir as an internal affair of India is the clearest hint that Kashmir is not an issue or on the agenda of Taliban which is seeking to engage with India.

Remdesivir's initial trial shows its efficacy in fighting corona

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The preliminary results of the trial of the Gilead Sciences Inc's Remdesivir, the first drug cleared for the treatment of Coronavirus, has been found to be effective on patients who need extra oxygen but are not dependent on ventilators or heart-lung bypass machines, according to a report in the New England Journal of Medicine.

It said that Remdesivir was superior to placebo in shortening the time to recovery in adults hospitalised with Covid-19 and evidence of lower respiratory tract infection.

In the experiment, patients were randomly assigned to receive either Remdesivir (200 mg loading dose on day 1, followed by 100 mg daily for up to 9 additional days) or placebo for up to 10 days.

Preliminary results of this trial suggest that a 10-day

course of Remdesivir was superior to placebo in the treatment of hospitalised patients with Covid-19, as per the report.

The primary outcome was the time to recovery. In contrast to the placebo drug, Remdesivir helped Covid-19 infected patients to heal faster and allowed them to return home after about 11 days. Placebo treated coronavirus patients in 15 days.

In addition to this, there were also signs that the medicine increased the survival rate of patients on Remdesivir by 7.1 per cent.

On the other hand, 11.9 per cent of placebo-experimented patients died within two weeks, the research added.

The researchers said, "Remdesivir was superior to placebo in shortening the time to recovery in adults hospitalised with Covid-19 and evidence of lower respi-

ratory tract infection".

In the experiment, a total of 1,063 patients underwent randomisation. 538 were assigned to Remdesivir and 521 to placebo. Serious adverse events were reported for 114 of the 541 patients in the Remdesivir group who underwent randomisation (21.1 per cent) and 141 of the 522 patients in the placebo group who underwent randomisation (27 per cent), the researchers added.

The US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) has made Remdesivir available under an emergency use authorisation for the treatment of adults and children with severe coronavirus disease.

The trial was sponsored and primarily funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), and National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Crop-eating locusts cross Rajasthan, to reach Central India

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A swarm of crop-eating locusts has crossed the border State of Rajasthan to reach Central India with thousands of the harvest flies swooping down on vast fields of moong dal in Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's Budhni constituency. It is said to be the biggest locust attack in the region in past three decades and is threatening to destroy crops worth ₹8,000 crore. Locusts' attack has also been reported from Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh.

While an expert team from Rajasthan is to visit MP to tackle the pest attack, in Jhansi the fire brigade team has been kept in readiness to spray disinfectant in the affected area. These locusts

come to India from Iran passing through Pakistan. This is the biggest locust attack in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in last 27 years and is likely to grow till monsoon season. The locusts entered through Neemuch district in the state and travelled to parts of Malwa Nimar to reach close to Bhopal.

In UP, as many as 17 districts including Agra, Jhansi, Aligarh, Mathura, Bulandshahr, Hathras, Etah, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Farrukhabad, Auraiya, Jalaun, Kanpur, Mahoba, Hamirpur and Lalitpur are affected from locusts that reached through Dausa, Rajasthan. Over the 250 tractors/ trolly have been kept in ready with chemicals.

According to officials of agriculture ministry, locust swarms have entered Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana,



and Madhya Pradesh a month in advance and pose a major threat to standing crops and vegetables. This is the fourth attack since December last year. Locust swarms enter the

desert areas of India via Pakistan for breeding in the summer of June-July, but this time Locust Hoppers as well as Pink Adult Swarms had entered border districts of

Rajasthan and Punjab in April itself. Officials said that India has taken up the matter with Pakistan as well as Iran, another country affected by the locust attack, and offered

pesticide support to both countries.

The Ministry of Environment also warned of locust attacks in Punjab, Haryana, UP an MP in the coming weeks.

In MP, four teams of the Central Government, besides teams of state agricultural development, are fighting the locusts by using chemical sprays with the help of tractors and fire-brigade vehicles. The Locusts

Warning Organisation of the agriculture ministry has issued an advisory to the farmers in villages of the affected districts to keep continuous vigil over the desert locusts. They have been asked to keep the insects at bay by using loud sounds through drums, banging of utensils and shouting.

In UP, the agriculture department has directed fire

brigade to keep its vehicle ready with chemicals following a sudden movement by a swarm of locusts. As Deputy Director Agriculture Kamal Katiyar said the swarm of locusts, which is moving, is small in size.

To tackle the locusts, the ministry has ordered spraying machines from United Kingdom to tackle locust swarms and over 2500 tractors and trollies are engaged in spraying chemicals. Besides, drones are being used to keep an eye over locust swarms in Rajasthan, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The officials of agriculture departments of these States are worried a lot as summer crops sowing are going on these days and there are possibilities that if they are not controlled, they could damage to kharif crops in these

States. In its latest update, the Locusts warning section of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), said locusts' breeding was continuing in southern Iran and south-west Pakistan, where control operations are in progress against hopper groups and bands.

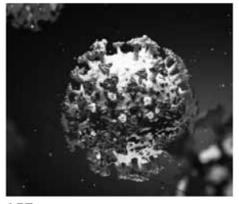
"As vegetation dries out, more groups and swarms will form and move from these areas to the summer breeding areas along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border in several waves from now until at least early July. Good rains are predicted during the first half of June along the Indo-Pakistan border [and] that would allow egg-laying to occur. This should reduce the further eastward movement of swarms that have already arrived in Rajasthan, India."

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Cases continue to rise in Kerala

53 new cases, 322 undergoing treatment

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



Number of persons tested positive for coronavirus continued to increase in Kerala in the backdrop of Ramzan festivities. On Sunday, 53 persons tested positive for the pandemic as the number of persons under treatment rose to 322, according to Kerala Minister for Health KK Shailaja.

Out of the 53 persons tested positive on Sunday, 18 were expatriates and 22 were from other States in the country. Till Sunday, 522 persons were cured of the covid-19 pandemic and sent home from hospitals.

The Minister said 188 persons were hospitalised on Sunday while the number of persons under observation rose to 95,394. The last three days saw the number of coronavirus cases in Kerala increasing by

tro surgeon, who has been focusing on covid-19 cases since the breaking out of the pandemic in the State, said the information disclosed by the Government about the number of cases is just the tip of the iceberg.

"There are more number of cases which are yet to be brought out. If only you test more and more persons you will be able to identify, isolate and quarantine the afflicted people. The situation is worrisome but I do not want to upset the people," Dr Vijayahari told *The Pioneer*.

He said the relaxation in lockdown over the last two-three days is sure to cause hike in the number of coronavirus cases in the coming days. "Any relaxation in lockdown rules will definitely cause an impact on the number of patients. But we cannot go on with lockdown indefinitely," he said.

765 new cases, 8 more deaths in TN

Total tally reaches 16,277, toll at 111

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

As on Sunday, there were 7,839 active coronavirus cases under treatment in various hospitals in Tamil Nadu, said the medical bulletin issued by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Government of Tamil Nadu.

The bulletin said that 16,277 persons have tested positive till Sunday. "8,324 positive patients have been discharged following treatment till Sunday. Hence 7,839 active cases are under treatment as on date," said the bulletin.

A total of 765 persons tested positive on Sunday alone, taking the total number of cases tested positive till date to 16,277 in the State. The fatalities reached 111 with eight persons succumbing to the pandemic. The day saw 833 persons getting discharged following treatment and getting

well. There are 68n laboratories in the State which tested 11,441 persons on Sunday. The number of persons tested till Sunday all over Tamil Nadu reached 3,91,252.

Out of the 765 persons tested positive on Sunday, 587 were from Chennai which remained the district with maximum cases, 10,576. Chengalpattu (779), Thiruvallur (731), Cuddalore (427) were closely following the capital city.

A new disclosure made by the Government of Tamil Nadu vide the medical bulletin is the unprecedented increase in the number of coronavirus positive persons in the 13 to 60 age group. Out of the 16,277 positive cases detected in Tamil Nadu, 13,911 were in the 13 to 60 age group while 1,358 persons were in the 60 Plus age group. Children in the 0-12 age group accounted for 1003 cases.

Muted Eid celebrations in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Amid strict lockdown, Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations remained a low-key affair across Jammu & Kashmir on Sunday.

None of the famous religious shrines including Hazratbal and Jamia Masjid witnessed congregational prayers in Srinagar city. Local police authorities had strictly enforced restrictions to ensure residents stay back at home and avoid stepping out in the wake of spike in number of cases of coronavirus across Kashmir valley. Police vans were seen making public announcements since early morning appealing people to stay indoors to ensure strict compliance of lockdown guidelines.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, 52 fresh cases were detected taking the total tally of coronavirus cases to 1,621 in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. While Srinagar district reported no fresh case on Sunday, 26 patients tested positive in Kulgam district alone. In Jammu division six cases were

reported from Jammu, seven from Samba, 4 from Kathua and three from Rajouri district. A police jawan, posted on duty at Lakhampur entry point, tested positive and shifted to isolation facility.

Official sources maintained, majority of fresh positive cases had a travel history and were fresh returnees. At present, 791 cases are active positive and around fifty percent cases i.e 809 have recovered so far in Jammu & Kashmir.

According to local reports from Srinagar, worshippers offered Eid prayers at home and at few odd places in remote areas small gatherings of close family members converged at one place to offer thanksgiving prayers ending the month long period of fasting during Ramzan.

Eid was celebrated across Jammu and Kashmir and Kerala on Sunday, while the rest of the country will celebrate Eid on Monday. In Jammu region too, no mass assembly was witnessed on the occasion.

Earlier, in August 2019, Eid-ul-Azha prayers could not be offered in Kashmir as authorities had imposed strict curfew in the wake of abrogation of Article 370 and division of then Jammu & Kashmir state into two Union Territories.

However, South Kashmir district of Pulwama witnessed incidents of stone pelting after a joint teams of security forces busted a terrorist hideout in the area.

A group of terrorists had carved a hideout in a shop owned by a government official of Revenue department. At least two people received injuries as clashes broke out in Mitriganam area of Pulwama after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the area.

Security forces have recovered detonators, explosives and some logistic materials from the hideout. Some of the close family members of the government official, detained by the police for questioning, were earlier involved in terrorist activities.

Bureaucratic indifference delays clinical trial of drug for Covid-19

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Even as the country is struggling hard to contain the coronavirus pandemic which is spreading all over with vigor by the hour, indifference of bureaucrats towards the medicine developed to minimise and regulate the contagious disease is causing irreparable damage to the soul of India.

While scientists specialising

in modern medicine are groping in the dark in search of a vaccine to fight the coronavirus pandemic, an Ayurvedic drug and protocol developed by a team of eminent Ayurvedic physicians in collaboration with modern medicine specialists is given a raw deal by the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Ayush. The details of the drug and treatment protocol was submitted to the Ayush

Ministry on April 15 this year. Messages to Shripad Yesso Naik, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) did not evoke any response. Dr Rajesh Kotecha, eminent Ayurvedic physician, who is also the secretary to the Ayush Ministry chose to ignore the messages sent to him requesting for details about the clinical trials.

The team of doctors that developed the ayurvedic drug

prepared from the age old Indian system of knowledge was led by Dr PR Krishnakumar, South India's leading Ayurvedic scholar and included a who's who of medical researchers. Dr Rama Jayasundar of All India Institute of Medical sciences, New Delhi, a physicist turned ayurvedic researcher, Dr CV Krishnaswamy, Tamil Nadu's leading physician, Prof B M

Hegde, described as the country's medical warrior are some of the members of the team that developed the drug and protocol.

Dr Krishnakumar has been honoured by the nation with Padma Sree while Prof Hegde is a Padma Bhushan with hundreds of publications in national and international journals. It was Prof Hegde who declared in his pathbreaking research

work "What Doctors Don't Get To Study in Medical School" that the drug for coronavirus and influenza would come from India.

"We submitted everything as per specification to the Ayush Ministry with a request that the drug be taken up for clinical trials. Without clinical trials, it can never be administered to the patients. But till date we have not received any communica-

tion from the ministry about the fate of our application," a visibly upset Dr Krishnakumar told *The Pioneer*.

Dr Jayasundar too sounded sad while speaking to *The Pioneer* over the inordinate delay in taking up their work for clinical trials. "I don't know what is happening. You have to check it with the authorities," she said when asked about the delay. Dr Krishnaswamy said

this clinical trial should have been taken up on a war footing.

"As you see, the number of coronavirus patients are shooting up on an hourly basis and our medical system should face the situation in a mission mode," said Dr Krishnaswamy.

A veteran medical doctor pointed out that the possibility of a vaccine to fight coronavirus getting ready in the near future is remote.

After confusion, Maha allows 25 flights to & from Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After hours of confusion on whether domestic flights will fly in and out of the metropolys in the coming days, the Maharashtra Government on Sunday evening agreed to allow operation of 25 flights to and from the Mumbai Airport from Monday.

Hours after Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that there should be "minimum possible domestic flights from Maharashtra from May 25th which are purely emergent in nature", Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Nawab Malik announced that beginning from Monday, the state government had allowed 25 flights to and from the Mumbai.

Quoting his telephonic conversation with State Chief Secretary Ajoy Mehta, Malik said: "After discussions with all agencies, it has been decided that 25 flights will arrive and depart from Mumbai airport. The number will increase subsequently."

In a formal announcement made later, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), Mumbai, said: late in the evening: "Starting May 25, 2020, CSMIA will resume 25 commercial

passenger flight movements on departure and 25 on arrival. The initiative comes after the directive issued by the Ministry of Civil Aviation as well as the State Minister giving a nod to recommence domestic flight operations to and from Mumbai.

"Furthermore, CSMIA also advises passengers above 80 years as well as expectant mothers and passengers with health issues to restrict travelling. While, arriving passengers will be temperature screened by the State Govt. and expected home quarantine for 14-days," CSMIA said in a statement.

"Moreover, CSMIA has also created a separate quarantine centre for symptomatic passengers. CSMIA has deployed resources to manage the queue effectively and to maintain minimal human interaction," the CSMIA statement added.

Earlier in the afternoon, chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's office tweeted: "CM Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray spoke to Civil Aviation Minister of State (Independent) @HardeepSPuri ji regarding domestic flights in Maharashtra."

"He communicated his views that till the time MIAL plans and fine tunes airport operations, they should initiate

minimum possible domestic flights from Maharashtra from May 25th which are purely emergent in nature like for international transfer passengers, medical emergencies, students, and cases on compassionate grounds," the CMO tweeted.

That the announcement also made by Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri's about the resumption of domestic flights from May 25 without consulting the Maharashtra Government has not gone well with the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) could be evidenced from a strong tweet put out by State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh in the early hours of Sunday.

"Its extremely ill-advised to reopen airports in red zone. Mere thermal scanning of passengers inadequate w/o swabs. Impossible to have autos/cabs/buses ply in current circumstances. Adding positive passenger will add Covid stress to red zone," Deshmukh had tweeted. Malik also hit out at the Narendra Modi for taking decisions without consulting the State Government, by saying: "The Government at the Centre makes announcement after announcement without discussing issues with the State Government."

K'taka tally at 2,056 with 97 new cases

IANS ■ BENGALURU

With 97 new cases, Karnataka's Covid-19 tally crossed the 2,000-mark, while 26 were discharged from hospitals taking the number of cured persons to 634, said an official, here on Sunday.

"The total number of Covid-19 cases across the state is 2,056, with 97 more testing positive during the past 18 hours," said a state health official. The number of active cases in the state is 1,378 and Covid-19 deaths 42, including 2 for non-Covid reasons.

Of the 26 discharged, 18 are in Davanagere, 4 in Chitradurga, 3 in Bagalkote and one in Haveri across the southern state. Of the new cases, 41 are women and 19 children below 20 years.

"68 of the 97 new cases are returnees from Maharashtra, the worst affected Covid-hit state in the country with 47,190 cases till Saturday," said the official.

Of the 30 Karnataka districts, Chikkaballapura recorded the highest cases at 24, followed by Udipi (18), Hassan (15) and Kalaburagi, Yadigiri and Mandya (6 each).

Subdued Eid in coastal K'taka amid lockdown

IANS ■ MANGALURU

At the end of month-long Ramadan fasting, Eid-ul-Fitr was celebrated in coastal districts of Karnataka on a subdued note at homes due to ban on mass gathering in mosques amid lockdown across the southern state to contain the coronavirus spread, an official said on Sunday.

"As decided by Markazi Ruet-e-Hilal committee member Maulana Maqsood Imran Rashidi sahib on Saturday after Maghrib, Eid is being celebrated in the state's coastal region today (Sunday) and on Monday in other parts of the

state though the moon could not be sighted on Saturday night," said Maulana Sagheer Ahmed Rashadi in a statement here.

The port city of Mangaluru is about 360km southwest of Bengaluru.

The state's coastal region comprises Dakshina Kannada, Udipi, Uttara Kannada, Kodagu and Chikkamagalur districts off the Arabian Sea.

"All the devout Muslims offered Eid prayers (namaz) at their home and greeted each other from a distance to maintain physical distancing. Attired in new clothes, all of us partook the festival dishes, including biryani and kheer," Urdu

teacher Habibur Rahman told IANS on phone.

As the state government decided to enforce a strict lockdown on Sunday the people completed shopping for new dresses and groceries for the feast by Saturday evening.

"This is the first time in our life we are celebrating Eid at home as we are unable to go to mosque for prayers or greet others due to the extended lockdown, which also made us observe fast during the month-long Ramadan at home," recalled Rahman.

The first day of Shawwal (1441 Azli Fazi) will be on Monday.

In a video message, Jamia

masjid Imam Maulana Abdul Aleem of Bhatkal in the northern coastal district urged the people to maintain peace and harmony and bear the inconvenience due to the lockdown with fortitude.

"May this special day bring peace, blessings and happiness to all. Pray Allah to accept our prayers on the Eid," the Maulana said on the occasion.

Bhatkal is about 460km northwest of Bengaluru in the southern state.

The Imam also hoped (Inshallah), COVID menace would soon end so that all could get back to normal life and meet relatives and friends again.

Sikkim reports 1st corona case Maha CM hits out at BJP for politicising crisis, says lockdown to be lifted gradually

IANS ■ GANGTOK

The Himalayan state of Sikkim reported its first coronavirus case when a 25-year-old student who returned from Delhi tested positive, a senior official said on Sunday.

Sikkim Health Secretary Pempa T. Bhutia said that the swab sample of the student was sent to North Bengal Medical College and Hospital in Siliguri (in West Bengal) for testing. The positive report came on Saturday.

The student from Rabangla in South Sikkim district is admitted at Sir Thutob Namgyal Memorial Hospital in Gangtok. Hospital sources said his health condition was stable.

The student was living in Delhi to prepare for UPSC examinations but returned to the state by bus along with a few others last week.

Till Saturday night, 1,707 people were tested in Sikkim.

Hitting out at the Opposition BJP for its efforts to indulge in politics over the coronavirus crisis, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said here on Sunday that his Government would lift the lockdown gradually as it did not want crowds in public places which would compel the Government to re-impose lockdown in the State.

Two days after the BJP staged "Save Maharashtra" agitation against the "inept" handling of coronavirus crisis by his Government, Uddhav said: "I sincerely feel that this is a time of crisis, and hence, no one should play politics. You may do it, but we will not as we are vested with a responsibility and above all, the people of Maharashtra trust us."

Addressing the people across the state through social media, the Chief Minister said: "As much it is improper to impose lockdown all of a sudden, it is

also improper to lift the lockdown at one go. We are treading cautiously to ensure restoration of normalcy. While lifting the lockdown, we will have to take measures against crowds at public places. Every citizen will have to take precaution of not indulging in undisciplined behaviour, a behaviour that will force us to re-impose lockdown."

"I want to thank people of all religions, social organizations and political parties for their co-operation," he said.

In a series of tweets put out after his interaction with the people across the state, Uddhav said: "A couple of days ago, I was part of a VC with Congress President Sonia Gandhi ji and other leaders. I said the real picture about our country will be clear in the coming fortnight due to the migration and the likely transmission of the virus due to the movement of people."

"This intra-state movement from one district to another has been allowed to

an extent. But, this can be permitted on a large scale only after following precautions. We have allowed shops and offices to open in some areas."

"We are also considering if the theatre, film and television industries can be allowed to resume shooting and post-production activities like dubbing and editing. They have asked us if they can shoot in the Green zone before the monsoons with due precautions," he said.

"We are also considering allowing outdoor games. The cabinet held a meeting to prepare for the Kharif season. We are launching a new project to make seeds and fertilisers available to farmers in their fields," he said.

"Since day one, we never stopped any agriculture activities or transport of produce. We are taking care of farmers. We have purchased 75 to 80% cotton in areas like Vidarbha, Maharashtra and North Maharashtra, and this is still underway," he said.

Shopping complexes to open, malls to remain shut in Lucknow

Lucknow: Shopping complexes in the state capital, outside the containment zones, will be allowed to reopen from May 26.

However, shopping malls and multiplexes will still remain closed. According to the order of the Lucknow district magistrate Abhisheka Prakash, only one-third of shops in a complex will operate daily on rotational basis from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The centralized air-conditioning of the complex will remain shut, though individual shops can keep their air-conditioners on.

A maximum of three customers at a time will be allowed inside the store. All customers will have to wear masks and thermal screening of customers will be done at the entrance of the complex. Shopkeepers will have to report to

health authorities immediately if they find any customer with COVID-19 symptoms.

Shop owners will have to make sanitizers available to the customer before and after transaction as well as keep record of every visitor. Shops will have to be sanitized with bleaching powder and sodium hypochlorite several times in a day.

Amarnath Mishra, senior general secretary, Lucknow Vyapar Mandal, said that the decision will help major stores of garment, electrical and electronic items and jewellery that are located in shopping complexes.

"With this decision, almost 70 per cent of the market will now remain open according to conditions laid down by the district administration," he said. IANS

Shopping complexes to open, malls to remain shut in Lucknow

Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh): A migrant worker riding pillion on a two-wheeler from Gurugram in Haryana to his home in Bihar, died when he dozed off on the motor-bike and fell off.

His nephew Satish also lost balance and fell down. Both received serious head injuries and Ratiram, 36, died on the spot while Satish is in hospital with critical injuries. The incident took place on the Yashoda Nagar highway on Saturday.

According to reports, Ratiram and his nephew Satish, residents of the Supaul district of Bihar, used to work in a factory in Gurugram.

After the lockdown, they lost their jobs and finally decided to return to their home.

They left on their motorcycle from Gurugram on Saturday after they failed to get another means of transport. Naubasta inspector Ashish Shukla said that their families have been informed and are on their way to Kanpur. "The body has been shifted to the mortuary and the autopsy will be conducted only after his family members arrive from Bihar," the inspector/ IANS

Migrant dozes off, falls from bike and dies

Total lockdown turns Karnataka into ghost State

IANS ■ BENGALURU

restore near-normalcy. "We have seized about 100 vehicles across the city (Bengaluru) since morning when some people, mostly youths, ventured out on two-wheelers to roam around in residential areas in violation of the lockdown norm," the official said.

The police also sealed inter-state borders to prevent movement of people and vehicles from neighbouring states, as bus services and transportation of goods remain suspended till Monday morning.

"Only ambulances and vehicles on essential duty are allowed to ply during the curfew period. Shops selling medicines, groceries, vegetables, fruits and poultry and meat products have been allowed to

open but ensure customers maintain physical distancing and stand in queues.

"Barring retail outlets for essential supplies like milk, vegetables, fruits, and medicines, everything has been shut down since 7pm on Saturday to 7am on Monday," the official added.

State-run buses, taxis and autos have also not been allowed to operate across the state.

Though the central government further extended the lockdown to May 31 from May 18 with greater relaxation in the norms to restore near-normalcy across the country, the state has decided to enforce it (lockdown) only on Sundays till month-end, that is on May 24 and May 31.

and enter/exit points on the city outskirts have been barricaded to prevent vehicular movement.

In an appeal to all citizens across the state on Saturday, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa urged the people to abide by the lockdown on this (May 24) and next Sunday (May 31) to contain the Covid-19 spread.

"We have reached a crucial stage in the war against Covid-19. Follow guidelines in the interest and welfare of all to fight the pandemic. Stay at home to be safe," said Yediyurappa.

The state government, however, allowed weddings prefixed on Sunday amid the lockdown with a slew of riders to ensure health and social distancing.

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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 that 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 loanee 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 MSMEs, most of which may still go under and increase a bank's NPAs 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 MSMEs 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, MSMEs, 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 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 noticing 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.

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



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,

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 (Sanya 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 bothers 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

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 worst 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

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

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 Almora 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)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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 HATICE CENGIZ

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

It is what is perceived as possibly the last phase of the lockdown, with States being given the powers to implement relaxations by 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 benefitting 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 reclassify worldwide security.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, JNU)

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Virus pushing US ties to brink of 'Cold War': China

Around the Globe

PTI ■ BEIJING

Coronavirus unleashed by China: Trump's aide

Washington: The deadly coronavirus was unleashed by China to the rest of the world and there has been a massive cover up by Beijing, US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said on Sunday.

unleashed by China. There was a coverup that someday they're going to do an HBO show like they did with Chernobyl on this virus," O'Brien told "Face the Nation" Sunday talk show of the CBS News.

conference. He accused American politicians of spreading "political virus" to smear

China. "It is the most regrettable that while the coronavirus is

still out there, a 'political virus' is also spreading in the US and jumping at any opportunity to attack and slander China," he said in a video media conference on the sidelines of China's annual session of the National People's Conference (NPC). "Some political forces in the US are taking China-US relations hostage and pushing our two countries to the brink of a new Cold War," Wang said.

filed by Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt against the Chinese government, the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), and other Chinese officials and institutions in the US District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri. It alleges that during the critical weeks of the initial coronavirus outbreak, the Chinese authorities deceived the public, suppressed crucial information, arrested whistleblowers, destroyed critical medical research and permitted millions of people to be exposed to the virus, causing a global pandemic that was unnecessary and preventable.

concerned that China's overseas assets could be seized, Wang said "some people are clamouring for so-called accountability and compensation from a victim of Covid-19." "They are fabricating so-called evidence for frivolous lawsuits. These people are tramping on international rule of law and betraying human conscience," he said. "If anybody thought they could use some ludicrous lawsuits to undermine China's sovereignty and dignity to deprive the Chinese people their hard-won gains they will be daydreaming and bring disgrace to themselves," he said.

and the US and it is the shared wish of the people of the two nations to support and help each other. China and the US should share the experience of the epidemic fight and learn from each other to boost their respective responses, Wang said. He said China is open to joint efforts by the international science community to identify the source of the virus, which originated from the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December. He said the process must be professional, impartial and constructive. By being "professional," it means that the process should be based on science, led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and conducted on a global scale by scientists and medical experts.

● The New York Times has devoted its entire front page to the names of 1,000 of the Covid-19 victims as the US approaches nearly 1,00,000 virus deaths, the current highest in the world. The Sunday edition's front page comprises a simple list of names and personal details taken from obituaries around the US, the BBC reported. The headline is "US deaths near 1,00,000, an incalculable loss", with a sub-heading that reads: "They were not simply names on a list. They were us."

Eid celebrated amid curfews, virus fears

AP ■ JERUSALEM



deadliest outbreak in the Middle East, allowed communal prayers at some mosques but cancelled the annual mass Eid prayers in Tehran led by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran has reported over 130,000 cases and more than 7,000 deaths. The virus causes mild to moderate flu-like symptoms in most patients, who recover within two to three weeks. But it is highly contagious and can cause severe illness or death, particularly in older patients or those with underlying health conditions. Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, has reported nearly 22,000 infections and 1,350 fatalities, the most in Southeast Asia. Lockdown orders intended to contain the pandemic mean there will be no congregational prayers at mosques or even open fields, no family reunions, no relatives bearing gifts for children. "This outbreak is not just dampening spirits of Eid, but also has made the tradition entirely different," said Andieka Rabbani, a university student in Jakarta. This year, like many Indonesians, he will only see family and friends through

video calls. In neighboring Muslim-majority Malaysia, businesses have mostly reopened after weeks of lockdown. But mass gatherings are still banned and people are not allowed to travel back to their hometowns for the holiday. Police have turned away more than 5,000 cars and have warned of strict penalties for those who try to sneak home. Malaysians are only allowed to visit relatives who live nearby, and only on Sunday, with gatherings limited to 20 people. Mosques have reopened but are limited to small congregations of up to 30. Malaysia has reported 7,185 infections and 115 deaths. Rohaizam Zainuddin said he felt blessed he could celebrate Eid with his elderly parents living nearby, but his sister in another state could not return home. "We are frustrated that celebration this year is not the same," he said. "But there is no point getting angry. We just have to accept it, life goes on." He and his family members are still wearing new clothes and preparing traditional dishes. Plates of cookies are set out for any visitors, alongside a ther-

mometer and hand sanitizer. In Pakistan, Eid is being celebrated in the shadow of the coronavirus and in the wake of a passenger plane crash near Karachi on Friday that killed 97 people. For the first time, Pakistan is celebrating Eid countrywide on the same day, ending an annual controversy between rival committees over the moon sighting that signals the start of the holiday. Pakistan has taken measures to control the spread of the coronavirus since mid-March, but Prime Minister Imran Khan refused to close mosques during Ramadan despite pleas from doctors and a rising number of infections. Pakistan has reported more than 52,000 cases and more than 1,100 deaths. More than 1,000 worshippers gathered and prayed shoulder-to-shoulder in an open field in Karachi on Sunday, with only a few of them wearing masks. In neighboring Afghanistan, the government and Taliban insurgents announced a three-day ceasefire in honor of the holiday. Some 2,000 Muslims gathered for Eid al-Fitr prayers Sunday at a sports complex in the Paris suburb of Levallois-Perret, carefully spaced apart and wearing masks, according to France-Info radio. Traditional embraces were not allowed. France is allowing religious services to resume for the first time since March, but France's leading Muslim organization, CFCM, advised mosques to stay closed Sunday. The CFCM said the government decree didn't give mosques enough time to procure masks and hand gel to ensure that gatherings don't turn into super-spreading events.

Table with 4 columns: COUNTRY, TOTAL CASES, TOTAL DEATHS, NUMBER OF CASES ON DECLINE IN US: TRUMP. Rows include USA, Brazil, Russia, Spain, UK, Italy, France, Germany.

Study: Age, male sex, underlying illness validated as risk factors for death due to Covid

London: Age, male sex, and underlying illnesses like diabetes have emerged as risk factors for death due to novel coronavirus infection, according to a large cohort study which can help health professionals learn more about how the Covid-19 illness progresses. According to the study, published in the BMJ, the risk of death increases in people above the age of 50, as does being male, obese, or having underlying heart, lung, liver and kidney disease. In this largest prospective observational study reported to date, the scientists, including those from the University of Liverpool in the UK, noted the characteristics of patients hospitalised in the UK with Covid-19, and their outcomes. At the time of publishing the study, the scientists said the study had recruited over 43,000 patients. While earlier studies had reported the risk factors associated with severe Covid-19 based on reports from China, the researchers said an understanding of features of patients in other parts of the world are lacking. To address this knowledge gap, the scientists said they analysed data from 20,133 patients with COVID-19 admitted to 202 acute care hospitals in England, Wales, and Scotland between 6 February and 19 April 2020.

Wuhan lab had 3 live bat coronaviruses, none matched Covid: Report

AFP ■ BEIJING

The Chinese virology institute in the city where Covid-19 first emerged has three live strains of bat coronavirus on-site, but none match the new contagion wreaking chaos across the world, its director has said. Scientists think Covid-19 — which first emerged in Wuhan and has killed some 3,40,000 people worldwide — originated in bats and could have been transmitted to people via another mammal. But the director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology told state broadcaster CGTN that claims made by US President Donald Trump and others that the virus could have leaked from the facility were "pure fabrication". In the interview filmed on May 13 but broadcast on Saturday night, Wang Yani said the centre has "isolated and obtained some coronaviruses from bats." "Now we have three strains of live viruses... But their highest similarity to SARS-CoV-2 only reaches 79.8 percent," she said, referring to the coronavirus strain that causes Covid-19. One of their research

teams, led by Professor Shi Zhengli, has been researching bat coronaviruses since 2004 and focused on the "source tracing of SARS", the strain behind another virus outbreak nearly two decades ago. "We know that the whole genome of SARS-CoV-2 is only 80 percent similar to that of SARS. It's an obvious difference," she said. "So, in Professor Shi's past research, they didn't pay attention to such viruses which are less similar to the SARS virus." Conspiracy rumours that the biosafety lab was involved in the outbreak swirled online for months before Trump and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo brought the theory into the mainstream by claiming that there is evidence the pathogen came from the institute. The lab has said it received samples of the then-unknown virus on December 30, determined the viral genome sequence on January 2 and submitted information on the pathogen to the WHO on January 11. Wang said in the interview that before it received samples in December, their team had never "encountered, researched or kept the virus."

● China has reported 39 new coronavirus cases, including 36 asymptomatic patients — majority of them from Covid-19 epicentre Hubei province and its capital Wuhan, health officials said on Sunday. Of the three confirmed coronavirus patients, one is locally transmitted infection and two are imported cases, China's National Health Commission (NHC) said. The domestically transmitted case was reported in Jilin Province, it said. ● Six million Australians have downloaded a mobile phone app that helps health authorities trace coronavirus infections, officials said Sunday. Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt said the COVIDSafe app is playing a strong role in Australia's response to the pandemic and several countries have expressed interest in learning from its positive impacts. If a user is diagnosed, the app works to identify other users who have been in close proximity for 15 minutes or more in the previous three weeks. ● South Korea has reported 25 additional cases of the coronavirus over a 24-hour period, amid a continuation of small-scale outbreaks in the country. The Korea Centres for Disease Control and Prevention says the additional figures released Sunday took the country's total to 11,190 with 266 deaths. The agency says 10,213 of them have recovered and been released from quarantine. ● Pakistan recorded 32 coronavirus-related deaths during the last 24 hours, taking the total number of fatalities in the country to 1,133, the health ministry said on Sunday. The total number of patients also jumped to 54,601. ● There is currently insufficient scientific evidence to show that vitamin D can be beneficial in preventing or treating Covid-19, scientists say, warning against health risk due to high doses of supplementation. Following unverified reports that high doses of vitamin D could reduce the risk of contracting Covid-19, scientists, including those from the University of Manchester in the UK, assessed current scientific evidence base on the vitamin's use in treating infections.

PAK PLANE CRASH Pilot, air traffic control's role under probe: Reports

Karachi: A preliminary report on the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane crash, in which 97 people were killed, has raised serious questions about the pilot's handling of the aircraft and what prevented the crew in the cockpit from informing the air traffic controllers about the troubles. Pakistani investigators are trying to find out if the crash of the national flag carrier's flight PK-8303 is attributable to a pilot error or a technical glitch, with new leads raising fresh questions over the circumstances of the incident, Geo News reported.

Hong Kong police fire teargas, water cannon at protesters

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong police fired tear gas and a water cannon at protesters in a popular shopping district Sunday, as thousands took to the streets to march against China's move to impose national security legislation on the city. Pro-democracy supporters have sharply criticized a proposal, set to be approved by China's rubber-stamp parliament this week, that would ban secessionist and subversive activity, as well as foreign interference, in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. The pro-democracy camp says the proposal goes against the "one country, two systems" framework that promises Hong Kong freedoms not found in mainland China. Crowds of demonstrators dressed in black gathered in the Causeway Bay

district on Sunday, chanting slogans such as "Stand with Hong Kong," "Liberate Hong Kong" and "Revolution of our times." The protest was a continuation of a monthslong pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong that began last year and has at times descended into violence between police and protesters. Police raised blue flags, warning protesters to disperse, before firing multiple rounds of tear gas. They later fired a water cannon at the demonstrators. At least 180 people were arrested, mostly on charges of unlawful assembly, police said. They also said that some of the protesters threw bricks and splashed unidentified liquid at officers, injuring at least four members of the police media liaison team. They warned that such behavior is against the law and that police would pursue the matter.



Trump's pitch to voters: Trust me, economy will soar in 2021

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has a new pitch to voters for this fall: Trust me. As the economy faces a once-in-a-century recession, with more than 38 million people out of work, Trump is increasingly talking up a future recovery that probably won't materialize until after the November election. He's asking voters to look past the pain being felt across the nation and give him another four-year term on the promise of an economic comeback in 2021.

"It's a transition to greatness," Trump says over and over, predicting a burgeoning economy come the fall. "You're going to see some great numbers in the fourth quarter, and you're going to end up doing a great year next year." His chief economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, echoes the wait-until-next-year sentiment, holding out hope for a "big bang 2021." It's a delayed-reward tactic Trump was using long before the global pandemic gut-punched the country. He has turned to it with new urgency as the coronavirus has robbed him

of the booming economy that was to be the core of his reelection message. Trump had already pledged to finally release a Republican health care plan after the polls closed — despite having served more than three years in office — along with a postelection tax cut and a "Phase 2" trade deal with China. Now, Trump is making the case to voters that if he helped bolster the economy once, he can do it again. "We built the greatest economy in the world," Trump says frequently. "I'll do it a second time."

NETANYAHU LASHES OUT AT 'LUDICROUS' GRAFT CHARGES AMID TRIAL

Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived at a Jerusalem court for the start of his long-delayed corruption trial, rejecting the "ludicrous" charges against him and declaring he was facing the hearing "with my head held high." The veteran premier, who has just forged a unity government after a year of political turmoil, now faces the next challenge — being the country's first premier to face criminal charges while in office. Flanked by ministers and bodyguards, PM Netanyahu addressed reporters before entering the Jerusalem District Court where he was to face charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust.

1ST IRANIAN SHIP REACHES VENEZUELA WITH NO SIGN OF US THREAT

Caracas: The first of five tankers loaded with gasoline sent from Iran reached Venezuelan waters on late Saturday, expected to temporarily ease the South American nation's fuel crunch while defying Trump administration sanctions targeting the two US foes. The oil tanker Fortune encountered no immediate signs of US interference as it eased through Caribbean waters toward the Venezuelan coast and Venezuelan officials celebrated the arrival.

Biden wins Hawaii presidential primary delayed by virus

Honolulu: Joe Biden won the Democratic Party of Hawaii's party-run presidential primary on Saturday, which was delayed by more than a month because of the coronavirus. Biden defeated Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders 63 per cent to 37 per cent. Biden won 16 of Hawaii's delegates and Sanders will take eight. Biden has a total of 1,566 delegates to the party's national convention, according to the count by the Associated Press. He needs 1,991 delegates to win the nomination, a threshold he is projected to reach in June. A total of 35,044 voters cast ballots in the party-run primary. All ballots were cast by mail. The party had initially planned to hold the primary on April 4 and had expected most party members would vote by mail and some would cast ballots at about 20-in-person polling sites around the state.

Af, Taliban announce 3-day Eid ceasefire

AP ■ KABUL

The Taliban announced a three-day ceasefire during the Eid al-Fitr holiday starting Sunday in a surprise move following months of bloody fighting with Afghan forces after the group signed a landmark agreement with the United States. President Ashraf Ghani swiftly welcomed the insurgents' offer and ordered his forces to also comply, while the US envoy to Afghanistan hailed the deal as a "momentous opportunity." Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement posted on social media that the group's leadership instructs all the mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate to take special measures for security of the countrymen, and conduct no offensive operation against the enemy anywhere.

SpaceX's 1st astronaut launch breaking new ground for style

SpaceX has gone all out on the capsule's appearance, he said. "And they've worked equally as hard to make the innards and the displays and everything else in the vehicle work to perfection." The true test comes Wednesday when Hurlley and Behnken climb aboard a SpaceX Dragon capsule atop a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and, equipment and weather permitting, shoot into space. It will be the first astronaut launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Center since the last shuttle flight in 2011. It will also mark the first attempt by a private company to send astronauts into orbit. Only Governments — Russia, the US and China — have done that.

FLOOR PRICE

Telcos approach Trai seeking early decision on issue

PTI ■ 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.

Notwithstanding the nudge from the industry, a latest report by ICICI Securities has said that any huge tariff hike is unlikely for at least a quarter or two. "Tariff hike is unlikely before recommendation on floor price, as any suo moto tariff hike may work against telecom operators

for policy intervention. We do not see any huge tariff hike for at least a quarter or two," ICICI Securities said in a report on Sunday.

Meanwhile, 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 looking forward to an early conclusion on this important matter with great interest, COAI said, urging Trai for an early decision on the same.

Notably, the regulator had earlier this month, resumed its customary open house discussion (OHD) on pending matters through video-conference but Trai sources had made it clear that the issue of floor price of tariffs is unlikely to be taken

up via online mode for now, till the ongoing situation arising from COVID-19 pandemic stabilises. Given the coronavirus pandemic and the difficulties faced by people, Trai may wait for the situation to stabilise before it proceeds to the OHD stage on floor price issue, a source had said.

Recently, Bharti Airtel CEO, India and South Asia, Gopal Vittal in an earnings call drew attention to the pending floor price issue, saying while the telecom industry has seen some bit of repair, tariffs continue to be "unsustainably low". He exhorted the sector regulator to address the floor price

issue "sooner than later".

"We believe that an ARPU of ₹154 is inadequate to turn a reasonable return on capital as a company and remain hopeful that ARPUs will get to ₹200 in the short term and eventually to ₹300 which is where it should be for a business like ours.

"Of course, even at this level of ARPU we believe we will be very well placed to serve all the lower-end customers who may have the capacity to pay ₹100 or less," Vittal had said. Airtel said the full impact of the tariff hike undertaken in December 2019 came through in its entirety with no downtrading.

India's retail trade lost business worth ₹9 lakh cr in last 60 days, says CAIT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

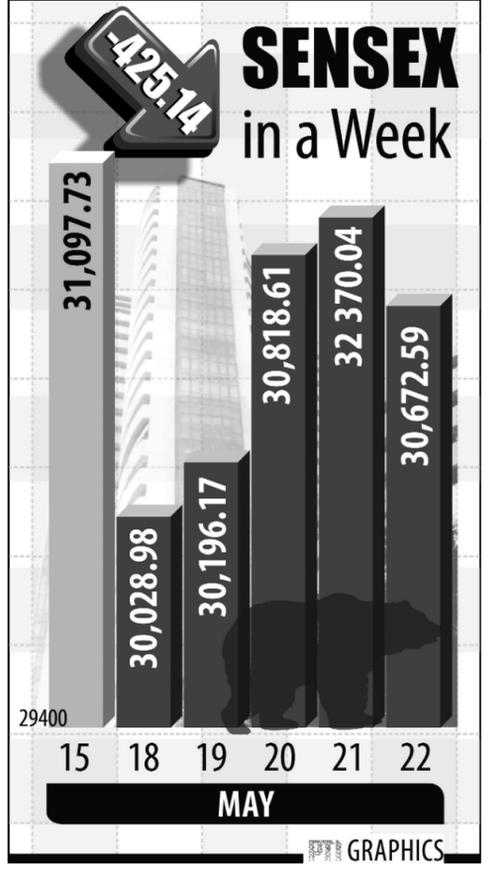
The country's retail trade lost business worth ₹9 lakh crore in the last 60 days, mainly due to the nationwide lockdown to contain coronavirus pandemic, trader's body CAIT said on Sunday.

Confederation of All India Traders said domestic trade is facing its worst period as shops and commercial markets across the country since last Monday could register only about 5 per cent of business, and only 8 per cent of workforce could resume their

duties in shops after migration of about 80 per cent employees to their native places.

CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said during the span of 60 days of national lockdown, domestic trade has lost a business to the tune of about ₹9 lakh cr, causing a revenue loss of about ₹1.5 lakh cr to both the central and State Govts on account of GST.

The traders are facing acute financial crunch, and in absence of any policy support from the Government, they are worried about future of their business, he said.



CII asks companies to comply with competition law amid Covid crisis

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

As businesses and enterprises face a severe crisis amid the coronavirus pandemic, industry body CII has cautioned that although tough times may prompt companies to collaborate with their competitors, they must take decisions and operate as per the anti-trust law and the Competition Act of 2002.

In its competition law compliance manual for corporates in the wake of novel coronavirus, CII noted that the Competition Commission of India (CCI) would keep a close watch for any potential competition law infringement during this period.

"The current COVID-19 crisis has created unprecedented challenges in India and across the world. This impact of COVID-19 on the functioning of the economy may prompt companies to collaborate with their competitors to tackle the uncertainty and hardship faced. However, companies must note that antitrust laws continue to apply and all business decisions undertaken by companies must not fall foul

of the provisions of Competition Act, 2002," said the industry manual.

It said that companies must carefully evaluate their business operations during the COVID-19 period, especially if their business operations might require close collaboration with competitors.

"The concrete antitrust risks surrounding any such collaboration remain difficult to assess. Given the absence of any guidance from the CCI, companies should tread with caution and consult their antitrust lawyers as and when required or while exploring any collaboration," the CII manual said.

It said that companies should reach out to their external counsel to assess these risks and must avoid information exchanges through trade associations or any other platforms.

It said that while entering into any form of collaboration, companies should take care that the collaborative efforts must be limited to products or services directly affected by the pandemic or the exigency measures.

Construction industry seeks immediate release of pending dues from Govt agencies

PTI ■ MUMBAI

As the ongoing lockdown has severely impacted infrastructure activities across the country, liquidity starved engineering and construction industry is seeking immediate release of long pending dues from the central and State Government agencies.

According to industry players, release of these dues, most of which are stuck in arbitration and run into thousands of crores of rupees, would bring in immediate liquidity in the current COVID crisis scenario, rather than the ₹20 lakh crore economic stimulus package announced recently.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently announced a stimulus package of ₹20 lakh crore, or 10 per cent of the GDP, in five tranches to give a boost to the economy which will be in the negative territory for the current fiscal.

"Funding of construction projects will be instrumental in helping revive the economy as infrastructure investment has the highest GDP multiplier factor, almost 2.0x, and our industry is among the largest employment generators

impacting seven crore households. Risk aversion by financial institutions to infrastructure was prevalent pre-COVID, and has now worsened," HCC Director and Group CEO Arjun Dhawan told PTI.

He further said that contract enforcement and timely dispute resolution is the bedrock of free enterprise and while all hope for swifter conciliation or court proceedings, an immediate solution is the unqualified payment of arbitration dues without repeated challenge in courts or the onerous requirement of bank guarantees.

"This immediate liquidity will repay lenders, unlock supply chains, protect thousands of MSMEs including migrant labour while restarting the profit cycle that will trigger our economic revival," he added.

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) alone has at least 180 cases in arbitration involving a sum of about ₹80,000 crore.

The agency has been holding dialogues (with contractors and industry players) to find resolution to disputes through reconciliation.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India has also slashed

the repo rate by 40 basis points in eighth straight cut and also allowed lenders to extend an ongoing moratorium on loan repayment, which was due to end on May 31, by another three months till August 31, a move intended at easing liquidity pressure.

"These initiatives will boost liquidity subsequently as the clients or customers can avail credit, but eventually it would be spent on project execution. The policy announced relaxation in time limits for infra projects, but is silent on who would bear the cost implications of lockdown. Once lockdown ends, we expect more clarity and that would put to rest this debate," Tata Projects Chief Strategy Officer Himanshu Chaturvedi said.

Echoing similar views, global professional services firm Alvarez & Marsal Managing Director Venkataraman Renganathan opined that the stimulus package is a step in the right direction and is intended to infuse liquidity into the system, however, it is a credit line.

"In a way, the stimulus package will get in the liquidity for projects which have been stranded for money.

Need to convert development into mass movement: Niti Aayog's Rajiv Kumar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There is a need to convert development into mass movement, and India should aspire to become second or third largest economy in the world by 2047, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said on Sunday.

Addressing a webinar organised by Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal, Kumar pointed out that private sector investment is necessary for the economic growth of India.

"Today we need to convert development into Jan Andolan (mass movement)... India should aspire to become second or third largest economy by 2047," Niti Aayog Vice Chairman said. Presently, India is the fifth largest economy in the world. Kumar also said if India generates enough employment opportunities then economic growth will happen.

He pointed out that COVID-19 pandemic has shown weaknesses of Indian society.

"80 per cent of our workers are below the radar, we don't have data about them.

Gold imports dip for fifth consecutive month in April

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's gold imports contracted for the fifth consecutive month in a row, falling by about 100 per cent to USD 2.83 million in April due to the lockdowns imposed globally on account of coronavirus outbreak.

The import of the yellow metal stood at USD 3.97 billion in April 2019, according to the commerce ministry's data.

The decline in gold imports has helped in narrowing the country's trade deficit to USD 6.8 billion during the last month as against USD 15.33 billion a year ago.

Gold imports have been recording negative growth since December last year.

India is the largest importer of gold, which mainly caters to the demand of jewellery industry. In volume terms, the country imports 800-900 tonnes of gold annually. Gems and jewellery exports declined 98.74 per cent to USD 36 million in April.

AWS driving Netflix, Fortnite, Zoom entertain and empower millions at home

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

As you stream your favourite movies or TV series on Netflix, Disney Plus or Hulu, or connect with your team via video meet app Zoom, leading Cloud service provider Amazon Web Services (AWS) in the backdrop is ensuring seamless, scalable and secure connectivity to help people at home and organisations function while they can't operate normally at work.

According to AWS CEO Andy Jassy, a lot of things that are allowing humanity to deal with the global health crisis run on top of AWS which is Amazon's Cloud arm and topped \$10 billion in quarterly revenue for the first time in the January-March period.

"We're just trying to help our customers in various areas. If you look at Netflix, it runs completely on top of AWS. So does Disney Plus. Hulu runs on AWS. Prime Video runs on AWS. All those entertainment pieces have kind of made time

go by," Jassy said during a fire-side chat at AWS Online Summit recently.

"Fortnite runs on top of AWS, and so does Sony PlayStation. A lot of other popular games too," he informed. The popular Battle Royale game Fortnite has gained 350 million registered players, who in April collectively spent over 3.2 billion hours in the game. According to Jassy, AWS has its own video-conferencing service in Chime.

"But a lot of people use Zoom, and the vast majority of Zoom's cloud infrastructure runs on AWS and will for the foreseeable future," he said.

Amazon Chime Voice Connector is a service that enables enterprises to migrate their telephony workloads to AWS.

If you have kids at home, you also realise they're all doing e-learning at the moment. "If you just look at companies like Blackboard and Instructure's Canvas, which run on top of AWS.

THAKUR TO INDIA INC Take advantage of Govt initiatives and step up investment

PTI ■ 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 told PTI in an interview.

As part of ₹20.97 lakh crore Atmanirbhar Bharat package, Thakur said Govt has announced a slew of long-pending structural reforms concerning industry, especially land, labour and laws, in a bid to improve investment climate and ease of doing business.

Besides, the Minister said other bold reforms announced, including easing of limits on foreign direct investment in defence manufacturing, privatisation of six more airports, and

allowing private sector in commercial coal mining, provide newer avenues for investment.

To take care of liquidity needs, various schemes have been unveiled to provide cash to industries to kickstart their business, he said.

"I personally believe that we need more investment from local industries, Indian industries to showcase to others that India is an attractive destination. We need both investment from the domestic industries, and also from other countries," he said.

Talking about new avenues for investment, the Minister said, "Agriculture, agro exports, manufacturing of defence equipment within the country and making it a hub for exports. Also, the area of space where you (private players) can get more investment and mining of coal and other mineral sectors could be looked at. So, there could be many sectors."

Wholesale vegetable prices fall sharply by up to 60% during lockdown

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wholesale prices of tomato, onion and other key seasonal vegetables have declined sharply by up to 60 per cent across the country, mainly due to higher production, compression of demand and market disruption amid COVID-19 crisis.

However, the retail prices of most vegetables remain firm. According to data maintained by AGMARKNET under the Union Agriculture Ministry, the wholesale tomato prices were ruling below ₹5 per kg in some states on May 24, while that of onion to ₹6 per kg in the key producing state of Maharashtra. However, potato prices were stable at 12-13 per kg.

Tomato, onion and potato are three key largely consuming vegetables in the country. The falling price trend was also seen in other vegetables such as ladies finger, capsicum, bitter gourd, bottle gourd, chillies and coriander leaves, among others.

"It is a matter of concern that farmers are forced to sell at such low prices,"

Government think-tank Niti Aayog member Ramesh Chand told PTI.

He said the fall in rates is due to an increase in arrival due to better crop production besides mandi disruption in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

Chand, however, ruled out the impact of lack of demand from bulk users like hotels and restaurants.

Since mandis come under the purview of states, the Niti Aayog member said they should step up efforts to ensure smooth functioning of wholesale markets. If they are not able to operate due to social distancing and COVID-19 reasons, other arrangements should be made to ensure farmers do not suffer.

"Mandis are not working as usual. Maybe traders are not coming to markets. For instance Azadpur mandi in Delhi was closed for a few days due to COVID-19 reasons. There is impact on prices due to such disruptions," he said.

Chand said he had suggested states in the beginning of COVID-19 crisis to suspend

mandis for six months which not many states have done yet. Farmers should have been allowed to sell directly.

Stating that demand for vegetables has compressed in this crisis period, agri-economist Ashok Gulati said the demand from bulk users like hotels and restaurants is missing. Even households are not buying in huge quantities because of fear of infection.

"After reports of traders in some mandis had got infected with the virus, there is fear among household consumers about the quality of vegetables. They find cleaning it everytime is a big hassle and therefore shifting to pulses, whose prices have shot up sharply due to rise in demand," he explained.

Gulati said it is sad to see the government's TOP scheme under Operation Green has not been of much help to farmers in this situation. The Government has spent only ₹3 crore out of ₹500 crore since its launch two years ago under the plan, whose objective is to help tomato, onion and potato (TOP) farmers in times of surplus output.

71% prefer domestic travel, only 1.4% wish to go abroad

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

A survey by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has shown that around 71 per cent people in the country would prefer domestic travel in the coming months, while only 1.4 per cent people wanted to travel abroad.

However, the report showed that 27.6 per cent respondents in the survey would like to travel both in India and abroad.

Around 33.3 per cent respondents said that they would like to travel within one month of the lockdown restrictions being lifted. Another 30.5 per cent said that they would

travel within 3 months.

As per the survey which was conducted in north India, around 29 per cent people would like to travel within six months of the curbs being eased and just 7.1 per cent would venture out more than 1 year after the lockdown.

Further, business travel and outing with family are the two biggest reasons for travel. The two reasons account for over two-thirds of responses.

Star-rated hotels are the most preferred place of stay for respondents, as 45.2 per cent preferring them. Around 21 per cent have shown preference for staying in resorts. Use of protective gear comes across as

the most important precaution that tourists would like to take during travel with Aarogya Setu app being the preferred choice of around one-fifth of respondents. Stressing on the impact of the lockdown on the tourism sector and the need for government support, Nikhil Sawhney, Chairman, CII Northern Region, said: "Given the nature of the tourism sector, it is first to be impacted and last to recover.

The sector generates mass employment, even in remote areas, and it is critical that the Govt looks at the package to cover the tourism and hospitality sector under various policies announced."

Agro-Advisory to jute farmers in post-Amphan scenario by ICAR-CRIJAF

NEW DELHI

Jute is the important cash crop in eastern India, particularly in West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Assam and about 5 million people are directly or indirectly depends on jute crop for their livelihood.

Amidst COVID-19 crisis, jute was successfully grown in about 7.5 million ha in this season of 2020 pre-kharif successfully. Even in some states 10-15% more crop area was reported by field functionaries. But the recent "very severe cyclone" "Amphan" with wind speeds of 155 kmph and 200 to 230 mm rainfall have devastated the jute crop in some parts of North 24-Parganas, Hooghly, Nadia, Murshidabad, East Midnapur and Howrah districts of West Bengal which are main jute growing belt of West Bengal. The cyclone severely affected the standing jute crop by lodging, specially that attains a height of 0.5 to 1.5 mt.

Permission required to enter Chittaranjan Locomotive Works

Chittaranjan: As per notification of Govt. of West Bengal in the year 1971, No. 871-P dttd 06-02-1971 and of the Public Order dttd.06.02.1971 under the provisions of sections 2 (31), (2) 32,3, 144,146, and further to Railway Act , Chittaranjan township had been declared as Protected places and for entry and exit into the township prior permission of the concerned Security Officer will be required. This procedure are being followed since then. More over, in view of the current serious situation of COVID-19 pandemic , CLW administration is following strictly the recent guidelines of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India and of Govt. of West Bengal by proper vigil and by deploying security personnel at various gates of this township to stop unauthorised entry . Our efforts has lead to positive results and because of these strict measures, CLW township has so far, till the current Lockdown 4.0, not reported a single Corona positive case.

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala - 147001, Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB20105GC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in)

E-Tender Enquiry No. 272/P-3/EMP-W/11703 dt. 19.05.2020 & Tender ID: 2020_POWER_47758_1

Scope of Work: Work of loading of material from transporter's godown /Railway Station, Loading/unloading, Checking, Counting and stacking of material at O&M stores, Shifting and Restocking of scrap material, preservation of material during storage, transfer of material from one Store Keeper to another Store Keeper and all other activities associated with handling of storage of material at GGSSTP, Rupnagar.

Time period: One year **EMD:** Rs. 50,000/- fixed

Date & time up to which tender shall be received 22.06.2020 & 11:00 AM

Date & time of opening of tender 25.06.2020 & 11:30 AM

Tender specification can only be downloaded from PSPCL website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> & no hard copy of the same will be issued by this office.

Note:

1) In case any difficulty regarding uploading of the tender the prospective bidders are requested to get clarification from this office and/or e-procurement system Government of Punjab. Contact No.+91- (172)-2970263/284. It is also requested to get their digital signature well in time so as to submit tenders through e-tendering only.

2) It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on website. eproc.punjab.gov.in

RTP 22/2020 Dy. CE Monitoring, GGSSTP, Rupnagar

Energy Saved is Energy Generated
Pay Electricity bill online 24x7on
PSPCL website: www.pspcl.in

Trend
Blazer

'Definition of a heroine has evolved'

Actor **BHUMI PEDNEKAR** feels the definition of a heroine has changed, with the audience open to stories that they can relate to.

"All the films I have been a part of or the roles I have played are all so different from each other. They may have few overlapping similarities like for example my characters tell the stories of women in the heartlands," Bhumi said.

"I am proud of the cinema that I have done so far. It has helped me connect to my audience. In today's time the definition of a heroine has undergone change and evolved," she added.



'Candle showcases a glimpse of my journey so far, which has been full of surprises, struggles, celebrations and soul-searching. One thing that ties this journey together is love and hope that everything happens for the right reasons. I hope it motivates my fans burn brightly no matter what obstacles they face.'

—**Madhuri Dixit**

Actor **VARUN SHARMA**, popular as Choocha in the *Fukrey* films, is trying to expand his linguistic skills. He is learning Spanish during the lockdown.



"It is difficult to keep yourself busy all the time, so I thought why not use this time to explore a new skill. Hence, I am learning a new language. I always wanted to learn a new language and finally I got some time," Varun said.

He has also been learning painting with tips from his mother.

On the work front, Varun will be sharing screen space with Rajkumar Rao and Janhvi Kapoor in *Roohi Afzana*.

'I was anxious about giving birth'

Actor **AMERICA FERRERA** has admitted that she was very nervous and anxious about giving birth during the Coronavirus pandemic.



Earlier this month, Ferrera, popular for her role in the show *Ugly Betty*, welcomed her second child, a daughter Lucia Marisol.

In an episode of *Katie's Crib* podcast, she confessed that she had to cut down on news intake during pregnancy in order to not panic.

"I just know I have to put up my filter because I don't have the emotional capacity to let that in," said she.

With the gradual opening up of offices amid lockdown 4.0, there are a number of precautions that we need to take to remain physically and psychologically healthy, says **AYUSHI SHARMA**

Undoubtedly, all of us have been going through a lot of stress these days. People tend to feel miserable because there are a host of uncertainties this pandemic holds. Someone might have lost a job or fears that they would, some are struggling to put together money to pay bills, a few of them are worried about their health and safety or that of their loved ones. The continuous onslaught of worry, fear and insecurity is certainly increasing mental health issues day by day. But how much more can you stop the world from moving? The economic damage from staying home could be worse than the impact of the disease, believe many global leaders. Yes, we are talking about learning to live with the virus.

Now, since the Centre has announced the opening of offices and industrial units amid lockdown 4.0, the major question here is — how can people psychologically and behaviourally rewire themselves while rejoining office? Experts share that it is very important that the guidelines are adopted in the community as a behavioural change.

The risk of returning to normal, as we knew it, is in no way possible. However, MBBS, MD, Psychiatrist, Dr Anuneet Sabharwal says, "The risk cannot be calculated. It is hard to get back into the routine of things when you first return to work but you can start by planning the day in advance and making a list of things that needs to be done. Strategising your work and focussing on doing one task at a time might help you to feel in control. Once you start doing it, your natural work rhythm will fall back into place. And you can start to feel productive again."

According to the recent data, a significant and sustained increase in symptoms of anxiety and depression have been reported. People with pre-existing health conditions and aged adults have all reported higher rates of anxiety and fear, shares Ariba Abbasi, Senior Counseling Psychologist, Msc, BA. The pandemic has brought huge changes in our lifestyle. Niharika Mehta, Psychologist at Hiranandani Hopsital Vashi, a Fortis Network, tells us that new habits have to be adopted and conscious precautions have to be taken. Just as a new normal of different trends (such as diets, workout routines, fashion) are accepted, a new normal of work culture should be accepted as well. Being aware and accepting of change is the very first step towards adjusting to it, she feels.

Every other expert believe that psychologically people need to accept this as a new reality and take precautions on how to safe guard themselves. Ekta Soni, Chief Clinical Psychologist, suggests that we should focus on the things that are in our control — hand washing, using mask, sanitising and social distancing. "If we were to live constantly with insecurity and give fuel to our negative thoughts, then we would paralyse ourselves and not do anything. Eventually, things will snowball into a big mountain. Over a period of time, we will all develop our own safety measures and these would become

LIFE GOES ON



habitual. The fear has led to the rise of catastrophising (view or present a situation as considerably worse than it actually is) and hypochondriacal (obsession with the idea of having a serious but undiagnosed medical condition) traits," she says.

As per official derivatives, provisions for thermal scanning and sanitisation are being done. But what precautions can be taken individually? Dr Anuneet shares some of these simple measures that can be taken in order to prevent contracting the virus: Understand the signs and symptoms: The symptoms can include cough, fever, cold or shortness of breath. Most people may only experience mild symptoms but some can become very sick with additional health issues. If you think you may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 and have symptoms, then get in touch with the emergency room immediately and inform them about your travel history as well. The best way to protect yourself is to practise good hygiene. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol based hand sanitiser. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose with unwashed hands. Maintain social distancing when you step out of



home. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and places. It is highly recommended that people wear masks whenever stepping out of their homes, especially in situations where maintaining social distancing is difficult. You can use a tissue or a toothpick while touching the lift buttons. Make sure there is enough distance between you and your colleagues's seat. At lunchtime, eat at a distance from others.

The threat of disease can lead us to become harsher judges of the people within our social group. The social attitude of people have become more conservative. This may reflect much deeper psycholog-

ical shifts. So what can be done? Dr Ekta feels that it is true that people may become more conservative but the mindset has to change from avoiding people to taking the above mentioned precautions ourselves. "People must realise that the fight is against the virus and not with each other. It is possible to win only if we all work together. It is important that people take responsibility for educating people in their social circles or extended families. Make sure to circulate right and verified information only," explains Dr Ariba.

These times are difficult for every single individual. Everyone is taking time to

process the change and take care of their well-being. Compassion, empathy, and support will make it easier, believes Dr Niharika. She says, "If someone is taking time off from social media to disconnect or not responding to calls and messages, instead of dealing with it negatively, try to understand that the person needs time to focus on self. It has nothing to do with your relationship. This strengthens the bond and creates a sense of social security and support. It's extremely important, especially in the current situation," she says.

Certainly, the pandemic will still be there but life has to go on...

Hope, comfort and love

New parents should feel positive about having a child irrespective of the environment around. Experts suggest and share some tips to deal positively with the threat perception related to the new born. By **TEAM VIVA**

The thought of bringing the child into the world is filled with phases of happiness, fear and anxiety. It is difficult to imagine what new parents are going through in the post-COVID world.

It has affected the plans of new parents and expectant couples. Parenthood is a blessing and it is a priceless feeling when you welcome your baby for the first time into this world. Nothing can ever come close to this emotion.

But during this these times of crisis, when there is a threat perception related to the new born, the realities of parenthood have changed and this makes it important to ensure that positivity engulfs the new parents even more today.

The ad world too is taking note. Recently, Pampers India released a film #WelcomeToTheWorld for the newborn babies with reference to the current context. At a time when a new mother is experiencing emotional upheaval, it captures her strength and positive outlook for her baby and portrays the true essence of the new world that will unfold for her newborn with each step and each milestone.

Dr Archana Dhawan Bajaj, Gynecologists and Obstetrician and IVF Expert, Nurture IVF Centre says that the expectant couples need to understand that everyone who's in the hospital or is going through a checkup is not COVID positive. And even if you contract an infection, there are chances that it would be a mild infection and not something related to Corona.

This is a lot of threat perception related to the newborns. Dhanvarsha Dadhich from Jodhpur is expecting her second child. She says: "I am just so scared of carrying this baby. Not just delivery but taking care of the child has become a scary task. I fear stepping out of my room as my area is a Corona



hotspot."

Dr Archana says that this is a new disease and there are very few studies related to it. So it would be difficult for anyone to comment on what would be the chances of a new born. "We just need to keep in mind the three portals of infection for the baby. First is the mother herself. So she needs to ensure that she maintains distance, use masks and take necessary relevant precautions. The other point of contact is the hospital where you deliver. Anybody who's about to deliver should choose their hospital very wisely. You should only deliver in a hospital which COVID tests all its pregnant women. Any good maternity will test the mother before taking her into the labour room. Try and avoid multi-speciality hospital where people from all kinds of ailments are likely to come. The general public has a higher chance of getting infected as compared to a pregnant woman because she is home bound and takes better care. The third place where the baby can get infected is when you are visit-

ing a paediatrician. So ensure that you go only when it's really necessary. Consult through video conferences and for things like immunization, go only when your paediatrics tell you that it is urgent." Though are various drawbacks of video conferencing as there is never a replacement for seeing a doctor. Doctors cannot judge many diseases unless they physically see the patient. But then, any good doctor will tell you to come to them if they are not getting adequate information through video conferencing.

It is also very important to understand that this fear of Corona will only make you feel anxious. "It is going to stay for at least two years. Women, their families and extended families need to get out of this phobia. Pregnant women are entering hospitals like Eskimos. They are covered from head to toe. This heat will smother them. So this fear has to go," says Dr Archana.

Pointing towards the silver lining, she says that a lot of male partners will get the chance to look after their wives and babies which they

wouldn't have been able to do otherwise. That's a plus. "Also, having a baby around this time gives you the opportunity to interact with him/her as you are homebound. If you are not stepping out and maintaining your quarantine, then your baby is not going to contract infections. In this scenario, other diseases that are specific to summer and would have occurred otherwise will also not happen," says she.

The new parents should follow all the necessary precautions — stay indoors, avoid meeting people or seeing vendors, don't get domestic helps who come daily, prefer the ones who stays within the house, eat well to increase your vitality, drink a lot water, keep exercising so that your lung capacity remains high, breathe fresh air, walk on your terrace or balcony. These are some of the little things one needs to take care of.

"Other than that being a new parent you have to condition yourself being positive irrespective of the environment around," says Dr Archana.

WEBBED



I'M NO LONGER HERE
A terrible misunderstanding with a local gang sends 17-year-old Ulises, leader of a group hooked on cumbia music, across the border to save his life. Starring Juan Daniel García, Angelina Chen and Jonathan Espinoza, the film releases on May 27 on Netflix.



SPACE FORCE
A four-star general begrudgingly teams up with an eccentric scientist to get the US military's newest agency — Space Force — ready for lift-off. Created by Steve Carell and Greg Daniels, season 1 releases on May 29 on Netflix.



THE VAST OF NIGHT
In the twilight of the 1950s, on one fateful night in New Mexico, a young switch board operator Fay and charismatic radio DJ Everett discover a strange audio frequency that could change their small town and the future forever. Directed by Andrew Patterson, the film releases on May 29 on Amazon Prime Video.

BLEND OF SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

Research during the last few decades has confirmed that yoga contributes to health and happiness of people. Filmmaker, art historian and photographer BENOY K BEHL explored the idea while shooting his latest film, *Yoga for Health & Global Harmony*

In the recent past, science and technology had been separated from spirituality. However, a lot of scientific research done in the last four decades has confirmed the far-reaching benefits of yoga and Ayurveda. The world is reaching out to integrate this ancient wisdom with the modern developments in medicine and psychology. While shooting my latest film, *Yoga for Health & Global Harmony*, Sujata Chatterji and I travelled across four continents and many countries to witness the marvellous blend of modern thinking and yoga which is taking place today. The deep connection between physical body, mind, emotions and spirit within us is being rediscovered around the globe.

Scientific research done in the last 30 to 40 years has confirmed the benefits of yoga. It has been found that it contributes to health and happiness of people in all walks of life. Further research needs to be done and yoga needs to be introduced in all branches of education, medicine and even in the workplace.

Yoga goes far beyond the medical system. It not only prevents disease but it covers all aspects of life. Integration of yoga and modern medicine would help the world to shift from disease management to health promotion.

In an interview in the film, Dr



Ananda Balayogi from Puducherry, who is a yoga expert as well as a doctor shares, "Yoga has come a long way from the time when it was confined to the ashrams in the forests or the caves of the high Himalayas. It is now found in modern hospi-

als."

He says, "Genetic potentialities may be preventable from becoming actualities. Our genes are like a loaded gun but the choice of whether the trigger is pulled or not lies with us. Yoga enables us to make

the right choice."

In next interview, Dr Andreas Michalsen from Charite University Hospital, Berlin, shares, "Step-by-step in the last few years, we see more acceptance of yoga in mainstream medicine. It means that it is



now almost an established part of standard medical care in Germany."

Another Ayurveda and yoga expert, Ramesh Vangal from Bengaluru, India, explains that yoga's entire essence is a concept called samatvam, which means bal-

ance. "It's very logical, when you are balanced, your body heals daily. So balance is what restores and heals you in a way that no medicine does. Most allopathic medicines basically treat the symptoms. They provide symptomatic relief, they can never

cure," says he.

For instance, Vangal tells us, "If I had diabetes and I am taking an allopathic medicine, what does it do? It cuts the symptoms but the moment I stop taking it, I get diabetes back again. However, if I am balanced, I am able to fight the imbalance and restore health." Anu Ramaswamy, Teachers' Training Course Student, Sivananda Yoga Farm, Grass Valley CA, says in the next interview, "I have restless leg syndrome, it's also known as Willis-Ekbom Disease. It's a nerve neuromuscular pain in the leg and I have had it for about 15 to 20 years. Since it is a neuromuscular condition, the medicines are invasive and affect the nervous system. Meditation and pranayama actually helps me to keep the pain either in control or pretty much not experience it at all. Also, I used to take the highest dose of sulfonylurea for diabetes till about six months ago, now I don't take it at all."

Yoga researcher and expert, Dr Sat Bir Khalsa, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, USA, says, "Modern medicine tends to be divided between psychiatry on the one hand and physical medicine on the other. The two really don't talk to each other, yet obviously the mind and body are inextricably linked. So yoga addresses that link between mind and body."

Working at the Corona hotspots from morning till evening, women police constables have been walking on the line of fire since the beginning of the nation-wide lockdown. Their contribution must be recognised not just as public servants but as women who are taking care of the nation along with their children and families.

Standing under the sun in Harnaamdas area — one of the hotspots of Meerut, constable Latesh sanitises her hands and then brings her mask down to wipe the sweat dripping down her forehead. "I have two children. The schools are shut so I am a little relaxed about their safety. I reach home around nine at night, take a bath, cook dinner, help them in their studies, make preparations for the next day and then go to bed past midnight. To ensure that all the household chores are complete before I leave for my duty, I have to wake up at five," shared Latesh who, despite being worried about her health, puts duty first. The only thing she complains of is the lack of sanitation facilities. "Risk of contamination is higher in hotspot areas. In such a situation, where are we expected to relieve ourselves? There is no police station nearby where we could use the washroom. In its absence, we have to request people to allow us to enter their houses which increases our chances of exposure. We take huge risks to survive," she added.

Constable Meenu, who is also posted in a hotspot in Meerut shares the challenges posed by the 12-hour long duty. "After reaching home, I bathe and keep my uniform outside the house in a separate box. In this 12-hour duty, I do not get time to wash and iron my uniform every day and have to use the same uniform for two days," says she as she has to complete other household chores before and after the duty.

She believes that people are safe inside their houses and she puts in extra efforts to ensure that lockdown guidelines are

SHE, THE FORCE

Women constables serving in Corona hotspots take huge risks to survive in difficult situations with courage and pride, says SHALU AGARWAL



being followed strictly in the areas assigned to her. "We eat while standing outside the gates of the affected colony so that people are safe," says she.

In another hotspot area of Meerut City, a woman constable Anita is seen scolding people for roaming unnecessarily on the streets. And then, the very next moment, she is video calling her toddler daughter and calming her down. She is serving the public for the last nine years. "We have to be strict as people do not understand the threat. We are standing here in a contaminated area risking our lives and people want to roam outside — I do not understand this," rues Anita, hinting towards the irresponsible behaviour of people who, despite having the privilege of staying inside their houses, were breaking the rules of the lockdown. "I am concerned about my children as

they are quite young. I have to leave them with my mother-in-law as my husband serves in the Indian Army and is posted outside Meerut."

These women posted in high-risk areas consider this 'special-duty' as an opportunity to serve the people of the country. In the interviews, they admit that they are not afraid of Corona and will keep the honour of the uniform by serving till their last breath. "While talking to my parents, I wanted to tell them how much I missed them but then I remembered why I joined the police services," shares Sonam whose parents live in Saharanpur while she has been serving as a constable for the last 10 years in Meerut.

Although, these women constables are fearless, but they have their weak moments too. Sharing one such incident, constable Bobby says, "On the very

first day of my posting in the hotspot area, I was scared. As part of our daily routine, my parents called me during noon and I wanted to ask my mother to pray for my health but I had to hold back my nervousness so that they don't get tensed."

Be it the police, health or sanitation department, every person serving in the high-risk environment is equally vulnerable and can easily be exposed to COVID-19 but it is about time that the dual roles of women are acknowledged. They carry various responsibilities — devote 12 hours in the hotspot regions, eight hours to household chores and get hardly four hours for themselves. On ground, they are more exposed to sanitation and hygiene challenges than men, yet stand in the line of duty with equal courage, fighting Corona effectively. Salute!

—(Charkha Features)

Share hope and compassion

It is only our good karma which will help us tide over crisis rather than our status or wealth, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Most of us would agree that COVID-19 has turned the world upside down. Everything — how we live, interact with each other, the way we work, communicate and of course, the way we travel — has been impacted. However, inspite of these negative effects, there are many positive ones too, which many of us would have observed while staying under lockdown. It is so wonderful to see that during such disasters, suddenly we all forget our caste, creed, religion, status and come together to focus solely on survival, sharing hope and compassion. We simply do this because we cannot bear to see the misery and suffering of our fellow beings. Hence, their pain becomes ours. Just imagine not being able to be a part of last rites of a loved one or feeling helpless at not getting a hospital bed for him/her. Under such circumstances, when a person who is not even known to us helps us out of the blue, it makes our belief in humanity and spirituality stronger.

It is so ironical that Armed forces across the globe are not fighting each other, but are distributing food, water and medicines to their citizens. From where does this loving humanity arise so spontaneously at a time like this? Today, we have a renewed sense of trust, in every human being and the government, as we continue to part with our wealth and services, hoping that they will reach the needy.

The pandemic as well as other natural disasters that we are witnessing today are, in a way, a reflection of our inner world — mirroring the tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes that continually break out in our mind. The ruthless energy of anger, violence and greed has taken a toll on mankind and mother earth. As we keep exploiting earth's mineral resources, hack its forests, pollute its water, deplete the soil, we rob it of all its energy. Thus this is nature's way of telling us that 'enough is enough'. Since most of us do not realise that mother earth has a heart and she, too, has feelings, we keep on hurting her without any kind of remorse. Just like we express



our love and affection towards our mother, we should do the same with mother earth.

Majority of us thank anyone who gives us something or helps us in some way. But do we do the same with mother earth? How many of us have thanked her for the fresh-air, water, food, sun and many more things that she gives us since the time we were born. How many of us have apologised for inflicting so much pain on her? Many would counter question, how do we do this? Or how do we communicate with nature? Well, the simplest and easiest way to do this is by praying or medi-

tating with positive thoughts which most of us can do. You never know the impact of your pure thoughts. One must not forget that there is a deep connection that we all share with mother earth — a feeling, a knowledge that during times of need, she would certainly come and defend us. Hence, we must realise that natural disasters in particular are a wakeup call as to where we are investing all our energies. Are we too busy giving value to accumulating, hoarding, storing, stockpiling material wealth and possessions, and not giving enough time to the upliftment of the soul. It is quite unfortunate that we need such disasters to bring the world together as one big family. Isn't it time to be wise and not commit the same mistakes that we have been committing till now? If only our vision would remain the same for all the time — a vision of oneness, embracing all, being non-judgmental, creating harmony in a relationships, so that we can be there for each other no matter what, as a family would be.

So let us all come together as one to support every member of the global human family and start respecting mother nature who is a life-giver. Remember that no status or wealth would ever matter during disasters. The only thing that would matter would be our good karma, which would help us tide over bad situations and carry us forward.

“There are no great things, only small things with great love. Happy are those. —Mother Teresa”

HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE UPS DEATH RISK

A significant observational study led by Professor Mandeep AR Mehra, executive director of the Brigham and Women's Hospital Center for Advanced Heart Disease in Boston, has claimed that treatment with antimalarial drug chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine (taken with or without antibiotics azithromycin or clarithromycin) offers no benefit for patients with Covid-19. The study, published in the journal The Lancet, comes after US President Donald Trump said he is taking hydroxychloroquine to ward off Coronavirus, even though health officials have warned it may be unsafe. "This is the first large scale study to find statistically robust evidence that treatment with chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine does not benefit patients with COVID-19," said Mehra. "Instead, our findings suggest it may be associated with an increased risk of serious heart problems and increased risk of death," he warned.



RESEARCHERS DEVELOP EFFICIENT N95 FILTER

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, there's been a worldwide shortage of face masks — particularly, the N95 ones, now researchers have developed a membrane that can be attached to a regular N95 mask and replaced when needed. The filter has a smaller pore size than normal N95 masks, potentially blocking more virus particles, the researcher from King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Saudi Arabia, said. According to the study, published in the journal ACS Nano, N95 mask filter about 85 per cent of particles smaller than 300 nm. SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) is in the size range of 65-125 nm, so some virus particles could slip through these coverings. Also, because of shortages, many workers had to wear the same N95 mask, even though its intended for single use. To help with this, the researchers wanted to develop a membrane that more efficiently filters particles the size of SARS-CoV-2.



PLACENTA INJURY SIGN OF COVID

The placentas from 16 women who tested positive for Covid-19 while pregnant showed evidence of injury, the organ that acts as the gut, kidneys, liver and lungs for a fetus during pregnancy, say researchers. According to the study, published in the American Journal of Clinical Pathology, pathological exams completed directly following birth found evidence of insufficient blood flow from the mother to the fetus and blood clots in the placenta. The injury seen in the placentas shows abnormal blood flow between the mothers and their babies in utero. The findings could help inform how pregnant women should be clinically monitored during the pandemic. "Most of these babies were delivered full-term after otherwise normal pregnancies, so you wouldn't expect to find anything wrong with the placentas, but this virus appears to be inducing some injury in the placenta," said study senior author Dr Jeffrey Goldstein, assistant professor of pathology from US.



SOCIAL ISOLATION MAY UP HEART ATTACK RISK

Researchers have revealed that people who are socially isolated are over 40 per cent more likely to have a cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack or stroke, than those who were socially integrated. The study also found that those who are socially isolated are almost 50 per cent more likely to die from any cause. "We have known for some time that feeling lonely or lacking contact with close friends and family can have an impact on your physical health," said study researcher Dr Janine Gronewold from University Hospital in Essen, Germany. "What this study tells us is that having strong social relationships is of high importance for your heart health and similar to the role of classical protective factors such as having a healthy blood pressure, acceptable cholesterol levels, and normal weight," Gronewold added.



PHONE MEASURES HB WITHOUT DRAWING BLOOD

Researchers have developed a way to use smartphone images of a person's eyelids to assess blood hemoglobin levels — a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen. The ability to perform one of the most common clinical lab tests without a blood draw could help reduce the need for in-person clinic visits, make it easier to monitor patients who are in critical condition, the study, published in the Optica journal said. "Our new mobile health approach paves the way for bedside or remote testing of blood hemoglobin levels for detecting anemia, acute kidney injury and haemorrhages, or for assessing blood disorders such as sickle cell anemia," said study researcher Young Kim from Purdue University in the US.



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 bar 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 as 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 bowlers' 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 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.

"(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 batsmen 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 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

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

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's 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 Bazee and Sergio Cordova scored as Augsburg moved seven points clear of the relegation play-off place.

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



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

things around," he added after Augsburg ended a run of four straight defeats.

Augsburg host Paderborn on Wednesday, the same day Schalke visit strugglers Fortuna Dueseldorf, who occupy the relegation play-off spot in 16th.

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, Blake, 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.