



Pandemic can't be an excuse to crush labour rights: Rahul Gandhi  
page 8



Eight parties write to President, condemn arrest of activists  
page 8



Government issues data processing rules for Aarogya Setu  
page 10



With oil price crash and COVID-19, Saudi Arabia confronts double crises  
page 12

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## NEARBY



Capital reports 310 new COVID-19 cases, no death

NEW DELHI  
The Capital reported 310 new COVID-19 cases on Monday, taking the total to 7,233. No death was reported and the toll remained at 73, stated the Delhi government's health bulletin. Of the total deaths, 48.53% were people above 60 years of age though they account for only 14.86% of the total cases, read an official statement.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

## SIT constituted to probe Gurugram teen's death

GURUGRAM  
A Special Investigation Team has been constituted by Gurugram Police to probe the death of a teenager in DLF Phase-V here a week ago. The 17-year-old was found dead after a girl made a social media post accusing him of molestation three years ago. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Chander Mohan said the SIT would probe the "scientific" and "cyber" aspects of the case.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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# Modi asks States to prepare for ramping up economic activity

In interaction with Chief Ministers, PM says country must plan for a new reality



Key assessment: Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacting with the Chief Ministers in New Delhi on Monday. ■ PTI

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said at a video conference with Chief Ministers that the lockdown would continue in some form or the other even after May 17, but that the State governments should send in their plans for ramping up economic activity in green zones between May 15 and 17 for consideration by the Centre.

In a marathon meeting that lasted (with a half-an-hour break in between) for nearly six hours, and saw most Chief Ministers speak their mind, Mr. Modi said the imperative was to protect ru-

containing the pandemic till now, and said it was to be a united effort.

Migrant labour He also said the movement of migrant labour to their native States should be expedited within the next 10 days. "This may lead to some problems in terms of States that employ them and even in their native States where there may be a spike in cases," Mr. Modi is reported to have said. All States, however, should now think in terms of economic revival as well, he emphasised.

He said, "I am of the firm view that the measures needed in the first phase of lockdown were not needed during the second phase and similarly the measures need-

ed in the third phase are not needed in the fourth."

"And therefore, we can now further focus our strategy in this battle against coronavirus, as should be the case. We have a twofold challenge – to reduce the transmission rate of the disease, and to increase public activity gradually, while adhering to all the guidelines, and we will have to work towards achieving both these objectives," Mr. Modi said.

He said the new way of life would be on the principle of "Jan Se lekar Jag Tak," from an individual to the whole of humanity. He said we must all plan for the new reality.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12

## CM for restart of economic activity in city

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, during the video-conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterparts from other States on Monday, asked for economic activity to be allowed to resume across the Capital, barring containment zones, sources said.

The AAP government has already demanded from the Centre that all 11 districts of Delhi be not treated as red zones so that more economic activities are allowed in the national capital. Mr. Kejriwal spoke for five minutes around 8 p.m., almost five hours after the videoconference commenced.

The Delhi government would follow the consensus reached at the meeting, said a source.

On April 11, Mr. Kejriwal had sought to make a case for a Centre-sponsored relief package and funding on a par with other States to deal with the pandemic.

# India adds 4,213 cases in highest single-day rise

State govt. data show overall infections crossing 70,000-mark

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The country on Monday registered its highest spike in COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours with an addition of 4,213 cases, taking the tally to 67,152.

An additional 97 deaths were reported, taking the nationwide toll to 2,206.

India currently has 44,029 active cases; 20,916 persons have recovered.

"In the last 24 hours, there were 1,559 recoveries which takes the recovery rate to 31.15%," Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry Lav Agarwal said.

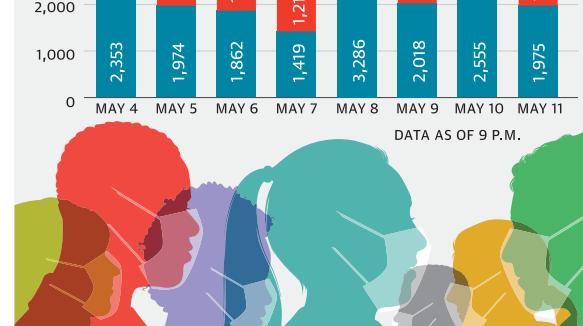
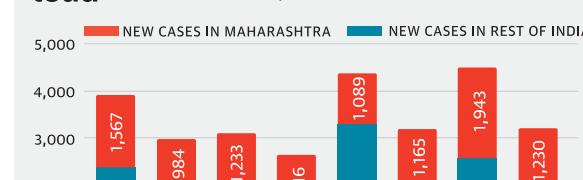
According to data from the State Health Departments, the nationwide death toll was 2,295, with 45,932 active cases. The total number of cases stood at 70,768.

The Union Health Ministry denied that any religion-based mapping of patients was done and termed any news in this regard as "baseless, incorrect and irresponsible".

Responding to allegations about the government mulling community/religion-based mapping of the COVID-19 spread, Mr. Agarwal said, "Awareness and adhering to guidelines issued by the government is our best weapon against the virus. We have to fight the stigma falsely associated with coronavirus. People having COVID-19 symptoms should come forward to report so that they don't spread infection to

## Viral load

Almost on all days after the lockdown was extended for the second time starting May 4, Maharashtra has recorded over 30% of India's new confirmed cases



already said no fake news should be published, and news should be published after checking facts. News should not spread fear, we should stay united to fight this virus. Nobody should encourage non-factual news," he added.

The Ministry also announced further changes in its discharge policy and revised the home isolation guidelines for very mild/pre-symptomatic cases. Under the new guidelines there is no need for testing after the end of the home isolation period for such cases.

The Ministry said the revisions were based on the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) review from lab surveillance data.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

# SC sets up panel to look into J&K Internet curbs

Pleas sought restoration of 4G facility

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Jammu and Kashmir government's orders do not reveal any reason for making mobile 4G Internet inaccessible across the Union Territory (UT), the Supreme Court said in an order on Monday.

Besides, the government orders snapping the Internet speed to 2G were meant to operate for only a limited time.

"Although the present orders indicate that they have been passed for a limited period of time, they do not provide any reasons to reflect that all the districts of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir require the imposition of such restrictions. At the same time, we do recognise that the Union Territory has been plagued with militancy, which is re-

quired to be taken into consideration," a three-judge Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana observed in the 19-page order.

The order was based on petitions filed separately by media professionals, school associations and private citizens claiming that lack of access to high-speed Internet in J&K had crippled medical efforts to contain the COVID-19 contagion and pulled the rug under online education and businesses. The government, on the other hand, maintained that high-speed Internet was a facilitator of terrorism in the UT.

The top court appointed a special committee led by the Union Home Secretary to "immediately" determine the necessity of continuing the restrictions.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Manmohan stable, under observation

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is stable but is being investigated to rule out causes of fever, a Congress functionary said on Monday, quoting sources in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

"Dr. Manmohan Singh was admitted for observation and investigation after he developed a febrile reaction to a new medication. He is being investigated to rule out other causes of fever and is being provided care as needed," a source said, quoting AIIMS doctors.

A person close to the family confirmed to *The Hindu* that "Dr. Singh is fine but he will spend the night at the hospital, just to be safe".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Ready to roll



Back on track: A worker cleaning a Rajdhani coach at a yard in Delhi on Monday as the Railways readies to restart some passenger train services from Tuesday, after a hiatus of about 50 days due to the COVID-19 outbreak. ■ R.V. MOORTHY ▶ (REPORT ON PAGE 10)

# Migrant exodus chokes Maharashtra-M.P. border

With restive workers desperate to return to U.P. and Bihar, screening and checks take a back seat

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BHOJPAL

Having walked and hitchhiked from Navi Mumbai for almost a week, Sonu Kumar, 18, was both elated to sit at last when he boarded a Maharashtra government bus. "Hume laga ab ghar jaayenge seetha (I thought I will directly reach home now)," he said, peering outside while gripping the window grille.

But just a few miles into the journey, the bus took a turn at the Bijasan border with Madhya Pradesh. Mr. Kumar, a mason, almost lost the little hope he had salvaged after the lockdown rendered him jobless and hungry for two months. His heart sank as did his hopes of returning home to Madhubani in Bihar, around 1,500 km away.

Dropped back 2 km from



Desperate attempt: Migrants returning to U.P. and Bihar at the Maharashtra-M.P. Border at Sendhwa on Monday. ■ A.M. FARUQI

the border, as an array of trucks, buses, motorcycles, scooters, cars, autorickshaws, bicycles and trailers – all carrying migrant workers – clogged the Mumbai-Agra Highway, he trudged back to the border, hailing every passing vehicle for a ride in vain.

"We were told the Madhya Pradesh government will

take us onward," said a desperate Mr. Kumar.

Hunger seemed a greater threat than the coronavirus at the State border. At 3 p.m. on Sunday, as the inflow of workers from Maharashtra and Gujarat swelled, an overwhelmed police force gave up checking for permits. No one was being screened for illness nor were social dis-

tancing norms observed.

Vehicles – especially open trucks – were stopped intermittently to allow waiting workers, clutching backpacks and cycles, to get in. "SP sahab has given orders. Don't drop them midway," a young constable warned a truck driver.

For the stranded and hapless workers, the searing heat had flipped the daily rhythm – they walked and pedalled at night, and slept through the day.

"Just look how they are going back," said a policeman from Madhya Pradesh. "This is a humanitarian problem, not a law and order one."

On Saturday, around 50,000 workers had crossed the border, but by Sunday night, twice that number had entered Madhya Pradesh. A policeman from Maharashtra

tra, slumped in a chair, wondered: "Will our economy work if they leave like this?"

When Madhya Pradesh had earlier refused to accept workers bound for Uttar Pradesh, he confessed that the police had suggested the workers take alternative routes to avoid detection. "How can someone be stopped from going back home," he asked. Then, the held-up workers had begun throwing stones, injuring three policemen.

Among the vehicles were several auto rickshaws and taxis, bearing the Mumbai, Pune and Nashik registration numbers, heading for Uttar Pradesh. "For the first time, I am riding my rickshaw this long, on a highway," said Umakant Sharma who was returning to Prayagraj. "I will return after the lockdown ends."

"We were seeing this happening since 6.30 a.m. as policemen were rebuking and abusing anyone who was on

# Policemen abuse schoolteacher for recording 'high-handedness'

Agra SP takes note of her tweet, promises necessary action

ANUJ KUMAR  
GAZIABAD

A case of "high-handedness" of Uttar Pradesh Police came to light on Monday when a 53-year-old schoolteacher in Agra tweeted for urgent help after some policemen allegedly hurled abuses at her and her family for making a video of them "beating those violating the lockdown".

Deepti Saraswat, a teacher at St. Felix Nursery School, wrote in her tweet that she and her doctor husband, currently posted at a COVID hospital in Aligarh, saw some policemen abusing two elderly persons on scooters on the road in front of their house.

"We were seeing this happening since 6.30 a.m. as policemen were rebuking and abusing anyone who was on

road. Within no time, SHO [Ajay Kaushal] and Assistant Superintendent of Police [of] Hariparavat [Saurabh Dixit] appeared on the scene. The SHO got down from his jeep and started beating the two persons who were asking for mercy. My instinct forced me to record it on my mobile," read her tweet.

When the policemen saw her recording the incident, they allegedly started hurling abuses and ordered her to come down. She claimed the SHO entered her house, asked for her cell phone and deleted the six-second-long video. "ASP Saurabh Dixit publicly shouted at us and asked us to behave."

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Ms. Saraswat said, "I was recording the video to show it to my son, who was insisting on going out for some work. The moment they objected, I stopped. I had no intention to capture how they were harassing people."

"The police were working under pressure but it didn't give them a right to humiliate me. The ASP abused my son who had come out," she said. Ms. Saraswat said she spoke to the wife of SSP Baloo Kumar. "I am yet to receive any call from her husband or any other officer. All I want is an apology."

SP (City) Rohan Pramod Botre said he has taken note of the tweet. "We will listen to both sides and take necessary action. Today [Monday], we were busy with the transportation of migrant labourers, tomorrow I will speak to her."

A ND-NDE

## Timings

DELHI

TUESDAY, MAY. 12
RISE 05:33 SET 19:04
RE 00:00 SET 09:49
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 13
RISE 05:32 SET 19:04
RE 00:08 SET 10:47
THURSDAY, MAY. 14
RISE 05:32 SET 19:05
RE 00:52 SET 11:45

## Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 36 21

Safdarjung 36 21

Palam 37 20

Delhi Palam Today

37°C A cloudy and warm weather to prevail. Spell of light duststorm and thunder-shower is likely.

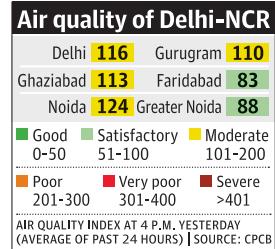
Delhi Palam Tomorrow

38°C Marginal rise in day and night temperature. Weather will be warm. Chances of duststorm.

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## THE HINDU

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## IN BRIEF

## Tablighi Jamaat probe: plea seeks case transfer

NEW DELHI  
A petition has been filed in the Delhi High Court seeking direction to transfer the investigation of Tablighi Jamaat leader Maulana Saad from Delhi Police to the National Investigation Agency. A case was lodged against him for holding a congregation, allegedly violating orders against large gatherings in order to contain the spread of COVID-19.

# Help us return home, workers in Shahpur Jat appeal to W.B. govt.

Embroidery craftsmen say they have exhausted savings, unit owners not giving relief

SHINJINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI

Nearly 700 embroidery workers in Shahpur Jat have appealed to the West Bengal government to make arrangements for them to return to their home towns.

With boutique owners refusing to provide monetary relief over the last two months due to lack of business, the workers said the authorities had not stepped forth to help.

Hailing from Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district, S.K. Riyazul Hossain said, "My entire family is back in Bengal. This time, due to the storms, our crops got damaged. The people who we used to work for have refused to pay us, barring a couple of them, who at times gave ₹500. But what will we do with it? Some of them have refused to take our calls and said that exports are not happening so they cannot pay. On an average my income was around ₹13,000."



Women queue up to collect food at a distribution centre during the ongoing lockdown, at Shahpur Jat in New Delhi.

• FILE PHOTO

But in the last two months, it has been left to almost nothing."

## No response

"Times of crisis like this showed how people don't really care about the poor like us, the worst-affected in this situation. Even the Bengal government has not said anything yet despite us appealing to them," lamented Hossain, who has been an embroidery worker for over a decade now.

With no response yet

from the State government, the group of workers stated that taking the special trains, scheduled to start from Tuesday, was out of bounds for them as they would not be able to "afford the tickets".

"What are we going to do with the special trains? We are in the category of people who buy tickets for ₹600. How are we supposed to buy AC two-tier tickets and go home?" Mr. Hossain said.

Shafiqul Islam, another worker added, "We have run

out of our earnings and are borrowing money and grains to sustain ourselves. While a handful of landlords are good, some have gone to the extent of asking the tenants to leave the accommodation as they could not pay the rent. Where will we get the money to buy tickets for these special trains?"

## Lack of options

Amid lack of options to make their journey back home, the workers said that they wanted the government to arrange for buses and were even ready to pay "whatever money that can be collected" for the tickets.

"Buses are the best option as trains will only take us till Howrah. Our homes are another 3-4 hours from there and we do not want to get stranded at the station. So we want the government to arrange for a direct bus to our villages," said S.K. Abdul Didar, another embroidery worker.

## JNU to develop device for COVID-19 tests

'University aims at demonstrating first prototype in 4 months'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

JNU Vice-Chancellor M. Jagadesh Kumar on Monday said that the university has been given approval to carry out a project on COVID-19 testing that will be an alternative to RT-PCR test.

Mr. Kumar said that Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, a public sector enterprise set up by Department of Biotechnology, has given its nod to JNU under diagnostics category to develop a low-cost portable device for large-scale screening of the viral infections.

The V-C said that currently, the detection of COVID-19 infection is being mostly done by reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR).

(PCR) by using a real-time PCR machine, a very accurate lab test for detecting, tracking and studying the virus. However, this technology is expensive, requires high-end laboratory-based equipment and is time-consuming. He added that there is also a need of expert personnel to operate the instrument and perform the testing at the laboratory reducing its capacity of sample handling per day.

"To overcome the cost and other disadvantages of the conventional methods, a

## COVID-19

team from the School of Biotechnology, JNU, has designed a chip-based low-cost portable spatial RT-PCR where the PCR has been integrated with an in-built detection system containing LED and diode detector enabling us to perform a point-of-care measurement," the V-C said.

He added that JNU has already filed an Indian Patent application on this technology that can complete the testing in about 50 minutes as compared to 120-180 minutes required for conventional real-time PCR. The V-C added that the university was targeting to demonstrate the first prototype testing device in about four months.

+ 14.04.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

24.04.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

NIT NO.22/XEN/CMD-II/R/GTPP/2020-2021 DT. 27.04.19 FOR THE WORK OF CONSTRUCTION OF BARRACK AT FIRST FLOOR IN HALF PORTION OF EXISTING BARRACK AT RGTPP, COLONY, KHEDAR, HISAR.

27.04.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

NIT NO.03/XEN/CMD-II/R/GTPP/2020-2021 DT. 27.04.2020 ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OF PRE-EXISTING RGTPP BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE OF 400 KV SWITCHYARD FOR 2X600 MV, RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

23.04.2020 14.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

NIT NO.03/XEN/R/GTPP/2020-21 DT. 22.04.2020 ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OF RGTPP FEEDER CHANNEL FROM SARANSA HEAD TO RGTPP, KHEDAR OF CAPACITY 75 CUSEC.

22.04.2020 21.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

NIT NO.01/SYD-61/WL-VX/2020-2021 DT. 22.04.2020 ANNUAL RATE CONTRACT FOR HYGENIC CLEANING OF SWITCHYARD CONTROL ROOM BUILDING &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - CLEANING OF 400 KV SWITCHYARD &amp; POWER TRANSFORMER YARD UNIT 1&amp;2, UPROOTING OF GRASS/WILD GROWTH IN SWITCHYARD &amp; TRANSFORMER YARD AREA AND DISPOSAL OF WASTES.

22.04.2020 12.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

NIT NO.312/R/GTPP/MM-II-TOE-4268 DT. 29.04.2020 SUPPLY OF TRANSDUCERS AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

29.04.2020 29.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

CLEANING &amp; SWEEPING ACTIVITY UNDER OUTSOURCING POLICY PART-1 FOR THE PERIOD INITIALLY SIX MONTHS, EXTENDABLE FOR TWO YEARS.

CLOSING DATE 21.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

HIRING OF 1 NO. PERMIT P.V.T. VEHICLE FOR USE OF SDO 'OP' DIVN., UHBVN, PARTAPNAGAR

OPENING CLOSING DATE 20.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

REPAIRING OF FLOOR TILES &amp; RENOVATION OF TOILET OF SSE OFFICE AND STAFF TOILET AT 132 KV S/TN., HVPNL, MADHUBANI

07.05.2020 15.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

E-TENDER IS INVITED FOR DISPOSAL OF OBSOLETE/UNSERVICEABLE AGRICULTURE IMPLEMENTS/SCRAP AND OTHER ITEMS ETC ON "AS IT WHERE IS BASIS".

13.05.2020 29.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

LOW TENSION (LT) MEASURING CURRENT TRANSFORMERS (CT) OF RATIO 200/5 AMP (NIT NO. 654/DH/XEN/MM-1/QD-835) DATED 20.05.2020

05.05.2020 27.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR FOR BIO REMEDIATION OF LEGACY WASTE OF EXISTING DUMPSITE AT MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, MANDI DABWALI

08.05.2020 15.05.2020 FOR THE PURCHASE OF ABC FOR HIRING OF TRACTOR TANKER FOR WATER SPRINKLING ON BARWALA-AGRERA ROAD NEAR ASH RILO AREA AT RGTPP, KHEDAR, HISAR.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in)

# Sharjeel Imam moves HC against order granting more time to police

Pace of probe was disrupted due to lockdown: Delhi Police

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Former JNU student Sharjeel Imam, arrested for alleged inflammatory speeches during anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) protest, approached the Delhi High Court on Monday challenging a trial court order granting more time to Delhi Police to conclude investigation.



Sharjeel Imam

The trial court had granted more time to the police after the investigating agency had submitted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country and the ongoing lockdown, the pace of investigation was seriously disrupted.

Delhi Police had registered a case against Mr. Imam under IPC Sections 124A (an offence by words, either spoken or written causes disaffection against government established by law), 153A (promoting enmity between different religious groups with an intent to create disharmony) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief).

A case of sedition was also lodged against Mr. Imam for a speech he delivered at Aligarh Muslim University on January 16.

Besides this, Assam Police had filed an FIR under the anti-terror law against him for his speech.

# Decide on action to be taken against DMC chief

Court disposes of plea seeking his removal

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday directed authorities here to take a call on action to be initiated against Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC) chief Zafarul Islam Khan in a reasonable time while disposing of the petition seeking his removal from the post.

A Bench of Justices Rajiv Sahai Endlaw and Sangita Dhingra Sehgal, conducting the hearing through video-conferencing, was informed by the Delhi government's counsel that the L-G had written a letter on April 30 to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for initiating action against Mr. Khan as per the provisions of Section 4 of the DMC Act, which provides for removal of a person from the

post of chairperson or member.

The High Court was informed that the L-G has also issued a show-cause notice to Mr. Khan on May 8 as to why action be not initiated against him. Following the submission, the court disposed of the petition seeking removal of the 72-year-old, who has been serving as the Chairperson of DMC since July 2017, on its controversial social media post.

Delhi Police, meanwhile, said Mr. Khan submitted his laptop to the police. An officer said that Mr. Khan was served a notice to provide the device that was used to post the message on social media. Responding to the notice, he had provided the laptop to the police. It has been sent to the FSL.

The government said that key stakeholders from all over Delhi will be able to give their suggestions and inputs that the Delhi government should implement once the schools reopen.

An online suggestion form has been put up on the website of the Directorate of Education, the government said.

# Plea challenges decision to freeze DA of govt. staff

No financial emergency to take the step

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A

petition before the Delhi High Court has challenged the Centre and the AAP government's decision to freeze de

IN BRIEF



Police modify vehicles to transport infected officers

NEW DELHI With the rise in the number of COVID-19 cases among its force, Delhi Police on Monday modified six of its vehicles to facilitate the transportation of its police personnel who are either infected or suspected to be infected with the virus, said officials. The six police vehicles have been modified to cater to the need of transportation of infected personnel to hospitals or quarantine centres. The vehicles also have barriers inside to ensure that social distancing norms are maintained.

HC declines petition on welfare of sex workers

NEW DELHI The Delhi High Court on Monday declined to entertain a petition seeking direction to the Centre and the city government to take steps to protect and provide welfare measures such as food, accommodation and medicines, to sex workers and the LGBT community during the lockdown. A Bench of Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw and Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal rejected the plea, by advocate Anurag Chauhan, who had sought financial aid, food, shelter and medicines to sex workers and LGBT community members in Delhi to ensure their survival during the lockdown.

5-year-old boy dies in wall collapse

NOIDA A five-year-old boy died in Greater Noida allegedly after an under-construction wall collapsed over him during a dust storm, the police said on Monday. The incident took place on Sunday at Chuhadpur village in Dankaur area, the officials said. The boy was taken to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him dead, according to the police.

## Man strangles pregnant wife following quarrel

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI A 33-year-old man allegedly strangled his five-month pregnant wife to death at their house in south Delhi's Dakshinpuri, following a heated argument and surrendered before the police on Monday.

The incident took place late on Sunday night, the police said.

According to police, Vijay Kumar, an autorickshaw driver found his house locked when he returned home. He went to his in-laws house in the vicinity to check if his wife was there. Later, he was annoyed to find her talking to someone

## Oppn. parties demand govt. release 'actual data'

BJP submits memorandum to Kejriwal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress and the BJP on Monday accused Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of hiding the actual COVID-19 data (number of deaths and cases) from the public.

DPPC chief Ch. Anil Kumar asked the Delhi government to make public the death figures recorded at crematoriums and burial grounds where the last rites are conducted according to COVID-19 protocol.

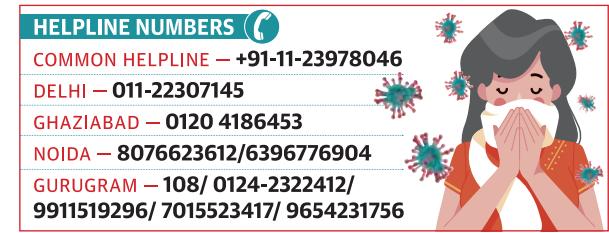
Mr. Kumar alleged that the government was hiding the figures as it did not want to comply with the law that provides for ex-gratia to the affected people.

The Congress also criticised the policy of allowing those with mild symptoms

or asymptomatic patients to be isolated at home, saying it will worsen the situation. It further slammed the Centre for making arrangements only for travel of rich people by AC trains from May 12 and ignoring poor migrant workers who wanted to go home.

BJP MLAs submitted a memorandum to Mr. Kejriwal urging him to ensure that the Delhi government gave the exact COVID-19 data, and advised him to set up temporary hospitals at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Ambedkar Stadium and Chhatrasal Stadium.

The MLAs further alleged that people were not getting ration at PDS shops, and demanded the withdrawal of the decision to increase VAT on petrol and diesel.



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## Capital reports 310 new cases, no deaths

Govt. removes one more area from list of containment zones

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Capital on Monday reported 310 new COVID-19 cases, taking the total to 7,233. No deaths were reported and the toll remains at 73, according to the Delhi government's health bulletin.

Of the 7,233 cases, 2,129 people have recovered and there are 5,031 active cases.

The total number of cases in the city have doubled in just 11 days, from 3,515 on April 30 to 7,233 on Monday.

Of the total number of deaths, 48.53% were people above 60 years of age though they account for only 14.86% of the total cases, read an official statement. A total of 97,678 COVID-19 tests have been done till now in Delhi.

Earlier in the day, a family member of a COVID-19 patient who had gone to Lok Nayak Hospital said there was a delay of nearly one hour in admitting the pa-



A police officer wears headgear for thermal scanning of commuters at Rajouri Garden on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases	7,233
Total deaths	73
New cases in the past 24 hours	310
New deaths in the past 24 hours	0

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

tient. Yogita Bhayana, an activist, said the issue was resolved after she contacted the Delhi government. "I had tagged the Delhi government on social media and they resolved the issue. Still, it took about 45 minutes. But this should have happened without anyone interfering," she said.

She added that there is a shortage of ambulances for patients suffering from other diseases in the city. "People having non-COVID-19 emergencies are suffering

because of this," she further said. One more area was de-listed as a containment zone on Monday. There are 81 such zones in Delhi.

and a number of people who work in the national Capital reside in the area.

The district reported four new cases on Monday, taking the tally to 141. Out of these, 56 are active cases.

Gautam Buddha Nagar reported six new cases on Monday, taking the total number to 224.

**Notice to RWAs**  
A second Residents' welfare Association in Ghaziabad has crafted its own rule during the lockdown. The RWA of River Heights Phase 1 issued a notice that residents who bring an outsider into the society will be fined ₹1,000 and their power and water supply will be cut till the penalty is paid. The fine will be deposited into the PM Cares Fund, it added.

District Magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey said except in special circumstances, residents of Khoda working in Noida and Delhi should make arrangements to stay there. Chief Medical Officer N.K. Gupta said that two COVID-19 cases were found during random sampling in the area on Sunday. "We cannot say whether it was community spread but it was worrying," he added.

Mr. Pandey also directed Loni Sub-Divisional Magistrate to work out a sector scheme for the area. Loni shares borders with Delhi

## SIT to probe Gurugram teen's death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

A Special Investigation Team has been constituted by the Gurugram Police to probe the death of a teenager in DLF Phase-V here a week ago.

The 17-year-old was found dead after a girl made a social media post accusing him of molestation three years ago.

Headed by an Assistant Commissioner of Police-level officer, the SIT comprises an Inspector and a Sub-Inspector. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Chander Mohan said the SIT would probe the "scientific" and "cyber" aspects of the case.

Meanwhile, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has directed the police to render counselling to the girl and the friends of the deceased and record their statements. The Commission has also directed them to remove the posts still circulating on the Internet.

The teenager's aunt said the police had already recorded the statements of two of the boy's friends.

## NDMC takes measures to curb dengue

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Monday said that they are strengthening anti-larval measures and action to contain vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue and chikungunya.

Till April, the number of dengue and chikungunya cases in the corporation's limits were 2.5 times more compared to last year, but no case of dengue or chikungunya has been reported, according to the municipal council.

## From care to crisis, how a Delhi government hospital lost the plot

As many as 106 employees of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital tested positive for COVID-19 after it failed to 'isolate' suspected cases

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

Two-and-a-half-year-old Devan (name changed) is one of the youngest COVID-19 patients in Delhi. His father too has tested positive, as has his three-month pregnant mother who works as a healthcare worker at the Delhi government-run Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital.

A total of 106 employees of the hospital, including doctors and nurses, have tested positive for the virus. This is the highest number of COVID-19 infection among healthcare staff in any hospital in Delhi. While the hospital claims to have taken all precautions to avoid the spread of the virus, its healthcare workers claim it failed to

"properly isolate" suspected cases and strictly follow standard protocol.

The Medical Director of the hospital, M.M. Kohli, did not respond to multiple calls and text messages. A senior hospital official, however, said: "Not all of these cases are hospital-acquired. Many of the employees come from hotspots and they could have been infected there." The official said the hospital is now taking "extra care".

**The infection 'source'**  
In the second week of April, the hospital announced that cubicle 1 of the Medicine Emergency Ward 1 will be kept for patients suspected of COVID-19 infection, said sources.



Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital claims to have taken all precautions to avoid the spread of the virus. ■ FILE PHOTO

tal to a non-COVID one. When it was a COVID hospital, we had all the facilities. Most of the healthcare workers who have tested positive in Delhi (over 375) are employed in non-COVID hospitals." On May 3, the president of Federation of Delhi Government Nurses, Jagdish Kulhari, wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Health Secretary complaining about the "mismanagement" at Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital. He said that

their attendants and others admitted to Ward 1 used the same toilets.

"Her [the woman who died] sister was sitting on her bed and holding her hand," said a doctor. The patient's husband also confirmed that her sister was with her the whole time and she did not wear PPE.

"There were not enough PPE for us, how could we give them to family members?" asked a healthcare worker.

All the six workers agreed that cubicle 1 was ill-equipped to handle suspected COVID-19 cases. It did not even have a separate set of workers to attend to the patients. Worried about the spread of virus, several doctors and nurses met the HoD (medicine) and complained about the problems with cubicle 1. Around April 20, after the issue was raised multiple times, the hospital shifted the patients from cubicle 1 to

## As cases rise, Ghaziabad authorities seal Khoda

Over 15 cases reported in seven days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GHAZIABAD

After a sudden spike in the number of COVID-19 cases, the Ghaziabad administration has sealed Khoda and implemented a sector scheme on Monday.

Five sector magistrates and two zonal magistrates have been put on duty in the densely populated area that shares boundaries with Delhi and Noida. More than 15 cases have been reported in the area in the last week.

District Magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey said except in special circumstances, residents of Khoda working in Noida and Delhi should make arrangements to stay there. Chief Medical Officer N.K. Gupta said that two COVID-19 cases were found during random sampling in the area on Sunday. "We cannot say whether it was community spread but it was worrying," he added.

Taking cognisance of the matter, the district administration issued notices to the RWAs of River Heights Phase 1 and Neel Padam Kunj asking them to explain why they had made rules on subjects that were beyond their authority.

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# Amarinder calls for defined exit strategy, favours curbs extension

Odisha and Rajasthan Chief Ministers demand greater say for the States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH/JAIPUR



Punjab CM Amarinder Singh

launching an employment guarantee scheme for urban areas on the lines of the MGNREGA. He said the lockdown has badly affected daily wagers due to which the Centre should come up with an employment generation scheme for the urban poor. Echoing Capt. Amarinder, Mr. Gehlot said States should be given powers to decide novel coronavirus zones.

#### Locust menace

The Rajasthan Chief Minister also drew Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attention to the massive attack of locusts, starting from India-Pakistan border, in several districts of the State and sought the Centre's assistance in dealing with the menace.

Mr. Gehlot said that the locust attack which had started in the Thar desert in May 2019 had extensively damaged crops and vegetation in as many as 12 districts. "The locusts have begun returning to the north-eastern State.

(With inputs from PTI)

said. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urged Mr. Modi to involve panchayats in the fight against COVID-19, saying the battle is going to be long.

Emphasising on the need for adopting a "decentralised mechanism" to strengthen the process of containing the spread of novel coronavirus, the Odisha Chief Minister said a smaller area instead of an entire district should be classified as a red, orange or green zone on the basis of the severity of the disease.

#### SOP suggested

To revive economic activities, the Centre may come up with a standard operating procedure (SOP), Mr. Patnaik said.

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu requested Mr. Modi for TrueNat machines for quick COVID-19 testing as a large number of stranded people have begun returning to the north-eastern State.

(With inputs from PTI)

Clearly favouring continuation of a strict lockdown in view of the escalating cases of COVID-19 nationwide, the Chief Minister said at the videoconference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi that States needed to be given greater flexibility in micro-planning.

He called for an exit strategy encompassing both COVID-19 containment and a defined path of economic revival.

The exit strategy should focus on fiscal and economic empowerment of the States, which are responsible for the real action directly impinging upon the livelihood and social health of the common man, said the Chief Minister. Capt. Ama-

rinder suggested that MSEs should be allowed to function in red zone districts with proper safeguards. The decision on designating the red, orange-yellow and green zones should also be left to the States, which were more cognisant of the ground realities, he said.

The Punjab Chief Minister demanded urgent financial assistance to States to meet at least 33% of their committed liabilities, along with revenue grants to the States for three months to meet shortfall in revenue and to fund expenditure on COVID-19.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot suggested

Haryana govt. anti-farmer, says Hooda

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Former Haryana Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Monday said the anti-farmer stance of the ruling BJP-JJP government has once again been exposed with its decision to restrict paddy cultivation in the State.

Opposing the State government's decision to restrict paddy sowing in 19 blocks, Mr. Hooda said the decision should be withdrawn immediately.

"It is important to worry about groundwater, but this is not the time to put restrictions on farmers, instead the government should provide whatever relief it can to farmers. The government should take effective steps to solve the groundwater problem, for which it should restart the Dadupur Nalvi water recharge canal project," he said.

## 3.62 lakh migrant workers arrive in Rajasthan

Many of them got stuck at checkpoints after State's borders were sealed on Friday

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR



Migrant workers taking rest at a temporary shelter near Rarah in Bharatpur district. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Over 3.62 lakh migrant workers deprived of their livelihood in the nationwide lockdown have returned to their home towns in Rajasthan from States such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh by trains and buses.

After the State's borders were sealed on Friday following a spike in the COVID-19 cases, a large numbers of migrants got stuck at the checkpoints.

The Rajasthan government has since revised the guidelines for entry of those coming from other States by treating the passes issued there as valid. A committee headed by Additional Chief Secretary (Industries) Subodh Agarwal is keeping a tab on the movements and is in touch with other States to ensure ease of travel for the stranded labourers.

Mr. Agarwal said on Monday that the highest number

of 2.20 lakh workers had so far returned from neighbouring Gujarat, followed by 21,400 from M.P., while 43,320 students at the coaching hub of Kota and 3,900 pilgrims at the Ajmer dargah had been sent back by special trains. Twenty-three trains have left the State for different places in the country since May 1.

Through the online platforms, 19.84 lakh stranded people, including 11.14 lakh inward and 8.69 lakh outward, have got themselves registered for the journey. "In the coming days, lakhs of labourers will be sent to their home States and will be brought back to Rajasthan. We hope that things go hassle-free and as we planned," Mr. Agarwal said.

The Additional Chief Secretary said the State government had taken strict measures to ensure the safety of stranded labourers after the Aurangabad train accident in which 16 migrant workers were run over by a freight train. Over 1.06 lakh workers

gistered for the journey. "In the coming days, lakhs of labourers will be sent to their home States and will be brought back to Rajasthan. We hope that things go hassle-free and as we planned," Mr. Agarwal said.

The Additional Chief Secretary said the State government had taken strict measures to ensure the safety of stranded labourers after the Aurangabad train accident in which 16 migrant workers were run over by a freight train. Over 1.06 lakh workers

## Punjab Cabinet to boycott meetings attended by CS

He had allegedly misbehaved with a Minister last week

VIKAS VASUDEVA  
CHANDIGARH

Chief Secretary's conduct during the May 9 meeting was totally incorrect and unacceptable

CHARANJIT SINGH CHANNI  
Punjab Cabinet Minister

couple of days, said an official statement.

Earlier, at the start of the meeting, the Chief Minister told the Cabinet that he had taken note of the complaint against the Chief Secretary by some Ministers. Raising the issue, Finance Minister Manpreet Badal and Mr. Channi, the Technical Education Minister, expressed unhappiness over the Chief Secretary's conduct during the May 9 meeting, describing it as "totally incorrect and unacceptable".

The Cabinet also authorised Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to act on the issue of amendments to the State's excise policy in the light of the impact of COVID-19 and the prolonged lockdown on the liquor business.

**Liquor decision soon**

At the Monday meeting, the issue of home delivery of liquor was also discussed but no final decision taken due to apprehensions expressed by some Ministers. The Chief Minister is likely to decide on the issue in the next

tary continues, then it would be impossible for me to attend any such meeting in which he is present. Charanjit Channi also clearly stated that he will not attend such meetings. The Chief Minister then asked us to record our decision. Thereafter, the Cabinet 'unanimously' recorded the decision," Mr. Badal later told reporters.

The Opposition hit out at the Congress government over the issue. The Shiromani Akali Dal urged Punjab Governor V.P. Singh Badnore to dismiss the State government on grounds of breakdown of the constitutional machinery.

Former Minister Bikram Singh Majithia said the Cabinet should resign on moral grounds or be dismissed for refusing to acknowledge the head of civil service appointed by the Chief Minister.

Aam Aadmi Party MLA and Leader of the Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema said the Chief Minister has failed to maintain equilibrium between the executive arm and the administration.

No renaming of Allahabad University'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ALLAHABAD

The Allahabad University's executive council has decided against changing the name of the Centre-run institution following renaming of the district to Prayagraj, officials said on Monday.

A university spokesperson said the executive council could not meet because of the coronavirus lockdown. So the opinion of its 15 members was sought through email.

Three members did not respond, while the remaining 12 responded in the negative and a resolution has been passed against changing the name, the spokesperson said.

The members wanted the name retained, he added. The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh had renamed the district to Prayagraj in 2018, a decision later approved by the Centre.

The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development and the university, founded in 1887, then corresponded over the suggestion to rename the institution as well, officials said.

## Maruti to resume operations

Manesar plant allowed to operate with over 4,000 workers

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM



Maruti plant at Manesar, Haryana. ■ FILE PHOTO

timings to three hours and have four tea-breaks instead of the two earlier to maintain social distancing, besides fewer workers would be allowed in the buses and rest areas.

#### Gurugram plant

The company has also received permission to resume operations at its Gurugram plant with more than 10,000 workers.

Meanwhile, the district public relations department, in a press release, claimed that 1,330 industrial units, manufacturing both essential and non-essential items, were given conditional permission to resume operations with the total strength of 1,06,751 workers.

Besides, 20,228 workers would be benefited by permission to 96 construction activities. Seven brick kilns employing 568 workers have also been granted permission to resume their activities.

Major haul of marijuana in Malkangiri

STAFF REPORTER  
BERHAMPUR

Over 2,000 kilograms of marijuana, worth over ₹1 crore, was seized by the police from a van at Orkel in Odisha's Malkangiri district on Sunday night.

The State is keeping a close watch on the emerging situation and changing its strategy accordingly to tackle the pandemic, said Mr. Bagchi.

The seized drug was packed in 66 plastic gunny bags. The seized drug weighed 2,004 kg.

#### Vehicle intercepted

According to Malkangiri Superintendent of Police Khilari Rishikesh Dnyanadeo, a police team from Orkel during regular checking at Surlokonda market square intercepted the vehicle transporting the contraband to Chhattisgarh. Thus year, a total of over 8,018 kg of marijuana has been seized in Malkangiri district while being smuggled out.

Fifty-eight persons have been arrested for their involvement in the illegal trade and 24 vehicles seized, police sources said.

Marijuana is illegally cultivated in remote Maoist-infested regions of Malkangiri district.

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#### \*INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)\*

1. The Executive Engineer, HIMUDA, Division Parwanoo, H.P. on behalf of Chairman, HIMUDA invite online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in Two Cover System for the under mentioned works from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms/companies enlisted with the similar Government Agencies of the State or neighbouring State of Punjab, Haryana and U.T Chandigarh shall be eligible for participation in the tendering process of HIMUDA. However, the successful bidders must get registered in HIMUDA, in appropriate class before signing the contract (All conditions as per enlistment rules of HIMUDA 2018) who have sufficient/requisite experience in the execution of similar nature of work.

Sr. No. Name of Work Estimated Cost. (Rs.) Earnest money. (Rs.) Cost of tender form (Rs.) Time Limit.

1. Repair of Two Nos. MIG Houses No. 139 & 140 of H.P. Pollution & Environmental Central Board in Sector-IV at Parwanoo, District Solan (H.P.) i/internal WS & SL.

2. Construction of BMO Office Building, 4 Nos. Typ-IV & 8 Nos. Type-II Quarters at Chandhi, Tehsil Kasauli, District Solan (H.P.) (Sub Head-Development of Site i.e C/o Random Rubble masonry, RWall, Breast Wall, Mild Steel railing along the boundary & gate).

3. Construction of Police Line at Kishanpura (Baddi), District Solan (H.P.) (Sub Head-Development of Prade Ground & Sitting arrangement).

4. Construction of Indoor stadium at Una distt. Una H.P. (SH- Repairs of 2Nos sitting tier, Blocks Room below sitting tiers & pavilion Block including internal WS & SI External Water Supply Sewerage system C/O 100 users septic tank & soak pit).

5. A/R & M/O Social Housing Colony at Phase - I to IV Una Distt Una HP (SH:- Cleaning of dust bins garbage through Mechanical transportation, Blocked sewerage lines & Manholes, Cleaning of Roads, drains, path and parks and external water supply scheme for the period from 01.07.2020 to 31.03.2021).

The bid documents will be published online on website <https://htenders.gov.in> on 16.05.2020 1030Hrs.upto.

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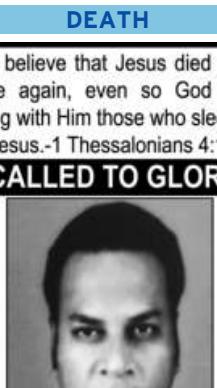
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#### OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

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jam district, taking the State's total to 414 on Monday. While the number of active cases increased to 326, the number of those recovered increased to 85 with discharge of 17 persons from hospitals during the day. Three persons have died in the State so far.

The State government's chief spokesperson for COVID-19, Subroto Bagchi, however, said that there was no need for people to worry about the increase in number of COVID-19 positive cases in

the State.

#### \*Cases to increase\*

Stating that the positive cases would further increase in the coming days, Mr. Bagchi urged people to ensure quarantine of all returnees instead of blaming the Odia migrant workers for spreading the virus.

The State is keeping a close watch on the emerging situation and changing its strategy accordingly to tackle the pandemic, said Mr.

# In a first, Karnataka reports COVID-19 'relapse'

Tamil Nadu toll touches 53; Telangana records 79-case spike, Andhra Pradesh adds 38 cases, 7 more test positive in Kerala

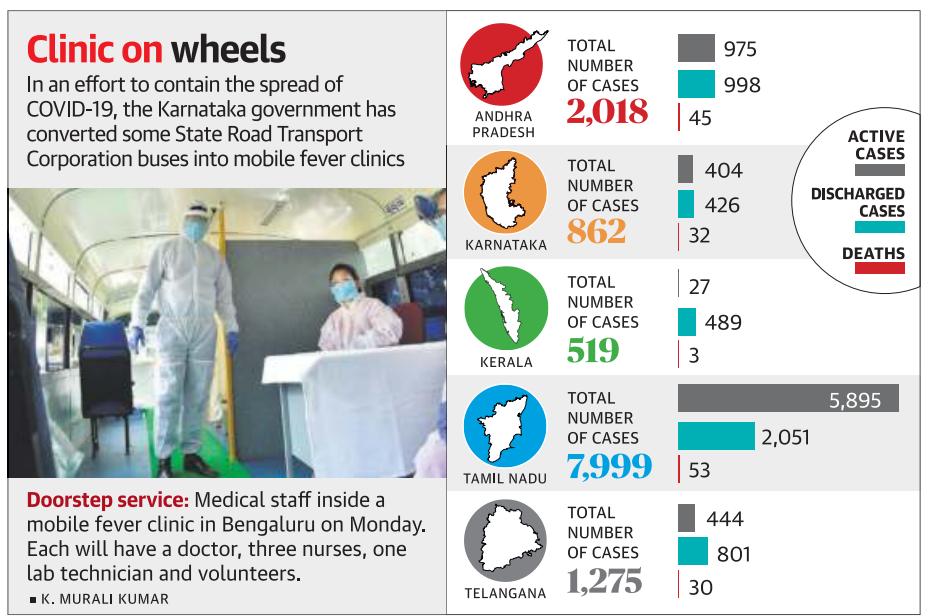
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Karnataka reported its first 'relapse' for COVID-19 on Monday with a 50-year-old Tablighi Jamaat delegate who had recovered testing positive a second time.

Health officials said the patient from Kudachi, who had been discharged, suffered a relapse. He was re-admitted to hospital in Belagavi. The patient was initially admitted on April 15 and had recovered and tested negative twice on April 30 and May 1. The tests were done at NIV, Bengaluru and National Institute of Traditional Medicine (NITM) in Belagavi.

Even after recovery, his treatment continued in the ICU for co-morbidities, especially cardiac issues. He was discharged on May 4 and quarantined at an institutional facility in Kudachi.

However, he developed



symptoms again and a repeat test on May 5 at NITM showed he was positive. On May 6, a second test was done at Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences and he tested positive again.

Meanwhile, 14 new cases were reported on Monday, taking the total to 862. These

included 31 COVID-19 deaths, one non-COVID death and 426 discharged persons.

Except for four, the rest were primary or secondary contacts of previous positive patients.

Andhra Pradesh, meanwhile, recorded 38 new cases and the total went up to

2,018. The death toll was 45.

For the first time, the number of discharged cases surpassed active ones, at 998 to 975. Of the 38 cases, Kurnool and Chittoor districts had nine each, Anantapur eight, Guntur five, Krishna and Visakhapatnam three each and Nellore one. Of the

new cases in Chittoor, eight originated at Koyambedu in Chennai.

Kerala reported seven more cases, six of which were expatriates or people who had returned from other parts of the country.

Four cases were from Kasaragod and one each from Palakkad, Malappuram and Wayanad. All cases in Kasaragod were people who returned from Maharashtra. The positive case in Palakkad came from Chennai, while the person in Malappuram had returned from Kuwait. The case in Wayanad was linked to a known/unknown source. Of 519 cases, 489 had recovered, and 27 persons were under treatment.

A total of 1,307 expatriates had returned to Kerala in the past week, of whom 650 were on home quarantine, 641 on quarantine in care centres and 16 in isolation in hospitals.

Telangana witnessed a huge single-day spike on Monday with 79 persons test-

ing positive. All the cases were from Greater Hyderabad area in the State Capital. With Monday's cases, the State tally shot up to 1,275.

Six persons, including two women in their 30s, died due to COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu

taking the total number of deaths in the State to 53. The fatalities came on a day when the State's total number of cases crossed the 8,000-mark, with another 798 persons testing positive on Monday.

It was a record single-day surge for both the State and Chennai. Of the new cases, Chennai alone accounted for 538, bringing its total number of cases to 4,371. Tamil Nadu's tally stood at 8,002.

A large number of children aged 0 to 12 years tested positive. A total of 63 children tested positive, taking the total number of children affected till now to 427.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram Bureaus)



**On guard:** An official maintaining vigil at the Walayar check-post near the T.N. border on Monday. ■ K.K. MUSTAFAH

## Keralites without passes turned back

Kasaragod Collector issues warning

STAFF REPORTER  
PALAKKAD

A few dozen Keralites who reached the Walayar check-post at the district border without valid passes were sent back by the authorities on Monday. However, there was a fall in the number of people who returned to Kerala from other States.

District Collector D. Balamurugan said only those with valid passes issued by the district administration could be allowed entry. Otherwise, the effectiveness of the COVID-19 monitoring system being followed in the State could be compromised.

He said all people who reached the border without passes until Sunday were cleared.

The Tamil Nadu Police too sent back several Keralites returning home without passes issued by the Palakkad district authority.

An understanding has been reached between the Kerala and Tamil Nadu authorities on permitting the movement of Keralites returning home. Only those with passes issued by the State authorities are being allowed to proceed to the Kerala border.

Until 4 p.m. on Monday, 1,345 Keralites returned home through the Walayar border. Deputy Superintendent R. Manoj Kumar said they included 454 women and 128 children. He said 480 vehicles were permitted to cross the border.

From the Talapady check-post, 285 Keralites entered the State on Monday. The Kasaragod district administration had issued 642 passes. Around 15 persons arrived at the check-post without passes. Most of them had applied, but were yet to receive confirmation. While a few of the family members received the pass, others were left out. The district administration accepted the applications and issued passes to a few people.

District Collector D. Sajith Babu has asked the District police chief to stop those trying to enter Kerala illegally. He said certain groups were helping people sneak in through the border areas in Karnataka. Such action would have serious consequences, he warned.

### 44 from Red zone

The inter-State border at Inchivila witnessed the entry of 211 Keralites, including 113 women, on Monday. These included 200 people from Tamil Nadu, eight from Karnataka, two from Maharashtra and one from Puducherry. While 44 people came from Red zone areas, all except one person were sent home where they will be required to quarantine themselves. One person was sent to the corona care centre in Mar Ivanios College hostel after he told the authorities that there were no facilities for self-isolation at his house.

## Andhra Pradesh to send back 13,000 tonne styrene to South Korea

The gas will be transported in two consignments

STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

Jolted by the death of 12 persons and hundreds falling sick due to the gas leak at the LG Polymers factory in Visakhapatnam, the Andhra Pradesh government has begun the process of transporting 13,000 tonnes of styrene gas in two consignments of 8,000 tonnes and 5,000 tonnes to South Korea.

The remaining gas in the storage tanks of the factory that leaked has been converted to 100% polymer.

The government is also drawing up plans to shift the hazardous industries to places far away from cities and

towns to avert such accidents. At a review meeting through video conference on the situation in the affected areas, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy asked the officials of industries and factories departments to conduct a safety audit, particularly those involved in the manufacturing and processing of harmful chemicals.

**Safety protocols**  
Mr. Reddy emphasised on the need for relocation of hazardous industries and strict compliance with safety protocols stipulated by the Central government.

Visakhapatnam Collector V. Vinay Chand informed the Chief Minister that the danger at the plant had subsided as the temperature of the styrene gas had been brought to

relatively cool 73 degrees Celsius. "Around 13,000 tonnes of gas stored in tanks is intact and it is being loaded into two vessels. The process will be completed in around five days," he said.

Ministers M. Srinivasa Rao and Botcha Satyanarayana said ex gratia was paid to the five bereaved families whose legal heirs were finalised and the remaining ones would get the solatium in the coming days. Sanitisation of the villages in the vicinity of the factory has almost been completed, they said.

Mr. Reddy instructed the officials to pay ₹10,000 to each resident of the five affected villages irrespective of their age and credit it to the unencumbered bank accounts of the women in those families.



Safe entry: Policemen unlocking a house at R.R. Venkatapuram as people return home in Visakhapatnam on Monday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

## Karnataka sets up investment task force to attract MNCs

Focus on industries moving out of China post COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

With India anticipating a shift of industries out of China in the post COVID-19 world, Karnataka on Monday constituted a special investment promotion task force to attract investments from "disenchanted multi-national companies [MNCs]."

The 15-member task force, headed by the Chief Secretary, will also have one representative each from companies from Japan, Singapore, the U.S., South Korea, Taiwan, France, and Germany that are currently operating in the State.

The task force will identify sectors in which Karnataka can attract investments

owing to relocation from other countries post COVID-19 and will formulate special incentive packages and facilitation to attract investments.

**Infrastructure projects**  
It will also identify key infrastructure projects, including dedicated industrial townships, that need to be undertaken or expedited and will identify the measures to fast-track clearances to promote these investments.

It will also recommend brand-building measures for the State.

A note on the constitution of the task force said there is now a pushback against China from several countries

and China may not be able to retain its position as the world's largest factory in the post COVID-19 world order.

**Alternative hub**  
"The Japanese government is paying Japanese companies to shutter their manufacturing plants in China. American companies are also planning shutdown. So are other countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore. They are planning to shutdown their facilities in China and see India as an alternative manufacturing hub," it said.

The task force will also have representatives from Indo-French, Indo-American, and Indo-German chambers of commerce.

## Violence in Telangana town, one injured

Row as drunkard enters worship area

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ADILABAD

An incident of violence late on Sunday night resulted in head injury to one person in the communally sensitive town of Bhainsi in Nirmal district of Telangana. Police controlled the situation as groups from two communities indulged in stone pelting which caused head injury to one person who was rushed to Nizamabad for treatment.

Additional forces were rushed to the town from Gudipet and Dichpally battalions. Superintendent of Police C. Shashidhar Raju reached the spot within half an hour and took control of the situation.

A motorcycle was damaged in the violence for which 25 persons were taken into custody. In a statement, Mr. Raju said prohibitory orders were imposed in the town and lockdown would be enforced stringently.

Trouble broke out when a youth belonging to one community barged into the place of worship of another community in the A.P. Nagar locality in an inebriated condition. About seven persons present in the worship house roughed up the intruder and chased him away. This was followed by stone pelting by a group of

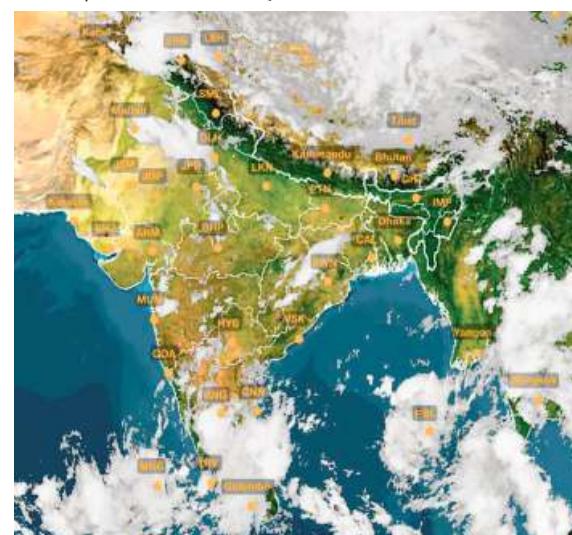
people belonging to the community whose place of worship was allegedly violated. After they withdrew, members of the other community indulged in stone pelting which caused head injury to one person who was rushed to Nizamabad for treatment.

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### WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places over Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Odisha, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Telangana, Lakshadweep, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 37.0	25.8	28.4	Kozhikode	... 35.5...	28.4	
Ahmedabad	... 41.3	27.5	31.1	Kurnool	... 39.1...	29.2	
Aizawl	... 30.2...	18.2		Lucknow	8.2...	34.4...	20.6
Aligarh	15.6...	35.3...	21.1	Madurai	... 37.5...	28.2	
Bengaluru	... 34.0...	23.6		Mangaluru	... 35.5...	25.4	
Bhopal	1.6...	37.7...	22.9	Mumbai	... 36.3...	27.1	
Bhubaneswar	14.3...	37.7...	20.7	Mysuru	... 35.1...	23.0	
Chandigarh	30.7...	33.7...	21.2	New Delhi	... 36.0...	20.4	
Chennai	... 36.4...	27.6		Patna	... 32.6...	21.2	
Coimbatore	... 37.0...	27.0		Port Blair	31.6...	32.8...	25.8
Dehradun	0.6...	27.0		Puducherry	... 35.8...	28.0	
Gangtok	5.3...	20.8...	15.4	Pune	... 38.4...	24.3	
Goa	... 35.4...	27.0		Raipur	... 35.4...	24.0	
Guwahati	1.2...	34.5...	20.9	Ranchi	3.2...	33.2...	18.0
Hubballi	... 36.0...	26.0		Shillong	14.4...	24.9...	
Hyderabad	... 33.9...	24.6		Shimla	3.1...	26.8...	15.9
Imphal	... 32.6...	17.3		Imphal	0.2...	24.0...	10.0
Jaipur	... 36.0...</						



## Consensus, not confusion

Relief trains will greatly aid stranded people, but States must have a common code for help

The Centre's move to run 15 pairs of trains between New Delhi and major cities will serve as a trial for further relaxation of lockdown travel restrictions. The new trains are a lifeline for stranded citizens, although the scheme has been designed as a limited air-conditioned service for higher fare paying travellers. Thousands of migrant workers will continue to look for Shramik Special trains to get home. There are multiple challenges to operating trains when the transmission of the novel coronavirus is rising. Many States have severely restricted the arrival of domestic travellers, but their attempts at regulating entry by road through passes issued online have been overwhelmed, and the pass system is becoming dysfunctional; quarantine facilities have come under strain and cases of expatriates testing positive, as in Kerala, have added to their worries. Telangana does not favour resumption of passenger trains. Karnataka wants a compulsory 14-day institutional quarantine for travellers. While this underscores the high degree of caution that many States want to adopt, it severely restricts inter-State movement. Kerala, more reasonably, is asking those coming from other States by road, with permission, to home quarantine themselves, after initially considering institutional monitoring. The Centre has left such dilemmas to be resolved by the States, and the Home Ministry's Standard Operating Protocol for the relief train services merely orders passengers to adhere to health protocols prescribed by the destination State or Union Territory.

As India moves into the last week of the extended lockdown, it is important for States to agree on a standard protocol on how to deal with travellers, whose numbers are bound to grow. Experience in the U.S., Europe and Asia shows that with the relaxation of lockdown curbs, many tend to lower their guard. India's peculiar circumstances, including the difficulty of maintaining physical distancing and low compliance with rules, could increase infections rapidly. Yet, a system for orderly movement is necessary to relieve the social and economic pressures since the national lockdown began. Trains and buses are the most affordable ways for those stranded to return home, and such travel can be facilitated with a safety protocol in place: physical distancing, use of masks and hand washing. Citizens can be persuaded to comply with this if governments have clarity on how they will facilitate train and road travel. At the destination, unless medically warranted, passengers can self-quarantine at home. This is something that the Centre has prescribed even for very mild, pre-symptomatic patients. A patchwork of rules and regulations among States will only confuse travellers and generate needless anxiety.

## A welcome change

The pandemic is an ideal opportunity to test the benefits of plasma therapy

With the ethics committee approval in hand on May 8, the ICMR cleared the last hurdle to conduct a multicentric phase-2 trial using convalescent plasma on COVID-19 patients with moderate illness. Its three feasibility studies in about 20 severely ill patients found the therapy to be safe and able to resolve illness or improve the clinical symptoms. Since safety of convalescent plasma from people who have recovered from COVID-19 illness is not a huge concern, the first stage of the human clinical trial has been skipped; the ICMR will instead study plasma safety and efficacy in a phase-2 trial with 452 patients. The patients with moderate COVID-19 illness will be randomly assigned to receive either convalescent plasma (226 participants) or only standard of care (control group). The primary outcomes of the trial in 21 hospitals that will be studied include prevention of illness from progressing to a severe form, and avoidance of death from all causes at 28 days after plasma infusion. And key secondary outcomes will include resolution of symptoms, reduction in hospital stay and respiratory support. Plasma will be collected from donors 28 days after they make a complete recovery from illness or are symptom-free and have more than the required level of antibodies against the novel coronavirus. Molecular and also other routine tests will be done before plasma use.

Convalescent plasma therapy, about a century old, has shown some benefit in treating measles, chickenpox and rabies. Small studies have shown faster clearance of virus in the case of MERS and SARS if given early in the course of the disease but no randomised controlled studies have been carried out. However, no benefit was seen in 2015 on some Ebola patients treated with convalescent plasma in Guinea. Only three small studies involving 21 COVID-19 patients have been carried out but not in trials where the participants were randomised with a control arm. Till date, there is a dearth of randomised controlled trials that clearly demonstrate the efficacy of convalescent plasma therapy for any infectious disease, including COVID-19. Even in the absence of any effective treatment or a vaccine, the pandemic provides an opportunity to ascertain the clinical benefits of plasma therapy through randomised controlled trials. The U.S. FDA and India have thus approved the use of plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients only for trial purposes. The ICMR's insistence on an evidence-based approach to plasma therapy is in contrast to the cavalier manner in which it approved the anti-malarial hydroxychloroquine, as a prophylaxis for coronavirus without carrying out any trial and relying on evidence that was slim and intended only for treatment, and also when the risks were unknown. If the trial outcomes are overwhelmingly positive, the agency would be ethically obliged to recommend plasma therapy as a standard of care for COVID-19 patients.

# Equal freedom and forced labour

The steps being taken by States, under the cover of COVID-19, of removing labour laws are grossly unconstitutional



GAUTAM BHATIA

**S**oon after Independence, while the Constitution of a free India was being drafted, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chairperson of the Drafting Committee, was asked to prepare a note on the idea of Fundamental Rights. In a terse document, B.R. Ambedkar observed that thus far, the purpose of Constitutions had been to limit state power, in order to preserve the freedom of the individual. But this was too narrow an understanding of freedom, because it ignored the fact that often, it was private parties – individuals and corporations – that exercised great sway over the economic and social life of the nation. B.R. Ambedkar therefore argued that fundamental rights must also "eliminate the possibility of the more powerful having the power to impose arbitrary restraints on the less powerful by withdrawing from the control he has over the economic life of the people" – or, more euphemistically, to tackle the "dictatorship of the private employer".

### Labour rights

B.R. Ambedkar, a long-time advocate for the rights of labour, and who had been instrumental in the passage of an eight-hour working day a few years before, was writing as part of a long-standing intellectual and political tradition. Labour movements had been key to the successful freedom struggle, and indeed, the 1931 Karachi Declaration and Bill of Rights – a fore-run-

ner to the Constitution – expressly placed labour rights on a par with ordinary civil rights such as the freedom of speech and expression. In its Preamble, it declared that "political freedom must include... real economic freedom of the... millions". These principles eventually found their way into the Indian Constitution in the form of "Directive Principles of State Policy", while a few of them were retained as fundamental rights. Prominent among these was the right against forced labour, guaranteed by Article 23 of the Constitution.

How do we understand the concepts of "force" and "freedom" in the backdrop of this history? A certain narrow understanding would have it that I am only "forced" to do something if there is a gun to my head or a knife at my throat. In all other circumstances, I remain "free". As we all know, however, that is a very impoverished understanding of freedom. It ignores the compulsion that is exerted by serious and enduring differences of power, compulsion that may not take a physical form, but instead, have a social or economic character that is nonetheless as severe. In such circumstances, people can be placed in positions where they have no genuine choices left. As K.T. Shah, another member of the Constituent Assembly, famously wrote, "necessitous men are not free men".

### Judicial stand

In 1983, the Supreme Court understood this point. The Court was called upon to address the exploitation of migrant and contract labourers, who had been put to work constructing the Asian Games Village. In a landmark judgment, *PUDR vs. Union of India*, the Court held that the right against

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forced labour included the right to a minimum wage. It noted that often, migrant and contract labourers had "no choice but to accept any work that came [their] way, even if the remuneration offered... is less than the minimum wage". Consequently, the Court held that "the compulsion of economic circumstance which leaves no choice of alternatives to a person in want and compels him to provide labour or service" was no less a form of forced labour than any other, and its remedy lay in a constitutional guarantee of the minimum wage.

The judgment of the Supreme Court in *PUDR vs. Union of India*, and the constitutional history that it drew upon, provides us with an important perspective from which to understand basic ideas of freedom, especially in our present context. A market economy is sustained by a set of laws – the laws of contract, of property, and so on. This legal structure ensures that capital and labour do not face each other as equals across a mythical bargaining table. There is a structural inequality that enables the former, going back once more to B.R. Ambedkar's language, to "make the rules" for the latter. This amounts to a form of "private government", a situation in which there exists democracy in the political sphere, but unilateral term-setting in the context of the workplace. Of late, with the rise of

the platform or gig economy, the rise of casualisation and precarious employment, and further fractures within the workforce, this inequality of power has only grown starker.

The purpose of labour laws, which arose out of a long period of struggle (often accompanied by state-sanctioned violence against workers), has always been to mitigate this imbalance of power. The shape and form of these laws has, of course, varied over time and in different countries, but the basic impulse has always remained the same: in B.R. Ambedkar's words, to secure the "rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", in both the public and the private spheres. In some countries, the path chosen has been to give workers a stake in private governance, through strong trade union laws and mandatory seats for labour in the governing boards of firms ("codetermination"). In other countries (such as India), the path has been to create a detailed set of laws, covering different aspects of the workplace, and depend upon State agencies for their enforcement.

### The Indian situation

To be sure, India's labour law structure has been criticised on multiple counts. It is argued that it sets up a labour bureaucracy that is prone to corruption; that the adjudicatory mechanisms are inefficient; the rights that labour laws grant are effectively submerged in a creaking judicial system, thus providing no real relief; that the system creates an unconscionable tiered structure where a majority of the workforce, engaged in contract labour or informal employment, has very few rights, while those in formal employment have greater security, at least in theory;

in a recent interview, it was even pointed out that many prominent labour unions prefer to arrive at an accommodation with the management, rather than represent the interests of their constituents.

These problems certainly call for a debate on the future of labour rights, especially in a world where the rapidly changing nature of work is already rendering old concepts of jobs and employments obsolete (courts around the world, for example, are struggling with how to classify platform workers such as Uber drivers). But this debate must be guided by B.R. Ambedkar's insights that remain relevant even today, the Constitutional guarantee against forced labour, and the understanding of force and freedom that takes into account differences in power. What is very clear, however, is that the steps being taken by various State governments, ostensibly under cover of the COVID-19 pandemic, are grossly unconstitutional: various State governments are in the process of removing labour laws altogether (for a set period of time). What this means, in practice, is that the economic power exercised by capital will be left unchecked. In his Note on Fundamental Rights, B.R. Ambedkar pointed out that this would be nothing other than the freedom to "increase hours of work and reduce rates of wages". Ironically, an increase in working hours and a removal of minimum wages are two proposals strongly under discussion. If the Constitution is to remain a charter of freedom, however, it must be equal freedom – and that must be the yardstick from which we measure proposed legal changes in the shadow of COVID-19.

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer

# Playing out live, a narrative of discrimination

The war on the pandemic is turning out to be an undeclared war against the workers of India, especially Adivasis



BRINDA KARAT

**T**he tragedy of Jamlo Makdam, 12, a migrant Adivasi girl who died of hunger and dehydration just a few kilometres away from her village in Chhattisgarh, while walking back from Telangana, symbolises what Adivasi communities are facing during this period of the national lockdown. The Modi government's declared war on the novel coronavirus is turning out to be an undeclared war against the workers of India, treating them as non-citizens. Among them are workers from Adivasi communities.

### Key insights into migration

This March, in answer to a question by CPI(M) MP P.R. Natarajan, the government gave a tentative estimate of there being 10 crore migrant workers in India but admitted to many being largely undocumented and unregistered as workers. The government has no clue as to the social composition of this large labour force. The last National Sample Survey Office migration survey, which was published more than two decades ago, showed that between 1992-93 to 2007-08, the proportion of migrant households among Scheduled Tribes (STs) was higher than among all other communities. The same data showed that STs were the single largest group among female migrants. Since then, the number of Adivasis dependent on

wage labour has increased in comparison to those dependent on cultivation. With 45.5% of rural Adivasis below the poverty line, Adivasis usually do multiple kinds of work through the year; as a cultivator, an agricultural worker, a labourer in non-agricultural work, including migrating in search of work. In the name of ease of business, the last several years have seen an accelerated process of displacement and dispossession of Adivasi communities and a takeover of their land and forest-based resources, increasing the numbers of migrant workers from Adivasi communities.

The patterns of Adivasi migration are somewhat different than those of other workers – they are short term, often seasonal, and circulatory in nature both within the State and inter-State. Adivasi migration is mainly for seasonal agricultural and construction work, work in brick kilns or as manual workers in urban areas. In Maharashtra, large numbers of Adivasis migrate for fishing work. This is apart from young Adivasi women who migrate to urban areas as domestic workers. The role of labour contractors is more pronounced too. The pattern of migration is through hiring of groups of Adivasi workers by contractors who take them to the designated workplace. Contractors often advance payments and the workers are then treated as bonded to the contractor.

Migrations had already started when the national lockdown was suddenly imposed. In State after State, Adivasis are reporting that work has stopped, contractors often snubbed by the principal employer, have run away leaving Adi-

vasis stranded. Adivasi migrants, since they are not part of the so-called mainstream cultures, are even more vulnerable to the general hostility towards the poor displayed by state agencies, particularly the police. During the lockdown, unable to get assistance and despairing of any free travel home, Adivasi migrants across India have started the long and painful march back often avoiding highways, travelling through forests and side roads to avoid the police.

### Law and rights

The Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, the only law for migrant workers, is on the way to being scrapped by the Modi government as part of its agenda of labour reform. It is to be merged with the Labour Code, which is an instrument to destroy the hard-won rights of the working class. Although the 1979 law is inadequate since it deals only with those migrant workers in the contractor system and excludes workers who migrate on their own, for Adivasi migrant workers employed through contractors, its implementation would have ensured payment as well as free travel back home. In fact according to the law, the Central government is legally liable to ensure free travel home since it is responsible for the termination of the work because of

the lockdown.

### Cause of suffering

Having suffered two months of the lockdown without work, Adivasi migrant workers will return home penniless. But they are totally 'invisibilised' in the government policies in the package announced. The functioning of Public Distribution System in Adivasi areas, particularly in the hilly regions, is generally irregular. Now, at the time of lockdown, ground reports point to a looming emergency of hunger and starvation in many Adivasi areas. The Central government gave permission for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme work only from April 20. At present, there are hardly any MGNREGA works in Adivasi areas, except to some extent in Chhattisgarh. It is critical to start projects in a mission mode if communities are to be saved from destitution. The MGNREGA projects can and should be linked not only to agricultural operations but also for the collection of minor forest produce. This will be a labour subsidy for Adivasi women who mainly do this work and can help relieve the acute distress. Even though the government did announce revised rates for minor forest produce, in the absence of purchasing centres, the distress sales to middlemen have meant little or no income.

The lockdown has caused more suffering to Adivasis than the virus. Most Adivasi habitats have so far been free of the virus. But what happens to Adivasi migrants when they get home is a major concern as the health infrastructure in these areas is extremely poor. The annual report from the Tribal Af-

fairs Ministry has data on the shortfall in Adivasi areas as: 20.7% for sub-centres, 26% for primary health centres and 23% for community health centres. The shortfall in the number of doctors is as high as 27%. Many of these areas are mineral rich. The District Mineral Fund which is meant for the development of mining affected people had a total of ₹35,925 crore. Till January this year only 35% had been spent and that too only on infrastructure which would help mining companies. The Modi government had arbitrarily permitted use of this fund for COVID-19 control-related expenditures. But in these two months, not a single rupee has been spent on strengthening the health infrastructure in Adivasi areas.

Instead of tackling the grave situation prevalent in Adivasi areas, the Modi government has used the lockdown to further its pro-corporate agenda including in spheres which directly dilute the constitutional and legal rights of Adivasis. It is also in this period that the Supreme Court gave its highly questionable judgment against prevailing reservations in schoolteachers posts for only Adivasis in Fifth Schedule areas in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Many aspects of the judgment will have a negative impact on special constitutional provisions for Adivasis under the Fifth Schedule beyond the issue of reservations.

The lack of protests because of the lockdown does not mean that Adivasis will remain silent on all these issues.

Brinda Karat is a member of the CPI(M) Polit Bureau and a former Rajya Sabha MP



NAGARA GOPAL

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### COVID-19 antibody use

The recent attempt of using convalescent plasma containing the antibodies from patients who have recovered from novel coronavirus illness in the treatment of COVID-19 infection is nothing new. Antiserum therapy was used in diseases such as tetanus. The anti-tetanus serum was prepared by injecting a limited quantity of the organism into a horse. After a lag period of three weeks or so, blood was collected from the animal and by a set procedure, antiserum was prepared. I have witnessed this procedure in the serum section of King Institute, Guindy, Chennai,

in the 1960s, as a student. I retired as Joint Director of Medical Education (Pharm), Government of Tamil Nadu. This antiserum containing the antibodies confers the passive immunity to the individual against the disease. In the same manner, the convalescent plasma from the recovered coronavirus patient also contains the antibodies against the disease. An attempt is being made to treat new coronavirus patients by infusing this plasma into them. Some success has also been achieved. But there is a problem – the quantity of such convalescent plasma that can be made available is very limited.

It is recently known that 80% of the population which has contracted the virus is in an asymptomatic state, not exhibiting symptoms of the infection but capable of transmitting the disease. It is certain and scientifically correct that these asymptomatic carriers would have formed and contain the antibodies needed against the virus in their blood/plasma/serum. The advantage here is that a good quantity of blood can be made available from this vast majority of asymptomatic carriers. However, the plasma prepared from their blood, apart from containing the desired antibodies to fight the novel coronavirus

disease, may also contain some virus (similar to the antiserum of the olden days). This number is likely to be minimised, attenuated or eliminated by the confronting antibodies which are also present in the same fluid. If this new line of thinking materialises, after research, careful and trials, there could be a breakthrough in treating COVID-19.

ALLEN CHIDAMBARAM, Chennai

**Unjust and a low**  
I cannot help but remember two lines from the poem, 'The Slave in the dismal Swamp', by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, after reading about the

plans to dilute labour laws in the wake of reviving the economy following the COVID-19 pandemic: "On him alone was the doom of pain, from the morning of his birth; On him alone the curse of Cain/Fell, like a flail on the garnered grain, And struck him to the earth!"

Although it was written in a different century, it rings true in today's climate. Not only is the brunt of the lockdown being borne by the labour population but also their right to a dignified life is being threatened by unjust labour law exemptions. Indiscriminate profiteering by capitalists at the expense of the marginalised is

nothing new in this country but coming at this point of time, it marks a new low. KSHIRI MANI TRIPATHI, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

**Abandoned**  
If there is a section of the population more gravely affected than the rest of us, it is those of migrant labourers, whose plight has been most inhumanely forgotten and neglected. India's pandemic response has been marked by resilience but there is also an astonishing lack of humanity, compassion and concern.

ABHISHEK SURESH, Kozhikode, Kerala



# The need for a second chamber

The proposal for the Rajya Sabha as a second chamber had no easy sailing in the Constituent Assembly



M. VENKAIAH NAIDU



"Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the first Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, said Parliament is not only a legislative body but also a deliberative one." President Dr. Rajendra Prasad on his way to address a joint session of both the Houses of Parliament in New Delhi on March 18, 1957. With him are Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Speaker of the Lok Sabha. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

The Rajya Sabha came into being on April 3, 1952 and held its first session on May 13 the same year. The second chamber underwent severe prenatal scrutiny in the Constituent Assembly. The proposal for a bicameral central legislature for the country was discussed at length, with deep divisions between the proponents and opponents. From this churning that went on for eight days with the participation of leading members of the Constituent Assembly finally emerged the Council of States and its mandate. After 68 years, it is instructive to revisit the debates on the need for a Council of States and its performance since then.

The central legislature that came into being under the Government of India Act, 1919 was bicameral with a Council of States comprising 60 members and a Legislative Assembly comprising 145 members. The membership and voting norms for the Council of States were so restrictive that only wealthy land owners, merchants and those with legislative experience could enter it. Women could neither vote nor seek membership. The Government of India Act, 1935 proposed an elaborate and improved version of the second chamber, but this never materialised. The Constituent Assembly, which was formed in 1947, after adoption of the Constitution became the Provisional Parliament and made laws till 1952.

**Bicameralism and federalism**  
Bicameralism is a principle that requires the consent of two differently constituted chambers of Parliament for making or changing laws. This principle came into operation in 1787 with the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. Its appeal grew in strength from time to time. At present, 79 Parliaments of the world (41% of the total number) are bicameral.

Federalism has been in vogue since ancient times when some states got together to confer the power of law-making on a central authority. But modern federalism is entirely different given the complexity of geo-

graphical, regional, social and economic diversities marking the constituent units of a federation or a union. It is more so in India. The U.S. is a union of constituent states and so is India – each unit has a set of unique features.

**Constituent Assembly debates**  
As in The Federalist, the famous essays written in 1787-88 by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay to explain the U.S. Constitution, it was stated that the second chamber enables a second and reflective expression of representative opinion besides checking the propensity to yield to the impulse of sudden and violent passions. The U.S. Constitution-makers were influenced by the proposition of the renowned French philosopher Montesquieu who said, "The legislative body being composed of two parts, they check one another by the mutual privilege of rejecting". Walter Bagehot later noted that the retarding chamber will impede minor instances of parliamentary tyranny, though it will not prevent or really impede revolution.

Federalism and bicameralism are linked because the federal character of a nation comprising constituent units can be reflected in, and secured by, a bicameral legislature. Despite being conscious of the huge degree of diversities and attendant inequalities that marked British India, and aware of the emergence of independent India as a Union of States, the

proposal for the Rajya Sabha as a second chamber had no easy sailing in the Constituent Assembly. It was subjected to serious argumentation and had a narrow escape.

So, what follows from the above discussion is that the House elected directly by the people is susceptible to passions of the moment and electoral considerations. Their imprint on legislation needs to be checked by the second chamber whose members are expected to be sober, wise and well-informed with domain knowledge. The mandate of the Rajya Sabha, as can be gleaned from the Constituent Assembly debates and the experiences of other Parliaments, is legislation – to revise or delay legislation without proving a clog in the wheel of progress; to represent the interests of the States as a federal chamber; and be a deliberative body holding high-quality debates on important issues.

Against this mandate of 1949, it is in order to examine the functioning of the Rajya Sabha since its first sitting on May 13, 1952; assess whether it is either obstructionist or disruptive with governments of the day not having the required numbers; and assess its evolving nature. (This will be in the next part, which will be published tomorrow.)

M. Venkaiah Naidu is the Vice-President of India

play besides checking hasty legislation. It fell upon N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar to make a strong case for the second chamber. Replying to the debate on the motion, he argued that "the most that we expect the Second Chamber to do is perhaps to hold dignified debates on important issues and to delay legislations which might be the outcome of passions of the moment until the passions have subsided and calm consideration could be bestowed on the measures which will be before the Legislature."

As the differences over the need for a second chamber persisted even after adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the first Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, while replying to the felicitations on becoming the Chairman, said that Parliament is not only a legislative body but also a deliberative one which enables the members to debate major issues of public importance. He echoed what James Madison, one of the authors of *The Federalist*, said about 165 years earlier in an essay: that the role of the Upper House is to be a deliberative body besides balancing the "fickleness and passion" of the elected House.

So, what follows from the above discussion is that the House elected directly by the people is susceptible to passions of the moment and electoral considerations. Their imprint on legislation needs to be checked by the second chamber whose members are expected to be sober, wise and well-informed with domain knowledge. The mandate of the Rajya Sabha, as can be gleaned from the Constituent Assembly debates and the experiences of other Parliaments, is legislation – to revise or delay legislation without proving a clog in the wheel of progress; to represent the interests of the States as a federal chamber; and be a deliberative body holding high-quality debates on important issues.

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# Legal but not appropriate

Far-reaching changes have been made to labour laws without scrutiny by the legislature



M.R. MADHAVAN

Over the last few days, many States have made changes to their labour laws. Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab have extended the maximum daily hours of work in a factory from eight/nine to 12, and allowed up to 72 hours a week in overtime. The provision of paying overtime wages at twice the normal rate would apply for working beyond these limits. Gujarat has made a similar change but the wages for overtime will be at the same rate (not double). Uttarakhand has increased the daily limit to 11 hours with overtime limited to 18 hours a week. Haryana has allowed work for 12 hours a day, and up to 60 hours a week, with overtime pay. Madhya Pradesh has made similar changes. These changes have been made through notifications issued by the State governments, and will be applicable for the next three months. M.P. has also suspended most provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1946 (except those related to retrenchment and layoffs) for 1,000 days for State undertakings. In addition, M.P. issued an ordinance to amend two laws. The M.P. Industrial Employment Standing Orders Act will apply to establishments with more than 100 workers (up from the existing threshold of 50), in line with the Central Act. The ordinance also enables the government to exempt establishments from the provision of another Act that provided for a labour welfare fund.

The Uttar Pradesh government has approved an ordinance that exempts establishments from all labour laws for three years with some exceptions (safety and security of workers, provisions related to employing women and children, payment of wages on time and above prescribed minimum wages, and no bonded labour). As this will override provisions of some Central laws, it will require the assent of the President or, in effect, the assent of the Central government. The question is, was there sufficient consultation before all these changes were made?

## Lawful changes

As per the Constitution, legislature has the authority to make laws. Such laws could delegate powers to the government which are in the nature of detailing some requirements. For example, the Factories Act allows State governments to exempt factories from the provisions of the Act during public emergencies for a maximum period of three

months. A public emergency is defined as a grave emergency whereby the security of India or any part is threatened by war, external aggression or internal disturbance. Most States have used this provision, presumably interpreting the current situation as an 'internal disturbance'. Haryana has used a provision that allows relaxation of work hours "to deal with an exceptional press of work".

The Constitution also permits Central and State governments to make laws through the issuance of an ordinance when the legislature is not in session. Such a law needs to be ratified by the legislature within six weeks of the beginning of the next session. M.P. and U.P. are using this procedure.

## The importance of consultation

While the changes made are lawful, we need to see whether it is appropriate to make such far-reaching provisions without scrutiny by the legislature. Usually, any change in an Act follows a rigorous process of public consultation, scrutiny by committees of Parliament, and debates in the House before being approved. The changes described here have not gone through such a process. However, most of these have a three-month time limit, and any extension would need to be approved by the legislature.

Interestingly, Parliament is consolidating 29 existing laws into four codes dealing with wages, occupational safety and health, industrial relations and social security. The first of these has been enacted, the Standing Committee on Labour has submitted the report on the next two, and is examining the last. The Code on Occupational Safety and Health does not specify the maximum hours of work but empowers the government to do so. The Standing Committee report states that the government agreed to incorporate a provision of maximum eight hours per day with overtime permitted for certain types of industry.

Several regulations have been formulated to tackle COVID-19. There have been over 4,300 notifications by the Central and State governments since the beginning of March. Given the emergency, the government has to take quick action and change the response as the situation evolves. However, that should not be a reason to exclude the processes of consultation with and scrutiny by elected representatives. The legitimacy of state action in a parliamentary democracy comes from the fact that there is constant oversight and check by elected representatives. Parliament and State legislatures should find ways to meet and examine the measures taken by Central and State governments.

M.R. Madhavan is the President and co-founder of PRS Legislative Research

# Time for EU fiscal stimulus

The sustained attacks on the European Central Bank should serve as a wake-up call for eurozone leaders

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

Germany's highest court ruled last week that the European Central Bank (ECB) exceeded its mandate in pursuing Quantitative Easing (QE) to rescue the eurozone from the sovereign debt crisis. The verdict is the culmination of fresh hearings that commenced in the country last year to apply the 2018 European Court of Justice (ECJ) decision to uphold the controversial programme. QE refers to the unconventional monetary tool of public sector asset purchases the ECB has deployed to stimulate economic demand and stoke inflation in the eurozone. The court in Karlsruhe has asked the Frankfurt-based institution to justify its huge purchases of government bonds. Failure to furnish proof within three months that these purchases have not had a disproportionate impact on other economic policies risks jeopardising Berlin's participation in QE, the court observed.

## Claims and counterclaims

The ECB's bond-buying under QE, of over €2.2 trillion since 2014, in order to raise eurozone inflation close to its 2% target, has long proved contentious in the eurozone's affluent northern states. Critics in Germany and the Netherlands argue that public debt purchases by the central banks of eurozone member states with ECB funding amounted to monetary financing of government spending by the ECB. This has been barred under EU law, so as to insulate the institution from political pressures. QE advocates refute the claim, insisting that the ECB was buying bonds from investors in secondary markets, not directly from governments. They also point to the self-imposed cap on its holdings of up to one-third of the debt of any country and to acquire sovereign assets in proportion to the size of the economy, as measured by the share of ECB capital. These constraints are intended as safeguards against potential defaults by member states.

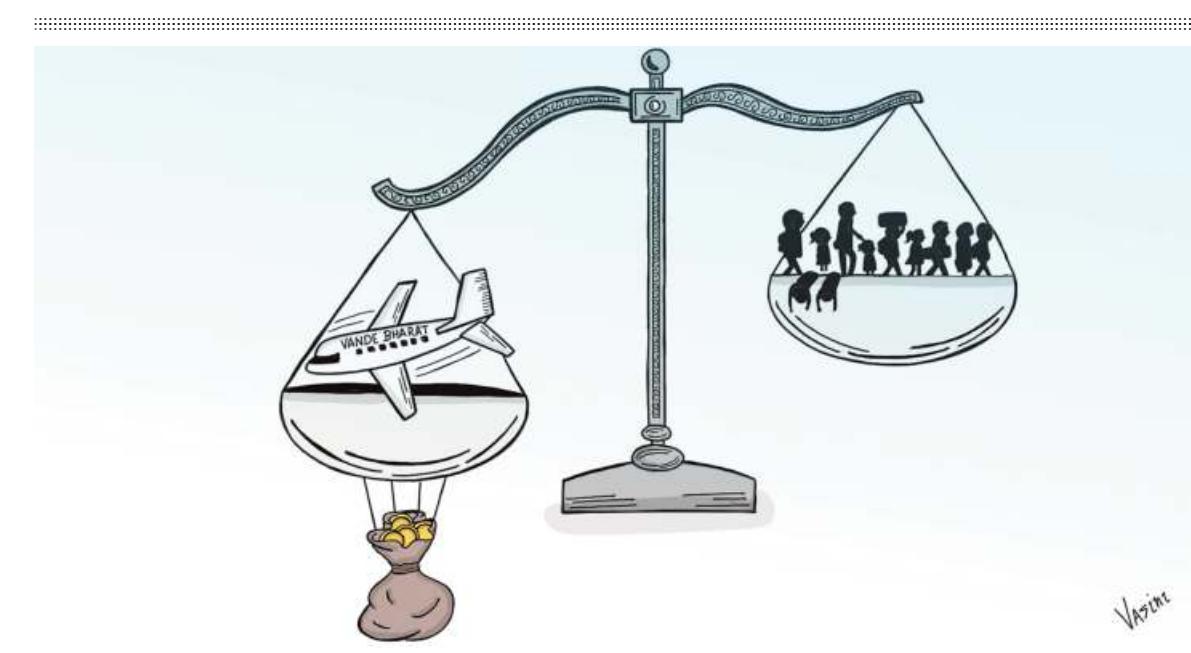
Significantly, the Karlsruhe court last week did not think the ECB debt purchases amounted to direct financing of governments. This is a setback

for the plaintiffs, who include Berlin's conservative academics, lawyers and the populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. But crucially, they were not deterred by an earlier defeat over the legality of the Outright Monetary Transactions, the 2012 predecessor to QE that was never availed. Indeed, they would regard the court's recent insistence of a justification of QE as marking a relative success over its 2017 refusal of a temporary halt to the programme, out of concern that Germany's withdrawal would hurt the ECB policy goals.

**Squabbling over rescue package**  
Germany's monetary hawks moreover have their eyes set on the distorted real estate prices from the prolonged negative interest rates in the eurozone and the impact on lenders and pension funds to continue their assault on QE. The Karlsruhe decision is believed to have no direct bearing on the ECB's expansion of asset purchases by another €750 billion of bonds under the so-called pandemic emergency purchase programme until the year-end in response to COVID-19. But the removal of the ceiling to acquire no more than one-third of a country's debt could potentially expose the institution to fresh legal challenges. The sustained attacks on the lender of last resort should serve as a wake-up call for eurozone leaders who are squabbling over the bloc's rescue package for the post-pandemic recovery. Moves to mutualise the bloc's debt acquire greater urgency than ever, as also calls for governments to infuse a bold fiscal stimulus.

The ECB has said it will continue its bond-buying programme, regardless of the implications arising from the Karlsruhe court ruling for the principle of central bank independence. The decision also raises fundamental issues concerning the primacy of common EU laws at a juncture when the bloc is beset with eurosceptic and populist challenges from member states. In the wake of the decision in Germany, the ECJ has emphasised its authority as the ultimate arbiter in all EU disputes.

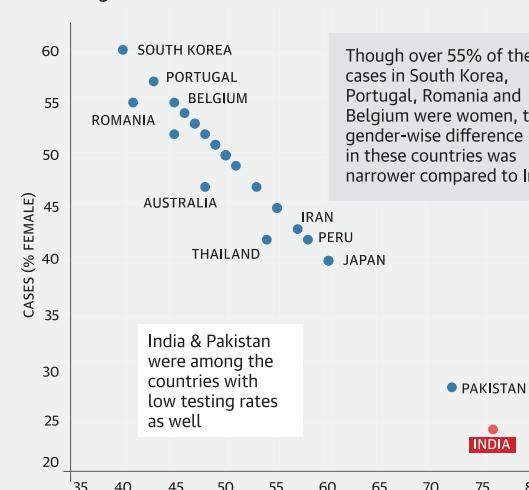
garimella.subramaniam@thehindu.co.in



## DATA POINT

### Gender divide narrowed

**ONE MONTH AGO** | In India, as of April 6, 76% of patients were male - the highest share among the countries which released gender-wise data. Pakistan had a similar ratio

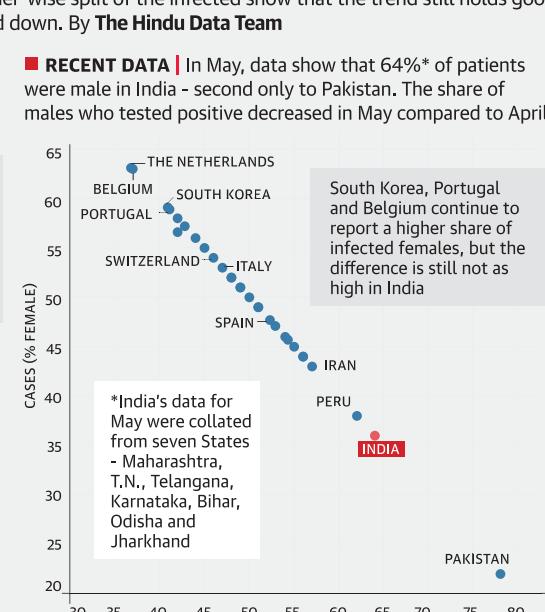


### STATE DATA

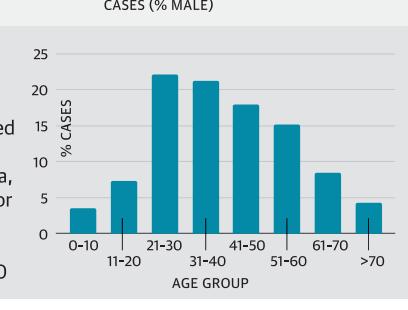
Among the States which have reported gender data, the difference between the number of male and female patients is the highest in Jharkhand. The table lists gender-wise % of cases

State	Male (%)	Female (%)
Maharashtra	62	38
Tamil Nadu	68	32
Telangana	66	33
Karnataka	64	36
Bihar	58	42
Odisha	64	36
Jharkhand	75	25

**RECENT DATA** | In May, data show that 64%\* of patients were male in India - second only to Pakistan. The share of males who tested positive decreased in May compared to April



**MOSTLY MIDDLE-AGED**  
Nearly 40% of patients were aged between 21 and 40 in Maharashtra, which accounts for a bulk of India's cases. Close to 12% were over 60



## The Hindu

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 12, 1970

The Supreme Court's verdict  
(From an editorial)

The unanimous verdict of a Special Bench of five judges of the Supreme Court, dismissing all the petitions challenging the election of Mr. V. V. Giri as President of India, ends months of nation-wide suspense. The judgment will be widely welcomed, not only for clearing the holder of the highest office in the country of charges of electoral irregularities and corrupt practices, but also for the resounding re-assertion that it implies of the supremacy of the rule of law. Both the petitioners' challenge and the Court's order, as well as the entire hearing during which many of the top leaders, including President Giri himself, took the witness stand, should have served to reassure the people that no one is immune from the due processes of the law and the humblest in the land may seek justice from the courts. As such, it has been a historic case in many respects and has established some legal precedents too, as, for instance, the admission of tape-recorded evidence in courts, not to speak of the Supreme Court deciding to hear oral witness.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 12, 1920

Immigration to U.S.  
(From second editorial)

Some interesting facts on immigration to the United States appear in "Munsey's Magazine" for April from the pen of the Commissioner-General of Immigration. During the last century, 30 million emigrants from Europe arrived in the United States. Up to about 1870, the vast majority of immigrants were from Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. With the decade of 1910, the immigrants were chiefly from Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain and European Turkey. These are considered undesirables when compared to the immigrants of the previous list, who rapidly found themselves a footing in the land and developed into American citizens of the proper stamp. The immigrants from the Balkan areas and Southern Europe and Russia are not considered desirable as they exhibit a tendency to form little coteries and do not mix readily with recognised Americans and take more to industrial pursuits as temporary workers rather than permanent naturalised sons of the soil.

FROM PAGE ONE

## Get ready to ramp up economic activity: PM

"Even as we look at the gradual withdrawal of the lockdown, we should constantly remember that till we do not find a vaccine or a solution, the biggest weapon with us to fight the virus is social distancing," Mr. Modi said.

Apart from asking for an extension of the lockdown, several States like Bihar, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh expressed misgivings about restoration of train services. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar reportedly said that as a former Railway Minister "he knew better than most" how it could lead to a rapid spread of the disease at this crucial juncture. The railways announced on Sunday evening that it would be running 15 trains in pairs

## India adds 4,213 cases in highest single-day rise

"Recent studies have also shown that viral load peaks in the pre-symptomatic period (2 days before symptoms) and goes down over the next 7 days which makes the revised discharge policy safe. However, cleared patients still have to follow rules issued by the Ministry," Mr. Agarwal said.

He added that the discharge policy has been changed in several countries.

Stating that India is yet to register community transmission, the Health Ministry

from May 12 to select destinations in a partial opening of till now shuttered passenger services.

While five States asked for an extension of lockdown, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said it was time that the country "learned to live with coronavirus," indicating that he was in favour of some opening up of the economy.

Mr. Kejriwal also said that instead of "red" or "green zones," containment zones be demarcated within districts to signify open and locked down areas.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel was vehement that States be left to decide containment and open zones and draw up micro plans for themselves.

## India adds 4,213 cases in highest single-day rise

said the country, however, has some relatively large outbreaks in certain locations. It added that it is important to focus on containment efforts to ensure that the country does not reach the community transmission stage.

"Coronavirus tracker app Aarogya Setu can play a crucial role in this. If not contained properly, the transmission rate would go higher. So, it is important for us now to focus on containment efforts," said Mr. Agarwal.

## Domestic flights may resume soon

The source pointed to comments made by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami that the Centre should not allow air services till May 31.

Apparently, the Centre is ready to go ahead with allowing airlines to fill the middle seat as operators have said time and again that it doesn't make commercial sense to fly with the middle seat vacant.

Another source attached to the Airports Authority of India said that delineation of metros like Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Chennai, apart from Pune, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad as red zones was an issue in resuming operations.

## SC sets up panel to look into J&K Internet curbs

The court directed the panel to examine the "appropriateness" of the petitioners' suggestion to limit the Net restrictions to areas where it was necessary and allow faster Internet (3G or 4G) on a trial basis in certain geographical areas and advise the J&K government on it.

The court took a leaf from its Anuradha Bhasin judgment of January 2020, which dealt with the months' long curfew imposed in J&K following the dilution of Article 370, to quote that restrictions should not be dispropor-

tionate to the "emergent situation".

Nevertheless, the court did not discount the Centre's reasons for the restrictions, which included "continuous infiltration, foreign influence, violent extremism and issues of national integrity prevalent in J&K". These were indeed serious issues. But hardships faced by citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic also raised serious concerns, it said.

The court had to "reasonably and defensibly" balance national security concerns and citizens rights.

## Manmohan stable, under observation

Dr. Singh, who is a Rajya Sabha member from Rajasthan, was admitted to AIIMS around 8.45 p.m. on Sunday following complaints of reported uneasiness and chest pain. "He is stable and under care of a team of doctors at the Cardiothoracic Centre of AIIMS," the party functionary added.

Since Sunday evening, wishes for Dr. Singh's speedy recovery have poured in.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot tweeted, "Much worried to know former PM Dr. Manmohan Singhji has been admitted to AIIMS. I wish him speedy recovery and pray for his good health and long life."

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel said in a tweet, "Praying for good health of Doctor saheb. We are sure he will be fit and fine at the earliest."

## Don't crush labour rights: Rahul

Pandemic is no excuse for amending laws in a way to exploit workers'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

We are together fighting against corona, but this cannot be an excuse to crush human rights, allow unsafe workplaces, exploit workers and suppress their voice. There cannot be any compromise on these basic principles

RAHUL GANDHI, FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF



loosen labour, land and environmental laws and regulations as the Modi govt is planning. The first steps have already been taken. This is a quack remedy like demonetisation," he tweeted.

At the party's online press conference, Congress leader Shaktisinh Gohil said the BJP-ruled States were amending labour laws in the garb of attracting foreign investors, and urged PM Narendra Modi to deny permis-

sion to the States to amend laws that would "strip workers of their basic rights".

Mr. Gohil accused Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat of suspending labour rights. "This is yet another shocking but unsurprising blow to workers and labourers by BJP governments. If the PM has little concern for workers and labourers, then he should himself tell these States not to go ahead with amendments to the labour laws and not al-

low them in doing so. We would expect him to intervene today itself."

It was "shocking" to note that at a time when the country was dealing with an unprecedented pandemic, the government was taking this as an opportunity to deprive them of their rights. "This is shameful and once again highlights the true nature and priorities of this 'Suit-Boot ki Sarkar,'" he said.

Mr. Gohil argued that as these labour laws were in the Concurrent List, no such suspension could take place without the explicit approval of the Central government.

"We, therefore, ask the Modi government to deny any permission that strip workers of their basic rights and have the potential of diminishing their livelihood. Also trade unions must be consulted before such an adverse step is taken," he said.

## Trade unions may knock at ILO's door

'Changes in labour laws retrograde'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Trade unions call the latest move a second phase of anti-worker policies.

consider these moves as an inhuman crime and brutality on the working people, besides being gross violation of the Right to Freedom of Association [ILO Convention 87], Rights to Collective Bargaining [ILO Convention 98] and also the internationally accepted norm of eight hour working day - espoused by core conventions of ILO. The ILO Convention 144 in regard to tripartism has also been undermined by the government," it said.

"As the mass of the working people have been subjected to inhuman sufferings owing to loss of jobs, loss of wages, eviction from residences etc reducing them to hungry non-entities in the process of 45 days lockdown, the government of the day at the Centre has pounced upon those working people. Now the government at the Centre has taken the strategy of letting loose their pliant state governments to take such anti-worker and anti-people autocratic measures, many other state governments are expected to follow suit," the statement said.

The unions added that they were "seriously considering to lodge a complaint to the ILO on these misdeeds of the government for gross violation of labour standards" and that they would soon give a nationwide call to action.

The statement was signed by representatives of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, the All-India Trade Union Congress, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, the All-India United Trade Union Centre, the Trade Union Coordination Committee, the Self Employed Women's Association, the All-India Central Council of Trade Unions, the Labour Progressive Federation and the United Trade Union Congress.

BJP-ruled U.P., M.P. and Gujarat have come out with employer-friendly changes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



drawal of labour laws and ask them to discuss with trade unions every step taken in the labour sector".

"The State governments have not so far been able to convince the public how the laws are hurdles in economic activities... On the contrary,

for the labour, the COVID-19 situation has created an extraordinary situation of massive economic losses and job losses..." the BMS said, adding that the workers' issues needed urgent attention.

The trade body told its State units to ask the Chief Ministers for detailed road maps for economic activities and employment generation after the effect of COVID-19 ends, it said.

### Grave situation

Citing the recent incidents of gas leak in Visakhapatnam and deaths of migrant workers run over by a train in Aurangabad, the BMS said the situation in the labour sector

was "grave". It asked its State units to set up help desks for migrant workers to address immediate concerns. "The BMS demands the governments to make smooth arrangements for free train travel for the migrant workers who want to meet their family members in their home States. Those workers who want to resume work should be given free transport facilities to workplaces in the absence of public transport."

It asked the government to provide wage support in the green and orange zones where activities have started as payment of wages was an "immediate major issue," it said.

## 'Arrests made in Delhi riots one-sided'

In a letter to Kovind, eight parties urge govt. to focus on pandemic instead of activists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



In crosshairs: Anti-CAA protesters staging a protest at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, in this file photo. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

In a joint letter to President Ramnath Kovind, eight political parties have condemned the recent arrests of activists and students in connection with the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) movement at a time when the country is battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

The letter has been signed by Sitaram Yechury, CPI (M) general secretary, D. Raja, CPI general secretary, Dipanjan Bhattacharya, CPI(ML) general secretary, Debabrata Biswas, AIFB general secretary, Manoj Bhattacharya, RSP general secretary, Sharad Yadav, LJD general secretary

with this pandemic, the letter says.

The arrests of women activists in Delhi under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act were on "manufactured charges". On April 10, M.Phil student Sa-

foora Zargar was arrested for her association with anti-CAA protests.

Similarly, the letter points out that the victims in the violence perpetrated in Jawaharlal Nehru University are being targeted while there has not been a single arrest of those outsiders who unleashed this violence against students and teachers.

In case of the riots in northeast Delhi, the eight leaders accused the police of making one-sided arrests of young Muslim men and interrogating only members of the minority community, creating a sense of insecurity among them.

## SC extends protection to Arnab

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday extended the protection granted to Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami from coercive action by the Mumbai police, while noting that a balance should be struck between the right to free speech and the police's duty to conduct investigation without fear or favour.

"We must ensure somebody is not subject to harassment but we should not create an environment where anybody in particular is exempted from the normal course of proceedings," the Bench observed.

## Nepal summons Indian envoy over border row

Protests take place in Kathmandu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Vinay Mohan Kwatra

Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs regarding the Kalapani region located in the state of Uttarakhand. Nepal disputes India's claims and maintains that the region is part of its sovereign territory.

Speaking to *The Hindu* via telephone on Sunday, Mr. Gyawali had stated that Nepal will strengthen border posts and deploy more forces in the country's southern and western borders with India. Kathmandu also witnessed protests on Monday by the student organisation of the Nepali Congress, and the Rashtriya Seema Raksha Abhiyan.

## Right to religion: SC explains reference to larger Bench

It has the power to frame questions on religious freedom'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



A nine-judge Bench of the Supreme Court declared that superior courts enjoy untrammelled power to take up any cause to do complete justice. This declaration came in a judgment explaining why the Bench, three months ago, decided to go ahead and examine "larger issues" of religious freedom across multiple faiths in connection with the Sabarimala judgment of 2018, which allowed women of every age to enter and worship at the temple. Instead, it had framed "larger issues" concerning essential religious practices of various religions and clubbed other pending cases on subjects as varied as female genital mutilation among Dawoodi Bohras to entry of Parsi women who married inter-faith into the fire temple and Muslim women into mosques and referred them all to a larger Bench.

The judgment was officially delivered on February 10, but published on Monday. The nine-judge Bench led by then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi had not been able to hear the case as the nation went into a lockdown in March following the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Entry of women

On November 14 last year, a five-judge Bench led by then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, did not complete its assigned task of reviewing the

court's original Sabarimala judgment of 2018, which allowed women of every age to enter and worship at the temple. Instead, it had framed "larger issues" concerning essential religious practices of various religions and clubbed other pending cases on subjects as varied as female genital mutilation among Dawoodi Bohras to entry of Parsi women who married inter-faith into the fire temple and Muslim women into mosques and referred them all to a larger Bench.

But matters came to a

## Single Judge Benches to hear bail pleas

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday announced it will have Single Judge Benches sitting from May 13 to hear bail and anticipatory bail applications involving offences entailing imprisonment up to seven years as well as pleas to transfer cases from one court to another.

Normally the court sits in multiple Benches of combinations of two or three judges besides the Constitution Benches.

Besides other amendments, the competent authority has provided that certain categories of matters may be "heard and disposed of finally by a judge sitting singly nominated by the Chief Justice".

It said the Single Judge would also hear application for transfer of cases under Section 406 of the CrPC and also application of urgent nature for transfer of cases under Section 25 of the CPC.

# No need for testing after home isolation

Health Ministry issues revised guidelines for quarantine of very mild, pre-symptomatic virus cases

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI

The Health Ministry has issued revised guidelines for home isolation of very mild, pre-symptomatic COVID-19 cases. It states that the isolation of patients will end after 17 days of the onset of symptoms (or the date of sampling for pre-symptomatic cases) and if there is no fever for 10 days.

"There is no need for testing after the home isolation period is over," notes the Ministry in the revised guidelines. The caregiver and all close contacts of such cases should take hydroxychloroquine prophylaxis as per protocol and as prescribed by the treating medical officer.

These guidelines are in addition to those on the appropriate management of suspect/confirmed cases of



**Taking no chances:** Municipal workers disinfecting an area in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

COVID-19 issued by the Ministry on April 7.

As per the existing guidelines, during the containment phase, the patients should be clinically assigned as very mild/mild, moderate or severe and accordingly admitted to a COVID-19 care centre, a dedicated COVID-19

health centre or a dedicated COVID-19 hospital, respectively. However, very mild and pre-symptomatic patients having the requisite facility for self-isolation at home will have the option for home isolation.

The eligibility for home isolation includes that

person should be clinically assigned as a very mild or pre-symptomatic case by the treating medical officer and such cases should have the requisite facility at their residence for self-isolation and also for quarantining the family contacts.

"A caregiver should be available to provide care on a 24x7 basis. A communication link between the caregiver and hospital is a prerequisite for the entire duration of home isolation," notes the Ministry.

## Aarogya Setu app

It adds that the Aarogya Setu app should be downloaded on the mobile and it should remain active at all times (through Bluetooth and WiFi). As per protocol, a patient is required to agree to monitor his health and regularly inform his health status to

the District Surveillance Officer for further follow-up by teams.

The Ministry explains that patients/caregivers will seek medical attention if serious signs or symptoms develop. "These could include difficulty in breathing, persistent pain/pressure in the chest, mental confusion or inability to arouse, developing bluish discolorations of lips/face etc," it says.

Additionally, utensils and dishes used by the patient should be cleaned with soap/detergent and water wearing gloves.

Also patients should at all times use triple layer medical mask and discard it after eight hours of use or earlier if they become wet or visibly soiled. "Mask should be discarded only after disinfecting it with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite," it notes.

# Counsel migrants against walking home, says Centre

States asked to allow private clinics, nursing homes to open

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Monday wrote to all States and Union Territories to cooperate with the Railways in running more special trains to facilitate the movement of stranded migrants.



Rajiv Gauba

Secretary's direction. "...All State governments should ensure that migrant workers do not resort to walking on roads and on railway tracks.

In case they are found in such a condition, they should appropriately be counselled, taken to nearby shelters and provided with food, water etc., till such time they are facilitated to board the 'Shramik' special

trains or buses to their native places. As requested by Cabinet Secretary, all State governments should cooperate in the running of more 'Shramik' special trains," the letter said.

In the other letter, the States were asked to ensure the smooth movement of all health workers after some of them flagged the issue of restrictions on inter-State movement of medical professionals, paramedics, sanitation staff and ambulances.

At many places private clinics and nursing homes had not been allowed to open and the functioning of these facilities, which supplement the regular medical infrastructure, and relieve the burden on hospitals, was also crucial, it stated.

## 'Weekend effect' takes a toll on testing

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

On a day that saw India post its highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases at 4,213, the number of daily tests saw its sharpest decline by about 21,000.

On Monday, the Indian Council of Medical Research reported 64,651 tests on Sunday, according to data available on the website of the National Institute of Epidemiology, an ICMR institute.

The previous day it had reported 85,824 tests. Since May 4, the organisation has consistently reported over 80,000 tests a day.

This is the first time that the daily test data has declined by nearly a quarter from the previous day and by over 20,000.

An ICMR spokesperson attributed it to a weekend lull. "Even though there are nearly 400 laboratories working double shifts, sometimes more, it does happen that Saturdays and Sundays see a drop in collection [of samples]," L.K. Sharma, Scientist, ICMR, and media relations in charge, told *The Hindu*. "It will rise as the week progresses."

Exactly a week ago, on May 4, the ICMR reported having tested 60,783 samples, a sharp fall from the 70,087 the previous day. As of May 11, the ICMR had reportedly tested 1.6 million samples, making India the seventh largest tester in the world. However, as a fraction of population tested, India occupies the lowest position in the world. Every day, the ICMR reports the cumulative number of samples tested without a break up of how many tested positive and negative.

Last week, the ICMR slightly eased up on its testing criteria. As of May 8, those with 'mild' or moderate symptoms can — provide they confirm to certain clinical criteria — be discharged without a negative RT-PCR test. An RT-PCR test is the recommended test that detects the virus and used to diagnose a person as positive.

## New norms to increase testing at district level

### Population-based serosurvey issued

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has issued new guidelines to increase COVID-19 testing and sampling at the district level, stating that it has decided to conduct a population-based serosurvey in select districts across the country.

This surveillance will be in addition to the routine testing and the new trend-checking method.

Results of this sample pooling are for surveillance purposes. It should not be used for diagnosis of patients, it said. In addition to throat/nasal swabs, blood samples should be collected for detecting IgG antibodies for ELISA testing, it added.

consist of 10 health facilities from each district. Among the low-risk population, outpatient attendees (non-ILI patients) and pregnant women will be tested and among the high-risk population, healthcare workers will be surveyed. At least 100 samples per week and 400 per month from selected districts among the high-risk population will be collected.

There is a need to establish systematic surveillance for COVID-19 infection in districts and monitor the trend in the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 at the district level," the Ministry said.

The surveillance unit will

## Maharashtra tally crosses 23,000

Total cases mount to 23,401; 36 deaths take State's fatalities to 868

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

With another big spike of 1,230 new COVID-19 cases, Maharashtra reported its fourth consecutive 1,000-case surge on Monday. The tally crossed the 23,000 mark to reach 23,401 cases, while 36 deaths took the State's total death toll to 868.

As per the State Health Department, 20 of the fatalities were reported from Mumbai to take the city's death toll to 528 till date, while Pune district reported three fatalities to take its death toll to 158.

As many as five deaths were reported from Solapur to take the district's toll to 16. Two fatalities were reported from Thane, while one each



**En route:** Migrants arriving at the Lokmanya Tilak terminus in Mumbai to catch a train to Patna. ■ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

was reported from Amravati, Aurangabad, Nanded, Ratnagiri and Wardha. "About 75% of the deaths reported today had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma and heart dis-

### Dharavi breaches 900-mark in case tally

MUMBAI

Dharavi crossed the 900-mark after recording 57 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday. The tally in the area has risen to 916, while the death toll stands at 29. The latest cases were reported from Matunga Labour Camp, Dharavi Cross Road and PMGP Colony. Meanwhile, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has stopped issuing ward-wise data of cases citing technical reasons.

charged till date to 4,786, said Dr. Awate. Of the new cases, Mumbai city reported the bulk — 782 — as the city's cumulative tally crossed the 14,000-case mark to touch 14,521.

## 20 deaths, 347 fresh cases in Gujarat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD

The fatalities due to COVID-19 in Gujarat crossed 500 when 20 deaths occurred on Monday, increasing the toll to 513, while 347 infections were reported to bring the total number of cases to 8,542.

Of the 8,542 cases, 2,780 have been discharged from hospitals. On Monday, 235 patients were discharged. The State's recovery curve is rising sharply after the new guidelines issued by the Centre regarding the discharge of patients. As per the new guidelines, patients with mild symptoms can be discharged after 10 days treatment in hospitals without retesting.

**Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd.**  
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**E-TENDER for SUPPLY OF MOLASSES**

Offers invited from Bidders for supply of MOLASSES for Cattle Feed Plant Pattanakkad and Malampuzha. E-tender cum auction is hosted in [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in). Last date for submission of bid is 26.05.2020. For more details: [www.milma.com](http://www.milma.com) or [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in)

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Tender No.	Material Description	Date due
202123 000112	Bleached Hardwood Sulphate Pulp for Unit-I & Unit-II (Qty: 10500 ADMT±5%)	25.05.2020
202113 000443	Bleached Softwood Sulphate Pulp for Unit-I & Unit-II (Qty: 2500 ADMT±5%)	26.05.2020
202123 000113	Bleached Chemi Thermo Mechanical Pulp Hardwood 70 for Unit-II (Qty: 2500 ADMT±5%)	27.05.2020

Detailed Terms & conditions, Qty. Tender Fee, EMD, etc. are available in tender document at our websites: [www.tnpl.com/](http://www.tnpl.com/) / [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in)

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**Computer Based Examination for ICMR Junior Research Fellowship**

**NOTIFICATION – 2020**

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in collaboration with Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh will hold national level Computer Based Test (CBT) for award of Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) in Life science/Social science stream on **Sunday, July 12, 2020** at Bengaluru, Bhopal, Chhattisgarh, Hyderabad, Chennai, Delhi (NCR), Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Sri Nagar (J&K) and Varanasi.

**Information bulletin/brochure, online application form and other details will be available at both PGIMER website: <http://pgimer.edu.in> and ICMR New Delhi website: [www.icmr-nic.in](http://www.icmr-nic.in). Candidates may visit the websites [weblink](http://16.05.2020). The last date for filling of online application will be accepted, no other mode of submission of application will be accepted.**

**REGISTRAR  
PGIMER, CHANDIGARH & CO-ORDINATOR, ICMR-JRF-2020 EXAM**

**e-mail id : se\_sicbam@yahoo.com  
Superintending Engineer,  
Southern Irrigation Circle-I, Berhampur  
'e' Procurement Notice No.: SE, SIC - 02 / 2020-21**

1. Type of Work : Flood Control Works  
2. Total No. of Works : 06 (Six) Nos.  
3. Amount put to tender : Rs.146.00 to Rs.771.00 lakhs  
4. Period of Completion : from 09 Months to 14 (Fourteen) calendar months.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Bid Amount (Rs. in lakh)	Availability & Submission of Bid On-line
Superintending Engineer, Southern Irrigation Circle-I, Berhampur, Ganjam.	SE, SIC, (BEID) - 01 / 2020-21	146.00	From 16.05.2020, 10.00 A.M. to 05.06.2020, 5.00 P.M
	SE, SIC, (BEID) - 02 / 2020-21	330.04	
	SE, SIC, (BEID) - 03 / 2020-21	325.24	
	SE, SIC, (BEID) - 04 / 2020-21	351.11	
	SE, SIC, (BEID) - 05 / 2020-21	276.83	
	SE, SIC, (BNID) - 06 / 2020-21	770.38	

Date of opening of the Technical Bid : 06.06.2020 at 11.30 AM  
Further detail can be seen from the Govt. Website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)

**Superintending Engineer,  
Southern Irrigation Circle-I, Berhampur.**  
A-15: OPR-32061/11/0001/2021

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU  
PENNAYAR BASIN CIRCLE, TIRUVANNAMALAI-606 603.**

**FORM OF CONTRACT : LUMPSUM - ITEM RATE CONTRACT  
TENDER NOTICE NO: 02/ PBC / T.V.Malai / 2020 - 21 / F. 401 / JDO.1 / DATED: 11.05.2020**

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamilnadu, the Superintending Engineer, WRD., Pennayar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai 606 603, invites tender in Two cover system from eligible tenderers for the work of "Reclaiming Kazhuveli Tank for storage of fresh water and sea water intrusion control measures and Recharge Shaft Well / Shafts in Marakanam Block of Villupuram District (Value of work: Rs.12,982.00 Lakh including GST)" at his office upto 03.00 p.m. on 19.06.2020 in sealed cover. The tender will be opened at 03.30 p.m. at his chamber on the same day.

Other information as details of Work, Value, EMD, Cost of Tender schedule, Qualification details etc., will be available in the Government website [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in). Any Corrections or Modifications will be published on web site only.

**SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, WRD.,  
PENNAYAR BASIN CIRCLE, TIRUVANNAMALAI 606 603.**

DIPR/1774/TENDER/2020

**CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF**

# 'India part of race to develop a vaccine'

Principal Scientific Adviser says 30 'attempts' on in the country, which is participating in global efforts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

There are nearly 30 "attempts" from India to develop vaccines, K. VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Union government, said at an online web conference on Friday.

"There are over a 100 vaccines being developed worldwide and at least 30 attempts in India. These include efforts where India is participating in global attempts and partnerships among Indian academia and industry," he said during the webinar organised by the

Confederation for Indian Industry (CII) and the Technology Development Board of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

#### NIV initiative

On Saturday, the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) announced a collaboration with the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Ltd. to develop a potential vaccine based on a SARS-CoV-2 strain isolated at the ICMR-National Institute of Virology in Pune.

The Pune-based Serum Institute of India has tied up



K. VijayRaghavan

with Oxford University that is testing a vaccine using a weakened adenovirus (which causes common

cold). Early trials have already been conducted, and the Serum Institute has said it is ready to start an initial run of production in June, without waiting for clearer results of the vaccine's efficacy.

Bharat Biotech is also involved in two other vaccine development projects with different groups.

#### Test kits

At the webinar, Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, DST, said a major thrust was to develop antibody tests that would help with a graded exit out of the lockdown.

"Lots of professors and heads of institutes from the IITs [Indian Institutes of Technology] ask me how can we reopen colleges and hostels. Having effective testing kits will be useful in taking decisions such as these," he said.

On Saturday, the Health Ministry announced the development of an ELISA antibody test kit that would help in district-level sero-surveillance. This is a cruder but cheaper way of checking a sample of the population to determine exposure to the virus.

# With no transport, govt. staff find commuting a big hurdle

Those who do not own vehicles unable to attend office

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

Central government employees who do not own vehicles and are finding it difficult to reach office amid the lockdown also face the risk of being marked absent.

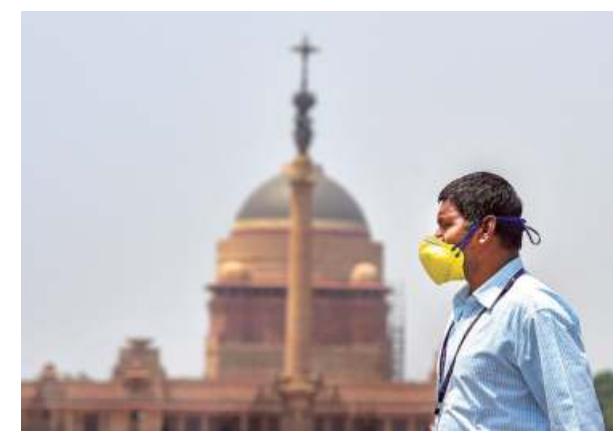
Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC), a Union government enterprise, sent an e-mail to employees on May 5 that "absence of staff/officer during roster period will be treated as absent from duty."

The IRCTC said that on the directions of the Union Home Ministry, all officials were expected to attend office as per roster except those who reside in containment zones.

"We are not asking 100% attendance, 33% of people sitting in common areas, without cabins... need to come. This is as per the Ministry's order. If you see this means a person needs to come for five to seven days in a month... We are not going to take any strict action against those who don't come. We will have a compiled list later... we will see then," a senior IRCTC official said.

An official said the Ministry guidelines in public domain needed to be followed.

**Considerable relaxations**  
On May 1, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry extended the country-wide lockdown till May 17 and allowed considerable relaxations in red, orange and green zones. Largely all forms of public transport remain suspended except buses and taxis allowed with



**Work rule:** The government has asked up to 33% of the junior staff to attend office. ■PTI

riders in green and orange zones subject to implementation by the local administration.

The order said all government offices shall function with senior officers of the level of Deputy Secretary and above at full strength, and the remaining staff attending up to 33% as per requirement.

It said "arrangements for transport facilities shall be ensured with social distancing wherever personal or public transport is not available."

"I do not have a personal vehicle, metro rail is not functioning and there are no buses or autos either. How am I supposed to reach office? If I am marked absent I also lose the day's salary," said a Central government employee who lives in Delhi.

**Paswan's intervention**  
Earlier, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan intervened and revoked an April 13 order that asked officials "unwilling to continue work" to intimate the estab-

lishment so that action may be taken to relieve them.

As per an April 23 order, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) had asked for staggered work hours for the government employees and "suitable roster" be drawn by the heads of department.

**Work from home**  
The order also added that those working from home should be available on phone and electronic communication at all times and should attend office in case of exigency.

"It is assumed that all government employees must be owning a car or a motorcycle. Either the office arranges transport for us. I have to request colleagues every day to drop me somewhere close to home," said another government staff.

Most Central government offices are located in Lutyens zone in Delhi. Only senior officials are entitled to personal vehicles provided by the government.

## 90-minute check-in, masks must for special trains

Passengers urged to bring their own food and water; dry, ready-to-eat food to be served on payment

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI

Passengers looking to travel by "special trains" from Tuesday will need to reach the stations 90 minutes before departure time, wear masks, and preferably bring their own food and linen and travel light, the guidelines issued on Monday said.

The Railways on Sunday announced plans to start 15 pairs of special trains from Tuesday as part of plans to restart the passenger service gradually.

The bookings for these trains from New Delhi to Dibrugarh, Agartala, Howrah, Patna, Bilaspur, Ranchi, Bhutan, Secunderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Madgaon, Mumbai Central, Ahmedabad and Jammu Tawi, were to start at 4 p.m. on Monday. However, this had to be pushed by two hours as the "data pertaining to special



**Opening up:** A worker sanitising a platform at the New Delhi railway station on Tuesday. ■R.V. MOORTHY

trains" was not updated on the IRCTC website. Till 7.30 p.m. on Monday, more than 18,000 tickets were booked, the Railways said.

These trains will have only air-conditioned classes – first AC, second AC and third AC – and tickets can be booked only on the IRCTC website or mobile application. General category passengers will not be able to book at the reservation

counter or through "agents". The "barest minimum PRS reservation counters" will be opened at some stations. Special categories, including HOR holders, sitting and former MPs and freedom fighters will be able to book at these counters.

The advance reservation period has been kept at a maximum of seven days and only confirmed e-tickets will be booked. Booking of RAC/

wait-listed ticket and on-board booking by ticket checking staff will not be permitted.

"Current booking, tatkal and premium tatkal booking shall not be permitted. No unreserved tickets (UTS) shall be permitted," the Railways said. "For movement of the passenger(s) as well as the driver of the vehicle transporting the passenger(s) and from the railway station will be allowed on the basis of the confirmed e-ticket."

The fare structure of the "special trains" will be equal to that of the Rajdhani trains, excluding catering charges.

While the provision for pre-paid meal booking and e-catering will be disabled, "dry, ready-to-eat food and bottled water will be provided on demand, inside the trains on payment basis... Passengers are encouraged to carry their own food and drinking water."

Online cancellation

will be permitted up to 24 hours before the scheduled departure with cancellation charge of 50% of the fare.

#### Compulsory screening

All passengers, the Railways said, will be compulsorily screened and only asymptomatic passengers allowed to enter and board trains. They would also need to wear masks and observe social distancing. No linens, blankets or curtains will be provided inside the train and passengers have been advised to carry their own linens.

"The temperature inside the coaches shall be suitably regulated for this purpose," the Railways said.

The Railways has advised passengers to download and use the Aarogya Setu application. Further, no stalls or booths on the platforms will be opened and no train side vending will be permitted.

## Shramik Specials to have 3 stops, increased capacity

Train will now carry 1,700 people against 1,200 at present

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Railways have added three stops in the destination State for Shramik Special trains being run for stranded migrant labourers to go home. The trains so far did not have stops.

Also, each Shramik Special will now carry 1,700 passengers against 1,200 at present, a Railway spokesperson said.

In a statement, the Railways said 468 Shramik Specials had been run till 10 a.m. on Monday. "As on 11th May 2020, a total of 468 'Shramik Special' trains have been operationalised from various States across the



**Long haul:** Migrants waiting to board a Shramik Special train to Ayodhya from Patiala. ■PTI

country, in which 363 trains had reached their destination and 105 trains were in transit," the statement said.

Of the 363 trains, 172 terminated in Uttar Pradesh, 100 in Bihar, 30 in Madhya

Pradesh, 25 in Odisha, 22 in Jharkhand, four in Rajasthan, three in Maharashtra, two each in Telangana and West Bengal and one each in Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.

## Aarogya Setu data protocol norms issued

Empowered Group Chairman says privacy protection is the primary consideration for the app

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Data of nearly 13,000 Aarogya Setu App users who have tested positive for COVID-19 have so far been transferred to the server for health intervention, says Ajay Sawhney, Chairman, Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management.

On Monday, he issued an order notifying the Aarogya Setu Data Access and Knowledge Sharing Protocol, 2020, that lays down the guidelines for collection, processing, storage and sharing of "anonymised" data.

Stating that Aarogya Setu had contributed immensely to the fight against COVID-19, Mr. Sawhney said privacy protection was the primary consideration while developing the app. It stores an

encrypted signature when the user comes in proximity with other registered devices. This interaction information is not pushed to the server unless the user tests positive.

#### Till 60 days

He said the encrypted data of all users, stored in their devices, got deleted automatically in 30 days. Data of the users who undergo tests were kept for 45 days and for those who had tested positive, it was stored in the server till 60 days from the day they recovered from the illness.

Based on the data of fewer than 13,000 users who tested positive, alerts were sent to 1.4 lakh users, he said. Nearly 9.8 crore people had so far downloaded the con-



tact-tracing app. The same service would soon be made available in feature phones.

Mr. Sawhney said upon sign-up, every app user was assigned a unique randomised anonymous device ID. All communications between two devices and between the device and the server were done using that ID.

No personal detail was used or shared with anyone. The location data was

used in case the person tested positive, only to map places the user visited in the past 14 days, for sanitisation and testing of people to prevent further spread.

#### Hot spots

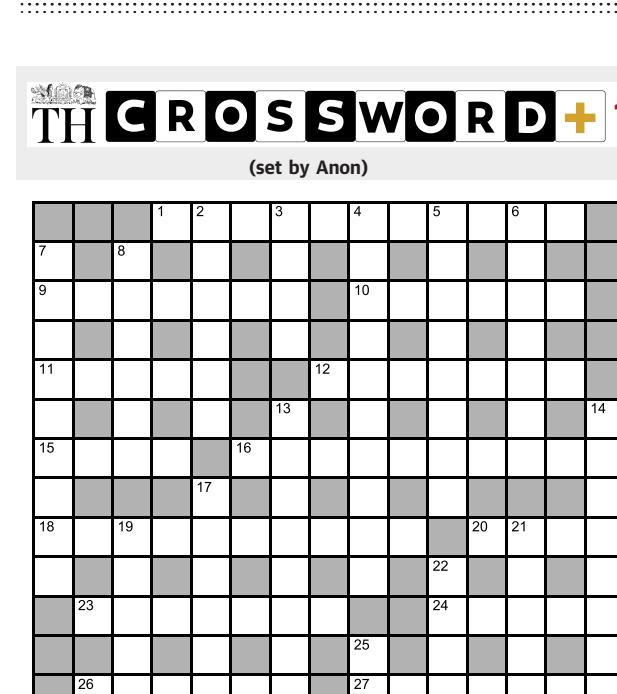
The information was combined with self-assessment data to identify the areas that were likely to turn into a hotspot. The details were shared with district and State authorities for timely preventive steps. The tool had helped in identification of 697 such potential hotspots, Mr. Sawhney said.

The protocol states that the contact and location data will, by default, remain on the device on which the app is installed. It may be uploaded to the server only for the purpose of formulat-

ing or implementing appropriate health responses.

The contact, location and self-assessment data, collected by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), will not be retained beyond the period necessary to satisfy the purpose for which it is obtained. The period, unless a specific recommendation to this effect is made, will not ordinarily extend beyond 180 days from the date on which it is collected, after which it will be permanently deleted, it says.

Demographic data of an individual, collected by the NIC, will be retained for as long as the Protocol remains in force or if the individual requests that it be deleted, for a maximum of 30 days from such request, whichever is earlier.



#### ACROSS

- 1 Labels brief, prepares law documents (5,6)
- 9 Salutation with regular bits of sausages? (7)
- 10 Removes Shakespearean king in Calais limits (6)
- 11 Sailor, purchased report from superior monk (5)
- 12 Anon returns from pub to proceed to barrier (7)

Are you a cryptic lover or a quick solver? Find out Now! @ <https://crossword.thehindu.com>

SCAN TO PLAY

## SUDOKU

8								6
2	3	6	8					5
1	5		8					
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9	1	6	8					
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8			2					

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12932

B	O	H	E	M</
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## Nominations for Gandhi Prize extended

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Culture on Monday extended the nomination period for the Gandhi Peace Prize from April 30 to June 15.

"For 2020, the last date for receiving the nominations was April 30. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the last date for receipt of nominations for the Gandhi Peace Prize 2020 has now been extended up to and including June 15," a Ministry statement said.

Nominations and recommendations in the format given on the Ministry's website can be emailed to joint secretary Nirupama Kotru at [jsmuseakad-culture@gov.in](mailto:jsmuseakad-culture@gov.in), it said.

## Another boat with migrants reaches Odisha from Chennai

42 workers have been sent to quarantine centres

STAFF REPORTER  
BERHAMPUR

Another fishing boat carrying 42 migrant workers from Chennai reached Odisha's Ganjam district on Monday night.

This is the fourth motor-boat carrying migrants from Chennai to Ganjam since April 25. To dodge the lockdown, the workers had opted for the dangerous journey without any navigation equipment.

Ironically, a special train carrying migrant workers from Tamil Nadu also reached Jagannathpur station in Ganjam on Monday.

The 42 migrants, who are from traditional fishing fami-

## Pandemic adds to the penury of tribal people in M.P.

Given the unsustainable living conditions in the hamlets in the State, people have no other option but to migrate again for work

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BARWANI

In February, Gulab Jamre's family made the biannual trip from Barwani in Madhya Pradesh to Junagadh in Gujarat, some 700 km away, hoping to clear some debt through work and also buy farm implements. In fact, they made enough money this time.

But then the lockdown was announced, scuttling their plan to return in March and draining all their earnings. Before they starved, the family of three decided to board a truck back home paying ₹6,000.

"I will go back after the rains. There is no work back home," said Mr. Jamre, 30, who worked in Junagadh as

an agricultural labourer along with his wife. A loan of ₹10,000, taken for medical expenses, is outstanding. And the half-acre land back in Sawariyapani village of Barwani can sustain the Barwali adivasi family for only two months.

**Widespread malaise**  
The Jamres are not alone. As thousands of adivasi migrant workers return empty-handed amid the extended lockdown, battling uncertainty and hunger, their villages have little to offer. Their land holdings are small, local agricultural wages are low, payments under the MGNREGA are sluggish and measures to create local employment have faltered – the very



For a way out: Villagers attending a meeting at Limbi in Madhya Pradesh's Barwani district on Sunday. ■ A.M. FARUQUI

predicaments that drove them to leave home for work in the first place.

In Gujarat, the workers make ₹300-400 a day, al-

most three times the wages in Barwani. "Our fathers had meagre plots of land. And now it is divided among four-five brothers," said another

migrant adivasi, 40-year-old Saka Ram.

As workers boarded the bus to Gujarat ahead of the harvest, each paying ₹700 as fare, they were accompanied by villagers who were stepping outside for the first time. "We get a commission of ₹50 for convincing a villager to come with us. Next year, they will convince others," said Mr. Ram.

Coupled with a faltering economy in the villages and the incentives of working for a decent wage, the number of migrants is swelling each year.

"Our forefathers depended mostly on forest produce," said Valsing Sastia, of Limbi village in the district. "But foliage has disappeared

Around 900 households have job cards, while the village's population is 4,000.

"If it doesn't rain enough this time, they will migrate now. If it does, they will migrate after three-four months," said Madhuri Krishnaswamy of the Jagriti Adivasi Dalit Sangathan. "These are marginal farmers who eke out bare subsistence from farming. It feeds them for only a few months."

Workers in the Nimir region of Barwani, Khandwa, Khargone and Burhanpur districts, were lately moving to work in industries, where conditions were worse, added Ms. Krishnaswamy. "The supply of labour is more than the demand in agriculture locally," she explained.

## Journalist questioned by Delhi police

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Monday questioned Mahender Singh Manral, a Delhi-based reporter with *The Indian Express* newspaper, for a recent report on the alleged doctoring of an audio clip attributed to Tablighi Jamaat chief Maulana Saad.

Luck favoured them in the first stage of the journey as three truckers gave them a lift for around 250 km. They have completed another 500 km on the cycles. "We hope to meet some more kind-hearted truckers for the remaining 1,000 km journey," said Mr. Lal.

Hunger and uncertainty are forcing people to take drastic steps. I have seen at least 25 groups either cycling or walking along NH-16 in the past one week," said Kalyan Anand, a volunteer, who has been arranging food and some transport for such groups.



A race across States: Migrant labourers, bound for Uttar Pradesh, crossing Bhubaneswar on Monday. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

cycles at ₹5,000 each, the four charted their route from Vijayawada to Visakhapatnam, on to Bhubaneswar, Jamshedpur and finally Gorakhpur. The *Hindu* met them as they took a break at Bhubaneswar on Monday.

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Rural households with Internet:  
**14.9%**  
(Numbers from Key Indicators of Household Social Consumption on Education in India report, based on the 2017-18 National Sample Survey)

**The digital divide**

Rural households with computer:  
**4.4%**  
Urban households with computer:  
**23.4%**

Urban households with Internet:  
**42%**

# Education during an emergency

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

Sruthi Sri Laxmi, a Class XII student in Coimbatore, last attended school on March 16, before it closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. She has been learning via WhatsApp ever since. The notes and assignments would be posted in her class group. She calls her teachers to clarify doubts. But she disfavours this set-up. "I prefer to be in a classroom," she says, "Now, I have to do everything on WhatsApp – submitting assignments, talking to friends, asking doubts... It is boring."

Sruthi is among the 1.26 billion children worldwide (estimated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) affected by school closures due to the pandemic. This is 72% of the world's student population. India comprises over 320 million of these learners. It is still uncertain when they can return to their schools or colleges.

Education, as a result, has largely moved online. The World Economic Forum reports a surge in the use of language apps, virtual tutoring, video conferencing tools, and online learning software in the last three months. India, too, is witnessing an e-learning boom. Classes on Zoom, WhatsApp and Skype are becoming the norm for students, parents and teachers. Yet, this abrupt transition to online hardly compensates for the absence of the classroom experience.

**Operational nightmare**

Neha Sharma's nine-year-old daughter, who attends a private school in Bengaluru, has four classes on Zoom from Monday to Friday – two core subjects (English, Science, etc) and two activi-

ties (dance and Taekwondo). Though Neha, who is an online tutor herself, and her daughter have adapted to e-learning, she says several parents she knows are not happy with this new set-up. "They complain of increased screen time for children, which is now inevitable," says Neha. "There are a few parents who aren't comfortable with technology themselves – they crib about it. So, their children, too, might look at it negatively. At times, classes get disturbed due to Internet issues."

In nuclear families, especially, parents might have to miss work to take care of their children. Some of them could be healthcare professionals, who are desperately needed to miti-

gate the pandemic. There is pressure on teachers, too. Valli Subbiah, the principal of KC High School in Chennai, says, "Every teacher has a unique teaching style. Over a period, they would have built a rapport with the children. This is done through observing their body language in class, their interaction with classmates – how it is different in small groups and large groups. Now, they just see them on computer screens and there could be a lot of disturbances."

Students and teachers also have to quickly adjust to new routines. "You can't have the same nine-to-five schedule," says Valli, "We had to reinvent our

model within a few weeks. And, thanks to the support of the students, parents and the school management, we could do it successfully." Classes were divided into groups of not more than seven children. Teachers regularly apprised the parents, individually, of their child's progress. The school even managed to conduct exams online. "Students were asked to take an honesty pledge. We felt it was a good way of making them responsible. Plus, even if they had a book with them, the questions required their own thinking to find the solution."

Conducting large-scale, high-stakes examinations, however, will be more complicated. Most board and entrance examinations have been either postponed or suspended, causing disruptions in the academic calendar. The students who are slated to appear for next year's board exams, for instance, have already lost instructional time.

**A call to arms**

Meanwhile, millions from Government schools and colleges, especially in rural areas, will not even have access to education due to the lockdown. According to the Key Indicators of Household Social Consumption on Education in India report, based on the 2017-18 Nation-



IMAGING: M ARIVARASU

al Sample Survey, less than 15% of rural Indian households have Internet (as opposed to 42% urban Indian households). A mere 13% of people surveyed (aged above five) in rural areas – just 8.5% of females – could use the Internet. The poorest households cannot afford a smartphone or a computer.

Governments, NGOs and other public-private organisations are trying to alleviate this serious deficiency.

Avanti, a social-educational enterprise set up in 2010, has launched a free learning app for Hindi medium Government school students in Classes IX to XII. The Sankalp app, which has been installed from the Google Play Store by 1,000-plus users, has recorded video content, solved examples and quizzes in the National Council of Educational Research and Training topics of Mathematics and Science. Avanti also conducts free live classes for IX to XII students on YouTube, TikTok, Facebook and other social media platforms.

Akshay Saxena, Avanti's co-founder, says his organisation has partnered with the State Governments of Haryana, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh to make its free content accessible to over one million stu-

dents. "Students from private schools and those from urban areas can access high-quality digital learning. But we aren't able to help those from the economically weaker parts in rural areas. There is no plan for them. The Government needs to subsidise phone data and phones for people in rural areas. There needs to be an aggressive push to do this as quickly as possible."

ThinkZone, an startup from Odisha, is using Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Short Message Service (SMS) and radio to help households with no Internet access. It has partnered with a local radio channel to broadcast activity-based learning modules for students aged three to 10. The activities are available in Odia, Hindi and English. "The response has been good. We found that people from the neighbouring states are consuming our content as well. In April, we reached over 5,000 families," says ThinkZone's founder Binayak Acharya.

The implications of school closures in the country are not just about education; they are manifold. An unprecedented social disaster can be avoided if more entities – Government and private – pitch into short-term and long-term futures of the children in this digital divide.



**Making the most** A student in Tamil Nadu engages in e-learning during the COVID-19 lockdown ■ RAGU

## Who let the dogs out?



What you need to know about the game-changing The Last Of Us Part II hacks and leaks

On April 26, pivotal details of one of 2020's most anticipated video games, *The Last Of Us Part II* by Naughty Dog LLC, was leaked way ahead of its June release. A user took to the ResetEra and rounded up information, including gameplay footage, story details for the game's plot (yes, even the ending), and more.

First game *The Last Of Us* (2013) is a horror-survival experience in an apocalyptic world overrun with fungi-based zombies and rebel groups. The story centres on Joel who is requested to get young girl Ellie, believed to be the human race's saviour, across the country safely. The PlayStation game has sold more than 17 million copies worldwide.

Sony Interactive Entertainment, which owns PlayStation where the game would be hosted, issued a statement that they identified the primary individuals responsible for the leak, adding they were "not affiliated with Naughty Dog or SIE" despite numerous rumours flying about cyberspace.

Hackers had reportedly accessed the developer's server through a unique key, and were then able to copy items off *The Last of Us II*'s development server, which apparently included the game footage that has since leaked. Naughty Dog has since fixed the vulnerability. However, the game's creative director and VP of Naughty Dog Neil Druckmann has explained that this will not affect the game's release; he recently announced that the game has gone Gold.

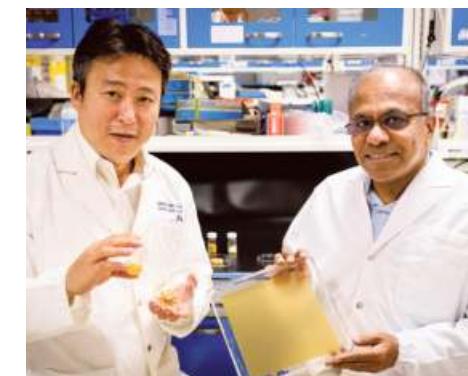
Please send your feedback to Wireless stories to [techknow@thehindu.co.in](mailto:techknow@thehindu.co.in)

CM YK



## Pollen, not plastic

Scientists are using technology to turn one of Nature's toughest ingredients into a biodegradable material that bends and unbends depending on humidity



**Sheeted success** The team at NTU, Singapore, examining the paper-like material derived from pollen grains ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America last month.

Professor Subra Suresh, NTU President, and one of the authors of the research paper, tells us a little more about the pollen-based paper-like material that could be a substitute for plastic. "Polylactic acid (PLA), which makes plastics, costs about US\$3 per kilogram, while pollen costs only \$0.01," he says.

### Where did the idea of pollen for material originate?

• The NTU team started this research to translate materials from Nature into materials of use to humans with minimal processing and change. When you think of pollen, the first thing that comes to mind are the allergies that these grains can cause. But the material properties of pollen, considered the diamond of the

plant kingdom because of its tough shell, are too good to be overlooked. We were inspired by the change in the pollen shell's material properties during biological mechanisms such as germination, and from there, found a way to transform these into pliable microgel particles.

When left to dry, these microgel particles form a paper-like material that bends and curls in response to changing levels of humidity.

### What industries can you see this being used in, besides robotics?

• Using strategies that are somewhat analogous to traditional soap-making, the soft microgel particles derived from pollen, could one day serve as a 'building block' for the design of new categories of eco-friendly materials.

The pollen-like paper is the first such example. The pollen-based microgel particles' biocompatibility – meaning it does not cause an immunological, allergic or toxic reaction when exposed to body tissues – also makes it potentially suitable for applications such as wound dressing, prosthetics, and implantable electronics. Combined with the power of 3D/4D printing, the pollen-based material could one day be turned into a range of different forms, including polymer gels and sponges, or even replace non-natural plastics.

### Why are bio-inspired sensors in focus today?

• Nature sees some of the most extraordinary sensing systems that surpass the capabilities, sensitivity and reliability of commercially available sensors. Understanding the physical, chemical, and bio-

logical processes behind natural sensing capabilities will help us replicate (mimic) or rebuild their systems and functions in human-made devices.

### Where does your research take you now?

• The next step is to develop various pollen-based paper actuators by implementing new structural designs or mixing-and-matching different pollen samples. For instance, one of our projects is to fabricate a programmable pollen actuator by integrating a patterned hydrophobic ink on the surface of a pollen paper through fast and facile laser printing. These patterned pollen papers show various conformations depending on patterns under controlled humidity. Our continuum models can successfully predict those structural conformation of pollen papers depending on patterned structures. By integrating materials science and additive manufacturing strategies or 3D printing technology, we could develop sustainable pollen-derived materials that are designed to address the latest industry needs.

### Do you see whole fields of sunflowers cultivated for this purpose – much like palm for palm oil?

• We already have enough farms or forests around the globe to collect abundant pollen or spores. For example, there are a great number of sunflower farms to produce sunflower seeds or oil. Pollen grains are critical delivery vehicles for transferring plant genetic material as part of plant reproduction. To ensure reproductive success, plants produce enormous quantities of pollen – most of which ends up as 'waste' – and is very cheap to obtain in large quantities. Therefore, our objective is to effectively collect and use these wasted pollen particles, reducing the need to specially cultivate plants just for this purpose. In addition, as mentioned above, aside from sunflowers, there are other plants that produce useful pollen.



# The empty ring

Reigning WWE Universal Champion Braun Strowman on special event 'Money in the Bank' and why he feels the need to perform for his fans despite the pandemic



Fight club Braun Strowman in action; (top) with the WWE Universal Championship ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

GAUTAM SUNDER

Sports-entertainment company WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) caused a furore earlier last month in the U.S. when it was deemed an essential business, and allowed to resume live production, despite the COVID-19 pandemic forcing several other major sports such as football, basketball, tennis, etc to be called off.

Despite some of the wrestling stars choosing not to participate in the events (that are now being recorded without a live audience), the telecasts have continued smoothly over the last month, with WWE stating that their broadcast of WrestleMania 2020 ranked among the most-watched digital programmes ever in

the history of the business.

After the big special 'Money In The Bank 2020' held yesterday, all focus is on WWE Universal Champion Braun Strowman who successfully defended his title against Bray Wyatt.

Talking to us over a Zoom call from the U.S., Strowman talks about headlining the big event, how WWE has successfully managed to navigate the pandemic using 'unbelievable' security measures, and looking forward to welcoming the new normal in sporting entertainment.

How does a pro-wrestler exercise and stay in shape for specials like 'Money in the Bank', amidst a pandemic like this?

• I've just kept training and being

ready for the fights by doing stuff at home, finding things to use around the house, along with a few weights. I live by a lake, so I go for jogs in the woods and even kayak sometimes, so that helps me stay fit. I also have a few close friends who have set up personal gyms at their houses where we ensure physical distancing and the utmost levels of hygiene are followed. It is tough to not be able to use public gyms or go out to train, so we have all had to think outside the box.

Unlike other sports athletes/performers, how and why did you decide to keep participating in WWE?

• A lot of it boils down to the fact that I'm single and live alone – while many others have young children and families with them – so I'm able to take certain risks. Having said that, the WWE has taken unbelievable precautions to ensure that all the safety guidelines are met, everything is sanitary, head counts are taken in and out of the building, tests are done and so on, in these crazy times.

As scary as it sounds, I think of it as my responsibility to perform and put on a show for fans globally. Everyone else – all other professional sporting and entertainment entities – gave up on their fans, and stopped their telecasts. But we have kept going, and gone above and beyond the curve when it comes to sports entertainment. Fans have something to watch and enjoy at home now, and I'm honoured to be able to do that.

Yes, we have got flak for this, but I can honestly say that I have never

not felt safe, while at work.

But how different is it to perform in a ring with nobody around you? So much of the excitement and thrill in a WWE event comes from vibing off the fans' cheers.

• I'll admit it is definitely harder to get fired up, and things hurt a whole lot more when you don't have support cheering you on (laughs). But I've been able to flip that switch, you know? When the music starts, the performer, the monster in me comes out – and irrespective of the fact that there's 100,000 people or nobody around me – I give it my all. I always keep in mind that there are millions of people watching at home, and I don't want to disappoint them.

Talk to us about facing Bray Wyatt at 'Money in The Bank': you guys go back a long way – how do you prepare to face someone like that?

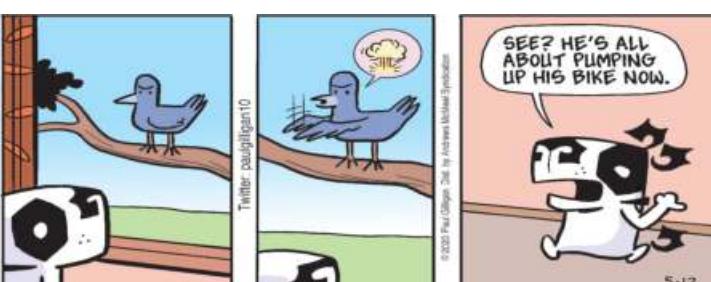
• It's always scary facing Wyatt, because I know him better than anyone else and he could say the same of me. We are very close, which makes it so easy for him to get inside my head as he has done many times earlier. He has multiple personalities and any of them could come out at any time; Bray's crazy! It's not just physical with him; there's a psychological war going on always.

You enjoy huge fandom in India; any plans to visit the country again after the pandemic is over?

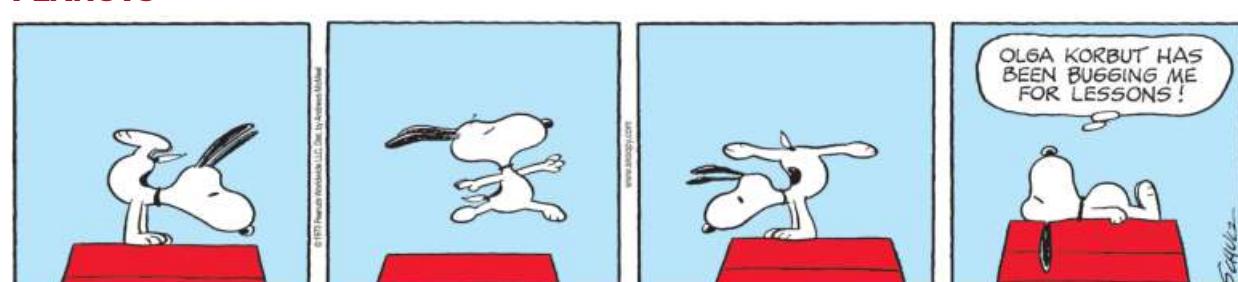
• I remember coming to cities like Hyderabad and Mumbai in 2018 and meeting Salman Khan; it was awesome! The fans in India are unbelievable and bring so much energy to the stadium, as they are really passionate about WWE. I really miss that energy, the crowds, the fire that lights up inside me when everyone screams their heads off – I can't wait for the pandemic to end and for the world to open up again.

Watch Braun Strowman in action every Saturday live on WWE SmackDown on Sony Ten 1 and Sony Ten 3 channels from 5.30 a.m. IST, and other WWE blockbusters daily at 8 p.m.

## POOCH CAFE



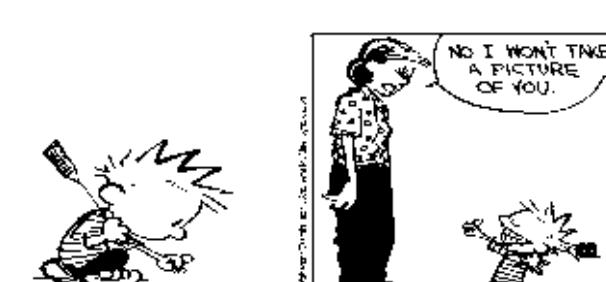
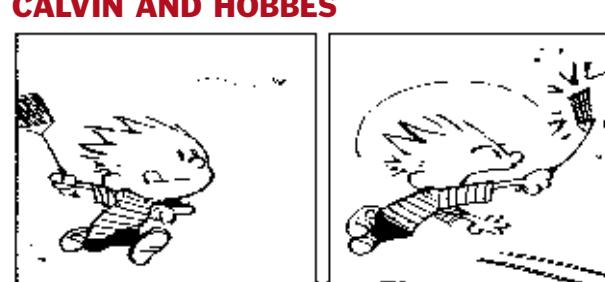
## PEANUTS



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



# A love letter to my bike

As they cannot hop on to their vehicles now, three intrepid bikers instead mull over what they miss about not being on the road and where they plan to go

K JESHI



Mahesh Prasanna

An ex-radio jockey, she has done the K2K ride (Kashmir to Kanyakumari), a 23-day bike ride criss-crossing 15 States covering a distance of 6,200 kilometres, and several rides in Kerala

### WHERE I WANT TO GO

Alleppey, Vagamon and Varkala in Kerala. Thick forest cover, misty hills, and the ride on winding roads along Idukki is any motorcyclist's dream. And, of course the backwaters. I want to be with nature and also find out how Kerala flattened the Coronavirus curve.

### WHAT I MISS

Consuming the city on my Bajaj Avenger Street gazing as I ride along the busy roads of Coimbatore, petting stray dogs along the way. That is a fail-proof stress-buster.

### MY NEW PASSION

I tried my hand at doodling, mandala and bottle art. We are anxious about 'what next'. This art calms you and gives you the strength to face the situation ahead.

### WHAT I MISS THE MOST

My business trips across India on my bikes, Royal Enfield Interceptor, CBR 250, and Classic 500. I have ridden up to 800 kilometres on work. I also long for the offloading, adventure and dirt biking experience on my bike that I built from scratch.

### MY NEW PASSION

I volunteered for 45 days and was part of the Emergency Food Response team during the lockdown. I took care of logistics and ensured that vehicles left on time to deliver food to the needy.

Malavika Ravisubramaniam

A German language trainer in the IT industry, she has been biking for six years. She has ridden to Ladakh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and has covered most parts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. She was also part of the Kashmir to Kanyakumari ride

### WHERE I WANT TO GO

By the time the lockdown is over, the monsoons will set in. I want to travel to Coorg and soak in the greenery. Or ride to Sakhlespur in Malnad. The slopes of the Western Ghats are covered with tea, coffee and spices, and when drenched in the monsoon rains, the experience will have a calming effect. Perfect, especially after going through the stress of lockdown.

### WHAT I MISS THE MOST

Being on my bike, Pulsar 220. Over weekends, I would head out to the outskirts. Now, I cannot take my bike out even to visit a store or watch a movie.

### MY NEW PASSION

I started writing my first fiction. The story idea that has been brewing in my head has a structure now. A rough outline of the story is in place.

# Europe emerges from curbs, but Asia fears a second wave

France, Spain, Germany reopen economies; Britain plots a path to normality

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

Swathes of Europe began the long process of reopening from coronavirus lockdowns on Monday, but the first new infections in weeks at China's ground zero offered a sobering reminder of the dangers of a second wave of cases.

The mixed fortunes illustrate the high-wire act governments face across the globe as they try to get economies moving while keeping in check a pandemic that has now killed more than 2,80,000 people and infected over four million.

## COVID-19

As France and Spain basked in a relaxation of restrictions and Britain plotted a path to normality, the Chinese city of Wuhan where the pandemic was born reported a second day of new cases after a month without a sign of the virus.

And neighbouring South Korea announced its highest number of infections for more than a month driven by a cluster in a Seoul nightlife district.

With millions out of work and economies shattered, governments are desperate to hit the accelerator, but most are choosing a gradual approach as fears about a resurgence of the virus linger.

**Declining death rates**  
In parts of Europe, officials have been emboldened by declining death rates, with France's toll dropping to 70 on Sunday – its lowest since early April – and Spain's daily fatalities falling below



**Back on track:** Passengers arriving at the Saint-Lazare Railway Station in Paris on Monday, on the first day since the country's lockdown measures in place for 55 days started to ease. ■ AFP

200. The French were able to walk outside without filling in a permit for the first time in nearly eight weeks on Monday, while teachers began returning to primary schools and some shops were set to reopen, causing a surge in the numbers using the Paris metro.

Many Spaniards revelled in being able to visit outdoor terraces and cafes again after months under one of the world's toughest lockdowns, although virus hotspots such as Madrid and Barcelona remain under wraps.

Shopping boulevards were once again populated with pedestrians in Greece, while other parts of Europe from the Netherlands to Switzerland and Croatia youngsters headed back to the classroom after weeks at home.

Germany too has set in motion the reopening of

### Conditional plan

In Britain, meanwhile, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said it was too soon for the country to lift its lockdown but he offered hope by unveiling a "conditional plan" to ease curbs in England during the months ahead.

Mr. Johnson said the restrictions had brought "a colossal cost to our way of life" but it would be "madness" to squander the nation's progress by moving too early.

With governments across the world trying to avoid a second wave, Asian nations

that have brought the virus to heel are being keenly watched. Much of China has begun to get back to a form of normality, and on Monday Shanghai Disneyland threw open its gates.

But enthusiasm in China was tempered by news on Sunday that one person had tested positive for the virus in Wuhan. There were five more cases on Monday.

Local health officials said the new infections were all from the same residential compound in the city and were mostly older people.

New Zealand, meanwhile, will phase out its lockdown over the next 10 days, although some restrictions will remain.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern warned "none of us can assume COVID is not with us", but said the country had only 90 active cases after a seven-week lockdown.

# Lower-skilled workers at greater risk of dying due to virus: study

Taxi drivers, chefs, retail assistants among the hardest-hit

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Lower skilled workers in parts of Britain appear at greater risk of dying from coronavirus than white collar employees, according to an analysis of official figures published on Monday.

The finding by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) came after Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday that construction and manufacturing workers could return to work but recommended office staff still work from home. The move is the first change to a seven-week-old nationwide lockdown, which the government hopes to introduce in phases. But Opposition parties, unions and business

leaders said there was a lack of clarity about the new recommendations – and voiced concerns about the safety of people returning to work. The devolved governments in Scotland and Wales have also said they would keep the lockdown in force.

**At least 32,000 deaths**  
Britain has been one of the worst-hit countries in the global pandemic, with the government officially recording nearly 32,000 deaths of people who had tested positive for COVID-19. The actual number of deaths from the virus is far higher, with the ONS finding that the 32,000 toll was reached in late April.

The ONS reviewed nearly

2,500 deaths in England and Wales linked to COVID-19 up to April 20 and discovered "men working in the lowest skilled occupations had the highest rate of death". The assessment indicated taxi drivers and chauffeurs, bus and coach drivers, chefs, and sales and retail assistants had died in greater proportions.

Men and women working in social care, which includes care workers and home carers, both had "significantly raised rates of death". But healthcare workers such as doctors and nurses were not found to have higher death rates. The ONS cautioned that the study was too small to draw any definite conclusions.

Gulf region has more than 100,000 cases

REUTERS  
DUBAI

The number of coronavirus cases in the six Gulf Arab states surpassed 100,000 on Monday, with 557 deaths, according to Reuters calculations based on official figures.

Saudi Arabia, the largest Gulf state with a population of about 30 million, has the highest count at more than 39,000 infections and 246 deaths.

Qatar, where health authorities last Thursday said the outbreak had entered its peak, has recorded a steady increase in cases to 23,623 while the number of deaths has held steady at 14.

The UAE total has so far reported 18,198 infections with 198 deaths.

# S. Korea scrambles to track nightclub cluster

More than 2,450 tested so far; over 3,000 people are yet to be tracked

REUTERS  
SEOUL

South Korean officials scrambled on Monday to contain a new COVID-19 outbreak, searching for thousands of people who may have been infected in a cluster of cases linked to nightclubs and bars in the capital Seoul.

South Korea has been lauded for its quick, effective action on its epidemic, significantly reducing the rate of new infections in recent weeks, but the resurgence of cases has raised worries about a second wave of infections.

**Highest in a month**  
Officials reported 35 new cases as of midnight on Sunday, the second consecutive

day of new cases of that magnitude and the highest numbers in more than a month. Twenty-nine of the new cases were linked to several Seoul nightclubs and bars, many of them catering to members of the lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community.

Authorities have tested more than 2,450 people who went to the night spots in the Itaewon neighbourhood, but were still trying to track about 3,000 more. Hundreds of other people who came into contact with club patrons have also been tested.

## 86 people test positive

"Our top priority is to minimise the spread of the infections," Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun told a meeting with government officials, calling on authorities to work with police. "We should quickly find and test them, and speed is key."

The Korean Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said 86 people had tested positive in connection with the Itaewon outbreak, which was made public on Friday, including people who had travelled to the capital and subsequently returned home.



**The crowds return:** Commuters at a subway station in Seoul, South Korea on Monday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

# China warns of retaliation over new U.S. visa rule

Both sides have imposed restrictions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

China on Monday threatened to retaliate against a U.S. rule that tightening visa restrictions on Chinese journalists, in an escalating row after Beijing expelled more than a dozen American reporters.

Citing China's treatment of the reporters, the U.S. Homeland Security Department issued new regulations on Friday limiting visas for Chinese journalists to a maximum 90-day stay, with the possibility to request an extension. Until now, visas for Chinese journalists lasted for the duration of their employment in the U.S.

"We express our strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to this wrong action by the U.S. side, which is an escalation of the politi-

cal crackdown on Chinese media," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian. "We ask the U.S. to correct its mistake immediately, otherwise China will have no other option but to take countermeasures," Mr. Zhao said.

**Diplomatic tensions**  
The tit-for-tat actions have added to searing diplomatic tensions.

Foreign journalists working in China receive one-year visas that must be renewed every year. But in an annual report, the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China said at least a dozen correspondents were issued press credentials valid for half a year or less. The report said Chinese authorities were "using visas as weapons against the foreign press like never before."

# 19 killed as Iranian warship is hit by missile in training accident

The ship stayed too close to a frigate's target in Gulf of Oman

REUTERS  
DUBAI

One Iranian warship accidentally struck another with a missile during an exercise, killing 19 sailors and wounding 15 others, Iran's Navy said on Monday.

The incident took place during training in the Gulf of Oman, a sensitive waterway that connects to the Strait of Hormuz through which about a fifth of the world's oil passes. Iran regularly conducts exercises in the area.

The frigate Jamaran fired at a training target released by a support ship, the *Konarak*. However, the support ship stayed too close to the target and was hit, state TV said, quoting the Navy.

**Heavily affected**  
Fars news agency quoted an unidentified military official as denying some Iranian media reports that the *Konarak* had sunk. The Navy state-

ment said investigations were undergoing regarding the cause of the incident, student news agency ISNA said. Video posted on Twitter purportedly of the *Konarak* showed a heavily damaged ship with black smoke rising from one side. Reuters could not independently confirm the authenticity of the video.

IRIB said the Dutch-made *Konarak* vessel, which was purchased before Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, had been renovated in 2018 and is equipped with four cruise missiles. The incident took place at a time of heightened tensions between Iran and the U.S. since 2018, when the U.S. withdrew from a nuclear deal between major powers and Iran, and Washington re-imposed sanctions on Tehran.

**Heavy affected**  
Fars news agency quoted an unidentified military official as denying some Iranian media reports that the *Konarak* had sunk. The Navy state-

# Putin announces end to non-working period

But mass events remain suspended

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin on Monday said Russia's non-working period imposed to contain the spread of the coronavirus will be lifted from Tuesday. "Starting from tomorrow, May 12, the national period of non-working days will be over for all sectors of the economy," he said, adding that Russia's regions will be able to keep in place anti-virus measures.

The announcement came after Russia registered a record number of daily cases on Monday, with more than 11,000 people testing positive over the last 24 hours.

Health officials have recorded a total of 2,21,344 infections and 2,009 deaths.

Mr. Putin said that Russia had used the self-isolation period to prepare its health-care system, increasing the

number of hospital beds and saving "many thousands of lives." Construction, agriculture and energy should be restarted first, he added. "The epidemic and associated restrictions have had a strong impact on the economy and hurt millions of our citizens," he said. As people begin going back to work, mass events are still suspended and "strict sanitation demands" must be observed, Mr. Putin said.

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# With oil price crash and COVID-19, Saudi Arabia confronts double crisis

The kingdom has announced harsh austerity measures in response to economic woes; further, it has also stepped down its Yemen intervention

STANLY JOHNY

**S**

The kingdom, 87% of whose budget revenues come from the petroleum sector, has already announced some "painful" economic decisions and signalled a rare readiness to scale back its regional operations to lift itself out of the "worst crisis in decades".

**Increase in VAT**  
On Monday, the official Saudi Press Agency reported that the kingdom decided to take

a slew of austerity measures, including raising value-added tax (VAT) and cutting a cost of living allowance for government employees. The allowance, which was introduced in 2018 to help workers tide over the effects of austerity measures taken during the last oil crash, will be suspended as of June 1, and the VAT, which was also rolled out in 2018, will be increased to 15% from 5% as of July 1, SPA reported, citing a statement of the Ministry of Finance.

Last month, the kingdom announced a unilateral ceasefire in Yemen after five years of war in the clearest signal that Riyadh seeks to depart from its expensive military intervention.

When Saudi officials announced the kingdom's budget in December 2019, crude oil prices were over \$60 a barrel. To balance its budget

virus continued to spread across the country. As of May 11 evening, the kingdom has reported over 39,000 infections and 246 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Centre. On top of this, it has also aggravated the economic woes. The IMF now forecasts the country's GDP will fall 2.3% this year.

"The situation in Saudi Arabia has been deteriorating well before the pandemic. Economic pressures were already building up on the kingdom. Coupled with this, we have the war against Yemen. On top of this, while the Crown Prince has projected himself as the fountainhead of liberalism, in actual fact, he's emerged as a very authoritarian and harsh ruler, who can be extremely impulsive in decision making," said Talmiz Ahmad, India's former Ambassador to

Saudi Arabia, adding that the oil crash and the pandemic made the situation worse. "The recent oil problem is almost entirely self-inflicted. Instead of engaging with Russia to discuss how they could consider new policies with regard to the OPEC-plus partnership, the Crown Prince has very impulsively rejected Russia and started a completely unwinning oil war, which has wounded not just Saudi Arabia, but also a very large number of countries in the region who are dependent on their oil revenues," Mr. Ahmad told *The Hindu*.

**A new normal**  
Saudi officials agree that they are facing a history-changing crisis. "I do not think the world or the Kingdom will go back to the way things were before coronavirus," Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan said earlier this month.

"Oil prices are unlikely to swing back to the pre-crisis levels any time soon as the world economy remains in doldrums. So the kingdom has to look for fresh policy decisions," said Mr. Ahmad.

He added that his prognosis of the condition of the kingdom is "negative". But Prince Mohammed could undertake a slew of radical domestic and foreign policy measures to reboot the country. "Domestically, the kingdom has to cut expenditure, train its youth for new jobs, build a more accountable and responsive political order which the Crown Prince has promised and there has to be a healing touch in the royal family... The royal family can legitimately rule the nation only if it's a united family," he said. "With regard to the foreign policy, the first step should be the engagement with Iran."



**Oil glut:** A man filling oil at a petrol station in Riyadh. ■ AFP

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

this year, Saudi Arabia requires oil prices to be around \$76 a barrel, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). But price of Brent crude, the international benchmark, crashed by 50% in March. Brent crude price was at \$26.31 on May 11 afternoon in London.

Amid the deteriorating sit-

uation, the Saudi government dipped its hands into the foreign reserves for meeting expenditures. The kingdom saw a record \$24 billion drop monthly drop in its reserves in March to \$479 million. It is also raising billions in debt from the bond market. The pandemic has aggravated the crisis with most economic activities suspended under a curfew.

Despite these actions, the

virus continued to spread across the country. As of May 11 evening, the kingdom has reported over 39,000 infections and 246 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Centre.

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The IMF now forecasts the country's GDP will fall 2.3% this year.

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**MARKET WATCH**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	31,561	-0.26
US Dollar	75.73	-0.25
Brent oil	30.78	3.01

**NIFTY 50**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	289.70	4.65
Asian Paints	1569.60	-8.80
Axisc Bank	379.55	-2.50
Bajaj Auto	2566.30	147.25
Bajaj Finserv	4558.00	-43.00
Bajaj Finance	2015.05	-9.10
Bharti Airtel	536.20	6.15
BPLC	314.80	-9.95
Britannia Ind	3053.95	59.30
Cipla	586.05	-5.85
Coal India	128.45	-0.55
Dr Reddys Lab	3862.00	-122.00
Eicher Motors	14288.95	430.10
GAIL (India)	92.05	0.70
Graim Ind	504.45	18.15
HCL Tech.	527.55	9.15
HDPC	1658.45	-31.25
HDPC Bank	915.80	-13.25
Hero MotoCorp	2088.65	126.05
Hindalco	119.75	2.65
Hind Unilever	2048.00	-41.45
ICICI Bank	320.15	-17.55
IndusBank	433.40	-6.95
Bharti Infralet	183.60	9.35
Infosys	682.90	8.70
Indian OilCorporation	75.35	1.00
ITC	158.45	0.20
JSW Steel	174.55	5.90
Kotak Bank	1188.45	-29.00
L&T	821.60	5.65
M&M	390.10	3.40
Maruti Suzuki	4937.80	283.65
Nestle India Ltd.	17562.10	-240.85
NTPC	86.65	-0.35
ONGC	77.05	1.05
PowerGrid Corp	158.80	-0.20
Reliance Ind	1576.80	15.00
State Bank.	165.45	-1.20
Shree Cement	18914.90	182.15
Sun Pharma	463.85	-5.15
Tata Motors	86.10	5.05
Tata Steel	276.20	3.30
TCS	1935.30	41.90
Tech Mahindra	530.20	-6.00
Titan	829.60	-3.25
UltraTech Cement	3360.75	54.95
UPL	368.10	3.50
Vedanta	79.60	2.20
Wipro	184.70	0.70
Zee Entertainment	155.40	4.75

**EXCHANGE RATES**

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.54	75.86
Euro	81.73	82.08
British Pound	93.03	93.43
Japanese Yen (100)	70.42	70.72
Chinese Yuan	10.65	10.70
Swiss Franc	77.67	78.04
Singapore Dollar	53.31	53.54
Canadian Dollar	54.04	54.27
Malaysian Ringgit	17.42	17.51
Australian Dollar	49.02	49.23

Source: Indian Bank

**TRAJ advisory on online platform tariff**

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Monday issued an advisory asking the public to exercise caution and check charges for online conferencing platforms beforehand to avoid 'bill shocks'. "It has been brought to the notice of TRAI that a few consumers have experienced bill shocks when they joined online conferencing platforms inadvertently dialing international numbers," it said.

**IN BRIEF**



**Tata Power arm inks ₹1,200-cr. defence deal**

MUMBAI Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division (Tata Power SED) has signed a ₹1,200-crore contract with the Ministry of Defence for modernising infrastructure of 37 airfields of Indian Air Force, Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard. Tata Power SED is a division of Tata Power.

**Nissan starts BS-VI vehicle dispatches**

CHENNAI Nissan India started dispatching BS-VI vehicles from its alliance facility in Chennai to its dealerships in green and orange zones across the country. Besides, Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd (NMIPL), the marketing and sales organisation, opened its office in Gurugram as per local government guidelines.

**Amazon starts store for COVID-19 supplies**

MUMBAI Amazon Business has introduced a 'COVID-19 Supplies Store' to provide easy access to related supplies. Frontline organisations such as those in healthcare and the government can purchase COVID-19 related essentials in bulk from the store to effectively fight the virus, the company said.

# Mandis linked to e-platform see 65% rise in count post-lockdown

On Monday, 177 more joined the platform, taking the total to 962 nationwide

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

COVID-19 has given a boost to e-NAM, the national digital platform for agricultural trade, with the number of connected mandis, or wholesale markets, up 65% since the lockdown, according to Agriculture Ministry data.

On Monday, 177 more mandis joined the platform, taking the total to 962 nationwide, giving farmers and traders another option at a time when transport disruptions and social distancing requirements have made physical mandi trade more difficult.

The National Agricultural Market (e-NAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the almost 7,000 existing mandis run by Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities, with a promise to promote real-time price discovery based on actual supply and demand.

It was launched in April



The user base comprises 1.66 crore farmers, 1.3 lakh traders and 71,911 commission agents registered on the platform. • PTI

2016 but progress was slow, especially as many States did not amend their APMC Acts; most farmers were not part of the cooperatives that would help aggregate the bulk quantity of produce needed to interest online buyers and most mandis did not possess the infrastructure to make the most of the platform.

By January 2019, when the first inter-State trade took place, there were only 585 mandis connected to the platform, although the Agriculture Ministry promised to integrate 415 more mandis

by March 2020. At the end of March 2020, however, the number of markets connected to e-NAM still remained stagnant at 585, even as the nation went into lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic and hundreds of mandis shut their physical gates.

The Centre recognised the potential of e-NAM in overcoming some of the hurdles of the lockdown, and introduced some important new features in April: a trading module allowing Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) to trade produce directly from their collection

centres without bringing it to mandis, a warehouse-based trading module and a logistics module offering users trackable transport facilities through aggregators with access to 11 lakh trucks.

On May 1, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar integrated 200 new mandis with the platform.

On May 11, another 177 mandis were integrated. As of May 9, 150 commodities with produce collectively worth more than ₹1 lakh crore had been traded on the e-NAM platform, according to an official statement, although 236 mandis have actually participated in inter-mandi trade across 12 States.

The user base remains at a nascent stage, with 1.66 crore farmers, 1.3 lakh traders and 71,911 commission agents registered on the platform. There are more than 13 crore farmers in India. However, an encouraging sign is the more than 1,000 FPOs which are registered on the platform, providing access to their members.

# Supreme Court dismisses appeal on Harsh Lodha

Group can now give effect to resolutions passed at 3 AGMs

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

KOLKATA

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed three special leave petitions and upheld last week's division bench verdict of the Calcutta High Court, clearing the decks for three companies headed by Harsh Vardhan Lodha – Birla Corporation Ltd., Vindhya Telelinks Ltd. and Birla Cable Ltd. – to declare and give effect to resolutions passed at their annual general meetings last year.

"This verdict marks a major victory – the second one in a week – in the sustained efforts of these companies to thwart attempts to disrupt their functioning, typically made ahead of their annual general meetings," said Debanjan Mandal, legal counsel to Mr. Lodha and partner at solicitor firm, Fox & Mandal.

The Birlas, through the defendants in the suit for



held up the payment of dividend to shareholders of Birla Corporation, a Birla Group release noted.

**Determining jurisdiction**  
A two-judge division bench of the Calcutta High Court had on May 4 ruled that the probate court hearing the dispute over Priyamvada Devi Birla's will should have first determined if it had the jurisdiction to impose restrictions on the operations of these companies, and set aside the injunctions passed by the High Court's single judge.

On Monday, Supreme Court judges D.Y. Chandrachud and M.R. Shah said there was no reason to interfere with the division bench's verdict, while reiterating that the single-judge probate court must determine if it has jurisdiction in the first place.

The resolutions that were disputed included the reappointment of Mr. Lodha as a director in Vindhya Telelinks and Birla Cable, and even

# No increase in lease rental for SEZs

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

CHENNAI

The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry has directed that there shall be no increase in lease rentals for Special Economic Zone units for FY2020-21, on account of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Payment of lease rent for the first quarter is to be deferred up to July 31, 2020 for all SEZ units and the deferment may not invite any interest thereof, it said in a circular.

The Development Commissioners of SEZs are requested to advise developers of State government and private SEZs to consider similar relief measures in their zones, it added.

According to data presented in Parliament in July 2019, there are a total of 232 operational SEZ units across the country, with Tamil Nadu topping with 40 units.

# Bond yields rise as govt. expands borrowing plan

Intraday yield up 27 bps in sharpest surge since Feb. 2017

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

MUMBAI

The yield on the most-traded 10-year government bond spiked 20 bps (basis points) on Monday after the government announced it would increase its market borrowings by more than ₹4 lakh crore for FY21, post market hours on Friday.

The yield stood at 6.17% at the close of trading hours on Monday, up 20 bps from the previous close. Intraday, yield rose 27 bps, the sharpest intraday surge since February 2017.

The estimated gross market borrowing in the financial year 2020-21 will be ₹2 lakh crore in the place of ₹8.80 lakh crore as per BE (budgeted estimates) for 2020-21. The above revision in borrowings has been necessitated on account of the COVID-19 pandemic," the Finance Ministry said in a statement on Friday.

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**Deep impact:** The nationwide lockdown has resulted in lower tax revenue for the government. • M.A. SRIRAM

the first half of the current financial year against the ₹4.88 lakh crore budgeted initially.

The nationwide economic lockdown imposed by the government to curb the spread of the pandemic had resulted in a lower tax revenue for the government. Dealers said till such time the Reserve Bank of India announces open market operations (OMO) to purchase government securities to address the supply glut, there would be pressure on yields.

"Markets would closely watch the RBI's stance on fis-

# Non-essentials demand to rise, says Walmart

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

BENGALURU

Walmart India on Monday reported a 'steady' of consumption across several essential categories in the last few weeks.

The e-tailer, which operates 28 Best Price stores across nine States, now expects some pent-up demand for non-essentials.

As per Anuj Singh, chief merchandising officer, Best Price, Walmart India, a couple of weeks into the lockdown, supply pipelines had depleted across consumption categories while the demand from kitanas for items such as tea and biscuits continued to be strong.

"We see a steady of consumption level across these categories. Now with non-essential categories also opening up, we expect some pent-up demand in small kitchen and home appliances," he said.

# IPPs seek liquidity window to clear dues

Want special line of credit by Power Finance Corporation to discoms

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

## IN BRIEF



## Warne slams obsession with 'Baggy Green' cap

MELBOURNE  
Former Australia cricketer Shane Warne hit out at the country's obsession with the 'Baggy Green' cap and according to him, the iconic cap evokes 'verbal diarrhoea' from its followers. "I always believed that you didn't have to wear the Baggy Green cap to say how much you loved playing cricket for Australia," Warne told Triple M radio station as per au.sports.yahoo.com. IANS



## Tennis courts and golf courses to reopen in England

LONDON  
The British government has said tennis courts and golf courses in England may reopen on Wednesday, although people may play only with members of their own household. Gyms and swimming pools will remain closed, although swimming in the sea or lakes will be allowed. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday to lay out the outlines of a road map for easing the coronavirus pandemic restrictions while maintaining forms of social distancing. AP

## Hayden enters world of gaming

CHENNAI  
Taking a leap into the world of gaming, former Australian batsman Matthew Hayden will be lending his voice and expertise to the online cricket world as a commentator on World Cricket Championship. Hayden will offer English commentary. He will join Aakash Chopra, who recently came on board as a Hindi commentator to cater to 110 million players. Hayden will bring his well-rounded cricket commentary experience that will address all aspects of the real game on the field.

## Recognition still eludes rowing and archery

Equestrian stays a priority sport despite its federation not bothering to amend its constitution

## GENERAL

UTHRA GANESAN  
NEW DELHI

Archery and rowing continue to remain de-recognised by the sports ministry despite holding much-delayed elections earlier this year, while the equestrian federation continues to enjoy recognition despite not adhering to the Sports Code.

Also not recognised by the ministry are golf, para-sports and School Games, the first for not following the Code and the other two for mismanagement. Carrom is back as a recognised federation after being kept out last year.

The Archery Association of India held its long-delayed elections in January 2020 and is headed by union minister Arjun Munda.

The elections paved the way for World Archery to revoke its suspension of AAI and also ended years of ad-hocism, legal struggles and electoral tussles. The ministry reportedly is waiting for formal clearance from the Delhi High Court.

The Rowing Federation of India also finds itself out of favour despite holding elec-



In troubled waters: The Rowing Federation of India finds itself out of favour in spite of holding elections in February this year.

\* FILE PHOTO: G. RAMAKRISHNA

tions in February this year, in the presence of an Indian Olympic Association observer, after complying with the ministry and IOA's directives to amend its constitution.

**Gymnastics still excluded**

Another federation that seemingly managed to have put its house together finally, and was hoping to get government recognition, was gymnastics but that has not happened.

In its case, however, the government has at least mentioned reasons for not granting recognition – questioning the elections of S. Shantikumar Singh as secretary and Parmeshwar Prajapat as executive member – citing the National Sports Development Code 2011.

However, while the elections were held in November 2019, the objections were raised only towards the end of April 2020.

Equestrian, meanwhile, continues to be a priority sport for the ministry despite not bothering to amend its constitution in line with the NSDC even after repeated extensions and reminders from both the IOA and the government.

## Interesting scenario

Interestingly, the annual recognition is normally for the calendar year. However, while the ministry delayed

the process by almost half a year, it has also specified the recognition only till September 2020.

Given that most sports would only have restarted activities around that time and the entire domestic and international calendar likely to be packed post-September, one wonders how the latest recognition list would help NSFs that largely depend on government funding.

## I've retired from active sports: Deepa Malik

Says she submitted a letter to this effect in September last year

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Deepa Malik, the first Indian woman to claim a medal in the Paralympic Games, has retired from active sports, a decision she took before becoming the Paralympic Committee of India president earlier this year but revealed only on Monday.

The 49-year-old, who won a silver in shot put F53 category in the 2016 Rio Paralympics, was elected PCI president in the elections held in February under the directives of Delhi High Court.

PCI has been denied recognition by the sports

ministry.

"Who said I announced my retirement today? I have already retired in September last year before filing my nomination paper though I did not make a public announcement," Malik said.

"I submitted my letter of retirement to the PCI in September last year when the election process began. Only after that I was able to stand for PCI president's post and I won the election and became president," she said.

Malik was bestowed the country's highest sporting honour – the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna – last year.



Making her point: Deepa Malik said she became the PCI president only after retiring. \* FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## Karman shines bright in Purav's show

Ankita gives Sania 7/10 for her role in helping India qualify in the Fed Cup

## TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

Karman Kaur Thandi could not play the Fed Cup qualification to the World Group play-off in Dubai due to injury, but she was at her brightest in emerging the champion in the Instagram show 'Chai with Raja'.

## Unique chance

It was a unique opportunity for the entire FedCup team, including Sania Mirza, to put Indian women's tennis in the limelight. Top doubles star Purav Raja hosted the six players in a 50-minute show.

The general questions, labelled Raja's Wisdom, caught the girls on the wrong foot, but they were sporting and composed.

Sania was at ease and rea-

dily offered to donate the proceedings to the Chief Minister's Fund if she won the FedCup Heart Award.

Sania said that she would seek about 1-1/2 weeks preparation in Latvia for the Fed Cup play-off tie, and said that it would be a 50-50 chance for both the teams.

Sania was the judge but left it to Purav by naming Sowjanya Bavasetti and Karman. Since Karman had answered most of the 15 questions, Purav had no hesitation in declaring her the winner.

## Quite smart

Though she could not remember the other top-200 ranked players of the country, apart from Sania and Ankita, Karman, herself a member of that elite league, was quite smart otherwise.



Purav Raja and Karman Kaur Thandi. \* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

shaping her career in the professional circuit.

Sowjanya spoke about the tricky experience of competing in Nigeria immediately after winning the national women's title last year.

Rutuja Bhosale said that it depended on the person to capitalise on college tennis in the US.

## Quite nervous

She said she was quite nervous during the Fed Cup, despite having been part of the team since 2011.

Rutuja hoped to be in the top-200 by 2022, a sentiment echoed by Riya Bhatia also. Ankita Raina gave seven out of 10 for Sania's role in helping India qualify in the Fed Cup, even though she herself had won the singles and doubles matches to steer the team.

## Sania wins Fed Cup Heart Award

Tennis ace to donate prize money to CM's relief fund

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Tennis star Sania Mirza on Monday became the first Indian to win the Fed Cup Heart Award for her successful return to the court post-motherhood.

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.

Fed Cup Heart Award as the first Indian.

"I dedicate this award to the entire country and to all my fans and thank everyone for voting for me."

"I hope to bring more laurels to the country in the future," she said in a statement.



Sania Mirza...dedicated to her craft. \* TWITTER.COM/FEDCUP

The award is an International Tennis Federation initiative to recognise those Fed Cup players who represent their countries with distinction, show exceptional courage on court and demonstrate outstanding commitment to the ideals of the competition.

## Aware primed to make the most of the situation

Postponement of Olympics has come as a godsend for the champion wrestler

## Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA

World championships medal-winning wrestler Rahul Aware feels the postponement of the Olympics has come as a godsend him.

Aware, who claimed a gold medal in 57kg in the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and a bronze medal in 61kg in the World championships in Nur-Sultan last year, saw the possibility of him returning to 57kg to stake claim for the Olympic quota place.

"The World championships (where Ravi Dahiya bagged the quota place in

57kg) happened in September last year. Now, there is a huge gap between the qualifying event and the Olympics. There is no guarantee that the wrestler who got India the slot would be in good form in future."

"I think the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) will go for selection trials. In such a scenario, I will give my 100%," Aware, also a two-time Asian championships medallist, told *The Hindu*.

Aware, who is undergoing training at the Maharashtra Police Academy in Nasik after being recruited as a Deputy Superintendent of Poli-

ce, is keeping fit during the lockdown.

Aware fondly remembered his mother (Sharda), who stays in his village in Patoda, on Mother's Day. "My mother never used to hide my mistakes from my father (Balasaheb) who was top wrestler and a strict coach. She used to report if I went to play cricket or did not have proper diet. Because of their guidance, I could achieve something."

"Now, my colleagues here in the academy are like my family members. They respect me for what I have achieved," said Aware.



Rahul Aware. \* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI

The inaugural Sukoon Resorts Indian Chess.com League (ICL), scheduled from May 15 to 17, brings together several young Grandmasters knocking on the doors of the National team.

The 10-team online round-robin competition has attracted 25 GMs. As per ICL regulations, each team includes a woman player and an under-16 talent.

The time-control will be 10 minutes plus two-second increment per move. Two leading teams from the league stage will clash in the superfinal.

From the prize-fund of ₹1 lakh, ₹35,000 will go to the

winner and ₹20,000 to the runner-up.

**The teams:** **Chess Gurukul (average rating 2537):** Aravindh Chithambaram, R. Pragnanandhaa, M. Karthikeyan, Aditya Mittal, R. Vaishali and R.B. Ramesh (non-playing Capt.).

**Superkids (2514):** N. Srinath (Capt.), Nihal Sarin, Arjun Ergasi, Raunak Sadhwani and Divya Deshmukh.

**Desi Boys (2498):** Abhijeet Gupta, Vaibhav Suri, Debadish Das, Tania Sachdev, Raahil Mullick and Vishal Sareen (non-playing Capt.).

**Five Fighters (2495):** Vishnu Prasanna (Capt.), Surya Shekhar Ganguly, D. Gukesh, Luke Mendonca and Soumya Swaminathan.

**United India (2742):** Mohammad Nubaish Shaikh (Capt.), Diptayan Ghosh, Harsha Bha-

rathakoti, Priti Gupta and Bhakti Kulkarni.

**Chess Gyaan (2459):** M.R. Venkatesh (Capt.), Aryan Chopra, G. Akash, Aronyon Ghosh and Vanitha Agarwal.

**Chess Pathshala (2447):** Swapnil Dhopade (Capt.), S.P. Sethuraman, Sankalp Gupta, Krishnater Kushager and Mrudul Dehankar.

**Cheeky Cheetahs (2432):** Abhimanyu Puranik, Raja Harshit, Rahul Srivastav, Raja Rithvik, Aakanksha Hagawane and Atharva Godbole (non-playing Capt.).

**Undercover Agents (2418):** Padmini Rout (Capt.), Arjun Kalyan, Girish Kaushik, Koustav Chatterjee and Ajay Karthikeyan.

## Premier League likely from June

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

Premier League clubs received a boost to their hopes of completing the season on Monday as the government published a "roadmap" that could see the return of elite sport in England from June 1.

Under step two of that process, which cannot begin any earlier than June 1, sporting events would be allowed to take place behind closed doors for broadcast, while avoiding the risk of large-scale social contact.

Such events will only be allowed if sufficient progress is made in limiting the spread of the virus.

## Jerry Stiller, comedian and 'Seinfeld' actor, passes away at 92

A multi-talented performer, who appeared in an assortment of movies, he had for decades teamed with wife Anne Meara

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK

Jerry Stiller, who for decades teamed with wife Anne Meara in a beloved comedy duo and then reached new heights in his senior years as the high-strung Frank Costanza on the classic sitcom 'Seinfeld' and the basement-dwelling father-in-law on 'The King of Queens,' died at 92, his son Ben Stiller said on Monday.

"I'm sad to say that my father, Jerry Stiller, passed away from natural causes," he said in a tweet.

"He was a great dad and grandfather and the most dedicated husband to Anne for about 62 years.

He will be greatly missed. Love you Dad," wrote Ben,

soning on his entire unit; an ever-simmering salesman controlling his explosive temper with the shouted mantra, 'Serenity now!'

Stiller earned an 1997 Emmy nomination for his indelible 'Seinfeld' performance. In a 2005 Esquire interview, he recalled that he was out of work and not the first choice for the role of Frank Costanza, father to Jason Alexander's neurotic George.

"My manager had retired," he said. "I was close to 70 years old, and had nowhere to go."

It jump-started the septuagenarian's career, landing him a spot playing Vince Lombardi in a Nike commercial and the role of another over-the-top dad on the long-



Jerry Stiller. \* AP running sitcom 'King of Queens.'

While he was known as a nut-job father on the small screen, Stiller and wife Meara raised two children in their longtime home on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

daughter Amy, who became an actress, and son Ben, who would become perhaps the most famous Stiller as a writer, director

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