

OPINION 6
STRATEGIC
STALEMATE

MONEY 9
SENSEX EXTENDS GAINS,
RECLAIMS 32,000-MARK

SPORT 12
PREMIER LEAGUE TO
RESTART ON JUNE 17

CHANDIGARH, FRIDAY MAY 29, 2020, PAGES 12-12

The Pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



MALAIKA SHARES
HER MORNING
RITUAL
10 VIVACITY

Ensure free travel for migrants: SC

Stranded workers must be provided with food and water, States/UTs told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ten days after it junked a PIL on the plight of migrant workers, the Supreme Court on Thursday directed that no train or bus fare be charged from the migrant workers stranded across the country and they be provided food and water.

Between then and now, dozens of migrant workers were mowed down by trains and buses or were found dead inside trains while returning to their home States.

The SC, which passed interim directions, said all migrant workers who are stranded shall be provided food by concerned States and Union Territories (UTs) at places which shall be publicised and notified to them for the period they are waiting for their turn to board a train or a bus. A Bench headed by Justice



Cadets of Scouts & Guides provide drinking water to the migrants sitting in a Shramik Special train for their native places, during ongoing Covid-19 lockdown at Mathura Railway Station on Thursday. PTI

Ashok Bhushan said the originating State shall provide meals and water at the station and during the journey while the Railways would provide the same to the migrant workers. It

said food and water be also provided to them for travel in buses.

The Bench, also comprising Justices SK Kaul and MR Shah, directed that States to oversee the registration of migrant workers and ensure that they are made to board the train or bus at the earliest.

The top court said complete information in this regard should be publicised to all concerned.

The court observed that it is presently concerned with the miseries and difficulty faced by the migrants workers who are trying to get to their native places. It said though there is no doubt that State Governments and UTs are taking steps, several lapses have been issued in the process of registration, transportation and providing food water to the migrants.

Earlier, the apex court also asked some questions from the Centre on the plight of

migrant workers ranging from as to how long they will have to wait before going to their native places to who will pay for their travel and provide them food and shelter.

The court asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, about the confusion over the payment of travel fare of stranded migrant workers and said that they should not be made to pay for their journey back home.

"What is the normal time? If a migrant is identified, there must be some certainty that he will be shifted out within one week or ten days at most? What is that time?"

There had been instances where one State sends migrants but at the border another State says we are not accepting the migrants. We need a policy on this," the Bench told Mehta.

We're engaged, India rejects US offer on China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after US President Donald Trump offered to mediate between India and China in what he termed a "raging border dispute," New Delhi on Thursday virtually rejected the US proposal saying it was "engaged" with Beijing at diplomatic level to resolve the issue "peacefully."

Making the Indian stand clear, External Affairs Minister Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, "Our engagement on the diplomatic front continues both in Delhi as well as in Beijing."

India and China, he said, have engagements both at the military level as well as diplomatic levels. The two nations have signed several protocols on maintaining peace and tranquillity at the border.

There are many agreements on this issue. "Our troops have taken a very responsible approach towards border management. They scrupulously follow the guidance provided by our leadership. At the same time, we will defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity," he

added. The US President in a tweet message from Washington had said, "We have informed both India and China that the United States is ready, willing and able to mediate or arbitrate their now raging border dispute."

Besides indicating that the LAC dispute was a bilateral issue and there was no need for third party interference, India on Thursday also said the two countries (India and China) have established a mechanism to resolve the situation peacefully through dialogue.

Sources also said talks at the local military level between commanders of the two armies are also on. In fact, more than seven rounds of talks were held in the last fortnight but could not achieve a breakthrough.

The armies of India and China are involved in face-offs at four places for the last 25 days or so in Eastern Ladakh. The Chinese army has also intruded into the Hot Spring area near Galwan valley and reinforced its troop strength to over 5,000 in total at all the stand-off locations.

Delhi, Bengal, Kerala see biggest single-day spike

For second consecutive day, India reports highest number of cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi, West Bengal and Kerala reported their biggest single day spike on Thursday and with Maharashtra recording yet another day of huge surge in number of cases and death it was the second consecutive day when the country recorded biggest spike of 7,220 cases.

Delhi reported 1,024 new cases and 13 deaths on Thursday and this is for the first time that the national Capital has reported more than 1,000 cases. Other than Maharashtra, only Gujarat, and now Delhi have reported 1,000 plus cases in a day. Delhi has now 16,281 confirmed cases with a death count of 316.

After the development in Delhi, the Haryana Government decided to seal its borders with the national Capital. "We will keep our border with Delhi completely sealed due to increasing Covid-19 cases," Haryana Minister Anil Vaid said.

After reporting between 2,000 and 2,200 cases for the three days, Maharashtra logged in 2,598 new Covid-19 cases on

Thursday, taking the total number of coronavirus cases almost to 60,000 in the State at 59,546. The toll in the State also rose to 1,982 after 85 casualties were reported in the last 24 hours.

Reports said 36 new cases of coronavirus were reported in Mumbai's Dharavi in the last 24 hours. The total number of cases rose to 1,675 on Thursday in the densely-populated area.

West Bengal, which is battling with coronavirus and destruction caused by Amphan cyclone, reported 344 new coronavirus cases which is the highest single-day spike in



The driver of an ambulance returns after helping cremate the body of a woman who died of Covid-19 in New Delhi on Thursday. AP

cases so far. The total number of cases in the State rose to 4,536, which includes 2,573 active cases and 1,668 discharges.

Kerala is losing the initial advantage it had scored in the battle against the pandemic. The number of persons tested positive for coronavirus in the State on Thursday is an all time high, according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Amit Shah speaks to CMs, seeks views on extension of lockdown

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to all Chief Ministers on Thursday, and sought their views on extension of the ongoing nationwide lockdown beyond May 31, officials said.

The telephonic conversations of the home minister came just three days before the end of the fourth phase of the lockdown. The nationwide curbs were first imposed on March 25 to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, and has been extended thrice.

Pulwama-2 terror bid foiled, forces seize IED-laden car

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces, aided by intelligence agencies, on Thursday prevented a repeat of Pulwama type "audacious" terror strike on the convoy of security forces by timely detecting a vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (IED), fitted with at least 40-45 kg of explosives, in Ayengund area of Rajpora in Pulwama district.

Police suspected involvement of local commanders of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and Hizbul Mujahideen behind the sinister plot to avenge recent killings of their top commanders, including Riyaz Naikoo and Junaid Shehri, in anti-terrorist operations in the Kashmir valley.

According to official sources, the explosive-laden car, bearing a fake registration number JK08B-1426, was detonated by the Bomb Disposal Squad causing extensive damage to window panes of local



Paramilitary soldiers stand guard near a checkpoint in Srinagar on Thursday. AP

houses in the area early Thursday morning.

Late on Wednesday, several residents were escorted to safer places before detonating the vehicle-borne IED.

K'taka suspends flights from 5 hotspot States

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka Government on Thursday pitched for down scaling air travel from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, saying a large number of people arriving from these States have tested positive for Covid-19 and it would be difficult to manage quarantine if more arrived.

Karnataka Parliamentary Affairs Minister JC Madhuswamy said the Government has decided to "suspend" air traffic from these States. "People are coming from these States to Karnataka... We have decided to suspend air traffic from five States, as cases here (Karnataka) may further increase," he said.

Domestic air travel resumed in the country only on Monday after nearly two months of Covid-19 induced lockdown with Karnataka stipulating seven days institutional quarantine for passengers coming from seven States, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and MP.

Staggered entry, no group lunch, no central ACs for Govt offices

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

For the next few months, there has to be no group lunch, entry to the offices through multiple gates, no loitering through the corridors of Shashi Bhawan, Udyog Bhawan, Rail Bhawan, Sena Bhawan, Nirman Bhawan, etc, and above all no use of central air conditioning system for the Central Government staffers. These guidelines should be followed from Monday after nearly two months of Covid-19 induced lockdown with Karnataka stipulating seven days institutional quarantine for passengers coming from seven States, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and MP.

The Centre on Thursday issued a new set of guidelines which says centralised ACs may not be used for time



In this file photo, an Indian Army truck crosses Chang La pass near Pangong Lake in Ladakh region. AP

being, if possible. While it has suggested that employees should take entry into the building through different gates in a staggered manner, it has also advised people to take stairs, or if using lifts, then physical distance of six feet has to be ensured. The rules also say that only four people can occupy lift for one travel and that the occupants should face the wall of the lift and avoid

talking. While wearing of mask, use of soap and sanitiser at every interval is a must, the new office memorandum notified by the Health Ministry also says that the movement of "handwritten" receipts and files should be discouraged so as to avoid the infection through frequent touching of papers. As much as possible, employees should avoid using other employees' phones, office paraphernalia like desks and tools and equipment.

The guidelines ask the employees to avoid group lunches. It says that the lunch timing may be staggered as much as possible and has prohibited entering and crowding in the corridors of the office premises.

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	59,546	1,982	18,616
Tamil Nadu	19,372	148	10,548
Delhi	16,281	316	7,495
Gujarat	15,572	938	8,003
Rajasthan	8,067	179	4,815
Madhya Pradesh	7,453	321	4,050
Uttar Pradesh	7,170	197	4,215
West Bengal	4,536	295	1,668
Andhra Pradesh	3,245	59	2,133
Bihar	3,090	15	918

50 dists in 6 States under attack of Pak locusts

Crops on 15 lakh acres affected across six States since Dec last

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 45-50 districts in six States — Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh after Rajasthan and Gujarat — are under attack of crores of desert locusts that entered from Pakistan last year.

It is estimated that crops on 10-15 lakh acres have been affected across six States since December last year while the Government estimates around one lakh acres of cotton, summer pulses and vegetables crops have been affected so far. The Ministry of Agriculture esti-



This grab made from Wednesday video provided by KK Productions shows locusts swarming over city and nearby area in Indore. AP

mates that not much damage to crops is reported as sowing has not taken place in most of the areas and harvest of winter crops is over.

The Shivraj Singh Chouhan Government in Madhya Pradesh is planning to declare the locust swarm attacks as natural disaster, fol-

lowing a survey on the losses. Haryana on Thursday issued high alert in 10 districts for farmers while Odisha and Chhattisgarh also issued advisories to farmers.

Delhi's neighbouring region, NoIDA, Ghaziabad, Gurugram have also issued advisories to this effect.

Delhi Govt orders pesticide spray to protect standing crops, vegetation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Thursday issued an advisory asking authorities concerned to spray insecticides and pesticides on standing crops, and gardens and orchards to prevent an imminent attack by the swarm of locusts, informed Development Minister Gopal Rai in a tweet.

"As the swarm of locusts flies in daytime, and rests during the night, it should not be allowed to rest at night," the advisory read.

Capt hails 'Moga boy Sonu Sood' for helping migrants in crisis

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Receiving accolades for his selfless service to send the stranded migrants back to their home towns from Maharashtra, Bollywood actor Sonu Sood's "charity work" won him the praise of Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh.

Capt Amarinder on Thursday took to Twitter to praise Sood, "our Moga boy" for going beyond the call of duty amidst the coronavirus pandemic to help the migrant workers go back home. "Good work Sonu!" he said.

"It fills me with immense pride whenever I read about my fellow Punjabis going beyond their call of duty to help those in need and this time it is our Moga boy Sonu Sood who has been actively helping



migrant workers by arranging buses from Mumbai to states like Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Kerala for over two weeks now. He has also been replying to those tweeting to him, asking them to send details, apart from launching a helpline number.

Earlier, cricketers like Shikhar Dhawan, actors like Ajay Devgn, and politicians like Smriti Irani, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari hailed Sonu's efforts. Even Union Minister Smriti Irani has praised Sonu Sood's efforts.

Replied to the Chief Minister, Sood said that he has always been an inspiration for him. "Thank you so much for your kind words sir. You have always been an inspiration for me. I promise to make our fel-

low Punjabis proud."

Sood has arranged numerous buses from Mumbai to states like Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Kerala for over two weeks now. He has also been replying to those tweeting to him, asking them to send details, apart from launching a helpline number. Earlier, cricketers like Shikhar Dhawan, actors like Ajay Devgn, and politicians like Smriti Irani, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari hailed Sonu's efforts. Even Union Minister Smriti Irani has praised Sonu Sood's efforts.

Last week, world renowned Chef Vikas Khanna prepared a special dish and named it 'Moga' after the town in Punjab where actor Sonu Sood was born.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

MONSOON ONSET OVER KERALA LIKELY ON JUNE 1

New Delhi: The southwest monsoon is likely to hit Kerala on June 1, thanks to a cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal, the IMD said.

SAMBIT HOSPITALISED WITH COVID SYMPTOMS

New Delhi: BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra was admitted to a private hospital in Gurugan on Thursday after he showed symptoms of Covid-19, sources said.

DMK SAYS POWER BILL AGAINST FEDERALISM

Chennai: Battling against any move to halt free electricity, DMK president MK Stalin on Thursday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to withdraw the proposed Electricity Bill 2020 as it "encroached" the rights of the States and went "against the principles of federalism."

Paying school fee in times of job losses triggers hopelessness

NISHU MAHAJAN ■ CHANDIGARH

A letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi written by a city-based resident requesting him to legalise sale of kidneys hit the national headlines this week.

Some would assume that someone talking about legalising sale of kidneys needs to pay off debts but the resident just wants to pay the school fees of his daughter.

The letter written by Atul Vohra, a resident of Sector 52 here, reads, "I am jobless since last three months due to Covid-19 restrictions and have to take care of my five family members. In such situation, I have to pay ₹32,000 for my daughter's school fee. If the Government is incapacitated to provide stringent laws to curb the commercialization of education, please make the required amendment in law to legalise sale of human organs, so that parents like me, can sell kidneys and other organs to pay the school fee for ensuring continuity of education of our

children and feed the greed of the schools."

Vohra is among many others affected due to the recent order of Chandigarh Administration (UT Education Department) allowing the private-unaided schools to collect tuition fees on monthly basis from parents. The last date to deposit tuition fee has been decided as 15th of every month from June 2020 onwards. However, the fee of April and May for this year is to be collected by May 31 without any late fee to be charged.

Sharing his ordeal, Atul Vohra, while talking to *The Pioneer* says, "I was doing a marketing job but since last three months, I have not got any salary and rendered jobless due to coronavirus. I am the sole earning member of my family constituting of my parents, wife and daughter."

"My daughter is studying in St. Joseph's Senior Secondary School. The school is demanding ₹32,000 for the current academic session summing up to ₹32,000 without

giving any relief to the parents," he adds while urging the local authorities and the Union Government to take stringent measures to curb the commercialization of education, at least during times when the entire world is facing its biggest challenge-Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. "How will I pay the school fee when I am going through financial crisis?" Atul asks.

"I can't pay my house rent, monthly EMIs, insurance premiums, medical expenses, basic utility bills, and the huge mortgage of debt taken on my friends and family to cater to my financial obligations," he further says.

The last two- three months of uncertainty, brought on by the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown in Chandigarh, has resulted in financial stress for many people.

The pandemic has clobbered the private sector and small businesses with many other businesses in Chandigarh, the schools for those experiencing financial crisis, deciding how to

spend money is a constant battle among the basic needs of food, health, and paying school fee for opening the schools and a handful of other bills.

Daisy Kaur, a resident of Sector 20 says, "My son is in 8th standard in a private school here. The school has sought more than ₹8000 tuition fee for two months. Her husband, who has a small mobile repair shop, could not work for last two months due to lockdown. Though he has been able to open the shop now, there are hardly any customers."

MLAs there is a drastic dip in the earnings, there is no other option but to pay school fee this month and other utility bills, somehow," she says, adding, "We will also have to pay more than ₹40,000 College fee this month. During the time when people are surviving hand to mouth each day, we were expecting some relief from local authorities in terms of payment of school fees and other bills."

While in Chandigarh, the schools for those experiencing financial crisis, deciding how to

time due to financial hardships and online classes should be provided to all students without discriminating.

Notably, the UT Administration's March order was challenged by the Independent Schools Association (ISA), Chandigarh in the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which had asked the Administration to talk to private schools on the issue of school fee.

HS Mamik, President of ISA, Chandigarh says, "The private schools have been asked to charge only tuition fee but the UT Administration has no authority to pass such order. We are going to challenge this decision legally. Thousands of families are relying on us as we have to pay salaries to teachers and staff members in schools. It is fair not to charge school fee from students?"

Only two days back, 51 private schools out of 77 in Chandigarh were issued show-cause notices by UT Administration for not paying income and expenditure details on their websites.

Parents' Association has alleged that private schools have not submitted their balance sheets as they are sitting on crores of undeclared surplus money, yet they are asking for school fees to pay salaries of their staff.

On the allegations, Mamik says, "Those schools which have not submitted their income and expenditure details, will submit it as per the directions."

Commenting on parents' protest, he says, "Property tax witnessed hike, fuel prices were increased but no one protested in the city. Only 10-15 people are protesting outside schools on fee issue and these protests are politically motivated."

Directions have already been issued to school authorities to give relief to those who cannot pay school fee due to financial crisis because of lockdown. There is no rationale behind parents' protest as they always have the option to transfer their children to government schools, if they want."

Drawing attention to the

plight of parents, Nitin Goyal, President, Chandigarh Parents' Association says, "In the garb of collecting tuition fee, the private schools are charging hefty fee including all kinds of charges related to computer fee, library fee, and infrastructure maintenance among others. Everyone is under financial stress these days and paying a hefty school fee is not possible for all parents."

"Even those who can afford to pay tuition fee are not willing to do so since schools are closed from past two months. Students did not take admission in schools for online classes but are still forced to pay the school fee amid the Coronavirus lockdown," he says.

Teachers are not well prepared to take online classes and everyone is struggling to bridge the digital gap. The private school managements should have waited till the reopening of schools for charging the fee from parents. It is unethical and immoral to charge the fee when schools are closed, he adds.

Over 36,000 migrant workers return home from UT so far

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

As many as 36,243 migrant workers have returned to their home towns through special shramik trains from Chandigarh so far.

Two trains accommodating 3102 migrant workers left Chandigarh Railway Station on Thursday for Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

A special shramik train for Chhapra, Hajipur, Mutaffapur and Darbhanga in Bihar accommodated 1600 passengers from Chandigarh while another train for Nazibabad, Gonda and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh accommodated 1502 passengers, said Anand Singh, Secretary Social Welfare.

He said that while 36243 passengers returned home through special shramik trains, 2188 returned home through buses from Chandigarh till date.

Garg said that since all the trains that were scheduled in consultation with concerned State Governments and Railways have been sent to their destinations, the status will be reviewed to decide further course of action.

Punjab Opp parties oppose move to hike fee in medical colleges

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

After Punjab Cabinet decided to increase the fees in the States medical colleges, both private and Government, the opposition parties have opposed the move.

State's principal opposition party, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has accused the Government of buckling under pressure of the "medical education mafia" while demanding constitution committee of judges to check open loot by medical colleges in Punjab.

Vehemently condemning the "backbreaking" 80 percent hike in the medical colleges' fee structure, Bhollath MLA has demanded immediate rollback, particularly in view of the impending pandemic crisis that has hit the economy hard.

AAP alleged that, like the previous Badal government, Capt Amarinder Singh, too, had been playing into the hands of the medical education mafia active in the state.

The party demanded setting up of a commission under the watch of a sitting Judge of High Court to look into the ongoing wanton loot of medical colleges in Punjab, by bringing out a white paper on

the fee fixed and charged from students of MBBS, BDS, MD/MS and Nursing Colleges since 2013.

Punjab Cabinet's decision to increase fees of medical students by 77 percent has made the medical education in Punjab more expensive than other states of the country, said AAP MLAs — state core committee chairman Principal Budhran, chief spokesperson Prof Baljinder Kaur and Meet Hayer.

Khaira, the former Leader of Opposition, slammed the Congress led State Government said, "It is alarming to note that the Government has made this huge increase in the fee structure of the said medical colleges at a time when ordinary people are suffering under severe economic crunch."

"This huge increase will shatter the dreams of all those youngsters aspiring to become doctors in Punjab. It is because of such erroneous and foolish decisions, the medical education has been migrating to other parts of the world in lakhs for better livelihood," he said while asking the Chief Minister to immediately rollback the 80 percent steep hike in the fee structure of medical colleges of the State.

Hry Speaker serves notice to SP, MC Joint Commissioner for not picking up calls of MLAs

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

Taking serious note of the students of Haryana MLAs that Government officers did not pick up their phone calls, State Vidhan Sabha Speaker Gian Chand Gupta on Thursday sought an explanation from Sonapat Municipal Corporation.

Joint Commissioner Shambhu Nathi and Rewari SP Nazreen Bhasin.

In two days of video conference recently conducted by the Speakers with legislators, MLAs from the Assam and Government officers did not pick their phone calls.

In his written complaint to Speaker, BJP MLA Laxman Singh Yadav from Koshi assembly seat in Rewari district said he had written to the SP and he did not pick up his phone calls. Other police officers are also not picking up his phone calls. SP should be transferred from the district."

Congress MLA Surendra Patil from the Assam and his written complaint stated that he had made several phone calls to Shambhu Nathi, Joint Commissioner of Municipal Corporation but he did not pick up his phone calls.

SP Gogi, Congress MLA from Assam

ON THE DIRECTION OF HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER MANOHAAR LAL KHATTAR, ORDERS HAVE BEEN ISSUED FOR ALL THE GOVERNMENT OFFICERS TO PICK UP THE PHONE CALLS OF ALL THE MPS AND MLAS. IN THE ORDER, OFFICERS HAVE BEEN STRICTLY DIRECTED TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES ARE CALLED BACK WITHIN TWO HOURS OF THEIR PHONE CALLS

Secretary, Speaker, taking the matter seriously, has sent a notice to the Rewari SP and Joint Commissioner of Sonapat Municipal Corporation. At the same time, the Speaker also sent a letter to the Chief Secretary for action against SDM. The complaints of MLAs against HCS level officers have been forwarded to Chief Secretary Keshani Anand Arora for action.

Sources said that on the direction of Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, orders have been issued for all the government officers to pick up the phone calls of all the MPs and MLAs. In the order, officers have been strictly directed to ensure that public representatives are called back within two hours of their phone calls. Also, they should be respected.

If officers are in a meeting or are not picking up the phone calls due to any other reason, then SMS should be sent to them. Later, when they are free, calls should be made as early as possible. Officers must answer the calls of public representatives within two hours. SMS can be sent even if their number is not available. Mobile numbers of MP-MLAs should be saved in their mobile phones, they added.

Punjab CM seeks cash transfer for poor people

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Thursday demanded that the Centre give ₹10,000 to the poor and provide financial assistance to small and medium enterprises to resume operation.

In a video message as part of the Congress party's 'Speak Up India' campaign, the CM said, "I want the government to give ₹10,000 to poor people." The government should give this amount to poor people who have been contributing in producing foodgrain and also working in factories, he said. The CM also sought financial assistance to micro, small and medium enterprises for reviving them.

The Congress on Thursday launched a 'Speak Up India' campaign to help raise the voice of the poor, migrants, and the unemployed. He said the worst hit was the poor.

He also demanded relief for small traders and shopkeepers, saying the middle class families also need money to survive by keeping the business going and not the package.



for the next six months to those families who are out of the Income Tax ambit, he said.

Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh said that the pain of migrant workers demanded that the Union Government provide free train travel or bus service to send them home. In his message, [Khattar] accused the Modi Government of forgetting the poor people.

He demanded the central government immediately transfer ₹10,000 in the bank accounts of every poor family as the lockdown had devastated the economy of every section and the "worst hit" was the poor.

He also demanded relief for small traders and shopkeepers, saying the middle class families also need money to survive by keeping the business going and not the package.

Pb keeps critical mortality rate low at 1.3% with most fatalities resulting from co-morbidity

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

While recording the highest recovery rate of 91 percent in India, Punjab has been able to keep the mortality rate amongst the lowest at 1.3 percent with majority of those fatalities resulting from co-morbidity.

"Out of 40 unfortunate instances, so far, occurring mostly in patients over 50 years, 31 persons, which is 77 percent, were afflicted with serious underlying illness like end-stage kidney disease and Cancer. HIV besides uncontrolled diabetes and high blood pressure," said the state Principal Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) Anurag Agarwal.

Chronic illnesses like heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and obesity were major associated illnesses as contributing factors in the remaining 25 percent of cases, he said, pointing out that there were very few cases which had no underlying chronic illness.

Agarwal said that deaths in most cases have occurred in patients who were already suffering from serious illness which might have led to mortality in natural course of events.

As many as 1918 patients have already fully recovered out of total 2,106 positive cases

Punjab Police ropes in IT expert, CTO to fight crime

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In an endeavour to make the state police force more technology-enabled and data-driven, the Punjab Police has appointed Dhruv Singh as its Chief Technology Officer (CTO), with the mandate of integrating state's various departments all kinds of crime, including terrorist and cyber-crime.

Singhal's appointment as CTO has been made with the concurrence of Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh in Punjab Police's Technical Services Wing.

Notably, Singhal has vast experience and expertise of 31 years in the IT industry and his last assignment was as Head of Technology at Amazon on Internet Services Private Limited — the Indian subsidiary of Amazon Web Services. Singhal is a graduate from IIT Delhi and IIM Calcutta, and his areas of specialization include Application Integration, Databases, and Big Data, among others.

Recognizing that technology can be a huge force multiplier, DGP Dinkar Gupta said that he had already initiated steps to integrate various departments a large number of ambitious technology and IT based projects and the Punjab Police.

"Given the hostile neighbourhood of this border state, with increasing deployment of drones to smuggle drugs and weapons into Punjab, it had become imperative to further scale up the force's technology thrust," he added.

Haryana reports a big jump of 123 new cases Highest single day figure so far

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a big jump, a total of 123 more people tested positive for Covid-19 in Haryana on Thursday, taking the state's tally to 1,504 cases. Of the 123 new cases reported today, 68 are from Gurugram alone.

Of the 123 new cases reported from Faridabad, six from Sonapat, five new cases each from Karnal, Kurukshetra and Rohtak, four in Hissar, three new cases in Sirsa, two from Fatehabad district while one new case each from Panipat, Yamunanagar and Charkhi Dadri, as per the official Covid bulletin released by the Haryana Health Department.

The bulletin reported one more death due to COVID-19 in Gurugram on Thursday, taking the total deaths in the state to 19. With 881 patients discharged from hospitals, the total number of active cases in Haryana as of Thursday is 604.

Karnal reported five new cases of the deadly disease, taking the total in the district to 42. Earlier, the previous single-day highest jump in cases was recorded in the state on May 26 when 94 infections were reported and prior to that on May 4 when 75 infections had been reported. The State has a recovery rate of 58.58 per cent, fatality rate at 1.26 per cent while tests per million being conducted are 4,262, the bulletin said.

According to the bulletin, Haryana has tested 1,08,031 people, out of which 1,02,260 were found negative while reports of 4,267 samples were

Haryana reports a big jump of 123 new cases

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

awaited. As many as 43 patients walked out of hospital from different districts of the State on Thursday. So far, 881 patients have been cured and discharged from hospitals in Haryana, including 14 Italian nationals. According to officials, a total of 43 Covid patients were discharged from various districts including 18 in Faridabad, 15 in Sonapat, three in Panipat, one in Fatehabad, two in Hissar and four in Kurukshetra.

In Mohali, a 32-year-old NRI, returned from the USA on May 20, has tested positive. He belonged to Dera Bassi's Humayunpur village. With this, the state's tally has reached 109 confirmed cases, with just two active cases. While 102 have been cured, the district has recorded three deaths.

The Vice-Chairperson of Punjab Health Systems Corporation, Bobby (Manik) Sehgal, has also been tested positive for coronavirus on Wednesday. It is not sure his case would be counted in which district. Sehgal's brother, too, have been tested positive for the contagion. Both have been admitted at a private facility set up on Jalandhar city's periphery at Malian in Shakkot.

As per the health bulletin, so far, 40 people have succumbed to the infection in the state. However, two deaths were reported on Thursday in Ludhiana and Amritsar — but was not recorded in the official tally.

In Ludhiana, a 49-year-old Railway Protection Force (RPF) jawan died of coronavirus. He was the RPF head constable from Ludhiana unit and hailed from Karol Bagh area of Jalandhar, said Ludhiana Deputy Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Agrawal in an official release.

The health officials said a woman of Bunala village of Baba Bakala town in Amritsar was also reported. She had tested positive for Covid-19 on May 27 and was admitted to Amritsar hospital.

The health officials said that she was suffering from hypertension and was in critical condition, and she was put on oxygen.

SEVEN FRESH CASES IN CHANDIGARH

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Seven fresh cases of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) were reported on Thursday in Chandigarh taking the total number to 289.

91 year-old female resident of Sector 15 here is tested positive for Coronavirus while other positive cases are reported from Babu Dham colony in Sector 26.

Two positive cases were declared cured and discharged from hospital for coronavirus on Thursday. One of the cases stood at 96 till the evening in Chandigarh.

With six more cases, the Babu Dham colony has till now reported 216 positive persons, accounts for 74 percent out of the total cases in the city. The colony in Sector 26 here has an approximate population of 60000 people.

"91 year old female resident of Sector 15 has been reported to be positive for coronavirus at Max Hospital, Mohali. She had gone to Hospital for treatment of fracture neck of femur. Her three family contacts and two community contacts are being sampled," stated Chandigarh Health Department evening bulletin.

"Six residents of Babu Dham colony belonging to two different households within the same house have been reported positive. They include males aged 8, 16, 17, 55 years and females aged 12 and 15 years."

They are community contacts of already positive case of the same locality," the bulletin stated.

"The total cases stood at 289 while the active cases are 96 in Chandigarh. 189 patients have so far been declared cured and discharged from hospital, the bulletin said.

Punjab to start driving test from June 1

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH

Driving test is all set to resume in Punjab from June 1. Punjab Government has launched an online system for the facilitation of its citizens to pre-book time and date for giving the driving test to obtain a regular licence.

Announcing this, the State Transport Commissioner Dr Amarpal Singh said that online booking will be mandatory for a driving test now and the powers of officials to take a test as per their discretion has been withdrawn.

"Any applicant missing the appointment will have to apply for a fresh slot and jumping the queue or adjusting a person without booking will not be possible, he said.

Singh said that another feature which has been enabled is that the result of the test and processing of the licence will have to be initiated the same day.

"The slots which will be available at each track have been limited to 40 to ensure social distancing in light of coronavirus," he said, adding that the earlier procedure will continue for the learner licence.

He said that no late fee will be charged for renewal of all documents issued under the Motor Vehicle Act, including driving licences that expired from February 2020 onwards.

Cabinet Secy reviews 13 worst-hit cities

Holds meeting with Chief Secretaries of States, 13 Municipal Commissioners and District Magistrates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Three days ahead of Lockdown-4 to end, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Vajpayee on Thursday held a meeting with Chief Secretaries of States, and 13 Municipal Commissioners and District Magistrates of most Covid-19 affected cities.



The meeting is seen important as Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation on May 31, Sunday through his radio talk Mann Ki Baat

The 13 focus cities are Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi/New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Thane, Pune, Hyderabad, Kolkata/Howrah, Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Jaipur, Jodhpur, Chengalpattu and Thiruvallur (Tamil Nadu)

The meeting is seen important as Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation on May 31, Sunday through his radio talk Mann Ki Baat. As Prime Minister's address is not fixed on other days, it is widely expected that he will announce the way forward after May 31, the day the Lockdown-4 regulations end.

India: HCQ to be used with full responsibility

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even as Italy, Belgium and France have stopped use of Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) amid WHO's concerns over its safety aspects, India on Thursday reiterated that it will continue to use it as it has been recommended as prophylaxis against the disease.



Favipiravir, plant-based medicine ACQH, Itrilizumab (Also used for arthritis) BCG vaccine Micro-Bacterium W, Centresent Plasma, Arbidol, and HCQ besides Ramdesivir. Eight vaccine candidates are being tried."

ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava too had said India would continue to use HCQ as prophylaxis despite its suspension from the solidarity trial of Covid-19. Scientists are studying these drugs and therapies, both in and out of the solidarity trial.

Soon test that detects viral particle's presence is on anvil: Vijayraghavan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Principal Scientific Adviser Dr K Vijayraghavan on Thursday said the RT-PCR test — the gold standard in India — looks for viral genetic material but soon a test that detects the viral particle's presence is on the anvil.

If sensitivity and specificity of antibody tests are high, they can be used to test at individual level. Otherwise, they can be used for community surveillance purpose, said Dr K Vijayraghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser.

However, now the local manufacturers too have jumped in the fray in a big way. To bring the scientists and laboratories in touch with private firms to produce millions of testing kits, including around 10 million rapid antibody tests that offer quick results is being done under the project called Consortium for affordable and rapid diagnostics (CARD), spearheaded by the NITI Aayog and the Central Government's Department of Biotechnology.

to produce 5 lakh indigenous kits daily by July, he said. The first goal of project CARD will be to churn out at least 10 million or 1 crore rapid antibody tests for Covid-19 by July 2020. The final aim is to make India a diagnostic export powerhouse by the end of 2020.

It also seeks to bolster India's capabilities in manufacturing reagents, probes, primers, and other components needed for diagnostics. "The final frontier for the fight against Covid-19 is science and technology. The base of our institutions of science and technology, bio-tech, and pharma industry is strong. The entire infrastructure is engaged in the war against Covid-19," said Dr Paul.

Nearly 30 groups in India trying to develop vaccines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 30 groups in India, ranging from big industry players to individual academics, are trying to develop vaccines to fight coronavirus, Principal Scientific Adviser K Vijayraghavan said on Thursday.



Children of migrant workers look out from a train at a railway station in Guwahati on Thursday

He said vaccine development currently takes nearly 10 years, but the aim of the work is to find a vaccine for coronavirus in a year even as he added that "till today, we have not observed any change in the virus that alters its fundamental properties."

attacks. Another is standard vaccine in which weak version of the virus is used while yet another uses protein coding region of the virus is attached to the backbone of another virus to develop vaccine, he said.

"In India, in addition to our science agencies, the CSIR and AICTE have embarked on drug discovery hocketoon where students are trained with info on how to do computational drug discovery, they will get access to expensive equipment. "As for testing and diagnosis, a new kind of test is likely to come up for testing of virus particle presence. Several medical acid tests have been developed, variations of RTPCR tests have been developed. Then there are antibody tests. "If sensitivity and specificity of antibody tests are high, they can be used to test at individual level. Otherwise, they can be used for community surveillance purpose," explained the scientist.

5 measures can prevent spread of Covid-19

These are maintaining hygiene, surface cleaning, physical distancing, tracking and testing in absence of drugs and vaccine, said Dr K Vijayraghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

With no letup in the coronavirus cases whose numbers have crossed over 1.60 lakhs and with over 4,000 mortalities, Dr K Vijayraghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser on Thursday suggested that five measures should be taken to prevent spread of Covid-19, till the time its vaccine is developed.



cinces at a cost of 200-300 million dollars.

However, the five steps suggested by the senior scientist to keep the covid-19 at bay elude densely populated countries like India which has most of its people living in a poverty line, people have poor hygiene habits because of many reasons and have the lowest Covid-19 testing rate per million in the world.

The migration of workers as well as arrivals of stranded Indians from abroad coupled with the easing of the lockdown has just added to the mounting tally of the cases. In fact, experts say that the cases are likely to witness sharp spike in near future. Dr V Ravi, Head of Neurovirology, National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) and nodal officer of the Karnataka Health Task Force for COVID-19 cautioned that there will be a spike in COVID-19 cases after Lockdown 4.0 ends which is after May 31, 2020.

"The country has not yet witnessed the spike in cases. The numbers will go up from June onwards after Lockdown 4.0 ends on May 31, and there will be community spread," he said as per a report. Dr Ghanshyam Panty, professor at the medicine department at Lady Harding Medical College had told a news agency that once the virus covers up to 30 per cent of population, possibly in the next four to five months, the situation will become very difficult to handle with the limited resources.

Parallel processing has to be done: Vijayraghavan

New Delhi: Dr K Vijayraghavan said if we want to develop vaccine in one year, then parallel processing has to be done.

"Hundred vaccines are being tested, instead of one. Simultaneously, we have to go fast on the regulatory process without compromising quality. We have to have manufacturing capability without compromising our standard immunising programme."



Children of migrant workers look out from a train at a railway station in Guwahati on Thursday

Cong seeking benefits from challenges country is facing, indulging in political slander: BJP

New Delhi: The BJP on Thursday accused the Congress of seeking benefit from the challenges the country is facing currently, and said the opposition party is indulging in "political slander" which is "unfortunate but expected."

Gandhi also urged the Centre to unlock its coffers to help those affected by the coronavirus-induced lockdown. Reacting strongly to Gandhi's remarks, Irani said, "It is unfortunate that when the nation needs to stand united against the Covid-19 pandemic, certain political parties are seeking to divert the country's attention to their own interests."

Yojna. The scheme has supported some of the weakest segments of our society, she added. "In this hour of crisis, the Centre and States, including district authorities, have converged their efforts. And for the Congress at this time to indulge in political slander is unfortunate but expected," Irani said. The Congress president said the video message, posted as part of her party's 'Speak Up India' campaign launched on Thursday, also demanded that the Government should provide Rs 7,500 to each newly family for the next six months. PTT

Patra admitted to pvt hospital in Gurugram after he showed Covid-19 symptoms

New Delhi: BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra has been admitted to a private hospital in Gurugram after he showed symptoms of Covid-19, sources said. He is admitted to the Medanta hospital in Gurugram, hospital sources said. The BJP leader has shown symptoms of Covid-19, a source said. Patra is one of the most visible BJP faces on news channels. He is also very active on social media and posted several tweets on Thursday as well.

HRD Minister interacts with Heads of more than 45,000 higher educational institutions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on Thursday interacted with Heads of more than 45,000 Higher Educational Institutions across the country through Webinar hosted by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bengaluru.

The Minister addressed and interacted with a galaxy of Academicians comprising participation from Vice Chancellors/Registrars/Professors/IQAC heads/Principals/Faculty from across the Nation. In the hour long interaction and address, the Union Minister reflected on various issues and concerns raised by educationists related to Academic Calendar, Online Education, examinations, Fees, Mental health of students, problems of students, fellowships, NEET, entrance examinations etc. He dwelt upon at length on the initiatives taken by the Government with regard to Swayam Prabha, Deekshamoh, Paramarsh and a host of other special initiatives taken during the pandemic period.

and assured of all help in furthering the academic activities of student fraternity. The Union Minister asked all Universities to constitute a special cell which will be empowered to address the issues of students related to academic calendar and examinations arising out of special circumstances due to Covid 19. He said that a task force has been created in UGC and NCERT to resolve the different issues of students. Nishank assured that Ministry is committed to provide all assistance to students in the time of crisis. During the interaction the Union Minister highlighted the process of how the new session will be commenced, at the same time he specified that the priority will be given to the safety of the students. He called educational fraternity as Corona Warriors because in this extraordinary situation they are working round the clock to provide quality education to students.

NIA forensic team reaches Puwama

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A forensic team of National Investigation Agency (NIA) has reached Puwama where a car fitted with an IED with an estimated 40-45 kg of RDX was blasted in situ by the bomb disposal squad early on Thursday. A Pulwama like terror plot is being touted to have been averted by destroying the explosives-laden vehicle and the forensic team lifted various samples from the incident site for scientific testing and analysis into the type of explosives and detonators fitted into the IED, sources said.

a Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist who escaped after initial fire-fight with the security forces. The Santro car had a fake number plate and the registration number was that of a two wheeler registered at Kathua of Jammu zone. Initial inputs suggest a Pakistan-based terrorist of the Jaish-e-Mohammad, Waheed, who is an expert in fabricating IEDs, could have been involved in developing the bomb for detonation by the occupants of the now destroyed car. The pattern is similar to the one in which Pak terrorist groups JeM and LeT had planned and helped in fabrication of the IED which was blasted by a local boy who acted as a fidayeen and rammed the Maruti Eco car packed with explosives on a convoy of the CRPF in February last year killing 40 paramilitary men and injuring several others.

Monsoon to keep its date with India, make onset on June 1 in Kerala: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Thanks to a cyclonic circulation, monsoon will keep its date for the earlier forecast of a slight delay. The southwest monsoon is likely to make an onset over Kerala on June 1, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday. This is because conditions are becoming favourable for monsoon winds to advance as a low pressure area is expected to develop over the Arabian Sea between May 31 and June 4. The IMD had in its onset date forecast on May 15 said that the monsoon is likely to hit the southern state on June 5, four days after its normal onset date. The normal onset of monsoon over Kerala is June 1. However, a cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal is likely to help in the progress of monsoon. "A low pressure area is likely to form over southeast

and adjoining east central Arabian Sea during May 31 to June 4. In view of this, conditions are very likely to become favourable from June 1 for onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala," the IMD said. It is also likely to intensify into a cyclone but may not impact India's west coast, IMD said. According to the IMD, the country is likely to receive normal monsoon this year. "With the strengthening of westerlies and increase in convective clouds, the southwest Monsoon has further advanced into some parts of Maldives-Comorin area, some more parts of south Bay of Bengal, remaining parts of Andaman Sea and Andaman Nicobar Islands," it said. Another low pressure area is likely to form over southeast and adjoining east-central Arabian Sea, close to the Indian coast between May 31 and June 4. "Scattered low and medium clouds with embedded intense for very intense convection lay over southeast and west central Arabian Sea," IMD said in its cyclone bulletin for Thursday.

advanced into some parts of Maldives-Comorin area, some more parts of south Bay of Bengal, remaining parts of Andaman Sea and Andaman Nicobar Islands," it said. Another low pressure area is likely to form over southeast and adjoining east-central Arabian Sea, close to the Indian coast between May 31 and June 4. "Scattered low and medium clouds with embedded intense for very intense convection lay over southeast and west central Arabian Sea," IMD said in its cyclone bulletin for Thursday.

Bengal for lockdown till June 14

Adhir slams State Govt for mishandling migrant workers issue
SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Government wants the lockdown to be extended by two weeks beyond May 31, sources at the State secretary Nabina said, resting the office of the Chief Secretary.

According to sources the State Government has already communicated its views to the Centre notwithstanding the fact that most establishments such as malls, cinema halls, restaurants and educational institutions have been fully or partially functioning in the State.

The State Government had already allowed resumption of bus and auto-rickshaw services to limited passengers from Wednesday.

Meanwhile even as train loads of migrant workers rolled in at various stations in Bengal Congress leader in Lok Sabha

Adhir Chowdhury on Thursday slammed the Mamata Banerjee Government for lackluster handling of the migrant workers issue, failing to realise the plight of those stuck in other states for months.

"Why the State is cold-shouldering the issue of migrant workers who are languishing in other States without food and shelter... Why the State Government has not created facilities for the migrant workers who are coming in hordes from other States... How the state can be so insensitive towards its own citizens? Chowdhury, a five-time MP from Behrampur asked wondering why the Chief Minister was so worried about 'shramik trains' coming to Bengal when already the workers are returning to their State in hordes by buses and trucks.

"The workers are coming back in hordes in buses and trucks, paying for the fare by selling whatever they had and

here the State Government is simply looking the other way. Why this Government is so insensitive towards the plight of the migrant workers, suffering for the past several months?" he asked wondering "where is a difference between people coming in trains and those coming buses."

Chowdhury's comments came on a day when about 25 trains entered Bengal bringing back several thousand workers to Burdwan, Malda, Dankuni, Purulia, Birbhum and Bankura.

Elsewhere another instance of alleged "insensitivity" raised many an eyebrow when Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh termed the incident of a toddler playing besides its dead mother's body at Muzaffarpur railway station a "minor event".

The Bengal opposition party leader Dilip Ghosh said his "insensitive comments" saying he was only reflecting the views of his party which was only an "attendant of the rich."

Condemning Ghosh for

his alleged cavalier ways senior Trinamool Congress MP Saugaro Roy said "less said about this man is the better. He is foul in his mouth and insensitive too. He is better suited as a wood-cutter."

CPI(M) politburo member and former MP MD Salim said "one can only express sympathy for the ruthless person who calls the heart-rending scene of a toddler trying to awaken its dead mother in a Railway Station --- particularly at a time when the migrant workers are dying a hundred death every day --- a 'minor incident'."

He said, "The rest of the BJP leadership think that Modi is the only God and Ambanis and Adanis are the only human beings... and the remaining people are animals. What can you expect from them. The Modi Government with the help of the leaders like Dilip Ghosh has failed to save humankind but successes in killing humanity."

Green loss to turn City of Joy into 'city of heat'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The City of Joy may get transformed into a "hot city" in the coming decades not because of any "page three" factor but because of the large-scale destruction of Kolkata's green cover, experts say.

With about 5,500 trees felled by the super cyclone that hit the city after 283 years Kolkata may witness a climate change of sorts getting robbed of about more than 5 lakh kilos of oxygen in parts at Jadavpur University say.

While Kolkata lost about 5,500 trees the iconic Botanical Gardens in Howrah saw about 1,000 trees getting damaged. The Pagla Gach (Mad tree) and the Kalpatrika—the only surviving species of their kind in the world — at Botanical Gardens too have suffered some damage, sources said.

It is irreparable loss considering the natural speed breaker for the cyclones," said DP Mitra an environmental expert.

"Even if you plant trees at a brisk pace which is unlikely to happen understanding the bureaucratic velocity of work the trees that will be planted now will take at least 10 years — if we plant some fast growing trees — to grow to a level that can at least half-mange the situation," said a Satupa Saha a green cover consultant.

Normally it takes 15 to 20 years for a tree to reach a stage where it is able to absorb a good amount of carbon dioxide besides providing oxygen. A full-grown tree absorbs about 20-25 kg of CO2 which is a huge amount.

Considering the fact that an individual requires about 750 kg of oxygen one should be surrounded by about 10 trees.

Tipplers in Kerala get their favourite brand after 2 months

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



Liquor outlets in Kerala (except those in hotspots) were reopened on Thursday morning and started selling spirits to tipplers who have been without their daily quota of drinks for the last two months.

According to TP Ramakrishnan, the State's Excise Minister, liquor is being sold through 265 outlets of Kerala State Beverages Corporation (Bevco), 36 outlets under the Consumed, 576 bar hotels, and 291 beer parlours.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told reporters that 2,25,000 persons made use of the BevQ App which went operational on Thursday morning. The app allows long through on-line mode. There were some hiccups during initial hours but the Excise Department told me that it has been rectified. A complaint regarding a fake App has been registered and a night. The liquor headquarters is probing the allegation. If found genuine, we

will initiate legal proceedings against those responsible for such fake campaign," said the chief minister.

Customers were asked to book their choice of drinks through BevQ, an App developed by a Kochi-based start up company to streamline and regulate the sale of liquor. The booking was opened from 6 am on Thursday and saw hectic activities, according to Faircode Technologies Pvt Ltd which developed the App.

The two-minute long trial-run of the BevQ app held on Wednesday saw 20,000 customers placing orders for the drink of their choice. The BevQ became operational at 6 am and would continue till 10 pm on Thursday night. The liquor will be sold between 9 am and 5 pm.

Flights running in & out of Mumbai half the capacity

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Even four days after the resumption of domestic air-operations and that too truncated manner, the flights are being operated in and out of the GVK MIAL-managed Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) in Mumbai at half the capacity, if the flights-passengers ratio is going by. As many as 52 scheduled flights — involving 26 departures and 26 arrivals — flew in and out of the Mumbai airport — catered to a total of 5,183 passengers comprising 4,255 departed passengers and 1,328 passengers who arrived in Mumbai.

"CSMIA today saw a total of 52 scheduled flights which include 26 departures and 26 arrivals. CSMIA connected to 16 sectors which were operated by 05 airlines. Today, CSMIA catered to a total of 5,583 passengers which include 4,255 passengers departures and 1,328 at arrivals," a CSMIA spokesperson said.

115 more afflicted in J&K, total count 2,036

PNS ■ JAMMU

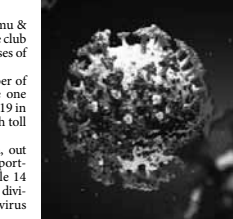
The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir has now joined the club of States with over 2,000 plus cases of coronavirus.

On Thursday, a total number of 115 cases were reported, while more patient died due to covid-19 in Kashmir valley, taking the death toll to 27.

According to media bulletin, out of 115 fresh cases, 101 were reported from Kashmir division while 14 cases were reported from Jammu division. The final tally of coronavirus cases stood at 2,036.

Out of these, 1,150 are active cases. A total number of 301 cases are active in Jammu and 849 in Kashmir division. A total number of 859 patients have recovered so far.

According to the media bulletin, the highest number of 45 cases were reported from North Kashmir district of Kupwara followed by 16 cases from Budgam, 11 each from Srinagar and Baramulla in Kashmir valley. Majority of cases were reported from Baramulla, Poonch and Udhampur districts of Jammu division.



Maha Gov announces austerity steps to cut costs at Raj Bhavan

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In an effort to make available more resources available for the welfare of the people, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari on Thursday announced a series of austerity measures, including a freeze on new capital works and cancellation of Independence Day reception in Pune, to reduce the expenses of Raj Bhavan.

The Governor issued instructions to the staff at the Raj Bhavan to undertake various measures in the current financial year to reduce the expenditure in Raj Bhavan premises. "There will not be any new major construction or repairing works in Raj Bhavan. Only ongoing works in progress will be continued and completed," a Raj Bhavan spokesperson said.

According to the spokesperson, the Independence Day Reception to be held on August 15, 2020 at Raj Bhavan in Pune will be cancelled.

Similarly, Raj Bhavan has deferred the proposal to purchase of new car for its use. There will be no new regular recruitment in Raj Bhavan

until further orders," the spokesperson said.

In another austerity measure, the Raj Bhavan has decided to discontinue unit further order the practice of offering gifts and mementos to VIPs. The practice of welcoming VIP visitors with bouquets will be discontinued. Guest house rooms in Raj Bhavan should not be decorated with vases and flower-pots," he said.

The Governor would henceforth hold meetings and interactions with Vice-Chancellors and various officers via video conference to avoid any expenses on travel.

"It is estimated that these measures will save nearly 10 to 15 percent of the budget of the Raj Bhavan in the current financial year," the spokesperson said.

"The Governor has already contributed his one month salary and further pledged 30% of his salary for one year to the PM CARES Fund for COVID -19," the spokesperson said.

"In the Governor's estimation, these austerity measures will be a small but significant contribution to save resources that can be used to reduce the sufferings of the people in the backdrop of the situation arisen because of the Corona Virus Disease," Raj Bhavan said in a statement issued here.

With 827 new cases, TN breaches 19,000 mark

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

There was no respite for Tamil Nadu or Chennai on Thursday as the number of persons tested positive for coronavirus in the State reached 19,372.

Of the total 827 persons testing positive for the pandemic and 12 persons succumbing to the disease. The death tally in Tamil Nadu due to coronavirus reached 145 with Chennai alone recording 106 fatalities.

The medical bulletin issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu said there were 8,679 active covid-19 afflicted persons in the State as on Thursday. "Till date, 10, 548 persons have been cured of the pandemic and discharged from hospitals. A total of 4,34,625 persons have been tested till Thursday," said the bulletin.

Chennai with 12, 762 positive cases topped the table while Chengalpattu (933), Thiruvallur (863), Cuddalore (443) closely followed the capital city. Dr C.V. Krishnaswamy, south India's lead physician closely tracking the pandemic said that there was no reason to be panic about the numbers. "Its when the death rate exceeds the prescribed norms we have to be worried. As on date, the death rate in India and Tamil Nadu is well below the mandatory figure. Though we are testing many persons positive for the pandemic, we should note that the recovery rate is one of the bests in the world," said Dr. Krishnaswamy.

Tamil Nadu Government despite the covid-19 pandemic succeeded in signing Memorandum of Understanding with some of the global brands like Danone, Virpro Solaire, Salcom PFC to set up manufacturing plants/expansion of ongoing operations in the State.

Andhra tally at 2,841 as 54 more test +ve

Amaravat: Despite intensive containment measures, fresh Covid-19 cases continue to surface in Andhra Pradesh with unflinching regularity. On Thursday the state reported 54 positive cases, which includes four persons that had travel histories to the Koyambedu market in Chennai.

With the addition of 54 new cases over the past 24 hours, the state's tally jumped to 2,841, the state nodal officer reported at 10 a.m., on Thursday. While there has been a decrease in the proportion of cases with a Koyambedu connection, the number of cases related to returns from other states are continuing to some extent.

On Thursday, only 4 of the 54 positive cases were found to have a Koyambedu connection. While Nellore district reported two cases, 1 case was reported from Chittoor and Guntur districts respectively.

The Koyambedu market which has since been closed, was identified as one of the biggest spreaders of Covid-19 cases in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, where positive cases tally has long crossed the 18,000 mark.

JANS

number of 228 active cases in Kulgam district and 167 in Kupwara continue to remain a cause of worry for health administrators in Kashmir valley.

On the other hand, Jammu division reported a total number of 14 cases on Thursday. Five travelers and three locals tested positive in Kathua while three travelers in Kathua tested positive. One case each was reported from Baramulla, Poonch and Udhampur districts of Jammu division.

number of 228 active cases in Kulgam district and 167 in Kupwara continue to remain a cause of worry for health administrators in Kashmir valley.

On the other hand, Jammu division reported a total number of 14 cases on Thursday. Five travelers and three locals tested positive in Kathua while three travelers in Kathua tested positive. One case each was reported from Baramulla, Poonch and Udhampur districts of Jammu division.

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI

O.A. No. 809/19 Date: 02.03.2020
PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK APPLICANT
SHRI SHAILENDRA PRASAD & ORS. RESPONDENT
To Delist
1. Mis EMI VEE INFRASTRUCTURES PVT LTD. PLOT NO. 1000M VILLAGE GHAT NEAR DWARKAKHAIHEIGHTS N-58, VEDYASAPURI MEERUT-25005
Whereas the above named applicant (s) has/have instituted a case for recovery of Rs.80,27,47/- (Rupees FIFTY EIGHT LAKH TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTYFOUR ONLY) against you and where as has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 02.06.2020 at 10.30 A.M.
Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.
BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL FOR REGISTRAR, DRT-II, DELHI

Chinese students to fly back to China from Mysuru

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

As the face off continue between Indian and Chinese troops at four points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh and Sikkim, around hundred Chinese students studying in Mysore University at Southern city of Mysuru will fly back to China in June as the University has decided to hold examinations for them earlier than scheduled to facilitate their evacuation from India.

These Chinese students are studying Information Technology courses in Mysore University, one of the oldest universities in the country. They are set to leave India following China's appeal to its citizens to return to their homeland.

In response to an appeal from the collaborative university in Central China for holding examinations early in view of special flights arranged for the evacuation of Chinese citizens from India, the Universities which had earlier scheduled the examination from June 10 to 15, agreed to hold it from June 1 to 6. These students are from Central China and studying MS (Information Technology) and MS (Software Engineering) courses specially designed for them as per a MoU and being run since past 10 years.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that a unidentified dead body of female **Name: Unknown, W/O: Unknown, R/O: Unknown, Age: about 55 years, Height: 5' 2", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Oval, Build: Thin, Wearing: Blue colour lower and orange colour shirt with khaki colour jacket, who was found in front of Kothi No. 24, Footpath New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi. In this regard a case DD No. 25-A dated 24.05.2020 has been registered at P.S. DBG Road, Delhi-110005**

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

Sd/- SHO
P.S. DBG Road, Delhi-110005
Tel.: 011-23537374, 23613252

DP/124/CD/2020

Appeal For Identification

General public is hereby informed that this person Name : Unknown S/o : Unknown, R/o : Unknown, Age : 55 Years, Sex : Male, Height : 5 Ft. 5 Inch, Complexion : Fair, Face : Oval, Build : Slim, Hair : Grey Hair and Beard, Wearing : Blue Colour Polo T-Shirt, has been found dead on 16.05.2020 In Front of Gate No. 6, GB Pant Hospital, Delhi and dead body preserved in Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital Mortuary, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 31 Dated 16.05.2020 has been lodged at P.S. IP Estate, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

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

SHO
PS, IP Estate, Delhi
DP/121/CD/2020. Ph.: 011-23370928, 23232294, 8758070426

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead at Mathura Road, Near Transformer, Okhla Tank, Delhi on 24.05.2020 at 20:08 Hrs. In this regard a DD No. 27A, Dated 24.05.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Sarita Vihar, Delhi The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown R/o: Unknown, Age: 62 years, Height: 163 cms. Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Chocolate Colour Checkdard Shirt, White Colour Payjama and Cherry Colour Shoes in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform to the undersigned.

S.H.O
P.S. Sarita Vihar, Delhi
DP/072/S/2020 Ph.: 011-26825553, 26825554, 8860731325

WESTERN RAILWAY

DESIGN, SUPPLY, ERECTION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF SCADA AND THE WORKS

Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, Patparganj, Vadodra invites E-Tenders as per details given below:

S. No.	Tender Notice No. & Date	Work and Location	Approx. Cost (₹)	EMD (₹)
1	TR-C-9-2020/1 dtd. 28/05/2020	Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of SCADA between PRTN-DB-CTD, MFG-SMLA, DB-CDD-Kewadaya section on BEC Division, Western Railway.	4,70,47,859.60	3,85,200/-
2	TR-C-5-2020 dtd. 28/04/2020	Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV AC OHE between Anand to Khambhat with Bonyari to Vadad Section on Vadodra Division of Western Railway in Connection with Electrification of Existing BG Line.	18,43,51,891.11	10,71,800/-
3	TR-C-6-2020 dtd. 28/04/2020	Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV AC OHE between Vasad - Kathana Section on Vadodra Division of Western Railway in Connection with Electrification of Existing BG Line.	17,71,38,787.34	10,35,300/-

Sl. No. 1: Date of Submission: 28/05/2020 & Date of Opening: 28/06/2020. Sl. No. 2: Date of Submission: 28/04/2020 & Date of Opening: 09/05/2020. Sl. No. 3: Date of Submission: 28/04/2020 & Date of Opening: 09/05/2020. Website Particulars: The tender can be viewed and submitted through website www.rwgs.gov.in

Like us on: Facebook.com/WesternRailway Follow us on: Twitter.com/WesternRailway

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION NO. 1 THANE STATION ROAD, THANE (W) - 400091

www.mahapwd.com Fax - (022) 25377240 email-thane.1e@mahapwd.com
OutWard No. 2145 Tel. Phone - 25369293 Date : 27/05/2020

E-Tender Corrigendum No. 1 (Time Table)

Subject :- Notice No. 1 E-Tender Corrigendum
Ref :- E-Tender Notice No. 1 Issued Dated No. This Notice Letter No. Tender/1959 Dated 29/4/2020.

Sl.No.	Tender	Before Publish Date	Now Publish Date
1.	Selling Date	6/5/2020 to 30/5/2020	30/5/2020 to 23/6/2020
2.	Pre bid date	22/5/2020	17/6/2020
3.	Tender Opening Date	2/6/2020	26/6/2020

Sl.No.	Work Name	Before Publish Information	Now Publish Information
1/2	ROUTIAN MAINTENANCE WORK TO BHIWANDI ROAD SH-35 KM.69/000 TO 89/000 AND VADPE NIMBAVALI BHINAR ROAD (SH84) BETWEEN KM.50/200 TO 54/400 IN TALUKA BHIWANDI DIST.THANE (BEFORE MANSOON)	ROUTIAN MAINTENANCE WORK TO BHIWANDI ROAD SH-35 KM.69/000 TO 89/000 AND VADPE NIMBAVALI BHINAR ROAD (SH84) BETWEEN KM.50/200 TO 54/400 IN TALUKA BHIWANDI DIST.THANE	ROUTIAN MAINTENANCE WORK TO BHIWANDI ROAD SH-35 KM.69/000 TO 89/000 AND VADPE BHINAR ROAD (SH84) BETWEEN KM.50/10 TO 54/400 IN TALUKA BHIWANDI DIST.THANE

Estimated cost 45173554 45173554

Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.W Division No.1, Thane.

DG/PR/2020-2021/139

Labour woes

While States are redistributing returnee workers, in the long run we need a national database and a pan-India social security net



The reverse exodus of migrants, which according to the Government's admission in the Supreme Court has seen 91 lakh daily wagers and service personnel move out of cities to their home States, may change the labour market forever. Shunted out overnight by contractors and factories following the lockdown and with no savings, quarters or interim relief coming from either their employers or the Government, they trudged back home, risking their lives in the process, exposing themselves to the disease and starvation. And though they may return to the subsistence economy that they once escaped, they are not coming back soon. Rejected by the big cities that they helped build and mistreated like intruders by the Governments they voted for, they would much rather find work in their home States under MGNREGA and infrastructure projects. The vacuum in big cities is already being felt as daily needs servicemen like drivers, cleaners, electricians, handymen, carpenters, plumbers, house helps, gardeners and bricklayers have all fled. And now with several States compiling a data base of returnees with their skill sets, these people are most likely to be rehabilitated in services vacated by migrants from elsewhere. In other words, local sourcing, something that political parties have promised in their manifestoes for a while, may soon become the new rule of engagement in the labour market. Except that the traditional labour-exporting States may be flooded with returnees seeking newer pastures and fall short of accommodating them. Sensing the new labour map, the first off the mark has been Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. With the State having already received 23 lakh migrants by the end of last week, he has fast-tracked moves to absorb returnee workers according to their skill sets and allocate them work zones. Fifteen lakh are already on the database and industrial units have sought contracts for five lakh among them. He has further drawn up a migrant commission to list all workers in the State, provide jobs and issue them a card that would ensure their social security during a crisis. An insurance scheme to secure their lives, too, is on the cards. And though he is reconsidering it, his controversial suggestion that other States hiring labourers from UP would have to go via his Government points to a new trading tool that may just take off unofficially as everybody tries to leverage strengths in a pandemic-hit economy. Such a move is downright unconstitutional as every citizen has a right to migrate to any part of the country in the quest for better prospects. But new regional labour cartels could emerge, peddling a skilled pool of workers and quoting higher prices now in labour-starved zones. Rajasthan has started collecting data of both skilled and unskilled workers from all 33 districts and will release them to factory owners in 18 industrial clusters soon. It has already collected details of 1.2 million unemployed people and will soon launch a portal that will help devise programmes for the labourers, generate quick employment and also meet the demand-supply gap. It will also help design training programmes for workers as per their qualifications and requirements of industries. Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh has restarted the Sambal Yojana, which will now cover returnee migrants and provide social security to their family members, including school fees of children and insurance. A workers' database is almost ready. Bihar and Jharkhand are also working on an internal reorganisation map. Punjab and Haryana, States without too much of local labour, were among the first to set up migrant portals to rehire and redirect displaced labour to their various work sites.

While the "vocal for local" mantra has taken a new meaning in the labour market, this could well be short-term. For wages and capacities are lower in States. For example, even if Uttar Pradesh manages to provide jobs to its returning migrants, its per capita income is a little over ₹70,000. Comparatively, it is over ₹2 lakh in Maharashtra and ₹4 lakh in Delhi. So the osmosis will happen once the threat of the pandemic weakens. Besides what do you do with States like Uttarakhand, which do not have enough opportunities to absorb highly-skilled labour? So far over 1.54 lakh migrants have returned to the State and under the Mukhyamantri Swarojya Yojana, they will get heavily subsidised loans to set up small businesses or shops. Many returnees are from the IT, hospitality and BPO sectors with a particular skill set and experience of working in big cities and are not keen on the entrepreneurial mode. They wouldn't want to erode their revenue-earning ability for the safety of a home that they won't have to pay for. Labour is needed across industries and communities and perhaps a national database and a pan-India social security net should be set up to streamline our demographic edge than pass this on to States as their responsibility. Besides, this protection based on geography will never substitute competence.

The reverse exodus of migrants, which according to the Government's admission in the Supreme Court has seen 91 lakh daily wagers and service personnel move out of cities to their home States, may change the labour market forever. Shunted out overnight by contractors and factories following the lockdown and with no savings, quarters or interim relief coming from either their employers or the Government, they trudged back home, risking their lives in the process, exposing themselves to the disease and starvation. And though they may return to the subsistence economy that they once escaped, they are not coming back soon. Rejected by the big cities that they helped build and mistreated like intruders by the Governments they voted for, they would much rather find work in their home States under MGNREGA and infrastructure projects. The vacuum in big cities is already being felt as daily needs servicemen like drivers, cleaners, electricians, handymen, carpenters, plumbers, house helps, gardeners and bricklayers have all fled. And now with several States compiling a data base of returnees with their skill sets, these people are most likely to be rehabilitated in services vacated by migrants from elsewhere. In other words, local sourcing, something that political parties have promised in their manifestoes for a while, may soon become the new rule of engagement in the labour market. Except that the traditional labour-exporting States may be flooded with returnees seeking newer pastures and fall short of accommodating them. Sensing the new labour map, the first off the mark has been Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. With the State having already received 23 lakh migrants by the end of last week, he has fast-tracked moves to absorb returnee workers according to their skill sets and allocate them work zones. Fifteen lakh are already on the database and industrial units have sought contracts for five lakh among them. He has further drawn up a migrant commission to list all workers in the State, provide jobs and issue them a card that would ensure their social security during a crisis. An insurance scheme to secure their lives, too, is on the cards. And though he is reconsidering it, his controversial suggestion that other States hiring labourers from UP would have to go via his Government points to a new trading tool that may just take off unofficially as everybody tries to leverage strengths in a pandemic-hit economy. Such a move is downright unconstitutional as every citizen has a right to migrate to any part of the country in the quest for better prospects. But new regional labour cartels could emerge, peddling a skilled pool of workers and quoting higher prices now in labour-starved zones. Rajasthan has started collecting data of both skilled and unskilled workers from all 33 districts and will release them to factory owners in 18 industrial clusters soon. It has already collected details of 1.2 million unemployed people and will soon launch a portal that will help devise programmes for the labourers, generate quick employment and also meet the demand-supply gap. It will also help design training programmes for workers as per their qualifications and requirements of industries. Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh has restarted the Sambal Yojana, which will now cover returnee migrants and provide social security to their family members, including school fees of children and insurance. A workers' database is almost ready. Bihar and Jharkhand are also working on an internal reorganisation map. Punjab and Haryana, States without too much of local labour, were among the first to set up migrant portals to rehire and redirect displaced labour to their various work sites.

The cost of care

SC asks Govt to identify private hospitals which benefitted from past largesse and, therefore, should treat COVID patients free



As Coronavirus cases continue to rise across the country and the Government healthcare infrastructure begins to burst at the seams, the Supreme Court has asked the Centre to identify private hospitals which can treat COVID-19 patients for free or at a minimum cost as many of them have been given land either free or at nominal rates. However, the hospitals are off the hook for now as being a policy issue, the Government would need to take a call on it first. At the moment, patients are being treated for free/minimum cost at Government hospitals across the country. However, those who opt for private healthcare facilities end up paying hefty sums as the cost of treatment in general wards is around ₹0.8 lakh in Tier-II cities, ₹1.5 lakh in Tier-II State capitals and ₹2.5 lakh in metro cities. Co-morbidities push up care costs further.

What complicates the matter is the fact that the Government cannot put a cap on treatment costs like it did for the Corona tests as that will depend on many factors like the place where the patient is being treated; his/her age; whether the person has any co-morbidities; what stage the virus is in, whether it is in the initial stage or has the infection aggravated. Will the s/he go to the ICU or be on oxygen support or will s/he also need a ventilator? Predictably private hospitals are not very keen to shoulder the COVID burden with the Government because they say their bottomlines have already been hit by a decline in patient footfall, limited OPD operations and suspension of the lucrative medical tourism business. Plus the overheads have shot up as they are spending more on disinfection, sterilisation, infection control, isolation wards, staff rotations and quarantines, responsible waste disposal and comprehensive disinfection. Free treatment won't work even if the hospitals had benefitted from largesse at inception. So while the apex court and the Centre mull how to rope private hospitals in, patients continue to suffer because even having an insurance does not mean that there will be no major out-of-pocket expense. Insurance firms are not paying patients for the PPE, face shields and so on to that constitute at least 50 per cent of the total treatment cost for a Corona patient. But what is irking is that while crying about the cost of the PPEs pushing up their expenses, hospitals are glibly glossing over the fact that they are charging all patients for these kits even though one doctor tends to multiple patients wearing one kit. Asking hospitals to lower treatment costs is reasonable but seeking to make it all free will be counter-productive. The larger question right now is how to increase capacities as both public and private facilities are saturated.

Strategic stalemate

The Chinese behaviour along the LAC points to a familiar pattern vis-a-vis India. However, it's time for New Delhi to turn a new page in dealing with Beijing



VIVEK MISHRA

After some intense physical showdown between the Indian and Chinese soldiers at the Line of Control has been launched world over as the conflict. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said recently that the situation at the border with India is "overall stable and controllable" and that both countries have "proper mechanisms and communication channels" to resolve the issues through "dialogue" and "consultation." China's apparent attempt to de-escalate tensions at the border is as quintessential a leaf from its strategic playbook as its attempt to escalate it in the first place. A few familiar patterns emerge, apropos earlier such endeavours cannot be missed.

The timing of the flare-up is, perhaps, the most predictable one. A pandemic-stricken world has been brought down to its knees and India has surpassed China's Coronavirus tally. It has now climbed into the top 10 countries worst hit by the pandemic. To recall, in 2014, when Chinese troops intruded deep into the Indian territory even as Premier Xi Jinping was on a State visit to India, it baffled many. Why would Beijing do that? If anything, it only harmed the purpose of the ongoing bilateral talks. By now, China's strategic charade of mixing wrong signals with publicly-perceptible good intentions is all too known. Physical assertion with an intention to send a political message that points south, deliberate obfuscation to prevent pending talks, international grandstanding and the choice of an opportune time — all of this collectively constitute the Middle Kingdom's new approach to heighten tensions. But there is a marked similarity that runs across modern China's strategic behaviour.

In its strategic playbook, it avoids "strength" and attacks "weakness." As the world reels under the Corona pandemic, China seems to have controlled the spread of the virus and has now resorted to practising aggressive behaviour with neighbouring countries. It has waged conflicts on multiple fronts. Border tension with India along the LAC has escalated; two new municipal districts to control the disputed Parcel and Spratly Islands has been declared; military confrontation with Myanmar in the Andaman Sea; the South China Sea, too, has been launched. Besides, China has approved a controversial legislation in Hong Kong to undermine its autonomy. This, in clear violation of the initial terms of agreement between Britain and China that the former's autonomy shall be pre-



served until at least 50 years. Furthermore, there's an obvious cold war 2.0 on the US. Wolf warrior diplomacy has been launched world over as a pre-emptive effort to counter criticism and questions of accountability. It is also resisting a global call for an unbiased probe into the origin of the Coronavirus. Above all, Xi has called upon the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to "prepare for war." All such instances have come to test China's strategic transition into a "great power." As countries look inward to deal with their economic, political and strategic problems arising due to the spread of the virus, China considers this as its moment to test the limits of "power transition hypotheses." But in many ways, how China acts during the pandemic will define its future course as a "great power."

In the ongoing standoff with India, too, traits clearly point to the aforementioned test-of-its-power transition. China has opened multiple fronts of conflict along the LAC, at least one of them is a hitherto uncontested region, the Naku La Pass in north Sikkim. There are a few other peculiarities that set the ongoing border flare-up apart from earlier skirmishes. The number of PLA troops camped near the LAC is estimated to be somewhere in between 5,000 and 10,000. Although India has matched Chinese encampments and numbers, this is perhaps a new high of troop build-up by the latter in the absence of any unilateral aggression by the former. The military build-up and China's refusal to recede is geared towards "political signalling" than to "protect" an apparent incursion into India. This subtle packaging comes at a time when India is scrambling to improve border infrastructure and connectivity in border areas. In the current context, the strategic importance of the Darbuk-Shyok-DBO road, that brings India within an eight kilometre range of the strategically important Karakoram Pass, cannot be overstated.

Steps from either side point to a long-drawn confrontation. While the two sides match in troop numbers that mirror each other, certain factors suggest that neither side will be too quick to withdraw from strategic positions. Chinese troops remain entrenched in bunkers along with a fleet of heavy vehicles and monitoring equipment. Helicopter movement close to the LAC has also been monitored by the Indian side. India, too, scrambled two fighter jets along the LAC in Ladakh. Besides, Army Chief MM Naravane paid a visit to Leh, the headquarters of 14 Corps in Ladakh, for a security review of the sensitive sector amid tensions. Perhaps this suggests that the best way to resolve the present standoff is through established mechanism at the military and governmental level, however ineffective these mechanisms may be.

Chinese behaviour along the LAC points to a familiar pattern vis-a-vis India. Just like its traditional medical practice acupuncture, it is pressing certain points. Its assertions may often be intended to solve a deeper or a different issue. In the present case, unprovoked assertions along the LAC can be linked to a few decisions taken by India in recent times, which may have perturbed China. Among them is the Indian Government's decision to implement three important recommendations relating to border infrastructure that was made by the Shekatar Committee in 2016. Specifically, the work on the Sela tunnel (connecting Tezpur in Assam to Itanagar) is in full swing. Once completed, it will provide all-weather connectivity to an important frontier with China in the Kameng sector. Such projects are also on to connect Zaskar Valley and Ladakh. The Nimrud-Padma Darcha road being constructed across the Sinkunla Pass could have been points of concern for China, too. Other factors that could have perturbed Beijing include New Delhi's decision to change FDI norms for countries sharing land border with India. This could potentially impact how China invests in India. The virtual presence of two BJP MPs at the swearing-in ceremony of the Taiwanese leader has also irked Beijing. Lastly, India's support to the global call for a WHO-led probe into the origin of the Coronavirus is a cause, too. From India's point of view, the transgressions, including ones at previously uncontested patrol areas, like the Naku La

Pass, point towards a wider conflicting arc. To that end, Chinese strategy along the LAC has preferred horizontality to vertical escalation, where scaling up of conflict at the local level has been the preferred strategy. India's options in the current standoff are limited. First, and perhaps the most likely way to resolve the tension, is by repeating the Doklam strategy; it should resolutely wait until both sides decide to de-escalate. However, under no circumstances should India negotiate on settled areas like the Naku La Pass. This will not only increase the possibility for China to horizontally escalate against India but would also dilute India's sacrosanct nature of "sovereignty" apropos a modern state. This is precisely what makes the current standoff different and more fraught than previous ones. Since both sides have laid claim to a new area as their "sovereign part", possibilities of de-escalation are high. India can press other weak points of China to compel desired State behaviour if LAC is too sensitive a matter. Adopting the Indo-Pacific strategy to chart a future strategy in Asia as an emerging global power is a low-hanging fruit. Among other steps, raising a global pitch on China's other interests or decisions that run counter to Indian interests can be considered. It is, perhaps, time to turn a new page in dealing with China.

(The writer is deputy director, KIIPS, Bhubaneswar, and research fellow, ICWA, New Delhi)

SOUNDBITE

Unki dar, unki siski, unki peeda desh mein sabne suni, par shayad sarfaraz nahai (Everyone won't hear their pain, heard their cries but may be the Government has not).
Congress leader — Sonia Gandhi

The best thing I've learned from Saff is being comfortable with myself and not always be bothered by success or fame. He's taught me to love the greater things in life.
Actor — Kareena Kapoor

The Indian Government, with its arrogant expansionist policies akin to Nazi's (in the name of free space), is becoming a threat to its neighbours.
Pakistan Prime Minister — Imran Khan

MS (Dhoni) is an incredible cricketer. Intelligence, calmness, power, athleticism, speed and a match-winner. This puts him among the greatest sportsmen in the modern era.
Former India coach — Gary Kirsten

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Another threat

Sir — Swarms of locusts have been destroying crops across western and central India. This is the worst such attack in three decades. With a speed of 150 km per day, these creatures have been rampaging farms across Maharashtra, Gujarat and other States. Concerns about them harming farm output have been raised. The solace is that with the harvest season over, rabi crops have not been affected and most monsoon-fed crops are yet to be sowed. But this does not mean that they are harmless. Cotton, summer pulses and vegetables have already suffered in some regions. With agriculture fields remaining bare right now, the insects have made their way to urban areas. This poses another set of problems. The Government is using specialised spraying machines and plans are on to deploy 60 specialised insecticide sprayers to kill the swarms. But what is needed is for us to shift to sustainable policies for an equitable future.
Shikha
 Via email

Amid crisis, people must act responsibly

With the fourth phase of the lockdown coming to an end and having registered more than 1.5 lakh cases, one feels that the curfew should have been implemented much earlier than in the last week of March. Also, the migrants should have been given at least a week's window to return to their home States. Necessary medical infrastructure, arrangements for poor labourers, who have been rendered jobless due to the spread of the pandemic, too, arrangements have been put in place. There's no disputing the fact that the lockdown was essential, at least to reduce the rate of spread of the infection. At the same time, it cannot continue endlessly, especially for a country like us. If not from the virus, people would die of hunger. A large section of the lockdown is inevitable now. However, it is amusing to see how the public has been flouting all lockdown norms. Even days before the lockdown was announced, the ever-busy and overcrowded streets of Kolkata wore a "ghostly" look. Getting into the railway coach seemed like a relaxed stroll in a park. In Central Kolkata, shops were almost devoid of customers. And when the lockdown was imposed, non-market areas remained almost desolate. At milk booths and grocery stores, people meticulous stood in queues, maintaining safe distance from each other and wearing masks religiously. The third phase of the lockdown saw a slow of relaxations for non-hotspot areas. But many people took advantage of the situation and came out of their homes on some pretext or the other. With the Government easing norms, it was obvious that human activities would increase. But how can people act so irresponsibly? It's high time people get accustomed to the new-normal and inculcate behavioural changes and habits. Else India might get ready to brace for alarming days.
Kajal Chatterjee
 Kolkata

restrictions on the movement of people and transport are in place in important cities such as Mumbai and Pune. This blame games aside, such a big decision should have not been taken by the Centre before consulting the States.
MN Musedee Jogeshwari
 Mumbai

Setting examples

Sir — Bollywood actor Sonu Sood deserves all the praise for arranging buses for the migrant workers so that they reach their home States safely. His team has even set up a toll-free number. In personal capacity, he has been doing what the Government — both Central and States — had promised to do. To see a member of the film fraternity take such decisive steps during the outbreak of a deadly virus is unusual. It is to be seen if his colleagues, many of whom hold immense wealth, follow his example?
Babu Tandra Rampur
 Uttar Pradesh

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Saving lives and livelihoods

The question of livelihood is getting desperate. The cure today is proving more expensive than the pandemic



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A housing society with nearly 3,000 families in Greater Noida was sealed this week due to a family being found Covid-positive. These families, most of them first-time flat owners, self-employed or working for private enterprises in the National Capital Region (NCR), are a relatively new bunch of inhabitants to this area. The sealing exercise ensured most of them are imprisoned within the society complex while their employers threatened them with salary cuts if not layoffs. For the first time perhaps since the lockdown began in March-end, angry employees from the housing society took to an organised demonstration to save their livelihoods.

A few dozen special trains meant to transport migrant labourers to their States allegedly got diverted on extended routes and ended up terminating at wrong destinations across the country. Many flights, too, got cancelled within the first two days of resuming operations in the country.

A high-intensity super cyclone whipped its way into mainland West Bengal leaving a trail of unprecedented destruction. It took nearly four days to restore electricity in the capital city of Kolkata even as rural and semi-urban areas are yet to be reached and assessed, for providing basic amenities like clean drinking water.

The above examples are just a fragment of the apologetic tale of mismanagement and lack of coordination between different arms of the same Government in a particular geography. If we start adding layers of Central, State, district, city and neighbourhood governance to this, an almost incomprehensible cobweb of India's ongoing pandemic-redressal system emerges.

It takes courage and a Himalayan leap of faith to impose a lockdown this stringent for more than two months on almost one-third of humanity, for a Prime Minister. We understand Narendra Modi took a call to save lives while bartering away over 400 million livelihoods, of people who had just about begun to start having a semi-global existence with most basic amenities like electricity, clean drinking water, gas connections and a monthly income of nearly \$150. In just two months, the harsh realities of still being a poor nation have started hitting hordes if not headlines.

Consider snapshots like the "Biggest recession for India", "Millions of faceless, traceless stranded nowhere", "Lockdown exit strategy missing". The real issue is beginning to stare most of us in the face and we are slowly realising that there is no lockdown exit strategy at all.

This reminds me of another great warrior. In the Mahabharata, Abhimanyu, the son of the brave Arjun, was a child prodigy who mastered the key skill sets of warfare in his mother's womb. However, Abhimanyu didn't know how to get out of the *Chakravyuha* (a multi-layer defensive formation used in warfare), even if he did know what it took to get into one and win a day in a battle. We all know what it takes to prepare and get into a war. But how many know how to safely get out of one with least collateral damage to human life or limb, especially if the war is not at the borders?

That's a crucial point, to drive at this stage and here are some near-sarcastic assumptions: COVID-19 spreads fastest with human-to-human contact. Misinformation or mistrust is a greater virus than COVID and is here to stay longer. A vaccine, if at all, is at least a year away from the developed world and much longer for a poor yet aspirational nation like ours.

The developing world can only wish for more heat and homemade remedies. The surprise element is that some of that ancient common sense does work in dealing with a deadly virus.

There is no statistical data to prove any of the above claims, but most of them have great significance. Indians can at this stage wish for a common-sense guided approach to the pandemic. India has had a good recovery rate till now and low fatality as compared to the rest of the world, based on public information. And there is no reason to doubt this information since in a nation with nearly 1.5 billion phones the truth can't be suppressed for too long. Somebody or the other will definitely capture an anomaly and let the information flow. Let us also accept and be cautious that India has managed to hold up so far and lives as envisaged by our Prime Minister are more saved than lost.

However, the question of livelihood is getting desperate, the cure today is proving more expensive than the cause. Every life saved today may be lost to malnutrition, hunger, preventable disease or disaster in the near future. Keepers of the law on the ground aren't safe from the pandemic or viral flow of misinformation and one-size-fits-all can't be the approach.

Going extremely micro-local and an empowered approach to tackle the pandemic can be a solution for the long-term fight against the virus. However, remember that with great power comes great responsibility. Therefore, frontline lawmakers, right from the senior-most to those guarding the neighbourhoods to prevent the outflow of the virus, have to ensure livelihoods and social distancing at the same time.

(The writer is a senior policy analyst)

REPUBLICANS FEEL THAT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS SILENCE CONSERVATIVES. WE WILL REGULATE OR CLOSE THEM DOWN BEFORE WE LET THIS HAPPEN.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

POINT COUNTERPOINT



WE WILL CONTINUE TO POINT OUT INCORRECT OR DISPUTED INFORMATION ABOUT POLLS GLOBALLY. WE WILL ADMIT TO AND OWN ANY MISTAKES WE MAKE.

—TWITTER CEO JACK DORSEY

Disastrous decade for data

The challenges for data posed by the pandemic, CAA-NPR-NRC and the reluctance of the Government to release official figures need to be tackled urgently



ARJUN KUMAR



PC MOHANAN

Owing to the lockdown necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre has deferred the National Population Register (NPR) updation exercise and the first phase of Census 2021, both of which were scheduled to start in April. Census enumerators in India had their last been conducted in an unbroken chain since 1981. The only exceptions were in Assam in 1981 due to Statewide protests against illegal immigration from Bangladesh and in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991 due to law and order problems.

India's census, comprising house listing operations, where all the houses, irrespective of use, are identified and population enumeration, is one of the largest administrative exercises undertaken anywhere in the world. In the present context, given how the virus is spreading its tentacles, it is impractical to send census enumerators to households to collect and validate any information.

The census-NPR debate: Before the pandemic struck, the emphasis on conducting a joint census and NPR updation exercise, riding on the house listing operations, had faced considerable debate and criticism owing to the recently enacted Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) intertwined with the Government's open commitment to the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Linking of the census and NPR raises technical and operational questions. In 2011, the NPR tagged to the house-listing schedule had serious coverage issues, with about 60 million people missing. The fact that the NPR data is certainly not required for targeting purposes, the question that arises then relates to its utility since it is collected at enormous physical and financial costs when Aadhaar-based biometric identification numbers with higher coverage are already available. Moreover, since the Government has not revealed the existing NPR to public scrutiny, all insistence on its accuracy is merely a conjecture, validating apprehensions over the NPR being the base for the NRC. The census-NPR exercise has become intertwined with other controversies over official Government data. This has portrayed the present decade as disastrous for public data in India and warrants an urgent response to uphold the integrity and credibility of our statistical institutions.

The political economy of official data and harnessing ICT: Experiences from recent years suggest that the Government itself shied away from adopting various official statistics on employment, consumption, sanitation, and so on, owing to the inability of the Government, NITI Aayog and other departments to produce credible reports on account of method and comparability, adhering to the consistent macro picture. Apart from concealment and postponement of Government reports, it is when these are released, they are done so with multiple disclaimers.

As a result, the entire process makes the reports virtually unusable. This is further amplified by blatant withholding of administrative data often managed by big private consultancies over several years, not much has been done to fix this lacuna.

To reform the Indian statistical system, the present Government prepared the Draft National Statistical Commission (NSC) Bill, 2019. This Bill is aimed at empowering the NSC to effectively formulate policies, priorities and standards on statistical matters. Further, a Five-year Vision 2019-2024 for the National Statistical System has been published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). The NITI Aayog on its



THE FIGHT AGAINST THE PANDEMIC HAS TAUGHT US THE REAL IMPORTANCE OF DATA AND STATISTICAL SYSTEMS WITH A ROBUST ECOSYSTEM FOR INNOVATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY. EMPOWERMENT OF THE SEVERELY UNDERFUNDED AND UNDERSTAFFED INDIAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM REQUIRES URGENT AND LARGE INVESTMENTS IN TECHNICAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES



part has proposed a National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP). These efforts demonstrate a growing acknowledgement of the need for the use of digital technology, which would democratise access to holistic and coherent public Government data on a real-time basis.

Thus, going forward, it appears that the era of Industry 4.0, Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain and big economy would require extensive utilisation of ICT. This would enable quick and smooth harnessing of new sources of data, including payroll data, GIS data and big data generated using mobile communications, social media interactions and digitally-enabled transactions.

A departure from the past census exercise for census 2021 is that these operations will be carried out with handheld devices for prompt scrutiny and transfer of data to secure centralised servers. While this is certainly a progressive move, India must further take a cue from the experience of many countries in their responses to COVID-19 to tackle data-related exigencies concerning citizens registers.

In the US, the ongoing census 2020 (https://2020census.gov/) operations have been a model of success, ensuring accountability and credibility. Importantly, this has made the exercise open, inclusive and participatory. In the US, the census exercise in the US appears more as a celebration on social media, where its citizens are proudly enrolling and actively participating, whereas in India, the whole exercise displays apprehensions and policy vacuum.

There is no time to lose. The existing initiatives by the Government on harnessing ICT, such as Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI), Digital India and IAM, must be leveraged to carry out and continue the historic census exercise of 2021, as well as

to restore the credibility of our statistical institutions.

COVID-19, data and the State: There is no denying that the pandemic can only be fought with real-time information and aggregated data collected using cutting-edge technology and with the use of the internet, phones, ICT, location data and so on. This will help in the mandatory surveillance of each citizen in the extended lockdown period to enforce the necessary social distancing, isolation, tracing, delivery of essential services and welfare, the functioning of the economy and society and, more importantly in ensuring health and medical facilities.

This calls for a full-fledged citizen digital literacy programme under Digital India, utilising the lockdown time to hand-hold each citizen. In other words, the time for ensuring universal digital literacy, learning and application is now or never. During the pandemic, the amount of constructive and willing enrolment and support from each citizen, community, private sector and civil society, which will provide for such universal enumeration and registry by the Government, will be enormous and worth attempting. For now, the fallout of non-withdrawal of the States' power over data and surveillance remains a valid yet distant worry.

The way forward: The fight against the pandemic has taught us the real importance of data and statistical systems with a robust ecosystem for innovation and accountability. Empowerment of the severely underfunded and understaffed Indian statistical system requires urgent and large investments in technical and human resources.

Also, a real-time and dynamic database of unemployed, migrant and informal sector workers would immensely help in aiding the most vulnerable and marginalised sections that are excluded from any support from the Government in the absence of their up-to-date registry. This

would, in future, help to avoid situations like the current plight of internal migrants trekking along the highways to reach their home villages and small towns, in the face of the transportation and economic lockdown.

The census provides migration data at the district and town level, so holding it every five years instead of the present decadal system should be considered. Organising an intersectoral survey, as done in many countries, can also mitigate this deficiency in the Indian data system to a large extent.

Improving the credibility of official statistics would take a broad consensus and effective leadership. Dismantling the overlapping functions of statistical bodies like the NSC and MoSPI and creating coherence and cohesiveness in their duties and responsibilities is required.

To enable evidence-based policymaking, planning and implementation, adapting ICT to par with global standards is required by the system of official statistics in India. A universal digital India push now can lay the foundation of real-time data and modern architecture. This will go a long way in realising the vision of 'New India and a \$5 trillion economy. Further, postponement of NPR and only doing the first phase of the 2021 census work will be a logical step to ensure that the timeline for the population count in March 2021 is not altered. The challenges for data, posed by the pandemic, CAA-NPR-NRC and the reluctance of the Government to release official data, needs to be tackled urgently. Besides this, the NSC should be made an independent and dynamic body led by professionals to ensure availability of credible, accessible and legible statistics to empower policymakers with quality data to make India the world guru.

Kumar is Director, IMPRI and Mohanan is former Acting Chairperson of the NSC and mentor, IMPRI.

A pandemic of domestic abuse

Lockdowns have trapped women and girls with abusive partners. They are isolated and cut off from support networks and resources



SHRUTI KAPOOR

Every morning I wake up to a few messages on Saify's social media pages. Usually, these are requests for help and read like, "I know a girl who is facing domestic violence (DV), please can you help?" One person asks, "Hey, do you help in the lockdown too? I have been going through domestic violence for four years and it's been horrible." My team and I get busy supporting victims of domestic violence, getting them the help they need.

More than 90 countries are under lockdown with four billion people con-

fined to their homes. However, little do most people realise that for millions of women, "home" is not a safe place during a lockdown. As the world scrambled to flatten the Coronavirus curve, the DV curve surged across the globe. In France, DV cases increased by 30 per cent while in Argentina, emergency calls regarding DV increased by 25 per cent. Cyprus and Singapore helplines registered an increase in calls of 30-33 per cent. The UK, US, Spain, India and other countries, have all witnessed a rise in violence at home.

Lockdowns have trapped women and girls with abusive partners. They are isolated and cut off from support networks and resources. Victims are no longer able to pick up the phone and call for help because they are being watched by the abusive constantly. They are unable to step out of that door and seek support.

The truth is that DV has persisted in our homes for generations. A fact most of us choose to ignore. DV, like

all forms of abuse, is about power. And during this pandemic, men are using violence to control women's minds, bodies, economic capacities and mobility. It is a deliberate action carried out against the victim with a sense of entitlement over their bodies. And nothing can or should justify violence against women/girls.

So, what have countries done so far to address DV during this pandemic?

France is offering hotel rooms for victims of abuse. The Government will pay for 20,000 hotel nights for victims and put in place approximately 20 counselling centres at stores across the country in order for women to be able to seek help when they run errands.

In Germany, the Green Party's parliamentary leader, Katrin Göring-Eckardt, said she feared for the lives of thousands of women trapped with violent partners and called on the Government to free up money for safe houses.

In Greece, officials said they were stepping up a campaign to help women cope with problems clearly emerging from the issue of confinement.

A prosecutor in Trento, Italy, has ruled that in cases of DV the abuser must leave the family home and not the victim.

In India the National Commission for Women has launched a WhatsApp number (+91 7217735372) to facilitate quick and increased reporting, taking cognisance of the increase in violence.

So, the big question is, what can a citizen do as a bystander? Now more than ever, bystander intervention is vital. Each one of us, even under a lockdown, can actively intervene online or in the offline space if we see someone experiencing harassment or violence. Here are five ways that can help citizens speak out, identify, engage or respond to a situation of domestic abuse.

Delegate: Which means get help

from someone else. For example, in India, you can dial 100 for the police or 181 to connect to the women's helpline number after checking with the person facing harassment or abuse.

Delay: Wait for the incident to be over and then check in with the person harassed or abused. You can call the person, message them or use another creative way to check on them like through a chat feature on an online game and so on.

Distraict: Is to use an indirect approach to de-escalate the situation and divert the attention of the abuser away from the violence to give the victim a break. A common way to do this, if the incident is happening in your neighbourhood, is to ring the bell and ask to borrow something, like a cup of milk. The famous #RingTheBell campaign by Breakthrough is a classic example of how to distract an abuser.

Document: You can document the violence using your phone or a camera. Remember, while document-

ing the incident, try to film undetected and give the videos and photos to the person facing the violence. Consent is important. Let them decide what to do with it.

Direct: Speak up when you see a incident of DV. You can do so by naming the abuser and the victim. You can say, "Domestic violence is a crime." Name what you see. "It looks like she is physically hurt and very scared." Ask the abuser a question, "Why are you beating her?"

A word of caution: When intervening, please ensure your own safety first. If you don't feel safe intervening, get help. Be vigilant. DV, most of the time, is occurring behind closed doors and is less talked about. In fact in India, less than 14 per cent of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence seek help.

While a majority of us are following the shelter-in-place order, many first responders like postal workers, garbage collectors, food delivery staff

are out and about through neighborhoods doing their jobs. They may have an opportunity to detect violence and report to the authorities. If you know of someone facing violence, ask them how they would prefer to connect? Stay in touch with them through creative ways. Once you have safely established a way to connect, help them find a DV shelter or a helpline number. Think through a safety plan with the victim. One safety plan does not fit all. Abuse, harassment and violence is different in each incident. Each situation is unique and will require a different intervention.

These are difficult and unusual times for all. While we are physically cut away from each other, don't let that prevent you from raising your voice and using your resources for another pandemic called gender-based violence. When will we try to flatten this persistent curve?

(The writer is founder and CEO, Saify)

China approves controversial HK security bill

Beijing: China's parliament on Thursday approved a new controversial security law for Hong Kong which would make it a crime to undermine Beijing's authority in the former British territory.

China's annual political season, delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, ended on Thursday with its legislature, much on the expected lines endorsing the new security law for Hong Kong.

The new law, Chinese security agencies can for the first time open their establishments and operate in Hong Kong. The National People's Congress (NPC), which ended its week-long meeting approved a host of bills on the last day including the new security law for Hong Kong, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The bill now passes to the Standing Committee of the Communist Party and could become law by August.

The full details of the bill are not yet known.

Some authorities in Hong Kong insist the law is essential to tackle growing violence and "terrorism", and that the territory's residents have nothing to fear from it.

Critics fear it could lead to Hong Kongers being prosecuted for criticising their or the



Chinese President Xi Jinping, centre, applauds after the passage of a piece of national security legislation concerning Hong Kong during the closing session of China's National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing on Thursday. AP

leadership in Beijing, joining protests or exercising their constitutional rights under local laws.

China's move has already sparked a new wave of anti-mainland protest in Hong Kong, a former British colony, which was handed over to Beijing on July 1, 1997.

Clashes broke out again on Wednesday, as Hong Kong's

parliament debated a different proposed law, which would make it a crime to disrespect the Chinese national anthem.

The NPC regarded as the rubber stamp parliament for its routine approval proposals of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) unanimously approved the law which Hong Kong political parties said

would be a death knell to its 'one country two systems' and the autonomy it enjoyed from China.

The law has been denounced by the US, the UK and the EU as a blow to freedom and liberty of Hong Kong and affect the city's status as an international business hub. PTI

Hong Kong offenders will not be sent to China for trial: Report

Beijing: Chinese officials have clarified that those facing charges for offences committed in Hong Kong will not be sent to China to face trial under the new security law to firm up Beijing's hold over the former British colony.

China's new national security law will be incorporated into Hong Kong's legal system with built-in protections for offenders, who will not be sent across the border to mainland China to face trial, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted sources as saying.

The new law permits for the first time Chinese security agencies to open their establishments in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Bar Association has said China's proposed new security law could run into problems in courts as Beijing has no legal authority to enact its national security law for the former British colony.

The association also expressed concern over sug-

gestions that mainland security agencies would be set up to safeguard national security within the city, saying it was "entirely unclear" how that arrangement would comply with Article 22 of the Basic Law, which stipulates that Beijing departments not to interfere in local affairs.

The new legislation establishing and improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to safeguard national security is set to be passed by China's National People's Congress (NPC) on Friday.

The bill is regarded as a political bombshell for the former British colony as China has long sought to bypass the local Legislative Council to bring about a new security law tailor-made to take control of Hong Kong which has been witness to international peace and security mass protests by pro-democracy groups since last year demanding autonomy and freedom from Beijing. PTI

US, China lock horns over new security laws

United Nations: The US and China clashed over Hong Kong at the UN Security Council, with Washington calling a meeting over the controversial national security law introduced by Beijing to tighten its control on the former British colony.

The US Mission to the UN on Wednesday said Washington was "deeply concerned by actions taken by the People's Republic of China (PRC) National People's Congress that fundamentally undermine Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and freedoms as guaranteed under the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984, which was registered with the UN as a legally binding treaty and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region."

"This is a matter of urgent global concern that implicates international peace and security, and warrants the immediate attention of the UN Security Council," the US Mission said.

The US mission added that the United States had called for a virtual meeting of the Security Council on Wednesday to discuss these actions and China's proposed national security law that would threaten Hong Kong's democratic institutions and civil liberties. "Such actions confirm the PRC's contempt and complete disregard for its international obligations," it said. China's Ambassador to the UN Zhang Jun hit back at the US, saying Beijing categorically rejects the baseless request of the US for a Security Council meeting. "Legislation on national security for Hong Kong is purely China's internal affairs. It has nothing to do with the mandate of the Security Council," he tweeted.

The Chinese envoy added that "facts prove again and again that the US is a troublemaker of the world." "It is the US who has violated its commitments under the international law. China urges the US to immediately stop its power politics and bullying practices," the Chinese envoy said. PTI

Bipartisan Opp leaves surveillance bill in doubt

Washington: Legislation extending surveillance authorities that the FBI sees as vital in fighting terrorism was thrown into doubt as President Donald Trump threatened a veto and Republican leaders and top liberal Democrats said they would oppose it.

House Democratic leaders abruptly adjourned without considering the bill, hours after saying there would be a vote Wednesday evening.

In between, Trump said explicitly for the first time that he would veto the measure. A similar version of the legislation had drawn bipartisan support just weeks ago.

"If the FISA Bill is passed tonight on the House floor, I will quickly VETO it," Trump tweeted, using the acronym for the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

"Our Country has just suffered through the greatest political crime in its history. The massive abuse of FISA was a big part of it!"

Trump had suggested Tuesday evening that he would veto the measure, prompting Republicans who once backed the deal to follow Trump's lead and say Wednesday that they would now vote against it.

The leaders of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, which has about 70 Democratic House members, also said they would oppose the legislation, saying it lacked curbs on online surveillance without warrants. Combined with the week-long opposition, the Democrats' defiance of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., suggested there might be enough dissent to

sink the bill.

It was unclear if Democratic leaders would try again Thursday to hold a vote, or if they would skip a vote and try to negotiate with the Senate on a final compromise.

"We cannot in good conscience vote for legislation that violates Americans' fundamental right to privacy," said the progressive caucus's leaders, Reps. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., and Mark Pocan, D-Wis.

The legislation first passed the House in March with broad bipartisan support after Attorney General William Barr negotiated a deal with Republican and Democratic House leaders.

But that consensus crumbled Wednesday after the Justice Department came out against the bill, which was

amended by the Senate. The Justice Department's statement, by Assistant Attorney General Stephen Boyd, urged Trump to reject the bill.

Soon after, House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said it was time to take a "pause" on the legislation. The new impasse raised the potential for the surveillance powers to remain expired indefinitely. The provisions, which lapsed in March, allow the FBI to get a court order for business records in national security investigations and to conduct surveillance on a subject without establishing that they're acting on behalf of an international terrorism organization.

They also make it easier for investigators to continue eavesdropping on a subject who has switched cell phone providers to thwart detection. Despite the sudden GOP switch, Democratic leaders said they would move forward with a vote anyway, arguing that very little had changed since 126 Republicans, including McCarthy, voted for it in March. "Your flailing around to find a rationalization for your change of vote is sad," House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., told Republicans in a heated, angry exchange. "The only thing that has changed," Hoyer said, "is that Donald Trump has said vote no."

UK PM's aide made 'minor breach' with lockdown drive: Cops

PTI ■ LONDON British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's top aide, Dominic Cummings, might be guilty of a "minor breach" of the legal regulation when he took a journey during the coronavirus stay-at-home lockdown last month, UK police concluded on Thursday.

Durham Constabulary found the aide had committed no legal offence when he drove over 400-km from his London home to his father's farm in Durham, UK police concluded at the end of March. However, a second shorter trip to Barnard Castle on April 12, which 48-year-old

Cummings said was to test his eyesight for an eventual driving licence, could have fallen into the category of a breach but no retrospective action would be taken against him.

"Durham Constabulary have examined the circumstances of the breach and concluded that there might have been a minor breach of the Regulations that would have warranted police intervention," Durham Constabulary view his as minor because there was no apparent breach of social distancing, a Durham police statement said.

US President Donald Trump said Thursday that coronavirus was a "very bad gift" from China to the rest of the world, as America surpassed the grim milestone of over one lakh COVID-19-linked deaths. "All over the World the COVID-19 virus is a very bad gift from China, marches on. Not good!" Trump said in a tweet. "We have just reached a very sad milestone with the coronavirus pandemic deaths reaching 100,000," he said. "The world has reached the painful milestone of 100,000 coronavirus-related deaths — the highest in the world — on Wednesday."

Manhunts after hundreds flee quarantine in Zimbabwe, Malawi

Blantyre (Malawi): Manhunts have begun after hundreds of people, some with the coronavirus, fled quarantine centers in Zimbabwe and Malawi while authorities worry they will spread COVID-19 in countries whose health systems can be rapidly overwhelmed.

In Malawi, more than 400 people recently repatriated from South Africa and elsewhere fled a center at a stadium in Blantyre, jumping over a fence or strolling out the gate while police and health workers watched. Police and health workers told reporters they were unable to stop them as they lacked adequate protective gear.

At least 46 escapees had tested positive for the virus. Some of those who fled told reporters they had bribed police. And in Zimbabwe, police spokesman Paul Nyathi said

officers were "hunting down" more than 100 people who escaped from centers where a 21-day quarantine is mandatory for those returning from abroad.

"They escape and sneak into the villages. We are warning people to stop sheltering them. These escapees are becoming a serious danger to communities," Nyathi said.

Nearly all of Zimbabwe's 75 health Minister Obadiah Moyo told the centers that hold hundreds of people who have returned, sometimes involuntarily, from neighboring South Africa and Botswana.

The quarantine centers have become "our source of danger," Moyo said. "We are worried about people crossing porous borders and failing to report at quarantine centers. AP

confirmed cases but regional power South Africa, where many in both countries go to seek work, has more than 25,000. South Africa has the most cases in Africa, where the continent-wide total is nearly 125,000.

Zimbabwe's information minister, Monica Mutsvangwa, on Wednesday told reporters that the government is increasing security at the schools, colleges and hotels used as quarantine centers.

Government spokesman Nick Mangwana suggested that security officers guarding centers with high walls and razor wire might be receiving bribes to allow people to leave early. Zimbabwe's government is also worried about people crossing porous borders and failing to report at quarantine centers. AP

Violent protests rock Minneapolis for 2nd straight night

Minneapolis: Violent protests over the death of a black man in police custody rocked a Minneapolis neighborhood for a second straight night as angry crowds looted stores, set fires and left a path of damage that stretched for miles.

The protests that began late Wednesday and stretched into Thursday morning were the most destructive since the death of George Floyd, who was seen on video gasping for breath during an arrest in which an officer knelt on his neck for almost eight minutes. In the footage, George pleads that he cannot breathe before slowly stops talking and moving.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey appealed to the governor to activate the National Guard and asked for calm. "Please, Minneapolis, we cannot let tragedy breed more tragedy," he said on Twitter.

Protests also spread to other US cities. In California,



hundreds of people protesting Floyd's death blocked a Los Angeles freeway and shattered windows of California Highway Patrol cruisers.

Pockets of looting continued Thursday at Minneapolis stores where windows and doors were smashed. Television station KSTP reported some fires at businesses burned with no firefighters on the scene. A liquor store employee displayed a gun as he stood among the debris of broken bottles and beer cans inside the business. Amid the violence, a man

was found fatally shot Wednesday night near a pawn shop, possibly by the owner, authorities said.

Protesters began gathering Wednesday afternoon near the city's 3rd Precinct station, in the southern part of the city, where the 46-year-old Floyd died on Memorial Day as police arrested him outside a convenience store on a report of a counterfeiter on the ground.

Protesters also gathered against the white police officer seen on video kneeling against the neck of a handcuffed black man who complained that he could not breathe and died in police custody. Based on the video, Mayor Jacob Frey said officer Derek Chauvin should be charged in the death of George Floyd. The footage recorded by a bystander shows Chauvin with his knee on Floyd's neck as Floyd gasps for breath on the ground. The officer does not move for at least 8 minutes, even after Floyd stops speaking and moving. AP

Minneapolis (US): The mayor of Minneapolis called for the officer's criminal justice against the white police officer seen on video kneeling against the neck of a handcuffed black man who complained that he could not breathe and died in police custody.

Based on the video, Mayor Jacob Frey said officer Derek Chauvin should be charged in the death of George Floyd. The footage recorded by a bystander shows Chauvin with his knee on Floyd's neck as Floyd gasps for breath on the ground. The officer does not move for at least 8 minutes, even after Floyd stops speaking and moving. AP

Daniel Pearl Murder Case Pakistan SC to hear appeal against acquittal of accused on June 1

Islamabad: Pakistan's Supreme Court on Thursday fixed the hearing of the Daniel Pearl murder case for June 1, a month after the American journalist's family filed an appeal against the acquittal of the prime accused and British-born top al-Qaeda leader Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and three others in the case.

The Pearl, the 38-year-old South Asia bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal, was abducted and beheaded while he was in Pakistan investigating a story in 2002 on the alleged links between the country's powerful spy agency ISI and al-Qaeda.

An anti-terrorism court awarded death sentence to Sheikh and life imprisonment to three others. PTI

US Congress approves China sanctions over ethnic crackdown

Washington: Congress has voted to toughen the US response to a brutal Chinese crackdown on ethnic minorities, adding another factor to the increasingly stormy relationship between the two countries.

The House passed a bipartisan bill on Wednesday that would impose sanctions on Chinese officials involved in the mass surveillance and detention of Uighurs and other ethnic groups in the western Xinjiang region, a campaign that has drawn muted international response because of China's influence around the world.

The measure already passed the Senate and needs a signature from President Donald Trump, who said this week he'll "very strongly" consider it amid US anger over China's handling of the Covid outbreak and tension over a Chinese plan to restrict civil liberties in Hong Kong. Both issues emerged, along

with other sore points in the China-US relationship, as members of Congress spoke in support of the bill. No one spoke against it, and it passed by a 413-1 vote. "Beijing's barbarous actions targeting the Uighur people are an outrage to the collective conscience of the world," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a floor speech in support of the bill. It was the first bill in history to pass with proxy votes after House Democrats, over Republican objections, adopted a measure allowing such votes in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Congress last year voted to condemn the crackdown in Xinjiang, where Chinese authorities have detained more than a million people — from mostly Muslim ethnic groups that include Uighurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz — in a vast network of detention centers. AP

Pak crash: Foreign experts recover missing cockpit voice recorder

Karachi: A team of foreign experts on Thursday recovered the missing cockpit voice recorder from the debris of the crashed Pakistan International Airlines plane, nearly a week after one of the worst aviation disasters in the country's history.

The domestic flight from Lahore to Karachi crashed in a residential area near the Jinnah International Airport here last Friday, killing 97 people on board. Two passengers miraculously survived the crash.

The Airbus A320 aircraft of the national carrier had 91 passengers and a crew of eight when it crashed into the Jinnah Garden area near Model Colony in Malir on Friday, minutes before its landing. Eleven people on the ground were also injured. PTI

Virus may push 86 mn more children into household poverty by 2020-end: Report

United Nations: The number of children living in poor households across low and middle-income countries could increase by 86 million to reach 672 million by the end of 2020 due to the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a new study.

The deadly virus has so far infected 5,695,290 people and claimed 355,692 lives globally, according to a tally by the Johns Hopkins University.

The economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic could push up to 86 million more children into household poverty by the end of 2020, an increase of 15 per cent, said the study conducted jointly by the UNICEF and humanitarian organisation Save the Children.

The analysis highlighted that without urgent action to

protect families from the financial hardships caused by the pandemic, the total number of children living below the national poverty line in low and middle-income countries could reach 672 million by year-end.

Nearly two-thirds of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia and countries across Europe and Central Asia could see the most significant increase, up to 44 per cent across the region. Latin America and the Caribbean could see a 22 per cent increase.

"The coronavirus pandemic has triggered an unprecedented socio-economic crisis that is draining resources for families all over the world," UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore said in a statement.

"The scale and depth of financial hardship among families threatens to roll back years of progress in reducing child poverty and to leave children deprived of essential services. Without concerted action, families barely getting by could be pushed into poverty, and the poorest families could face levels of deprivation that have not been seen for decades," Fore said.

The organisations warned that the impact of the global economic crisis caused by the pandemic and related containment policies is two-fold — immediate loss of income meant families are less able to afford the basics, including food and water, less likely to access health care or education, and more at risk of child marriage, violence, exploitation and abuse. PTI

Around the Globe

Dhaka: Bangladesh on Thursday issued an order allowing the reopening of the offices and transport services from May 31 despite fears of the intensified coronavirus onslaughts as the country recorded 2029 new COVID-19 cases — the highest number of infections in a single day.

Kathmandu: Nepal on Thursday registered its highest single-day surge in the coronavirus cases with 156 new infections, taking the COVID-19 tally in the Himalayan nation to 1,042, the health ministry said.

Seoul: South Korea on Thursday reported its biggest jump in new COVID-19 cases in more than 50 days, a huge setback that could erase some of its hard-won gains.

Ankara: Intercity train service resumed on a limited basis Thursday in Turkey as the government eases restrictions imposed to curb the coronavirus.

Islamabad: Pakistan on Thursday crossed the 61,000-mark with 2,076 new coronavirus cases reported in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said. As many as 36 more patients died of the deadly viral infection, bringing the total death toll in the country to 1,260.

Moscow: Russia is continuing to see high numbers of new coronavirus cases even though its far-flung regions have increasingly moved to reopen the economy. The government's anti-coronavirus task force reported 6,371 new infections Thursday, the same as in the previous day and lower than the peak levels of more than 11,000 cases earlier this month.

Beijing: China has reported two new confirmed coronavirus cases, both from abroad and 23 asymptomatic ones, majority of them from COVID-19 epicentre Wuhan, health officials said on Thursday. According to the China's National Health Commission (NHC), two imported cases — one in Shanghai and the other in Fujian were reported on Wednesday while no cases of domestic transmission were reported. PTI

Sensex extends gains, reclaims 32,000-mark

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices defied gravity for the second straight session on Thursday as expiry of May series derivatives contracts triggered across the board buying amid firm global cues.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 595.37 points or 1.88 per cent to finish at 32,200.59. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty ended 175.15 points or 1.88 per cent at 9,490.10.

L&T was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, surging 6.17 per cent, followed by Hero MotoCorp, Infosys Bank, HDFC Bank, Maruti, HDFC, Tata Steel and Bharti Airtel.

ITC, SBI and Bharti Airtel were the only laggards, slipping up to 0.83 per cent.

Benchmarks witnessed a broad-based rally on account of short-covering by market participants as May series derivatives and options (F&O) contracts expired at the end of the session, analysts said.

Further, domestic investors took positive cues from most global markets amid optimism over the reopening of major economies across the world.

"A huge EU stimulus plan provided a boost to European LIC of India launches Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana

New Delhi: The Government of India has introduced Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (Modified -2020), with modified rate of pension for citizens aged 60 years and above.

This plan will be available for sale commencing from 26/05/2020 for three financial years i.e. upto 31st March, 2023.

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI 4TH FLOOR JEEVAN TABLA BUILDING PARLIAMENT STREET NEW DELHI - 110001

O.A. No. 807/19 Date: 02.03.2020 APPLICANT PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK

SHRI BADAL PANWAR & ORS. RESPONDENT

1. M/s. EMV VEE INFRASTRUCTURES PVT LTD. PLOT NO. 10000 VILLAGE GHAT NEAR DVAARKAKA HEIGHTS NH-58, VEDVYASPURI MEERUT-20005

Whereas the above named applicant (i) has/have instituted a case for recovery of Rs.59,03,835/- (Rupees FIFTY NINE LAKH THREE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED THIRTY FIVE ONLY) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 02.06.2020 AT 10.30 A.M.

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL FOR REGISTRAR, DRT-II, Delhi

Govt. of Bihar BIHAR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD



Table with columns: TOP GAINERS, TOP LOSERS. Includes entries for L&T, Hero Motor, Industrial B, HDFC Bank, Maruti Suz, ITC, SBI, Bharti Airtel.



Table with columns: TOP GAINERS, TOP LOSERS. Includes entries for Zee Ent., Eicher Motors, L&T, Hero Motor, HDFC Bank, SBI, Jsw Steel.

Wheat procurement by Govt agencies surpasses last year figures

New Delhi: Despite fortnight delay due to COVID, procurement touches 341.56 LMT surpassing last year's total by 25,000 tons

Surmounting all impediments created due to the spread of Covid-19 virus and the country wide lockdown.

Wheat harvesting generally starts towards end of March and procurement commences in the first week of April every year.

Western Rly preparing inhouse mask, sanitisers

New Delhi: Western Railway is taking all best possible efforts to prevent the spread of Covid 19 pandemic.

The real fight against Corona pandemic is being fought on various fronts over the Western railway in the form of transportation of essential commodities through parcel special & goods trains.

Operation of special trains for general passengers, mission food distribution for free meals to needy & helpless persons & inhouse preparation of Masks, sanitisers, PPEs etc.

In order to step up preventive measures against the coronavirus infection, masks and sanitisers are prepared inhouse at all the six divisions of WR.

These masks and sanitisers are used by not just railway officials and RPF who are involved in the day to day working of the freight and passengers movements

But are also used by the labourers, who are involved in loading and unloading of goods and parcel trains.

71% Indians think Govt's stimulus package will lead to economic recovery: Study

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Around 71 per cent of Indians believe that the Government's ₹20 lakh crore stimulus package will lead to economic recovery, a study said.

The Centre earlier this month announced a mega relief package to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

The survey was done online by YouGov Omnibus among 1,005 respondents in India between May 19-22, 2020.

2019-2020 FDI in India jumps 13% to record \$49.98 bn

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investment in India grew by 13 per cent to a record of \$49.97 billion in the 2019-20 financial year, according to official data.

The Budget 2020-21 had proposed to launch a system under which Permanent Account Number shall be instantly allotted online on the basis of Aadhaar without filling up the detailed application form as it sought to further ease the process of PAN allotment.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday launched a facility for instant allotment of online PAN on furnishing of Aadhaar details.

The Budget 2020-21 had proposed to launch a system under which Permanent Account Number shall be instantly allotted online on the basis of Aadhaar without filling up the detailed application form as it sought to further ease the process of PAN allotment.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday launched a facility for instant allotment of PAN (on near to real time basis).

Nissan plans to shut Indonesia, Barcelona plants

SILENT ON INDIA

Japanese automobile major Nissan Motor Company on Thursday said closure of Indonesian and Barcelona plants; reducing the number of models; rationalising production capacities; cutting down fixed costs by 300 billion Yen and streamlining operations planned to achieve sustainable growth, financial stability and profitability by the end of fiscal 2023.

Some think this package will help the Government believes the underprivileged (migrants and poor, among others), majority of respondents (61 per cent) believed 'distribution of free food grains' is most likely to work to their advantage.

More than half (53 per cent) were in support of one nation one ration card' provision under which the government has allowed inter-state portability of ration cards.

FM launches instant allotment of e-PAN based on Aadhaar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday launched a facility for instant allotment of online PAN on furnishing of Aadhaar details.

The Budget 2020-21 had proposed to launch a system under which Permanent Account Number shall be instantly allotted online on the basis of Aadhaar without filling up the detailed application form as it sought to further ease the process of PAN allotment.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday launched a facility for instant allotment of PAN (on near to real time basis).

US layoffs climb to 41 million despite business reopenings

AP ■ WASHINGTON

An estimated 2.1 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week despite the gradual reopening of businesses across the country, bringing the running total since the coronavirus shutdowns took hold in mid-March to about 41 million, the government said Thursday.

The figures underscored the continuing damage to businesses and livelihoods from the outbreak that has now killed at least 100,000 people in the U.S., more than the number of Americans lost in the Vietnam War.

The figures were combined and more than 33 times the death toll on 9/11. The U.S. unemployment rate was 14.7% in April, the highest since the Great Depression.

Mumbai facing 'disastrous consequences' due to high population density: Gadkari

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said there is a need to decongest the financial capital as the most affected in terms of number of virus cases, accounting for over 40% of the overall COVID-19 infections in the country.

At present, there are reports of the medical facilities being close to being overwhelmed, even as the number of patients continues rising fast in some localities like the Dharavi slum, which alone has reported over 1,600 cases.

"There is a need to decongest Mumbai, look at the disastrous consequences that we are facing. The population is very dense, which leads to a lot of problems," Gadkari said speaking at a webinar organised by the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank Federation.

Gadkari, the road transport minister, also offered to allocate plots for Dharavi's tanneries along the upcoming Mumbai-Delhi express highway.

In comments that came amid reports that many including migrants battling hunger due to the pandemic, Gadkari said he would look into the problems that are overflying and grains

COVID-19

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said there is a need to decongest the financial capital as the most affected in terms of number of virus cases, accounting for over 40% of the overall COVID-19 infections in the country.

At present, there are reports of the medical facilities being close to being overwhelmed, even as the number of patients continues rising fast in some localities like the Dharavi slum, which alone has reported over 1,600 cases.

"There is a need to decongest Mumbai, look at the disastrous consequences that we are facing. The population is very dense, which leads to a lot of problems," Gadkari said speaking at a webinar organised by the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank Federation.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Sarita D/o Sajjan Kumar R/o H.No. B-30, Deepak Vihar, Khandar Vihar, Delhi, has been missing/kidnapped from the area of P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi since 14.03.2020.

In this regard, a case vide FIR No. 186/20 S/O 363 IPC Dated 15.03.2020 has been registered at P.S. Nihal Vihar, Delhi. The description of the missing girl is as under.

Age: 15 years, Complexion: Fair, Height: 5'3". Face: Round, Wearing: Chocolate colour Kurta-Pajama and hawal chappal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far.

General public is hereby informed that a Male namely Vishnu S/o Ram Singh, R/o Plot No. 11-B, Uttam Nagar, Vikas Nagar, Panchsheel Enclave, Ground Floor, Delhi, Age: 23 yrs., Height: 5'8", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Oval, Wearing: Black Colour Shirt, Black Colour Pant, Green Colour Jersey and Black Colour Shoes in Feet, has been missing / kidnapped since 13.02.2020 with his son namely: Jatins, Age: 2 months, from the area of P.S. Rahnaha. In this regard a case DD No. 23-A dated 14.02.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Rahnaha, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped Male but no clue has come to light so far.

General public is hereby informed that one female namely: Moni with her Daughter Yashvini (Age-4yrs), Wo Neeraj, H/o: S-327, Swarn Park, Mangal Bazar, Nanjoli, Delhi, Age: 25 years, Height: 5', Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Wearing: Orange Sari-Red Shawl and Green Hawai Chappal in feet has been Missing since 07.02.2020 from the area of P.S. Nanjoli. In this regard a DD No. 17-A dated 09.02.2020 has been registered at P.S. Nanjoli, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this female but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this female kindly inform to the following.

GOVT. OF MAHARASHTRA P.W. Division, Chiplun Phone No. 02355/252806

Web-www.mahapwd.com & e-mail-chiplun.ee@mahapwd.com E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 01 FOR 2020-2021 Open ONLINE

Table with columns: Sr No., Name of Work, Approximate value of work (Rs.) Lakhs, Earnest Money (Rs.), Time Limit (Months), Type & Cost of blank e-tender form fee (Non Refundable)

E-tender time table 1. Download & Bid Preparation Period of online Tender Dt 04.06.2020 at 10.00 a.m. to Dt 29.06.2020 at 18.00 p.m.

Note :- 1. All eligible/interested contractors who want to participate in tendering process should compulsory get enrolled on e-tendering portal "http:mahatenders.gov.in" the appropriate category applicable to them.

SGD- Executive Engineer Chiplun P.W. Division, Chiplun

SEARCH FOR MISSING Vishnu

SEARCH FOR MISSING Jatins

SEARCH FOR MISSING FEMALE

SEARCH FOR MISSING FEMALE

Trend
Slazer

Malaika shares her morning ritual

Actor **MALAIKA ARORA** has shared her daily morning ritual, which is all about soaking in the sun.

She took to Instagram to share her morning routine through a video.

"My every morning ritual — stand in the sun and get my share of vitamin D, which I think is so essential. Don't forget, just get that morning sun," she said in the video.

In the clip, Malaika is seen flaunting healthy glowing skin with her hair tied in a bun. She is wearing a navy blue, round neck t-shirt and is standing in her balcony against the backdrop of a sunny sky.



'We all are going through a tough time due to this pandemic and lockdown. But the situation

also demands us to think beyond normal and explore new ways to reach out to the music lovers. I like it is one such attempt by me to offer something entertaining to the audience.'

—Palash Sen

Amid the lockdown, actor **SHRADDHA KAPOOR** stepped out to buy essential groceries with her brother Siddhanth, and described it as an adventurous experience.

She took to Instagram to share a picture with her brother at a supermarket. "Groceries adventure with my *bhaiya* @siddhanthkapoor," Shraddha wrote along with the picture.

Meanwhile, Shraddha has been urging fans to not abandon pets amid the lockdown. Recently, she shared a poem from the perspective of a caged animal, talking about freedom and life outside of zoos.



India on Reese's mind?

Actor **REESE WITHERSPOON** and her son Tennessee are dreaming of travelling to India. Her recent Instagram post underlines the fact.

In the post, the mother-son duo can be seen engrossed in an activity book on India.

In the image, Tennessee holds a pen while Witherspoon is seen pointing to a page with 'India' written on it. There is also a brochure of India lying nearby on the table along with a fake passport meant for a play.

"Dreaming of the places we will go. Where do you dream of travelling to?" she wrote along with the picture.



A NEW LEARNING

AYUSHI SHARMA talks to the experts to find out the way forward for schools and education as social distancing changes the method of instruction

Students without seat partners, attending school in shifts while wearing masks, and carrying sanitizers along with books, combining online education with physical and a focus on keeping safe... Is this what schools in the recent future, whenever they reopen, look like? Since the world is all set to change with new normal in every industry be it fashion, travel or education, the question is — what is the way forward? Educationists share that COVID-19 is likely to change the face of education in the forthcoming years and it will pave the way for new learning trends.

Some of the suggestions that have come forth from educationists include frequent health checks, temperature screenings, staggered arrivals and limiting visitors on campus.

But there is also the emotional aspect to be looked after. The bond that children make in school, while being away from their parents, family or any kind of intervention, make them understand different aspects of life while making them emotionally strong. So social need is one domain which every school caters as it plays a very important role in shaping a child's character, believes Shivani Gupta, a primary teacher of Gems Modern Academy, Gurgaon. She says, "Multi-sensory experiences for a child are a very strong force. s/he learns best not in a class, but over time with real life experiences. I feel the focus still remains the same, just the strategies have changed because of what is happening in the world. Now these values are being taught using technology."

Children are being taught with the new normal. Short videos, PPTs and online discussions are being conducted to make them aware of the current situation. Their inputs are asked on topics like: What do they think can be done to stay safe? How important is it to maintain social distancing? Is there any need to change — our thinking or our actions? "Such topics ignite their critical thinking and give them a chance to introspect their views. Once they believe in what they do, it becomes their habit," Shivani tells us.

Group learning, which was widely adopted before this pandemic, should now be replaced with a more engaging approach, shares Beas Dev Ralhan, co-founder and CEO of Next Education India Pvt Ltd. "Schools should introduce individual activities and project-based learning so that students can explore their interests and learn at their own pace. Further, to make bonding among students and teachers, online discussions, debates and extempores should be conducted so that they can interact, present their views and stay connected. This, in turn, will ensure that learning and holistic development doesn't stop no matter what," says he.



What is a crisis worth if you don't learn something from it? Well, Anju Wal, principal of Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad, shares that schools are re-imagining the teaching-learning process. At this moment, it is more important to do empathetic teaching than transactional lessons online. She says, "An expression of love and care is

paramount to the digital learning format in these unprecedented times. No one in the education sector was certain how to go about the new norm of teaching digitally, but have evolved considerably and bettered the online experience for our children with regular improvements made through feedback, dialogue, and analysis." One thing is certain that education institutions have made the most of the situation. With e-learning, schools have learned not to put disproportionate focus on facts, figures and bookish learning. What Meenal Arora, founder-director of Shemford Group of Futuristic Schools, feels is that this chaotic time is teaching us that a curriculum must be grounded in students' realities and cultivate empathy, creative and flexible thinking in students. "Teachers are trying to help children think about their relationship with the world around them through various activities. Parents are encouraged to play and their active participation is indispensable," says she.

Educational needs of children are changing at a very high pace. Subjecting them to mathematical tables, mugging up poems and memorising the names of colours is not going to help anymore. They need to be exposed to 'experiences' no matter how trivial. But with the current scenario and online education becoming the trend, this isn't an option. So how can one focus on learning through real experiences in an untouchable world? Shivani Gupta says, "Parents need to be in a situation as well. She feels that we can still do a lot more than what we could do before the 'stay-at-home' orders. "Earlier, we were getting away from all the pleasures of life, from family and happiness because of our fast-paced lives. Right now, we are actually saving that time and energy, which can be used in various other pursuits. This untouchable time has actually brought us closer to our families and has given time to focus on the real experiences. As a teacher, I ask my students to connect with their grandparents as they can offer endless stories and a huge amount of patience to answer all those 'why?' questions and help their mothers as psychology suggests that children learn and imitate behaviours by watching and listening, which means they can learn character traits such as resilience, determination and perseverance from mother," shares she.

Anju tells us that even in these lockdown days, when they are digitally connecting with the children, they are looking at the home as the laboratory of learning and the parents as their co-partners in the journey of teaching and learning. Even agrees with Shivani and says, "There has been no option but to deepen connects with our parents and orient them seamlessly and consistently to own our pedagogy. We partner with them and use homegrown resources to bring real-time experiences in this learning from home situation."

The global health crisis has also redirected the pedagogical approach towards digital learning tools and e-learning plat-

forms that offer learning experiences close to real experiences. "Subject learning must be reshaped and amalgamated with short videos, DIY activities, audio-visual content and more. Students must be encouraged to explore and browse subject-related queries online, actively participate in discussions with subject experts and attend webinars," says Ralhan.

Pankaj Kumar Singh, Managing Director of the Cambridge Montessori preschool and day care Pvt Ltd, has a few more ways through which children can be exposed to real experiences. He says, "Design activities that integrate online interactions with physical movement like going on a scavenger hunt, group songs, singing or music. Provide children with a choice of activities so that they can be empowered in making decisions over the week, while ensuring a balance of activities across curriculum learning areas. For instance, using a rubric to self-monitor progress, apply techniques of the flipped classroom. It's where children engage in learning experiences by collecting information, items, experimenting and then share through online format."

Once the schools reopen, a few precautions need to be taken and we can still be on the path of learning. So how can the children be taught about social distancing in schools and no-touch culture? Rohan Parikh, director of The Green Acres Academy, explains that children are naturally curious and are always looking to explore and interact with their environment. "The more practical solutions will be to create a shift system so we have less children in the building at one time. Keep separate groups to contain any spread. There will be a huge burden on schools to manage and keep these measures. Teachers will have to look for ways to create experiences within classrooms that are meaningful and impart knowledge. Such creativity and working with limited resources have been the way of teachers for many years. I trust we will find the solution," says he.

Undoubtedly the process has its own challenges but "a lot of training sessions and workshops for everyone — teachers, students and even parents, can help a bit," shares Meenal. "Using fun interactive activities, children can be taught to maintain social distance. With constant counselling, we will be able to achieve a no-touch culture at school. It can be done by instilling discipline and making children understand how they have to conduct themselves in the 'new normal' world. This may impact learning through real life experiences a bit but we must remember — difficult times don't last forever. This, too, shall pass soon."

The future of education is all set to change. And it's true that nothing can replace the physical touch and its impact on one's memory. But as they say, the only constant in life is change. The ones who do not want to change will succumb and the ones who change with the times, stay calm and are willing to adapt this change will survive this pandemic.

'Phygital is the way forward' Theatre helped me grow: Shreyas Talpade

BALBIR SINGH DHILLON, Audi India's head, hopes that the sales will bounce back in the country powered by the YOLO mentality of customers

As the country limps back to a sense of normalcy, I spoke with Balbir Singh Dhillion, Audi India's head, about how he believes the luxury car market in India will proceed. To start with, over two-thirds of Audi's workshops are open as are half of the showrooms that are following all social distancing norms. But Dhillion says that there are challenges, not just social distancing, inside showrooms but other norms such as the rule in Chennai that car showrooms cannot use air-conditioners. "There are some unique challenges in some states," he says.

But what about car sales? Not a single unit was sold in April. In fact, even customers forget that no cars could even undergo routine servicing. Audi India, like several other manufacturers, found itself in a slightly piquant situation. "Well, each one of our workshops had customer vehicles undergoing service and repairs. Our first priority is ensuring that those get back to their owners as soon as possible as we restart operations." At the same time, Audi India ran a special service scheme for Covid Warriors to ensure that Audi vehicles owned by those on the frontlines of facing the virus that originated in Wuhan are serviced or repaired on a priority basis.

As for sales, since all Audis, even those assembled in India, are made from parts shipped from abroad, Dhillion said that customs authorities are being slightly cautious and understandably so. And despite some showrooms opening up, several states are just figuring out how to tackle the lockdown now. This, Dhillion believes, will lead to ever increasing levels of digitisation in the selling process. "Customers have been digital, but they initially researched the cars they wanted to buy and read reviews online. An average customer and his or her family spends around 100 hours buying a car. Earlier, maybe a third of



the time was spent online and then there were visits to the showroom. Now that will go up to over half, maybe even two-thirds. We are enabling that with things like the Audi 'Virtual Showroom' as well. Yet, digital will not replace physical, that is why I believe the way forward is 'phygital', where digital showrooms and experiences will enhance the physical buying process."

But can the market recover from the virus-hit first few months of 2020? Dhillion reckons, it will be tough, as the industry already dealt with a challenging 2019, where volumes fell 15 per cent. "The first quarter of the calendar year 2020 saw volumes continue to decline," he admits. But he maintains a positive spin on things going forward. "I believe the thought process will change, people will start thinking on the lines of 'YOLO (You Only Live Once) and will want to splurge on a luxury vehicle for driving getaways." He added that the Q5 SUV's interventions by the government, might not have any immediate impact on sales but will have a long-term positive effect.

"It would have been nice if the government made some demand-side interventions such as a reduction of GST rates, which are still far too high in India. Rates between 43-48 per cent coupled with registration charges ranging from 10-20 per cent have meant that the luxury segment is just one percent of the overall car market. Even a slight reduction in these rates could have proven to be a booster to growth, but we must accept this and move on. We have to continue to do what we do best, that is selling emotions, dreams and positivity." Dhillion told this columnist, which is why he continues to believe in incalculating brand loyalty for Audi early on.

However, the higher charges on luxury cars has proven to be a hindrance for the government's ambitious 'Make in India' project. While 90 per cent of the Audis sold in India, such as the best-selling A3 and A4 sedans and the Q5 SUVs are assembled in India, Dhillion admitted that localisa-

tion levels are low. "With more proactive policies we could have reached 1,00,000 units easily but the system has to work together for that. Such numbers would not only have meant more manufacturing and localisation in India, but also newer technologies and products for us."

The lockdown might be winding down but the economy and sales are in tatters. Audi is not going to hold back from its previously planned launch schedule for 2020. "Sure, there will be short-term adjustments such as a launch getting delayed by a month or two, but there are no changes in plans." And in other markets, as restrictions lift, sales have seen a bounce. In China, for example, the country where all the troubles began, sales have stabilised to nearly the levels they were before everything went haywire. Dhillion and his colleagues at Audi India are hoping the same will happen here as well.

Shreyas Talpade's first role was that of Sita for a school play. The next year he played Draupadi in the school version of the *Mahabharata*. This was, perhaps, the first sign of how versatile the actor he would be in later years. From school dramas, street plays to monologues and mime — Shreyas wanted to learn and be a part of everything.

"From 1990 till 2005, I did nearly 2,500 shows in various languages and of different productions. My love for the stage was such that I didn't want to miss a single chance to be under the art lights. Whatever I am today is because of theatre. It grows you and betters your craft like no other medium. Whatever little appreciation I get in my films today is all because of it," reminisces Talpade.

The actor switched from theatre to television, and later films. But in the midst of all his other work commitments, he was inspired to return to the stage with Zee Theatre's teleplay *Typecast*. "I love the format of a teleplay and that's the reason why I said yes to it. I think teleplay is a great experiment where we get rid of the proverbial fourth wall. It's almost like shooting for a film in an enclosed studio. These formats are challenging but they need to be explored a lot more," says he.

Typecast is an adaptation of a Marathi play called *Pahije Jatiche* by the famous playwright Vijay Tendulkar. The play is set in the 70s when the caste system was not just prevalent but rigidly enforced in India. However, it shows how the context of the story is relevant even today. Shreyas plays the role of Mahipat Babruvahan, who becomes the first from his caste and village to complete his master's degree. Mahipat has a dream of becoming a professor and of the play showcases all he does to achieve his dream including how he manages his love interest.

"The script is layered, entertaining and has a strong social message. I have always believed you can say a lot with humour," says Shreyas.

The teleplay is available on Tata Sky and Airtel Digital TV Spotlight. It also stars Atul Mather, Aaditi Pohankar and Utkarsh



LITTLE VICTORY GARDENS

While most super foods are perceived to be exotic, expensive and difficult to find, this is not really true, says nutritionist ISHI KHOSLA

Evolving consumer demands based on health needs and changing lifestyles have resulted in changes in the food industry in recent years. To meet growing and changing consumer demands driven by health and well-being, the food industry is forced to come up with new, innovative concepts and food products that are driven by the use of new raw materials. These are emerging out of super foods, which gained the attention of the consumers over the last few years.

The increasing popularity of super foods can be understood from the fact that these raw materials match with diet trends like "organic", "all-raw", "free-from", "vegan", "gluten free" and an increasing desire to stay healthy. These new raw materials might play a role in meeting the new health needs in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic along with existing epidemics of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, auto-immune disorders and cancers. These merit particular attention when immune systems are challenged and there is rising awareness about their importance. The properties that qualify a food as super are that it should possess special health benefits which go beyond its nutritional benefits. While most super foods are perceived to be exotic, expensive and difficult to find, this is not really true. Actually they are all around us in legumes (soya, black beans), spices and herbs (turmeric, basil), vegetables (ginger, garlic, broccoli, kale, mushrooms, avocado), fruits (berries, amla, olives), grains (quinoa, millets). Some of the unsung Indian super foods are fox nuts (*makhana*), *kokum*, *morenga*, Sea Buckthorn, flax, soursop, basil seeds, and in fact our entire spice box.

It is only when a food gets recommendations by health professionals based on research or other factors that it acquires a premium status and is then positioned as a super food. As a matter of fact, the concept which was meant only to describe foods with higher polyphenols and anti-oxidants has been revoked and has become questionable.

In 2012 USDA has withdrawn this term and does not support claims of super foods. The goal is to eat a variety, include all the food groups, in the right amount as a part of a healthy diet. Rising consumer awareness about the health benefits being offered is leading the industry to boost its demand.



Growing health consciousness among the consumers and rising number of new products are some of the major factors contributing to growth in this industry. For example leading multinational food companies are serving turmeric ginger laced beverages. Such trends are only expected to grow. Currently global super foods market is dominated by North America, with a growth rate of 9 per cent followed by Europe and Asia-Pacific region.

Consumption in Asia-Pacific is driven by the growing affluence of the middle-class population and rising health consciousness among consumers coupled with increasing acceptance of nutritious products. However, the high prices of such products restrain the growth of their demand. High rate of urbanisation has radically changed the lifestyle and resultant changing diets of people are expected to have a positive impact on this growing market.

To cope with increased demands and the growing popularity of these foods, there is a need to increase agricultural pro-



duction and productivity with more environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Until then, it is likely that the demand may exceed the supply and the prices will go up making them assume a

further premium status on super market shelves. With the adoption of new ground breaking innovations, it is possible to add value in the areas of health, nutrition, consumption, and overall well-being. Organic, bio-dynamic cultivation, hydroponics and many more advancements are some of the future agricultural practices which will not only be good for our health but the entire ecosystem.

The combination of suitable raw materials and inspiring food technologies may guide and shape the food sector of the future. Meanwhile the best practices that emerge to enjoy these high value foods is to go back in post world war times and grow your own vegetables, herbs and spices. Victory gardens (vegetable, fruit, and herb gardens planted at private residences and public parks) supplied 40 per cent of fruits and vegetables at one point in the US after the war in 1919. Fruits of the little victory gardens with super foods all across the country and may pave the way to victory on the virus by building our very own immunity.

Beat the heat

Here are some drinks with a refreshing twist to keep you hydrated during summer. By TEAM VIVA

Now that summers are here, ways to stay hydrated will take centre stage. Water, for obvious reasons is the first choice. Apart from that, one can try other drinks, salads, more carbs, coconut water and more to remain hydrated.

Here are some drinks with a refreshing twist.

The Oberoi has come up with *Green Rush* by combining spinach leaves, green apple, celery sticks, cucumber and lemon juice. You need to blend all the ingredients until smooth, add crushed ice, garnish with a celery stick and serve chilled.

It has several nutritional benefits. Cucumber is a great source of antioxidants and provides hydration to the body. Celery contains a plant compound called apigenin, which is anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antiviral and an antioxidant. Spinach is a great source of iron and vitamin A and green apple provides both vitamins A and C to the body.

Another drink that it has to offer is *Banana Spice Smoothie*. Mix banana, moringa leaves, coconut milk, ginger, cardamom and cinnamon. Blend the spinach and coconut milk until smooth, add the bananas, ginger, cinnamon, and cardamom and blend again. Ginger helps in reducing inflammation, aids digestion and helps the body detoxify naturally. Moringa helps in balancing digestive system and in improving eye sight. Banana is high in anti-oxidants and helps in moderating blood sugar levels. It is a rich source of fibre and helps in weight loss.

Chef Anshu Raj, Caterpoint suggests *Watermelon Basil Coconut Limeade* to up your health game. Combine ripe watermelon, fresh basil leaf or soaked basil seeds with fresh lime, roasted cumin and coconut water. Don't forget the ice cubes.

First take the watermelon, wash it thoroughly, peel and chop into about half inches cubes. Now take fresh coconut water and pour in mixer. Then add lime juice, basil leaves or soaked basil seeds and stir well along with six to eight ice cubes. Now add watermelon cubes. For an Indian flavour, you can add roasted cumin seeds which go very well with the mix. If you have a sweet tooth, you can add honey to your limeade.

He shares another summer favourite to beat the heat *Watermelon Mojito Cooler*. Add Sprite or sparkling water, mojito



syrup, lime juice and ice cubes in ripe watermelon.

Take watermelon, wash it thoroughly, peel the skin and cut into half inches cubes. Then take a mixer, add Sprite or soda, lime juice and mojito syrup. If you don't have mojito syrup you can make it at home with sugar, lime juice and crushed mint leaves. Add that to your cooler. Now add ice cubes in a mixer and stir before adding watermelon. Pour the mixture in a tall glass and garnish with fresh mints.

Apart from keeping you hydrated, it helps you to fight heart problems, is good for hair, skin and your digestive system.

Vinayak Gupta, chef and partner at Beep, Agra shares an immune booster elixir which keeps one hydrated too. It can be made by combining wheat grass, apple, carrot, celery stick, lemon, chopped ginger, garlic clove (optional) and turmeric. Put all ingredients in a jar, juice them and drink immediately. If you prefer the drink to be chilled, place all ingredients in the fridge for at least half an hour before processing. All these refreshing drinks will certainly leave you wanting for more.

R E C I P E S

BOHRI MALAI KHAJA

WHAT YOU NEED

For covering:

- Refined flour: 2 cups
- Ghee: 2 tbsp

For layering:

- Refined flour: 1 tsp
- Ghee: 1 tsp

For stuffing:

- Khoya: 1 cup
- California walnut powder: 1/2 cup

- Sugar (powdered): 1 cup
- Green cardamom powder: 1 tsp
- Saffron water: 1 tsp
- Oil for frying



METHOD

- Roast the khoya and California walnut powder on low flame for 10 minutes.

- Cool and mix sugar, cardamom powder. Keep aside.
- Knead refined flour and ghee with little water to form a stiff

dough. Make into orange-sized balls.

- Roll each ball to a thin disc nine-inches in diameter. Smear ghee and sprinkle refined flour all over.

- Roll into a thin cylinder, twist it and spiral it up. Chill for 10 minutes.

- Roll the chilled spiral ball into a four-inch disc and add in a scoop of the cooled filling.
- Bring the ends together and roll into a ball again.

- Give it a smear of saffron water and cool for 15 minutes.
- Deep fry over low flame.
- Garnish with powdered sugar.

Courtesy: California Walnuts.

ALMOND & ROSE KULFI

WHAT YOU NEED

- Milk, full cream: 4 cup
- Sugar: 1/2 cup
- Saffron: 1/4 tsp
- Almond meal: 1/2 cup
- Dried rose petals: 1/4 cup

METHOD

- In a pan, add milk and heat it on low flame. Keep stirring. Do not let the milk burn.
- Let milk start to



thicken.

- Once it becomes half the volume, add the almond meal and sugar and mix well.
- Strain the mixture.
- Add the dried rose petals and saffron strands. Mix well.
- Allow the kulfis mixture to cool, pour it into kulfis moulds or small bowls and freeze them.
- Demould the kulfis and serve it garnished with roasted almond flakes.

Courtesy: Chef Manish Mehrotra, Almond Board of California.

SMOKED ALMOND RAITA

WHAT YOU NEED

- Almond flakes: 1/4 cup
- Yoghurt: 1 cup
- Dry roasted jeera powder: 1/4 tsp
- Black pepper powder: 1/4 tsp
- Salt to taste
- Black salt: 1/4 tsp
- Chopped garlic: 2 tsp
- Chopped coriander leaves: 1 tsp
- Sunflower oil: 2 tsp
- Hot coal: 2-3 pieces
- Ghee: 1 tsp

METHOD

- In a heavy bottom pan, heat the oil. Roast the chopped garlic until golden.
- In a bowl, add the yoghurt and whisk it well.
- Add the jeera powder,



- black pepper powder, salt, black salt, roasted garlic as per taste. Mix gently.
- Take the almond flakes in a bowl.
- Make a small bowl-like structure out of the aluminum foil, and place it in the center of the bowl with almond

- flakes.
- Place two to three small pieces of hot coal in the aluminum foil.
- Pour some ghee on top of it.
- Cover the almond bowl immediately with aluminum foil and keep it covered for 10-15 minutes. The almonds should be smoked.
- Remove the foil and the coal from the almonds and add these smoked almonds to the raita and mix gently.
- Serve the raita topped with chopped fresh coriander leaves and smoked almond flakes.

Courtesy: Chef Manish Mehrotra, Almond Board of California.

PATELI KE KEBAB

WHAT YOU NEED

- Boneless mutton (cut in half inch bits): 800 gm
- Ginger garlic paste: 50 gm
- Raw papaya paste: 150 gm
- White onion paste: 100 gm
- Brown onion paste: 100 gm
- Desi ghee: 150 gm
- Yellow chilli powder: 25 gm
- Coriander powder: 25 gm
- Garam masala: 25 gm
- Black pepper powder: 10 gm
- Roasted chana powder: 50 gm
- Curd: 100 gm
- Saffron: 1 gm
- Poppy seeds paste: 30 gm
- Cashew paste: 10 gm
- Chiroli paste: 10 gm
- Desiccated coconut powder: 10 gm
- Kewra: 2 ml
- Clove: 4 pcs



- Green cardamom: 6 pcs
 - Salt to taste
- METHOD
- Take a bowl, put washed

- mutton, add ginger garlic paste, raw papaya paste, white onion paste, curd, coriander powder, yellow chilli powder, garam masala, black pepper powder,
 - salt and brown onion.
 - Blend well and keep in a cool place for two hours.
 - Take a pateli, heat it and add ghee, clove and cardamom. After roasting put the entire marinated mutton, add some amount of water, roasted chana powder and stir vigorously. Put on medium flame, cover it for almost 15 minutes.
 - Remove lid when the mutton is almost done. Now add cashew, almond, chironji paste, desiccated coconut powder, and poppy paste. Again blend it with a ladle and cook until it turns oily.
 - Now add saffron and kewra water, stir two to three times, close the lid and remove from the flame immediately.
 - Garnish with coriander leaves. Have it with romali roti or paratha.
- Courtesy: Chef Mohammad Shaeem Quraishi.

ICC defers decision on WT20 postponement till June 10

NEW DELHI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) Board on Thursday deferred a decision on the fate of this year's T20 World Cup in Australia till June 10 as it continued exploring contingency plans amid a raging pandemic.

The ICC also launched an inquiry into concerns over the "confidentiality" of its functioning, which the Board felt has been breached in the past few days.

"The Board also requested the ICC management continue with their discussions with stakeholders in exploring various contingency options in light of the rapidly changing public health situation caused by the Covid-19 virus," the ICC said in a statement after the Board's teleconference.

It is learnt that most of the discussion on the day was pertaining to classified information, including internal e-mails, being leaked, an issue that outgoing chairman Shashank Manohar as well as board members addressed.

"A number of Board members had raised their concerns over this issue recently and felt it required immediate attention to ensure the sanctity and confidentiality of Board matters in line with the highest standards of governance," the ICC release stated.

In fact, the ICC's Ethics Officer will be probing the media leaks.

"There was unanimous agreement to immediately initiate an independent investigation led by the ICC's Ethics Officer and supported by global experts. The Board will be updated on this by the ICC CEO at its next meeting on 10 June 2020," it further stated.

It is understood that ICC board discussed all options with regards to the World Cup but there was no unanimity on whether to go ahead with the World T20 as per schedule or postpone it to 2021 or possibly 2022, which for many is a practical solution.

With Cricket Australia announcing their itinerary on the day, which included T20 matches in October, there are questions as to why the World T20 cannot go ahead in such a scenario.

"If you look at the Australian itinerary, India's T20 games are scheduled in mid-October before the start of World T20. If you can play T20 games in mid-October, why is it not to play World T20," a source told PTI.

But having a World T20 is not only a health concern but also about commercial viability.

If BCCI is unable to organise the IPL in this window, it stands to lose \$400 crore, which certainly would be a big blow.

Also Star, which is broadcast partner of both the ICC and BCCI, will also need to be taken into confidence with regards to rejigging of the calendar. PNS

Dates set for series Down Under

Virat & Co will travel Australia for T20, Test & ODI series in the last quarter of 2020 with Adelaide to host D/N Test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Ending weeks of speculation, Cricket Australia on Thursday confirmed that India will make the trip Down Under starting October this year for a financially critical assignment comprising four Tests, ODIs as well as T20 Internationals.

Cricket Australia announced the much-anticipated resumption of the game after the Covid-19 pandemic with a six-month home summer schedule, which will begin with a tour by Zimbabwe for a three-match ODI series from August 9.

India will tour the country for a T20 series, which will begin on October 11 at Brisbane followed by matches on October 14 (Canberra) and October 17 (Adelaide), the CA posted on its official website.

This is to be followed by the T20 World Cup, the likelihood of which going ahead is slim owing to the pandemic. The CA did not even mention the event in its official schedule unveiled on Thursday.

After the T20s, Virat Kohli's men will return for a four-Test series, beginning on December 3 at Brisbane. India are then scheduled to play a Day/Night Test, as committed by BCCI President Sourav Ganguly, from December 11 to 15 in Adelaide.

The third and fourth Tests will be held in Melbourne (December 26-30) and Sydney (January 3 to 7). The ODI series is scheduled to begin with a match on January 12 in Perth and it will be followed by contests on January 15 (Melbourne) and



January 17 (Sydney).

"We are working closely with the BCCI to deliver the eagerly anticipated men's and women's tours, and we are looking forward to staging the important series against both the men's and women's New Zealand sides," Kevin Roberts, Cricket Australia CEO, said in a statement.

"The India women's team will also travel to Australia for an ODI series with matches scheduled in Canberra (January 22), St Kilda (January 25) and Hobart (January 17). Roberts hinted that if circumstances dictate, there could be changes

WACA chief lashes out at CA for India series snub

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Western Australia Cricket Association (WACA) chief Christina Matthews has lashed out at Cricket Australia for choosing Brisbane over Perth as one of the venues for the high-profile Test series against India in the summer.

Matthews said the newly built Optus Stadium is better than the Gabba in every way. Instead, Perth will be hosting the low profile one-off Test against Afghanistan in November.

"All the metrics associated with cricket over the last two years see us surpass Brisbane in every area, whether that's crowds, broadcast ratings, even better rainfall at that time of year, more corporate seats — just to name a few indicators — and a brand new stadium," Matthews was quoted as saying by Fox Sports on Thursday.

WACA chief lashes out at CA for India series snub

"When Australian cricketers primarily objective is fans first, it is astounding that the 10,000 members who pay money to support cricket year after year in this state are not afforded the number one Test team to tour this year.

"The last time (India tour of 2014), we were told it was because our venue wasn't good enough and if we supported a new stadium, this would never happen again. And here we are again," Matthews said referring to the old WACA stadium.

India played in Perth when they toured last year (December 2018) with Australia winning the second Test by 146 runs to level the series.

The reinstatement of the Gabba comes after support from none other than Australia captain Tim Paine. Australia have not lost there in more than 30 years.

Oval, Canberra
T20: October 17, Adelaide
Test: October 17, Adelaide
Men's Test Series
First Test: December 3-7, the Gabba, Brisbane
Second Test: December 11-15, Adelaide Oval (day-night)
Third Test: December 26-30, MCG
Fourth Test: January 3-7, SCG
Men's ODI Series
First ODI: January 12, Perth Stadium
Second ODI: January 15, MCG
Third ODI: January 17, SCG.

"Austral cricket will survive and thrive after the coronavirus pandemic dissipates, just as we have after world wars, depressions, recessions and the many other challenges that have confronted us over the past 140-plus years," he added.

AUS SCHEDULE AGAINST INDIA

Men's T20 Series
First T20: October 11, the Gabba, Brisbane
Second T20: October 14, Manuka

Sakshi Singh... Its only rumours... MS Dhoni's wife Sakshi has once again rubbished the rumours of the former Indian skipper's retirement from international cricket.

Bharat bats for use of external substance to shine ball

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The use of saliva to shine the ball is a "difficult habit" to get over but India's bowling coach Bharath Arun says he will try to break an external substance "at its expense if it is used across teams."

In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, ICC Cricket Committee has decided to ban the use of saliva as a part of health safety protocol.

Virat right guy to take Indian cricket forward: Botham

LONDON: Legendary England all-rounder Ian Botham has said he would have loved to play against Indian captain Virat Kohli, saying he is the right guy to lead the Indian cricket team.

Speaking in an online chat session with Playwrite Foundation, Botham was quoted as saying by The Times of India: "Virat takes the game the opposition takes a toll on your body. I just imagine Kapil... the amount of bowling he did on those Indian pitches, which had very little to offer, that too in the scorching heat of Chennai and Delhi. I can't see anyone in the present generation being able to do that," Botham said.

Botham also rated Ben Stokes higher than Andrew Flintoff, saying the 2019 World Cup and Ashes hero is like him.

"Ben (Stokes) is better than a mile to Freddy (Flintoff). Ben Stokes is the closest version of me, he plays like me with his heart on his sleeve. Flintoff was good but Stokes is just exceptional. He is the best cricketer in the world now."

USP



Bank of India, Ludhiana Zone Has Organized Webinar to Facilitate MSME customers for Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme by Govt.

Recently Govt. of India has launched Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for MSME borrowers providing financial assistance of 300 lakh crore to help them come out of financial crunch due to COVID-19 Crisis. Bank of India, Ludhiana Zone has taken the lead and accordingly a webinar was organized on May 29, 2020 in many cities such as Ludhiana, Patiala, Bathinda, Mohali, Ferozpur etc. to apprise customers about this scheme.

SBI simplifies EMI deferment process for its term loan borrowers amid COVID-19. Bank has started notifying its borrowers via SMS for their consent to defer EMI.

Chandigarh: In line with recent RBI's announcement on extension of the moratorium on term loans by another three months, country's largest lender, State Bank of India, has decided to extend the moratorium by another 3 months in loan accounts of all eligible customers without waiting for their request. Besides, the Bank has also proactively reached out to all of its eligible loan customers to obtain their consent to stay their Standing Instructions (SIs) / NACH mandate for the EMIs falling due in June, July and August 2020.

It will be responsible for raising the overall standard of player support personnel across all the high performance centres of the country.

Saqlain played international cricket between 1995 and 2004 and will be responsible for identifying, developing and preparing players so that they can go on to become world-class cricketers. PTI

PL to restart on June 17



AFP ■ LONDON

The Premier League season is set to restart on June 17, three months after it was suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, British media reported on Thursday.

No matches have been played since Leicester's 4-0 win over Aston Villa on March 9, with Liverpool and two wins away from securing the title.

Top-flight clubs voted unanimously on Wednesday to return to contact training and were meeting again on Thursday to discuss issues such as the restart date and the rebate to broadcasters.

The BBC reported that the first two matches would be Aston Villa vs Sheffield United and Manchester City vs Arsenal. Those matches are the two games in hand.

A full fixture list would then be played on the weekend of June 19-21.

Kumble optimistic of IPL this year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India captain and Kings XI Punjab head coach Anil Kumble is hopeful of the IPL returning this year and is not averse to the idea of conducting the cash-rich event without spectators due to the Covid-19 threat.

"Yes we are hopeful and optimistic that there is still a possibility to (hold) IPL this year if we can cram in the schedule," Kumble said on Star Sports show Cricket Connected.

"If we are going to have a stadium without spectators, there's still a possibility, there are all optimistic," said the former spinner, who is also the chairman of the ICC's Cricket for All Committee.

Leipzig drop more points

LEIPZIG: Julian Nagelsmann slammed 10-man RB Leipzig for defending like a school team in Wednesday's 2-2 draw at home to Hertha Berlin behind closed doors.

"We started well, but fell behind because we defend a set piece like a school team," fumed Nagelsmann.

"We simply did nothing, everyone is standing in position, yet he (Grujic) could finish with his foot, in the box. This is the second time in a row in a home game that we conceded from a set piece," said Nagelsmann, whose team drew 1-1 against Freiburg in their last home game.

"We have to blame ourselves for this. We're happy that we scored another point, but I'm not happy at all."

The result leaves Leipzig third in the table, two points behind Dortmund. AFP

Bradburn, Saqlain get high performance roles in PCB

LAHORE: Pakistan fielding coach Grant Bradburn and spin great Saqlain Mushtaq were on Thursday appointed as PCBs Head of High Performance Coaching and Head of International Player Development, respectively, as part of a restructuring of its premier training facility.

Bradburn is presently the fielding coach of the Pakistan's men's national team, a role he took in September 2018 following a successful coaching stint with the Scotland national team.

He will be responsible for raising the overall standard of player support personnel across all the high performance centres of the country.

Saqlain played international cricket between 1995 and 2004 and will be responsible for identifying, developing and preparing players so that they can go on to become world-class cricketers. PTI

National Games postponed

NEW DELHI: The much-delayed 36th National Games, scheduled for October-November in Goa, was on Thursday postponed indefinitely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) recently asked the Goa Government to host the National Games as scheduled from October 20 to November 4 this year.

However, a part in the number of novel coronavirus cases has led to a postponement.

"The National Games organising committee has decided to postpone National Games due to Covid-19 pandemic," Goa's deputy Chief Minister Manohar (Babu) Aigaoikar said. PTI

Haryana Tender Notice table with columns: SR. No., EMD, NAME OF BOARD/CORP/AUTH, NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER, OPENING DATE, CLOSING DATE (TIME), AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES, WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH, NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL.

विज्ञापन

चौक- हरियाणा राज्य के सौराष्ट्र विभाग में सत्कार पुर योजना के संवाहन 07, दिल्ली वर्ष 2006-21 के विजे योग्य अनुक्रम स्वयं सीडी संख्याओं के द्वारा सत्कार प्राप्त करने के संबंधित।