



Rahul Gandhi 'hurt' as Speaker denies him second question

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Government nominates ex-CJI Ranjan Gogoi to Rajya Sabha

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ED summons Anil Ambani in Yes Bank investigation

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FIDE Candidates chess tournament begins at Yekaterinburg today

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## NEARBY



Tahir Hussain sent to four-day police custody

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday ordered four-day police custody of suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain in connection with the killing of Intelligence Bureau staffer Ankit Sharma during the riots in north-east Delhi. The court passed the order after the police sought Mr. Hussain's custody for five days.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

### Posters: U.P. govt. seeks more time to file report

ALLAHABAD

The U.P. government on Monday moved an application before the Allahabad High Court seeking more time to file a compliance report in the matter related to the 'name and shame' posters of anti-CAA protesters. The State government contended that a special leave petition against the March 9 decision of the High Court is pending before the Supreme Court.

NORTH ▶ PAGE 5

### Rajasthan govt. moves apex court against CAA

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government on Monday moved the Supreme Court against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, contending that the law was against the country's secular fabric and violated the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. Rajasthan is the second State after Kerala to challenge the CAA in the top court.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 13

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# Travel from EU, U.K. banned as India tightens preventive steps

All from UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait to be quarantined; COVID-19 cases touch 114

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI

In a series of temporary preventive measures, the Group of Ministers (GoM) on COVID-19 on Monday banned the entry of travellers from European Union nations, the European Free Trade Association, Turkey and the United Kingdom to India from March 18.

After its seventh meeting on the COVID-19 outbreak, the GoM also called for expanding the compulsory quarantine for a minimum period of 14 days for passengers coming from/transiting through UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait.

**Odisha reports first case**  
The Union Health Ministry update on COVID-19 cases reported four new cases, taking the tally to 114 confirmed cases, including 13 discharges and two deaths, and 5,200 contacts, who are under surveillance. One fresh case was reported from Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Kerala, the Ministry said.

Reports from States, ho-

### Tighter curbs

According to the Centre's new advisory, travellers from some West Asian countries will be compulsorily quarantined for 14 days while entry is prohibited to those from Europe and the U.K. from March 18.

Advisory	Travellers from
Quarantine of minimum 14 days	UAE, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait
Entry to India prohibited	European Union, European Free Trade Association, Turkey and U.K.



A Health Department worker scanning international passengers on arrival at the Coimbatore International Airport. ■ M. PERIASAMY

wever, put the total number of cases, including fatalities, at 123. The highest number of cases at 39, is from Maharashtra, with two more people, including a Philippine

death, announced that all gyms, night clubs and spas will remain shut till March 31 and that a gathering with more than 50 persons, excluding weddings, will not be allowed.

A senior Health Ministry official said if an Indian from Europe or U.K. or Turkey travels to another country from which there is no ban, such as the U.S. or Australia, he or she will be "allowed entry and quarantined or advised home quarantine depending on his condition." He added that this was already being

national, testing positive, State Health Department of officials said. With one more confirmation, Karnataka now has eight cases.

The national capital, which has so far reported seven COVID-19 cases and one

allowed for Indians returning from France or Germany via Dubai in UAE.

Speaking at a press meet, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry Lav Agarwal, assured that "adequate number of tests are being done to get information about any community transmission".

"We don't want to create panic and conduct unnecessary mass testing of people as of now. There is no requirement for it," he added.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 3, 8 & 9

# Ready for COVID-19 impact: RBI Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Amid a carnage in the financial markets, the Reserve Bank of India on Monday said it was ready to take any policy measure to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the economy.

At an unscheduled press conference to assuage market participants, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das also as-

sured depositors of the beleaguered Yes Bank that the reconstruction was aimed at ensuring the safety of depositors' money.

Mr. Das assured that the central bank would provide liquidity to Yes Bank if needed, after the moratorium on withdrawals is lifted on March 18.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

# Investors get poorer by ₹7.62 lakh crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Investors' wealth eroded by ₹7.62 lakh crore on Monday as markets witnessed yet another sharp fall, with the Sensex plunging 2,713.41 points over the COVID-19 scare.

Global equity markets also continued to be in turmoil on account of the pandemic, even as Indian

benchmarks registered their second-biggest, single-day fall in absolute points, plunging to their lowest level since September 2017.

The 30-share Sensex lost a whopping 7.96% to close at 31,390.07. The broader Nifty plunged 757.80 points, or 7.61%, to close at 9,197.40. (With PTI inputs)

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 15

# Public gatherings of over 50 not allowed: Kejriwal

Nightclubs, gyms, spas shut till March 31

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

No religious, cultural or political gatherings of more than 50 people will be allowed in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced here on Monday.

Nightclubs, gyms and spas will also remain closed till March 31 in the wake of the seven confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Capital. Schools, colleges and swimming pools have already been shut till the month-end. Wedding functions have not yet been included, but people are being requested to postpone

the ceremonies if possible, he said.

"A videoconferencing was held at 11 a.m. today [Monday] with SDMs, DMs, Ministers and the department officials. We are taking all measures necessary to tackle the corona crisis," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"More than 500 beds are ready to be installed for immediate hospitalisation in case there is an outbreak. We are also advising people who have come in contact with those infected to home-quarantine themselves for a while," he said.

Plea in SC cites possible job losses, NPAs

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

Nearly five months after winning its legal battle in the Supreme Court against telecom majors, including Vodafone and Bharti Airtel, for payment of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues worth several lakhs of crores of rupees, the Centre did a virtual U-turn on Monday by urging the court to give the blow of the October 24, 2019 judgment directing the compa-

nies to cough up the AGR in three months.

**Staggered instalments**  
"All the licensees impacted by the judgment be allowed to pay the unpaid or remaining amount of past DoT assessed/calculated dues in annual instalments over 20 years (or less if they so opt), duly protecting the net present value of the said dues using a discount rate of 8% (based on one year marginal cost of lending rate of SBI which is currently 7.75%)," the application said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12



The SC had asked the firms to pay up within three months.

In an application mentioned for urgent hearing in the top court, the government said it has, after "detailed and long-drawn deliberations", devised a "formula" to soften the blow of the October 24, 2019 judgment directing the compa-



Taking pride: The transgender football team at the Queer Games in Manipur. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

coincided with the onset of

Yaoshang, Manipur's

version of Holi, the festival of colours.

"We wish to be a part of

State, national and

international level football

tournaments under the

transgender category. We

hope other players come

out so that we can compete,

improve ourselves and

create strong transgender

teams," said Chaki, the

team's vice-captain.

Coming out despite social

stigma has been the hardest

part for transmen,

transwomen and other

but failed due to social factors. The team for transmen worked," Mr. Hanjabam told *The Hindu* from Imphal.

Ya All sowed the seeds of the team two years ago by organising six-a-side football matches for the transgender community. Most of the members of the team are students of physical education and used to play football. The challenge now is to ensure a support system and bring coaches on board.

"It is difficult to get experts to improve the skills of our players. But we hope people will soon get over their prejudices," Mr. Hanjabam said.

"Given the popularity of football in Manipur, we have had transgender and non-transgender people playing in mixed groups. We tried to form a team of transwomen (male to female transsexual)

and men to participate in the Queer Games," said Mr. Hanjabam.

"The Queer Games were

organised by Ya All, an NGO based in Imphal.

"The Queer Games were organised by Ya All, an NGO based in Imphal.

# An inclusive goal for Manipur's transgender football

The northeastern State is now host to the country's first team of transmen

RAHUL KARMAKAR

GUWAHATI

Followers of football in India are unlikely to have heard of Nick, Sillebi and Lem. But they have created history by becoming the captain, goalkeeper and striker of arguably the first transgender football team in the country.

"Having a team of our own was beyond imagination. I am so happy," said Nick after Ya All, an Imphal-based NGO, put together the team. The launch last week at an event named the Queer Games

categories of queer people, Ya All's founder-president Sadam Hanjabam said. The NGO works to empower youth and the queer community through life skills, and capacity-building.

"Given the popularity of football in Manipur, we have had transgender and non-transgender people playing in mixed groups. We tried to form a team of transwomen (male to female transsexual)

and men to participate in the Queer Games," said Mr. Hanjabam.

"The Queer Games were

organised by Ya All, an NGO based in Imphal.

"The Queer Games were organised by Ya All, an NGO based in Imphal.

# Nath rules out floor test after meeting Governor

M.P. CM defies Tandon's directive, claims majority

SIDHARTH YADAV

BHOPAL

Capping a day of hectic political activity, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath called on Governor Lalji Tandon at the Raj Bhavan late on Monday night. He later ruled out holding a floor test in the Assembly, claiming that his government enjoyed a majority.

The late night meeting followed a letter from the Governor directing the Nath-led Congress government to hold a floor test on Tuesday after Speaker N.P. Prajapati earlier adjourned the House till March 26 in view of the COVID-19 threat.

The Speaker's decision, soon after the Governor's address on the first day of the Budget session, scuttled an expected floor test on

Monday. "During the Vidhan Sabha session, honourable members and people can't be stopped from being in groups or meeting anyone," said Mr. Prajapati.

"Considering the health of the honourable members, historic steps taken by other Vidhan Sabhas, advisory issued by the Government of India and in larger public interest, the proceedings of the Vidhan Sabha have been adjourned until March 26."

### Dares Opposition

## Timings

DELHI

TUESDAY, MAR. 17
RISE 06:29 SET 18:31
RISE 01:46 SET 12:18
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 18
RISE 06:27 SET 18:32
RISE 02:40 SET 13:13
THURSDAY, MAR. 19
RISE 06:26 SET 18:32
RISE 03:30 SET 14:08

**Delhi Weather** max min  
Delhi City 26 12  
Safdarjung 26 12  
Palam 26 12

**Delhi Pilm Today**  
27°C Shallow fog/mist is likely in the morning. A warm afternoon is likely with a partly cloudy sky.

**Delhi Pilm Tomorrow**  
28°C Mist/haze is likely in the morning. A warm and sunny day is expected with moderate winds.

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Air Quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi 139	Gurugram 165	
Ghaziabad 134	Faridabad 184	
Noida 118	Greater Noida 146	
■ Good	■ Satisfactory	■ Moderate
0-50	51-100	101-200
■ Poor	■ Very Poor	■ Severe
201-300	301-400	>400
Air Quality Index at 4 p.m., yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) [Source: CPCB]		

## DELHI TODAY

**Exhibition:** "Natural Instincts", a group paintings exhibition of various artist at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Transparent Destiny", a solo paintings show by Nafisa Yesmin at Open Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Culture:** Akhil Bharata Sadhu Samajam presents discourse on Srimad Ramayanam by Sri Krishna Premi Swamigal at Sri Rajaram Mandir, Dasarath Puri, 7 p.m.  
(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditordelhi@thehindu.co.in)

## Plea on riots footage: HC seeks reply from Centre, police, State

Police should be told to preserve footage of riot-hit areas'

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court on Monday sought stand of the Centre, the police and the city government on a plea seeking directions to the State police to preserve the CCTV footage of the recent riots that broke out in north-east Delhi.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar posted the petition, filed by Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind, for further hearing on March 27.

**Pinjra Tod**  
alleges  
vilification  
drive against it

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
Pinjra Tod, a collective that was formed to ensure secure, affordable and non-discriminatory accommodation for women students across Delhi on Monday said that a vilification campaign was being run against it for opposing the CAA.

It said that presently, peaceful protesters and victims of violence are the ones facing severe backlash and police repression for opposing the CAA.

In a statement, Pinjra Tod said, "It has been disturbing to see the vilification campaign being run in the media against victims of the worst violence, against Pinjratod and other peaceful protesters. We are now seeing speculative journalism which has been reduced to abysmal lows by portraying peaceful protesters as criminals and as the cause for the violence meted upon them."

The organisation said that it would remain committed to peaceful and democratic means of protesting.

"Pinjra Tod is also opposed to the NRC-NPR-CAA which, it believes, is unconstitutional and violates the democratic fabric and ethos of India," the statement added.

## Riot victim's kin await charred body claimed a fortnight ago

The DNA report of the body is expected within a day or two, say police

JATIN ANAND  
SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI



22-year-old Shehbaz was a welder. ■ FILE PHOTO

Over a fortnight after he claimed the charred remains of a body, which was just some part of a skull attached to traces of a spine, Mohammad Shehbaz's brother Matloob still does not know if it belongs to his 22-year-old sibling.

Of eight instances in which the bodies or body parts recovered by them were in such a condition that they could not be visibly identified by their next of kin, Shehbaz's remains, according to the police, are one of six cases in which DNA testing is required to conclusively ascertain the identity of a riot victim.

### Fished out of drain

These remains, Mr. Matloob said, were fished out of from one of the drains in the vicinity of Shiv Vihar - one of the epicentres of violence that ripped across north-east Delhi for three consecutive days late last month - and claimed by him from Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital mortuary four days after he last heard his younger brother's voice.

"He was a welder by profession and, like most people engaged in the trade, needed routine medical attention to get debris which collected in

his eyes during welding and soldering to be removed. He had gone to Guru Nanak Eye Centre for the same at 7 in the morning on Tuesday [February 25]," Mr. Matloob said he and his family lost all hope.

They accepted the fact that only parts of Shehbaz's body could be recovered after what he had gone through before allegedly being burnt to death.

"I first went to the hospital on February 26 morning. Then I just set up a camp there. I looked at all the bodies which were mostly recovered in one piece, but did not find my brother," he said.

"On February 29, on the basis of what looked like the clothes he was wearing when he left the house, I wanted to see the body which those belonged to. I was shown a part of a human skull with some part of the

spine attached to it. We claimed it as Shehbaz's body. My father gave his blood sample for the DNA test, but there is no development since," he stated.

According to a senior police officer, a DNA test was required for six of the eight bodies which were fished out from separate drains in north-east Delhi.

Five of the DNA reports have matched so far and the bodies have been handed over to their respective family members.

"The family is claiming the body but we want to be doubly sure and don't want to take any chances. The report, based on blood sample collected from the family, is expected within a day or two.

A senior police officer associated with the investigation said, "In this [Shehbaz's] case, we got the family's sample a bit late. It was sent for examination to a laboratory. We will check the status and, if not completed soon, we will expedite the process and hand over the body to the family at the earliest."

## Tahir sent to four-day police custody

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday ordered a four-day police custody of suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain in connection with the killing of Intelligence Bureau staffer Ankit Sharma during the recent riots in north-east Delhi.

The court passed the order after the police sought Mr. Hussain's custody for five days for custodial interrogation.

It noted that Mr. Hussain's custodial interrogation was required "to unearth a larger conspiracy behind the riots that led to massive loss of lives and property" and

identify other persons involved in the murder of Sharma. During the hearing, the police said that Mr. Hussain needed to be confronted with other co-accused.

Mr. Hussain was earlier arrested on March 5 and sent to police custody in another case related to the said riots in the city.

## Relief camp gets in-house tailor

Woman stitches suits for other victims at Idgah camp

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Shama Parveen was stitching her fifth suit for the day on Monday at Idgah relief camp here and said she had five more to go. While her boutique back in Shiv Vihar was damaged in the recent riots a little corner at the relief camp is her new workplace.

"She is my favourite designer and I am her most loyal customer," said Rihana, flaunting her bell-sleeve suit which Ms. Shama stitched for her.

The 26-year-old mother of three daughters is currently the in-house tailor of the relief camp and is approached by all the women who want their suit piece, which they receive as relief material, stitched or altered. "I have stitched 35 so far and have cut out 10 which are yet to be completed," she said.

An NGO worker brought the first sewing machine about 15 days ago and now,

she that she would be paid a sum for it subsequently.

When asked how she learned the skill, she said it was a matter of time and practice.

"I had been running my shop in Shiv Vihar for nearly 10 years and had customers from Dehradun and Kanpur as well". The shop with a board reading 'Shama Tailor' now stands vandalised.

Recalling when she fled her house on the night of February 24, she said that throughout the day, she was locked up in the house. Assuming that she would not survive, she called up people to ask them to forgive her if she had done anything wrong. Around 1.30 a.m., she and few other women managed to flee to Chaman Park to take shelter.

"My husband has taken a room on rent in Mustafabad. We will go there from the relief camp. We will not go back to Shiv Vihar. I will set up a new shop," she said.

## 'Scarcity' of masks, no sanitisers at Idgah relief camp

Waqf Board official Mohammad Ovais says riot victims have a medical camp at their disposal

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI



People at the camp are being given masks and asked to keep their surroundings clean. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

At the Idgah relief camp here, it appeared that little help was available for riot victims to protect themselves from COVID-19.

In the name of measures, masks are being distributed and inhabitants are being asked to keep their surroundings clean.

Waqf Board official Mohammad Ovais said that in the wake of the outbreak of COVID-19, riot victims at the camp were being given masks, adding that they also have medical camp at their disposal.

"We are trying to keep the place clean and distributing masks, but not everyone is comfortable wearing them. In case people complain of

cough and cold, they can get medicines at the camp. In case of an emergency, there is also an ambulance standing right outside the camp to shift

### COVID-19

people to hospitals," he said.

Paramedical staff at the camp said that people have been complaining of cough and cold - some of the COVID-19 symptoms - but that they were less in number. "There has not been a serious case so far. We are continuously telling people to use masks. Most people who come to us have skin rashes or minor injuries," said a staffer who did not wish to be named.

A riot victim, identified as Shahnawaz, however,

claimed that there was a scarcity of masks at the camp.

"They have distributed masks but there are people who are yet to receive one. When someone sitting or lying next to us coughs or sneezes we get scared," he said.

Due to the absence of hand sanitiser or wash basins at the camp, women said that they and their children could be at risk. "I have seen videos on WhatsApp. They say we should wash hands and use sanitiser but we are not being able to use sanitiser or wash hands properly and frequently," said Nazia, a woman at the camp.

## Quarantine centre lacks facilities, says woman

Govt. will fix issues at these centres: CM

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A woman who arrived here from Spain and apparently quarantined at a police training facility in Dwarka, on Monday, complained of inadequate facilities at the centre.

"We are more than 40 people with only three washrooms and five large bedrooms. They want us to stay sanitised and this is what they give us. This is a major concern. This way, India cannot contain COVID-19 but will only get more cases," Navya Dua said while sharing a video from inside the quarantine facility on Twitter.

When asked about complaints from people about government-run quarantine fa-

cilities, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, while addressing a press conference on Monday, said that the government would fix any issue in these centres.

"I land at Delhi airport dated 16th March 1:00 am KLM airlines from Spain. I am subject to the 14 day quarantine at a govt facility in Dwarka police training school. I won't say anything I just give some videos of our \*sanitised\* accommodation," Ms. Dua said on Twitter.

A Delhi government official, meanwhile, said that the administration had planned to set up paid quarantine facilities at three hotels here for people travelling from abroad, even before the complaint.

### IN BRIEF

JNU students 'strongly advised' to return home

**NEW DELHI**  
JNU on Monday "strongly advised" students to return home and take adequate precautions as per guidelines issued by the government to protect themselves from COVID-19. It said that hostel services will be limited to only basic mess facility and will be available in a few hostels for foreign nationals and those students who stay back in hostels for valid reasons.

### Sikh body bans entry of foreigners in gurdwaras

**NEW DELHI**  
The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee on Monday banned the entry of foreigners, who have not completed a 15-day stay in India, in all gurdwaras in the city with immediate effect to check the transmission of COVID-19. The staff will start langar services only after sanitising themselves.

### Bait and watch



Fisherman seen rowing a boat in the Yamuna in New Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## Ensure precautionary gear, demands AIIMS RDA

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, on Monday wrote to the hospital authorities stating that most wards lack adequate universal precautionary components. The RDA also demanded prompt action from the authorities to ensure the re-

quisite precautionary gears are available.

"A team of RDA executives inspected various wards to check the supply of PPE [Personal Protective Equipment] in this crucial time of COVID-19 pandemic and sadly found that most of the wards do not have adequate universal precautionary components," the letter to the director read.

## Metro ridership up despite virus fear

DMRC had recorded 46.22 lakh daily ridership last March

journey figures of the corresponding month of March in 2019 and 2020, there is no significant variation with average journey figures of 46.22 lakh and 46.53 lakh recorded so far respectively [rather showing a marginal increase over last year]," officials said.

However, it recorded 57.13 lakh daily average journeys in the month of February. DMRC officials said that the month of

March witnessed a natural dip of 10-15%.

"It is also stated that every year the month of March witnesses a natural dip of 10-15% in comparison to the figures for the month of February. The same trend is visible up to March 15 this year too with passenger journeys going from 57.13 lakh [February 2020] to 46.53 lakh [March 202

# Over 1,400 beds to quarantine people in the Capital, says govt.

Kejriwal announces paid quarantine facilities at three city hotels near airport

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

To fight COVID-19, the Capital has a capacity of over 1,400 beds to quarantine people in different facilities run by the Central and Delhi governments, an official said.

This includes, quarantine facilities in hospitals, unused flats of the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, police training schools, and under-construction hospitals.

"All put together, we have about 1,400 quarantine beds including, AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital and other Delhi government facilities," a Delhi government spokesperson said. "The Delhi government has about 900 beds for quarantine at this point and by midnight 250 more will be set up," a Health Department official said.

The government on Monday announced that they will provide paid quarantine facilities at three hotels, which can be used by people who are not satisfied with the go-



A man gets his temperature taken at Nehru Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital on Monday. ■ BIBEK CHETTRI

#### HELPLINE NUMBERS

COMMON HELPLINE +91-11-23978046

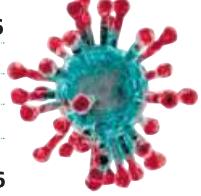
DELHI - 011-22307145

GAZIABAD - 0120 4186453

NOIDA - 8076623612/6396776904

GURUGRAM - 108/ 0124-2322412/

9911519296/ 7015523417/ 9654231756



vernment facilities after paying the hotels.

"Many people who come from abroad are from af-

fluent class and the quarantine facilities are not up to their expectations. We have booked some hotels. They

can pay to stay there during quarantine," Mr. Kejriwal said at a press conference on Monday.

"At this point, these many numbers of beds are enough. The CM is holding a review meeting everyday and at any point if we feel that more beds are needed we will scale it up," an official said, when asked whether the number was enough.

People can choose from three hotels, Ibis, Lemon Tree, and Red Fox, near the airport for quarantine facilities. "Your facility has been identified as a suitable premise which could be made operational as quarantine facility at short notice, as discussed in the meeting held on March 15," an order issued by the Delhi government to Ibis said.

For all the three hotels, a rate of ₹3,100 plus taxes for a day has been fixed by the Delhi government, which includes three meals and other basic facilities.

## Delhi govt. hospitals not prepared: BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Delhi government hospitals are "absolutely incapable" of fighting the COVID-19 epidemic, the Leader of the Opposition Ramvij Singh Bidhuri alleged here on Monday, claiming that no isolation wards or investigation centres had been set up in these hospitals so far.

Mr. Bidhuri made the claim after visiting Lok Nayak and G.B. Pant Hospitals to assess their preparedness to fight the epidemic with a delegation of other BJP leaders.

"We also visited Apollo Hospital working in partnership with the Delhi government... the hospital management apprised us about its preparedness to deal with COVID-19. The hospital has made preparations," Mr. Bidhuri said.

"We appreciate the work done by Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and Safdarjung Hospital to fight COVID-19 under the leadership of Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.

## Gurugram reports first COVID-19 case

Woman had returned from Malaysia on March 12

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

In the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Haryana, a 29-year-old woman in Gurugram has tested positive for the virus. She had returned from Malaysia on March 12.

The media bulletin released by the Haryana Health Department on Monday confirmed that one positive case has been reported from Gurugram. As per the report available on the department's website, 66 samples have been sent for ex-

amination till date, out of which one was found positive and 54 negative. Results for 11 samples are awaited.

Dr. Ramprakash, Civil Hospital (Gurugram) told *The Hindu* that the woman, a resident of Gurugram, had gone to Malaysia for a personal visit and her samples were taken on her return to India on March 12. "She is asymptomatic and admitted to a hospital. She works in a private firm in Gurugram. All her colleagues have been examined and have tested

negative," he added.

In Haryana, 2,992 persons are being kept under observation. and out of them 2,957 with travel history to affected countries are asymptomatic, as per the Health Department website.

Further, 35 passengers with travel history from affected countries were admitted to hospitals out of which 29 have been discharged as their result was negative.

However, as per protocol, they are still under surveillance at home.

## Grocery stores in Gurugram see rush amid COVID-19 threat

This comes in the wake of shutting down of public places

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

Le Marche food store at South Point Mall in the up-market DLF Phase-5 here on Golf Course Road has seen a sudden spurt in demand for groceries over the past couple of days.

The trend of panic buying of grocery items is not just confined to this store, but has been noticed in several parts of the Millennium City in the wake of shutting down of schools, colleges, cinema halls and gyms in Haryana due to COVID-19 scare.

Le Marche customer executives head Pawan told *The Hindu* that the demand for non-perishable grocery items, including rice, pulses, flour, vegetable oils, had suddenly gone up over the past two days.

"The demand went up especially after the news of shutting down of shopping malls in Mumbai. The customers are stocking up food items. The demand, in fact, is very high. Those usually



Customers at a store in Gurugram on Monday. ■ ASHOK KUMAR

morning and the stock of pulses with us is already exhausted. A few customers even enquired whether there was any word on closure of the store," said Mr. Shri Ram.

Grahini Store's Pramod, a Sadar Bazar-based wholesale dealer of groceries to retailers in DLF areas, Sector 43, 49, 56 and along the Sohna Road, said that the demand was up by 25-30%. He, however, said there was no spike in demand from routine customers coming to Sadar Bazar, mostly catering to the regularised colonies and workers class.

## Shortage of masks and sanitisers continues, say pharmacists

No need to get scared... get tested if you see symptoms, says COVID-19 patient who has recovered

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Despite being declared as essential commodities, shortage of masks and sanitisers continues in the market, said city pharmacists on Monday.

While demand has "increased again" over the last two days, limited supply is resulting in a shortage, they added. Uttam Nagar-based pharmacist Vinod Kapoor said: "There is no stock in the market. Whatever little supply is happening is limited and only six to 10 masks or sanitisers are being provided. Even though the demand is lesser than what it was earlier, the limited stock is also finishing fast."

"As compared to last



A roadside vendor selling face masks in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

week, the demand of masks and sanitisers have reduced, but over the last few days there was a slight spurt. There has been no new supply," said a representative of Vinayak Medicos.

A 45-year-old man, who was the first to recover from COVID-19 in the city said that people should not panic as "it is similar to a normal cough and cold with a couple of days extra to recover."

"People are also panicking about isolation wards. They should not worry as the government has provided adequate facilities, at least at Safdarjung Hospital. People should not get scared and hide. Rather, with the onset of the slightest of symptoms, they should step out and get tested," he said.

#### COVID-19

Food and Supply Minister Imran Hussain on Monday directed officials to take action against shopkeepers who overcharge customers for face masks, surgical masks, hand sanitiser and

other commodities used for control and prevention of COVID-19. "The Minister has directed senior officers to depute all field functionaries to check instances of overcharging and to take necessary punitive action," an official statement said.

Since sanitiser has been declared as essential commodity under the Essential Commodities Act, action can be taken against dealers involved in hoarding and black-marketing of sanitisers, according to the Delhi government.

Mr. Hussain also reviewed the compliance of Packaged Commodity Rules in a meeting with senior officers of Legal Metrology Department.

## HC restricts functioning

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday said its functioning would be restricted till March 20 in order to combat the threat of COVID-19.

In an urgent meeting held on Monday, the court passed fresh directives, including adjourning all pending matters listed from March 17-20 to April 14-17. The High Court, in its advisory, also said no undertrial would be produced before the subordinate courts till March 31 and if production is indispensable, the facility of video-conferencing be utilised. "For extension of remand, the District and Sessions Judge will depose Duty Metropolitan Magistrates..." the advisory read.

It also said that the Delhi Judicial Academy would suspend all its institutional training programmes till March 31.

## Advocating safety



Lawyers and litigants being checked with a thermal-screening device as a precautionary measure to stop the spread of COVID-19 at the Supreme Court in New Delhi on Monday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

## Residential societies take steps to mitigate virus fear

Measures include separate elevators for residents and visitors, deferring public gatherings



Passengers wearing masks at the New Delhi railway station on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

mal, the residents are to come down to collect their parcels in that case. The ones being allowed are to use hand sanitiser placed at the entrance," said Tarun

Singh, general secretary of the Sunrise Green Society in Indirapuram.

Even though common spaces like swimming pools are shut and large gatherings

are not allowed, important general body meetings are happening with chairs kept apart at a distance of three feet from each other with hand sanitiser being provided to the attendees.

#### Measures implemented

Measures have been implemented before Holi when the grand celebrations and meeting-greeting ceremony during the festival was called off. Mr. Singh said that majority of club house bookings for parties have been cancelled as well since past few weeks as a precaution.

Most common contact areas within elevators, play

areas are being sanitised every two hours through outsourced teams and is monitored by the welfare association staff.

Director of Clean and Secure Facility Maintenance company Sharat Jha with his team is ensuring the services to almost 2-3 building associations in a day.

"We place sanitiser bottles at public movement areas within buildings making sure that they are timely refilled. Each building is currently consuming 2.5 litres of hand sanitiser and 2 litres of spraying one used for cleaning purposes each day," Mr. Jha informed.

## STEPS TOWARDS SAFETY



Daycare facility is also equipped with doctor recommended hand sanitizers.

## CELEBRATIONS AT DPS

Delhi Public School Rohini celebrated 'Ekjut: A festival of Social Initiatives'. Programmes like, plays, games, fashion show, dance were performed by the students. Chairperson, DPS Rohini, Managing Committee, Mrs. Namita Pradhan was the Chief Guest and Mr. Alok Mittal, Inspector General, National Investigation Agency, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India was the Guest of Honour. Mrs. Surjeet Khanna, Principal DPS Greater Faridabad and Mrs. Ritu Jain, Headmistress, DPS Greater Faridabad were the special guests. Principal, Mrs. Vibha Singh, addressed the gathering.



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SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

In January, when senior advocate and human rights activist Indira Jaising urged the mother of the 23-year-old victim of the infamous December 16, 2012, gang rape and murder case to "forgive" the four death row convicts, there was a backlash – not just from the mother but the public as well.

This was despite Ms. Jaising making clear that she was with the mother in her pain, but "against death penalty".

The debate over the death sentence is going on for a long time. Those in favour of capital punishment see it as a deterrence against such type of crimes while others opine that it has not had any such effect.

**First initiative**

In British India's Legislative Assembly, the first time an issue was raised regarding capital punishment was in 1931, when one of the Members from Bihar, Gaya Prasad Singh, sought to introduce a Bill to abolish the death penalty for offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

However, this was defeated.

At the time of Independence, India retained several laws put in place by the British colonial government, including capital punishment for various crimes under the IPC.

A crucial change in the law was made in 1955 when the Parliament repealed Section 367(5) of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), which until then mandated the courts to record reasons when it decided not to impose a sentence of death for offences where the death penalty was an option. The CrPC was re-enacted in 1973 where several changes were made, notably to Section 354(3) mandating judges to provide special reasons for why they imposed the death sentence.

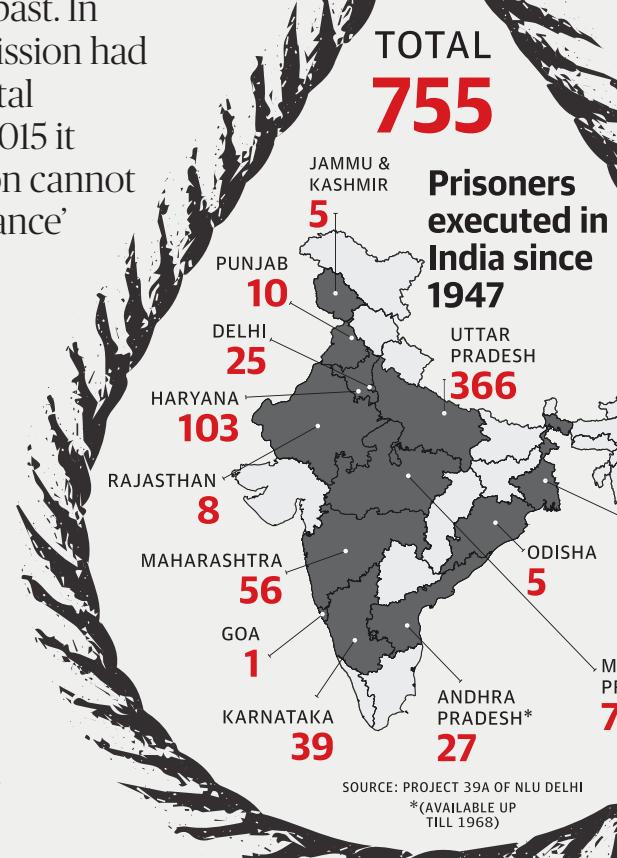
**Law Commission reports**

In 1967, the 35th Report of the Law Commission had argued for retention of capital punishment in India. The report stated that retribution should not be understood as an "eye for an eye", but in its refined form as public denunciation of crime. It also stated that there are a category of individuals who are "cruel and wicked", and are not capable of reform.

A major reason stated in the report for the retention of capital punishment was the unique condition of India, and the society then prevalent.

# Getting the hang of death penalty

India is one of only 58 countries that have the death penalty on their statute book and have used it in the recent past. In 1967, the Law Commission had argued to retain capital punishment, but in 2015 it stated that 'retribution cannot be reduced to vengeance'

**Rarest of rare cases**

The first legal challenge to the constitutionality of the death penalty came in the 1973 case of Jagmohan Singh vs State of Uttar Pradesh in which the petitioners argued that the death penalty was against the Constitution.

The Supreme Court, however, found that the death penalty was a permissible punishment.

This was followed by the 1980 landmark verdict of the top court in the Bachan Singh case where it upheld the constitutionality of the death penalty

but confined its application to the 'rarest of rare cases', to reduce the arbitrariness of the penalty.

**International scenario**  
Internationally, countries are

In 2015, the Law Commission recommended that the death penalty be abolished for all crimes other than terrorism-related offences and waging war against the State



## Some offences which carry capital punishment in IPC

Sections	Description
Section 121	Treason, for waging war against the Government of India
Section 132	Abetment of mutiny actually committed
Section 302	Murder
Section 376A	Rape and injury which causes death or leaves the woman in a persistent vegetative state
Section 376E	Certain repeat offenders in the context of rape
Section 376AB	Rape on a woman under twelve years of age

SOURCE: LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA

## Stages in death sentence cases

- 1 **TRIAL COURT**  
It has to give special reasons justifying awarding death penalty
- 2 **HIGH COURT**  
It has to confirm the death penalty, before the convicts can be hanged
- 3 **SUPREME COURT**  
Convicts has a right to appeal against the HC verdict before the apex court
- 4 **SUPREME COURT**  
After the dismissal of the appeal, the convict can file a review petition
- 5 **SUPREME COURT**  
After review petition gets dismissed, the convict can file a curative petition
- 6 **PRESIDENT**  
Convict can file mercy petition
- 7 **SUPREME COURT**  
Convict can challenge President's decision of dismissal of mercy petition before the SC

classified on their death penalty status based on four categories: abolitionist for all crimes, abolitionist for ordinary crimes, abolitionist de facto, and retentionist.

At the end of 2014, seven countries were abolitionist for ordinary crimes. Only 98 countries were abolitionist for all crimes, and 35 were abolitionist in practice.

This brought the number of countries which are abolitionist in law or practice to 140.

At the same time, 58 countries are regarded as retentionist, who still have the death penalty on their statute book and have used it in the recent past. This list includes some of the most populous nations in the world, including India, China, Indonesia and the United States.

Neighbouring countries such as Nepal officially abolished the death penalty in 1990 and did not reintroduce it even in the aftermath of the civil war.

Sri Lanka, despite a long civil war, has maintained a moratorium on the penalty, the commission report said.

**Recent executions**

In July 2015, Yakub Memon was executed by hanging in Nagpur Central Jail for his role in the 1993 Mumbai bombings.

Afzal Guru, who was convicted for his role in the 2001 Parliament attack, was executed in February 2013.

In November 2012, Ajmal Kasab, the lone terrorist captured alive in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, was hanged at Yerwada Jail in Pune. The previous execution was carried out in 2004 of Dhananjay Chatterjee for the crimes of rape and murder of a 14-year-old schoolgirl.

The commission had stated that the constitutional regulation of capital punishment attempted in Bachan Singh case has failed to prevent death sentences from being "arbitrarily and freakishly imposed".

The commission had put a case for abolition of death penalty, except terrorism-related offences and waging war, noting, "Retribution has an important role to play in punishment. However, it cannot be reduced to vengeance".

**No clear data**

Project 39A of the National Law University, Delhi, which publishes the death penalty reports has highlighted the difficulty in obtaining the exact number of prisoners under the sentence of death in India.

As per Project 39A, India has executed around 755 persons since Independence. Its report said that Uttar Pradesh carried out the highest number of executions at 366. Also, the Bareilly District Jail in the State has the distinction of carrying out 130 executions, the highest of all jails in the country, with the last execution being carried out on September 24, 1988.

Delhi's Tihar Central Prisons carried out 25 executions, the last one of Afzal Guru on February 9, 2013.

"Though we at Project 39A have tried our best to collate data from various sources, it is an unfortunate truth that the prisons and other government departments do not have accurate records of the people they have executed," Project 39A stated.

"Hence, we continue our struggle to get accurate data on the administration of the death penalty in India and are hindered by an absolute lack of coordination between different official sources," it added.

**A case for abolition**

"The notion of "an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" has no place in our constitutionally mediated criminal justice system. Capital punishment fails to achieve any constitutionally valid penological goals," the Law Commission, in its 262th Report had said.

It pointed out that even the Supreme Court has on numerous occasions expressed concern about arbitrary sentencing in death penalty cases. "The court has noted that it is difficult to distinguish cases where death penalty has been imposed from those where the alternative of life imprisonment has been applied," it said.

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**IN BRIEF**

## AAP MLA acquitted in 2016 molestation case

Court notes discrepancies, contradictions in testimonies of star witnesses

**Three arrested for assaulting policemen**

NEW DELHI

A woman, her son and their suspected accomplice were arrested for allegedly assaulting two policemen and attempting to implicate them in a case, in west Delhi's Rajouri Garden, the police said on Monday. The accomplice has over five cases of theft and robbery registered against him, the police added.

## Brothers kill each other over property

STAFF REPORTER

Two brothers allegedly shot each other over a property dispute in north Delhi's Civil Lines, Rahul Nagar (35) and Tanuj Nagar (24) lived with their parents and two other siblings at DDA flats near Tis Hazari Court Complex. Rahul worked at a city court while his brother was unemployed, said the police.

The shooting took place on Sunday when Rahul, who was returning home, was stopped outside the house by Tanuj. The police said there were no eyewitnesses to the incident.

"We suspect that Tanuj fired at Rahul, who then caught hold of the pistol. They got into a scuffle and a bullet hit Tanuj in the chest. Rahul tried to escape but fell on the road, Tanuj followed him and fired at him again. After some time, Tanuj also fell down due to the bullet injury," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Monika Bharadwaj.

Both of them were declared dead by the doctors at the hospital, she added.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A court here on Monday acquitted Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Dinesh Mohaniya in a 2016 case of alleged molestation. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Vishal Pahuja acquitted Mr. Mohaniya upon furnishing a bail bond of ₹20,000 and a surety of like amount.

**Material discrepancies**

The bail bond was taken to ensure his presence in case an appeal was filed in a higher court challenging the acquittal. "In the instant case, there are material discrepancies and contradictions in the testimonies of star witnesses and none of the other independent public witnesses has supported the version of the complainant... the

It also acquitted co-accused Satish and Subhash Shukla in the case.

The Sangam Vihar MLA

was booked on June 23, 2016, for allegedly misbehaving with a group of women, who had approached him with a complaint regarding water crisis in their locality the previous night.

He was arrested under Sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 506 (criminal intimidation), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman), 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354A (sexual harassment), 354B (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe) and 354C (voyeurism) of the Indian Penal Code.

He was arrested when he was addressing a press conference, triggering an angry reaction from Chief Minister

Arvind Kejriwal, who accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of declaring an "emergency" in Delhi.

**Dragged from his seat**

Mr. Mohaniya, then the vice-chairman of the Delhi Jal Board, was virtually dragged from his seat by a police officer when he was talking to reporters at his office in south Delhi's Khanpur around 12.10 p.m.

In their statements, the women had alleged that Mr. Mohaniya molested them during a tussle on June 22 midnight, when they had gone to complain to him about the water crisis.

In their complaint, they said they had told the police earlier that the MLA and his men had verbally abused and threatened them.

and Punjab, the officer said.

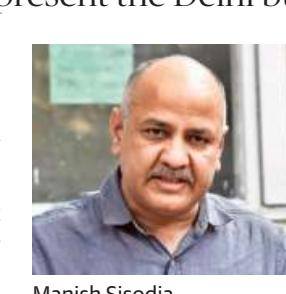
## Budget session from March 23

Manish Sisodia to present the Delhi budget on March 25

**NEW DELHI**

STAFF REPORTER

The budget session of the Delhi Assembly will be held from March 23-27, and Finance Minister Manish Sisodia will present the budget on March 25, the Delhi government spokesperson said on Monday.



Manish Sisodia

This will be the first budget of the Aam Aadmi Party government after coming to power in February. In the run up to the 2020 Assembly elections, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had released a 10-point 'Kejriwal Ka Guarantee Card', these

projects and promises in different sectors are likely to find a place in the budget, said officials.

The guarantee card promises to make Delhi "pollution free", and has fixed a target to reduce air pollution by a third in the next five years. It also promises to introduce "mohalla marshals" for women's safety, procure 11,000 buses, and increase the metro network to over 500 km.

## Cable stolen, metro services disrupted

STAFF REPORTER

Metro service between Dwarka and Dwarka Sector-21 stations on the Blue Line were disrupted on Monday as a portion of the signalling cable had to be replaced after it was reportedly stolen. Services on the section were regulated from the beginning of operations till 11.30 a.m., said Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) officials.

**Spurt in cases**  
The officials added that incidents of theft on the metro network have seen a spurt. "The DMRC lodges an FIR in such cases and breakthroughs have been made in the past by the police. However, in recent times, such incidents have witnessed a spurt with 14-15 such cases reported on the Airport Line alone in February," a DMRC official said.

## Entered Jamia to rescue trapped students: police

They say rioters entered the campus and were pelting stones



Students coming out of Jamia Millia Islamia with their hands raised on December 15 last year. ■ FILE PHOTO

tropolitan Magistrate Rajat Goyal during the hearing of a plea seeking registration of FIR against alleged police attack on students on the campus during the protests.

The court has put up the matter for further hearing on April 7.

The police said as it was not possible to distinguish between rioters and students, who were found to be carrying petrol bombs earlier, and as a result all of them were asked to be evacuated with their "hands up". "With a view to contain

the violence and maintain law and order, the police was constrained to enter the campus. The personnel were able to contain the violent activity by temporarily apprehending 52 persons under the Delhi Police Act... The action was required in light of ongoing violence from within the university campus and to rescue innocent students trapped inside, and to ensure normalcy," the ATR stated.

The police further submitted that the rioters had destroyed/damaged the lights within the campus, and it was difficult to distinguish between them and the innocent students. No student has been arrested so far in the case, it added.

An investigation is under way and efforts are on to identify and arrest other accomplices of the accused, the officer said.

Mr. Singh used to receive heroin from foreign nationals staying in Delhi and then would supply it in the city

## Census begins in Haryana from May 1

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

The first phase of Census - 2021 in Haryana, which includes house listing and housing census, will be conducted from May 1 to June 15 this year, during which the National Population Register will also be updated.

The second phase, which includes population enumeration, will be conducted from February 9, 2021, to February 28, 2021, with a revisional round from March 1 to 5, 2021, said an official statement on Monday.

The five-day training programme for 21 field trainers for Census-2021 has started in Panchkula. "During the training, all the concepts and definitions of house listing and housing census and the National Population Register would be explained in detail," said the statement.

# U.P. government seeks more time to file compliance report

Allahabad High Court had ordered removal of 'name and shame' posters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ALLAHABAD

The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday moved an application before the Allahabad High Court, seeking more time to file a compliance report in the matter related to the 'name and shame' posters of anti-CAA protesters.

In the application, the State government contended that a special leave petition (SLP) against the March 9 decision of the High Court is pending before the Supreme Court, which has referred the matter to a larger Bench.

Hence, in this backdrop of the situation, further time was sought by the State government for the filing of the compliance report till the matter is finally adjudicated by the apex court, said Addi-



A 'name and shame' poster in Lucknow. ■ FILE PHOTO: AFP

tional Advocate General Neeraj Tripathi.

The Uttar Pradesh government moved the Supreme Court on Wednesday challenging the Allahabad High Court order directing the State administration to remove posters of those ac-

cused of vandalism during anti-CAA protests. The Allahabad High Court had ordered the immediate removal of the roadside posters in Lucknow, observing that the police action was an "unwarranted interference" in privacy of people.

Earlier on March 7, the High Court had taken suo motu cognisance of the issue.

The Bench of Chief Justice Govind Mathur and Justice Ramesh Sinha also directed the District Magistrate and the Lucknow Police Commissioner to submit a compliance report on or before March 16 and asked the Uttar Pradesh government not to install such posters "without having the authority of law".

### Shaming protesters

The posters were displayed to "name and shame" the accused who had allegedly caused damage to public property during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) on December 19 in the State capital.

Refusing to take any de-

# TADA court frames charges against Yasin Malik, 6 others

Four IAF officials were killed in a militant attack in 1990

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

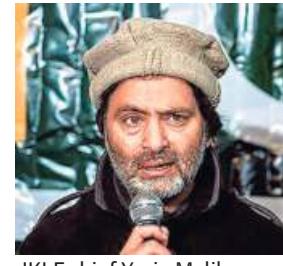
A Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA) court on Monday framed charges against separatist JKLF chief Yasin Malik and six others in a 30-year-old militant attack case that left four Indian Air Force officials dead in Srinagar in 1990.

Refusing to take any de-

fence lawyer in the case, Malik, however, pleaded "not guilty" in the case.

Special Judge NIA Subhash Gupta observed that the prima facie evidence "can safely be considered as incriminating material against all the accused".

The court mentioned the CBI chargesheet, including documentary and oral confessional evidence recorded under Section 164 of CrPC and Section 15 of TADA, as it framed the charges. "It (evid-



JKLF chief Yasin Malik

dence) can safely be considered as incriminating material against all the accused... and they further confessed that in furtherance of which, crime was committed by them in the present matter".

### 'Don't plead guilty'

"I do not plead guilty. It is a fabricated case," Malik told the court. Sources said the JKLF chief has refused to have anyone as his defence lawyer in the case. He has also questioned reopening of the case after 30 years.

Judge Gupta read out the charges to Malik who is lodged in the Tihar Jail, through videoconferencing.

The charges have been framed under sections of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act and the Arms Act of the Ranbir Penal Code. The court will again hear the case on March 30.

"The court has framed charges against all the seven accused, including Yasin Malik and Showkat Bakshi, lodged in Tihar and Ambedkar Nagar jails," additional public prosecutor Rakesh Singh, representing the Central Bureau of Investigation said.

Four Indian Air Force officials, including Squadron Leader Ravi Khanna, were killed in the attack in Srinagar on January 25, 1990.

## Services of retiring doctors, paramedics extended in Punjab

Cabinet takes stock of preventive steps to fight COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Cabinet on Monday held a meeting to take stock of the situation arising out of the COVID-19 outbreak and gave ex-post facto approval to the Chief Minister's decision on extending the services of retiring doctors and paramedical staff working with the State's health and family welfare department.

An official statement said that their services have been extended till September 30, for which a resolution was passed at the meeting as the Cabinet reviewed the reports of the 7-member Group of Ministers, constituted under the chairmanship of Local Bodies Minister Brahm Mohindra, to oversee the preventive measures undertaken to combat the threat.

Chief Minister Amarinder Singh later talking to journal-



CM Amarinder Singh

ing over Punjab's reins. "But these things take time. We have done our best, and we could not have done any better considering the situation," he added.

Describing unemployment as the biggest concern, he announced that one lakh government vacancies would be filled up in the next two years.

### Transport monopoly

To a question about monopoly of a single family on buses being operated from Delhi airports to Punjab, the Chief Minister said his government was working to address the issue.

Referring to complaints of continued illegal practices in sand mining, Capt. Amarinder said he had asked the Water Resources Minister to thoroughly review and make the system fully transparent.

The Chief Minister said his government was working to end all these evils since tak-

ists reiterated the total elimination of all kinds of mafia and monopoly in the State. He was talking on the occasion of completion of three years of his government. Capt. Amarinder said he will not allow mining, liquor, drug and transport mafias, gangsters and terrorists to disturb the State's peaceful environment.

The Chief Minister said his government was working to end all these evils since tak-

## Fighting the virus



Municipal workers spray disinfectants as a precautionary measure against COVID-19 at a park in Srinagar on Monday. ■ PTI

## Haryana officials told to check hoarding

Ensure availability of masks and sanitisers at reasonable price: State govt.

VIKAS VASUDEVA  
CHANDIGARH

After the Union government declared masks and hand sanitisers as essential commodities, the Haryana government has ordered its officials across all districts to carry out operations against black marketing and over pricing amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

Issuing directions to the District Food Supplies Controllers (DFSC), the Director of the State's Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs has asked officials to inspect chemists and drug wholesalers to ensure availability of



CM Manohar Lal

products at reasonable prices.

As district head of consumer affairs in their district, the DFSC and their subordinate inspection staff shall visit chemist shops,

pharmacies, drug wholesalers to check their stock of masks and hand sanitisers. Hoarding and refusal to dispense shall be reported and acted against," said the order.

Notably, the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution had regulated the production, quality, distribution, logistics of masks (2ply & 3ply surgical masks, N95 masks) and hand sanitisers for COVID-19 management.

Meanwhile, Chandigarh on Monday decided to put a ban on gathering of more than 100 people in the city.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of top officials, chaired by Union Territory Administrator and Punjab Governor V.P. Singh Badnore here.

Besides, cinema halls, gyms, swimming pools, spas, video gaming centres, shopping malls and coaching centres will also be closed till March 31.

### Ban exemption

However, the closure won't apply to groceries and medicine shops in order to enable people to meet their essential needs, said an official statement.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of top officials, chaired by Union Territory Administrator and Punjab Governor V.P. Singh Badnore here.

## Black marketeers will not be spared'

Five new testing centres being opened in U.P., situation under control: Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GHAZIABAD

Atul Garg, Minister of State for Medical and Health in the Uttar Pradesh government, said on Monday that strict action would be taken against those chemists who sell masks and sanitisers at more than the maximum retail price. District authorities have suspended licences of five chemists for selling masks and sanitisers at 8 to 10 times the regular price.

After surveying government hospitals in Ghaziabad designated for possible COVID-19 patients, Mr. Garg said the situation was under con-



Thermal screening of visitors at Allahabad High Court on Monday. ■ PTI

dulges in black marketing of masks and sanitisers," he said. He also urged citizens to present themselves for testing if they show symptoms of infection. Multiplexes, single-screen theatres, gyms and clubs have been shut down in the district till March 31.

He further said five new sample testing centres were being opened in the State. Right now, labs at the King George Medical College, Lucknow, and Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh, have the facility to test samples for COVID-19. Mr. Garg said this facility will

soon be extended to BRD Medical College, Gorakhpur, and Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. "In 75 districts of the State, isolation wards with a total of 820 beds have been earmarked for such patients," he said.

### Two positive cases'

Narendra Kumar Agarwal, CMO, Ghaziabad, said that out of the 36 samples taken by the department in the city, two have been found to be positive. "One is recuperating in Delhi while the other is in MMG Hospital in Ghaziabad. The reports of four samples are awaited," he said.

## With Jyotiraditya's entry, the BJP-Scindia connect is complete

The family patronised Hindu Mahasabha, funded Atal Bihari Vajpayee's education and laid the base of BJP

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BHOJPAL

V.D. Savarkar's acrimonious dressing down of the Scindias in his early 20th century writings couldn't foretell, and rather runs in sharp contrast to, Jyotiraditya joining BJP, a political outfit inspired by his Hindutva thought, a century later. By embracing the only member left out of the party for 18 years, the erstwhile royal family's decades-old unmistakable link with the BJP has reached its denouement. His aunt Yashodhara, welcoming him, announced: "This is ghar wapsi (homecoming) for him."

### Savarkar's view

In his 1909 text *The Indian War of Independence*, Savarkar is particularly miffed at Scindia ruler Jayaji of Gwalior for joining hands with the British during the 1857 revolt. At this, he wrote, people rose



Jyotiraditya Scindia

as it could help counter Congress influence locally. In *Royal to Public Life*, Vijaya Raje Scindia wrote that her husband, Jivaji, had "strong faith in the politics and programs of Hindu Mahasabha."

Ironically, the Scindias were its chief patrons. Christophe Jaffrelot in *Religion, Caste and Politics in India* notes that Jivaji, grandfather of Jyotiraditya, had been "willing to patronise" a movement which invoked the Maratha empire with pride,

was a necessity for Vijaya Raje, eager to quell "rumours" of her husband's association with the Mahasabha, but for Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, her 10-year stint with the Congress was a probable means at clawing back at its base eroding to the Mahasabha.

But Hindutva inklings of the Scindias can be largely attributed to the Angre clan, whose Chandrapur Angre, the second-most richest jagirdar in the Gwalior estate, aided and advised Jivaji; later his son Sambhaji Angre became an associate of Vijaya Raje, and set up the local Hindu Sabha in Gwalior, which was visited by Savarkar in 1938.

When Vijaya Raje joined the Jana Sangh in 1971, and latter became a founding-member of the BJP, Angre provided her with the necessary ideological base, but he also

became reason for the rift with her son, Madhavrao, who joined the Congress after leaving the Jana Sangh, never to look back, charting a different course from sisters Vasundhara and Yashodhara.

### Crucial link

Another crucial link with the BJP for Scindias is former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. To pursue higher studies in Kanpur, he was funded by the Scindias, "whom he naturally revered," wrote Ullekh N.P. in *The Untold Vajpayee: Politician and Paradox*. In 1984, Vajpayee was "up against his own mentor's son" Madhavrao in the Lok Sabha election from Gwalior, and defeated, switched to contesting from Lucknow thereafter.

In 1992, when the Babri Masjid was being torn down, wrote William Dalrymple in *The Age of Kali: Indian Tra-*

## Punjab government to honour woman boxer

Simranjit Kaur qualified for Olympics

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

World championship bronze medallist boxer Simranjit Kaur, who has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, will be honoured with a cash award of ₹5 lakh by the Punjab government.

The announcement was made by Chief Minister

Amarinder Singh. Ms. Kaur is the first woman boxer from the State to qualify for the Olympics.

Sports Minister Rana Gurmit Singh Sodhi accompanied by the boxer and her family members met Amarinder Singh on Monday morning, according to an official statement.

Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli		
Open tender based on Single pack system Tender Notice No.-MCF/RBL/Tender/Shell assembly activity (LSCN/LGS coaches ) with partition / 2020-21/C174 dt. 12.03.2020 is invited by Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/Shell, MCF/RBL through IREPS portal www.ireps.gov.in for and on behalf of president of India for the following work:-		
Description of Work	Approx. Value (₹)	EMD (₹)
Shell assembly activities on Jig-I for LSCN/LGS coaches with partition as per scope of work	93,65,328.00	1,87,300.00
Cost of Tender document - ₹. 5,000.00 only		
Quantity of Work- 300 Coach.		
Completion period of Work- 12 Months or earlier.		
Period of Submission of tender document- From 19.03.2020 to 02.04.2020.		
Date & time of closing of Tender- 02.04.2020 at 11.45 hrs.		

# Election panel defers civic polls in West Bengal

Decision will be taken after reviewing the situation: SEC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

The West Bengal State Election Commission on Monday announced its decision to postpone the civic polls.

State Election Commissioner Saurabh Kumar Das, after meeting representatives of the political parties, said that a decision in this regard will be taken after a review of the situation after a few days.

Mr. Das also cited the example of Andhra Pradesh where local elections have been delayed.

**Parties meet SEC**  
Earlier in the day, major political parties in West Bengal had urged the State Election Commission to postpone the upcoming civic polls.

"In the wake of the crisis, we will appeal to the State Election Commission to defer the upcoming municipal elections. In fighting this pandemic virus, political parties must stand together with the people we represent," a statement from the Trinamool Congress said.

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said that the party would support the decision of deferring the polls.

"We are ready for polls,



Post my interaction with the SEC and my subsequent communication to him, I am confident that he would take an appropriate call

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR  
West Bengal Governor

were likely to be held in next few weeks and the parties have already hit the campaign mode.

**Session cut short**  
The West Bengal Assembly decided to cut short the ongoing budget session.

Speaker Biman Banerjee held an all-party meeting during the day and informed the House that the session will end after meeting on Tuesday.

The Assembly session was likely to continue till March 26.

The Raj Bhawan in the State also decided to reschedule all programmes.

During the day, the State Bar Association also decided that lawyers will not take part in any judicial proceedings till March 21 as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

but in the wake of this crisis, if the State government and SEC take a decision, we will support it," he said.

The Left and Congress leaders are also willing to support the decision.

## COVID-19

State Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar had also advised the Commission to take note of the totality of the situation while deciding the dates for the polls.

"Post my interaction with the State Election Commissioner and my subsequent communication to him, I am confident that the SEC would take an appropriate call," he said.

Elections to several civic bodies, including the Kolkata Municipal Corporation,

Office of the Executive Engineer, JKPTCL Transmission Line Maintenance Division-III, Amargarh, Sopore  
Tele No: 01954-225010 Fax: 01954-225010,  
E-mail: tlmd3rdamargarh@gmail.com

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

E-NIT No. EE/TLMDA/05 of 2020

DATED: 13-03-2020

Superintending Engineer, Operation & Maintenance Circle 1st, Bemina Srinagar on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory invites e-tenders (In Two Cover System) valid for 180 days from reported, experienced and financially sound Electrical Contractors and Executors fulfilling the eligibility criteria specified in the standard bidding documents for the work detailed below. E-Tenders need to be accompanied by earnest money deposit (EMD) in the shape of DD/CDR/BG from any Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank equivalent to 2% of the advertised cost pledged to Superintending Engineer, Operation & Maintenance Circle 1st Bemina, Srinagar, PDD, Kashmir, J&K.

The complete bidding process is online. However, hardcopies consisting of Tender Fee & EMD (original instruments) in cover-land Techno-Commercial bid (as per SBD) in cover II, has to be submitted only by the Lowest Bidder in the office of Superintending Engineer, Operation & Maintenance Circle-1st, Bemina, Srinagar on the day which will be communicated to lowest bidder. Financial bids must be submitted online only as per prescribed format.

The Standard Bidding Document is available on website <http://jkttenders.gov.in>.

Scope of Work	Qty	Estimated Cost	Tender Fee	EMD	Time of Completion
Augmentation of 132/33 KV Grid sub-station Amargarh Sopore by way of various works required for installation of 50 MVA power transformer.	As per BOQ	Rs.300 Lacs	Rs. 5000/-	Rs.6.00 Lacs	06 Months

The information regarding schedule of downloading of the tender document and submission dates thereof is as per the table below:

### Critical Dates

1. Issue of NIT	14-03-2020 (10.00 AM)
2. Downloading of bidding documents (Start)	14-03-2020 (10:00 AM)
3. Downloading of bidding documents (End)	16-04-2020 (4:00 PM)
4. e-Bid submission (start) date & time (Submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF formats)	01-04-2020 (2:00 PM)
5. e-Bid submission (end) date & time (Submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF formats)	16-04-2020 (4:00 PM)
6. Start date of clarifications	14-03-2020 (10:00 AM)
7. End date of clarifications	30-03-2020 (4:00 PM)
8. Pre Bid meeting	31-03-2020 (2:00 PM)
9. Online Techno-Commercial e-Bid opening date	20-04-2020 (2:00 PM)
10. Venue of opening of Techno-Commercial-Bids	Office of the Superintending Engineer, O & M Circle 1st, Bemina, Srinagar
11. Cost of e-Bid document (to be submitted in the form of Demand Draft Pledged to Executive Engineer JKPTCL, TLMD-III Amargarh)	Rs 5,000/-
12. Amount of earnest Money Deposit (2% of Advt cost)	Rs 6.00 Lacs

\* Only the bidders possessing the qualifying criteria as mentioned in the SBD should participate in the bidding process.

Clarifications can also be sought from the office of the under signed on E-mail [tlmd3rdamargarh@gmail.com](mailto:tlmd3rdamargarh@gmail.com) or fax 01954-225010.

Before participating in the bids, the bidder shall acquaint himself with the site of work and local conditions.

The department reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.

S/D  
Executive Engineer  
JKPTCL,  
TLMD-III, Amargarh  
Sopore

DIP/K-NB-2295

### OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

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#### Loving Remembrance

DOB: 03.05.1922

DOB: 17.03.2013

Mrs. Vinolia Vincent

Retd., Asst. Headmistress,

Bentinc Hr.Sec.School

W/o. Late Vincent Samuel

Inserted by Children. M: 9940613593

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DONATE EYES-GIFT SIGHT

## War on infection



Workers spraying disinfectant on the Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express train at a railway yard in Kolkata on Monday. ■ PTI

Arunachal school closed after boy's death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The school in Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district where a Class VI student died of unnatural causes has been shut down indefinitely.

A local court on Monday sent three employees of the school to judicial custody while the Juvenile Justice Board sent four minors held in the case to a juvenile home in East Siang district's Pasighat, District SP Jimmy Chiram said.

The boy was found dead in the bathroom of the hostel at Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya in the Sher area near Kimin town on Friday evening. Officials probing the case said bullying could be one of the reasons behind the boy's death.

## Mobile Internet shut, prohibitory orders in Manipur

A suspected land dispute led to violent clashes between residents of two villages, say police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
IMPHAL

Mobile Internet services were suspended for three days on Monday across Manipur and prohibitory orders imposed in parts of Kamjong district after violent clashes between residents of two vil-

lages over a suspected land dispute, officials said.

The measures were taken after villagers of Kamjong in the homonymous district allegedly attacked the residents and torched houses in Chassad village.

Some residents of Chas-

sad village have been sheltered at a government camp, they said, without elaborating on whether anybody was injured in the attack.

Police contingents have been deployed in both the villages to maintain peace.

Mobile Internet services were suspended to prevent any disturbance of peace and public order in the State after anti-social elements tried to vitiate the atmosphere by circulating hate videos and images, according to an order issued by Special Secretary (Home) H. Gyan

Prakash.

Kamjong District Magistrate Kengoo Zuringla clamped prohibitory orders under section 144 CrPC at Chassad-Kamjong and along the main road of Sampui area. The order will be in force till further notice.

## Arunachal puts off survey of road through tiger reserve

The project had attracted criticism from all quarters

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Arunachal Pradesh government on Monday decided to "keep in abeyance" the survey work for a road through the Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR).

The project had attracted criticism from wildlife activists, film personalities and political leaders.

A 40-km stretch of the East-West Industrial Corridor road proposed to connect Sejosa in Pakke Kessang district and Bhalukpong in West Kameng district of the State passes through PTR, a biodiversity hotspot of the eastern Himalayas.

"We cannot afford to destroy our planet's natural wealth. All survey work for the proposed road through PTR is kept in abeyance following an initial review meeting with Chief Secretary and Commissioner PWD today (Monday)," Chief Minister Pema Khandu said.

He also said that local stakeholders would be part of the next review meet-

ing on the road project.

Sejosa-based environment activist Tana Jorjo Tara had through an RTI raised the alarm over the proposed road through PTR. *The Hindu* had reported the development in February.

### Protected sanctuary

Mr. Khandu observed that PTR, home to over 2,000 species of plants, 300 species of birds, 40 species of mammals, 30 species of amphibians and 36 species of reptiles, is one of the most protected sanctuaries in the country and pride and treasure of Arunachal Pradesh.

"As many species of flora and fauna are globally threatened, and PTR is one of the last remaining strongholds left for these species, we are committed to preserving it for our coming generations. We are aware that any infrastructural development that can be detrimental to the tiger reserve in the future need to be considered seriously before proposing it," he said.

## Tiger kills crab-catcher in Bengal's Sundarbans National Park

'He might not have permit, had illegally entered forest'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CANNING (W.B.)

A 52-year-old crab-catcher is suspected to have been killed by a tiger in Sundarbans National Park in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, police said on Monday.

Basudeb Sarkar and two others from Kumirmari village in Sundarban Coastal Police station area had ventured into the national park to catch crabs on Sunday, an officer said.

One of the crab-catchers, Swapan Mondal, said the tiger attacked Sarkar from behind and dragged him deep into

the forest, he said.

However, Sarkar's body is yet to be found, the officer said.

"Prima facie, it seems the trio did not possess permits to catch crabs in the forest and had illegally entered it. If that is the case, the kin of the deceased will not be eligible for compensation," a forest official said.

The export of crabs from Sundarbans to China has taken a hit due to COVID-19 outbreak. However, with crab markets reopening in Singapore and Hong Kong, crab-catching activities have resumed in the region, sources said.

HARYANA STAFF SELECTION COMMISSION  
Bays No. 67-70, Sec.-2, Panchkula 134151  
(Website: [www.hssc.gov.in](http://www.hssc.gov.in))  
CANCELLATION NOTICE

CANCELLATION NOTICE TO THE CANDIDATES FOR ONLINE WRITTEN EXAMINATION (COMPUTER BASED TEST) FOR THE POST OF ASSISTANT LINEMAN (ALM) AGAINST ADVT. NO. 11/2019, CAT. NO. 21 (2<sup>nd</sup> &

# Govt. orders private offices to go for 'work from home'

CM urges public to show self discipline for next 15 days; limits ministers' entourage

SHARAD VYAS  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government went into partial lockdown mode announcing closure of private office spaces, religious shrines, and wedding functions after fresh cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) were reported from across the State on Monday.

At a meeting with health officials, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray warned that citizens would have to show greater self discipline for the next 15 days – which are crucial for the mutation of the virus – or the government would be left with no option but to go for a total closure of the financial capital and rest of the State.

Fighting COVID-19 is not only the government's responsibility but citizens too will have to chip in by adhering to the government's advisories, he said. "For everything we cannot make a law. For now we have not stopped trains and buses, we have not shut down hotels. But I request people with



**Tough measures:** Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray addressing a press conference on Monday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

folded hands to adhere to the advisories to avoid total lockdown in future."

Among the measures announced on Monday, the government, under the Epidemic Disease Act, ordered private offices to operate at below 50% of the total attendance and allow the rest to work from home.

Those offices involved in essential services are ex-

empted from the order. "We have issued orders to all private offices just a while ago," additional chief secretary and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation Commissioner Praveen Pardehi said.

The government has also asked shrines and religious sites, including temples, mosques, and churches, to avoid large gatherings and ceremonial prayers until further orders. Mr. Thackeray said he had empowered district officials to take all necessary measures, including closing of discos and pubs if needed to restrict the spread of COVID-19 in urban and rural areas. Following the orders, the city's iconic Siddhivinayak temple announced closure with immediate effect. "I am requesting churches and mosques to follow suit," the CM said.

The government also passed orders restricting its Cabinet and State ministers entering offices with large entourage. Now the entourage has been limited to less than 10 people, including assistants and secretaries. General public has also been restricted from entering the State headquarters.

The State postponed all university and school examinations, except Class X and Class XII, until further notice, Health Minister Rajesh Tope said. All scheduled elections has also been deferred for the next three months.

## Spray to kill



**Preventive step:** In the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak, sanitation workers spray to disinfect a Metro station in Nagpur on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## All houses will have electricity, potable water by 2022: Sawant

Goa CM says Mopa airport will also be ready by that year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PANAJI

Campaigning for the March 22 elections to zilla parishads, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said all houses in the State would get electricity, toilets and water connections by 2022.

Addressing a corner meeting at Succoro zilla panchayat constituency on Sunday, the CM said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government was keen to usher in development.

"Our government is committed to provide development to each and every village. We assure you that by the year 2022, all the homes in Goa will have toilets, light (electricity) and potable water connections," he said, adding that toilets would be provided to each and every household in the next two to four months.



Pramod Sawant

Referring to upcoming greenfield airport at Mopa, Mr. Sawant said the first

flight from the airport will take off in 2022. "The airport will create more than 20,000 jobs," he said.

The chief minister reiterated that the State government is working on a legislation to give 80% jobs to locals in private industries.

The elections to two zilla parishads in North Goa and South Goa will be held across 50 constituencies on March 22.

The next Assembly elections are due in 2022.

## Opposition objects to CM holding rallies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PANAJI

Opposition parties on Monday objected to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant addressing public meetings for upcoming zilla panchayat elections despite the COVID-19 threat.

At least one political party has suggested that the upcoming polls be postponed in view of concerns over novel coronavirus. "When Andhra Pradesh can keep its zilla panchayat elections on hold for the next two months, Goa with a similar climate could also imitate it," said Goa For-

ward Party (GFP) president Vijai Sardesai.

Referring to the campaigning by the CM, Mr. Sardesai alleged that the State was not taking the pandemic seriously.

"The government's reaction to the virus varies from port minister Michael Lobo saying that outbreak will increase tourism footfalls in Goa to party's Goa chief (Sandan Tanavade) stating that voting for ZP elections is safe from the coronavirus spread as it will not be held in air-conditioned booths," The GFP president said.

## Firm's 4 office-bearers booked for boat capsizing near Mandwa

They have been charged with act endangering life, say police



**Scary sight:** The ferry carrying 90 people had capsized near Mandwa in Raigad on Saturday morning. ■ FILE PHOTO

RAINA ASSAINAR  
NAVI MUMBAI

The police have registered a case against four office-bearers of Gateway Elephanta Jal Vahatuk Sahakari Sanstha after a ferry belonging to the organisation had capsized in the Arabian Sea near Mandwa jetty on Saturday.

The secretary, chief secretary, vice president, and driver of 'Al Fatah' boat of Ajanta services, which is being run by the Sanstha, have been booked under Section 336 (act endangering life or personal safety of others) and Section 282 (conveying a person by water for hire in unsafe or overloaded vessel) of the Indian Penal Code.

"The documents were in

## Tourist, religious places out of bounds

Ajanta and Ellora caves, Siddhivinayak and Tuljabhavani temples will remain shut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Authorities in Maharashtra, which has registered the highest number of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) positive cases in India, have decided to close some prominent tourist and religious attractions as a precautionary measure.

The world famous Ajanta and Ellora caves near Aurangabad, the popular Siddhivinayak temple in Mumbai, and the Tuljabhavani temple in Osmanabad district will remain closed.

The caves will be shut from Thursday till April 7, an official said. The other sites that have been put under lockdown are Bibi-ka-Maqbara, Aurangabad Caves, and Daulatabad (Devgiri) Fort, all of which attract robust tourist footfalls, including foreign nationals.

"All monuments in Aurangabad under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Maharashtra government will remain closed from March 19 to April 7. Tourists who have been allowed to visit these sites over the next two days have already been screened by the ASI," Collector Uday Choudhari said.

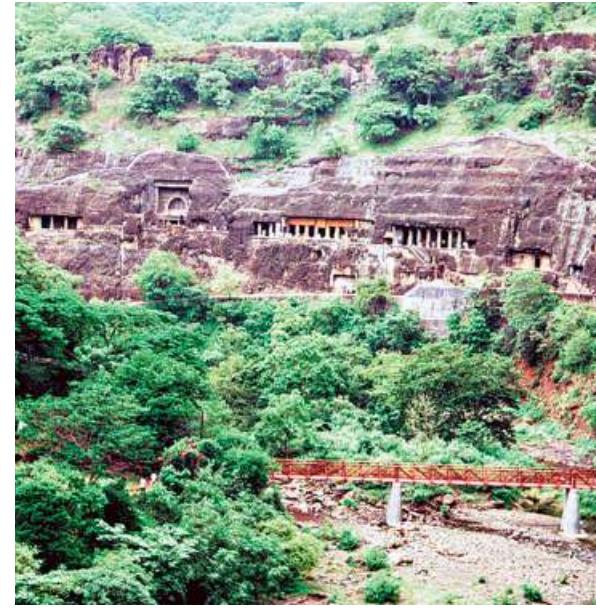
Siddhivinayak temple trust chairman Adesh Bandekar said the number of coronavirus cases is increasing rapidly worldwide. "Thousands and lakhs of people come to the Siddhivinayak temple to pay respect. In the current situation, it is our responsibility to deal with the crisis (coronavirus outbreak). Hence, the trust has decided that the temple will be closed for worship till further notice."

The Tuljabhavani temple will remain shut for devotees from March 17 to 31. "In spite of the outbreak, 13,000 devotees visited the temple on Sunday," the shrine's assistant public relations officer, Nagesh Shiroto, said.

"Hence, a meeting of the managing committee was



**Seeking Bappa's blessing:** Devotees performing puja at Siddhivinayak temple at Prabhadevi in Mumbai on Monday. ■ AADESH CHAUDHARY



The world famous Ajanta caves near Aurangabad will be closed for visitors from Thursday till April 7. ■ FILE PHOTO

held on Monday and it was decided to shut the temple from Tuesday (March 17) to March 31," he said.

Entry restrictions to Mantralaya, which sees thousands of visitors daily, will also be in force, Public Health Minister Rajesh Tope said.

The State government, which had announced closure of urban schools and colleges, has now decided to

extend the measure in rural areas too. Schools and colleges in rural Maharashtra will remain closed till March-end due to the coronavirus situation, Mr. Tope told reporters.

Four new cases have been detected in Maharashtra, taking the tally to 37 on Monday. Of the four cases, three were reported from Mumbai and one from Navi Mumbai, a government official said. "The total number

of coronavirus positive cases increased to 37," he said.

Similarly, the Raj Bhavan tour for citizens has been suspended till March 31, an official said. The tour of the sprawling complex, the residence of the Governor, is well patronised and 20 people are let in every day after prior booking.

"The tour booking for April is full but we will try to adjust those who missed out on it this month," he said. It was introduced in 2015.

The decision to prohibit visits comes in the backdrop of the State government appealing to people to avoid crowding and mass gatherings as part of measures to prevent spread of the viral infection.

The Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC) has suspended racing till further notice. "We have taken a decision to suspend all activities at RWITC as a precautionary measure to help combat the spread of COVID-19. We request everyone to stay safe, keep indoors, and maintain high spirits during this global health crisis," a statement issued on Monday quoted RWITC chairman Zavaray Poonawala.

+ The Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC) has suspended racing till further notice. "We have taken a decision to suspend all activities at RWITC as a precautionary measure to help combat the spread of COVID-19. We request everyone to stay safe, keep indoors, and maintain high spirits during this global health crisis," a statement issued on Monday quoted RWITC chairman Zavaray Poonawala.

## Firm tampers with sanitiser expiry date labels, raided

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
AURANGABAD

Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials raided a firm in Aurangabad and caught staff changing expiry date labels

on hand sanitiser bottles to profit from the novel coronavirus outbreak, a senior official said on Monday.

The staff of Eurolife Healthcare in Waluj industrial area were replacing

till midnight. Sanitiser stock worth ₹50 lakh has been seized. They were manufactured in a factory in Gujarat and were being marketed by Eurolife Healthcare in Aurangabad," Mr. Kale said.

"Prices were also being changed. The raid started on Sunday evening and went on

till midnight. Sanitiser stock worth ₹50 lakh has been seized. They were manufactured in a factory in Gujarat and were being marketed by Eurolife Healthcare in Aurangabad," Mr. Kale said.

+ The staff of Eurolife Healthcare in Waluj industrial area were replacing

order and the passengers were within the prescribed capacity of the boat. They had charged the passengers for a safe journey and their act endangered their lives; hence we booked them. We have witnesses on the basis of which the case was registered. The upper deck of the ferry was meant to have only one person yet many of the passengers were allowed to go up and travel," assistant police inspector Dharmaraj Sonke from Mandwa coastal police station said. All the people booked have been served notices.

According to the police, prima facie, the boat hit a rock and water started seeping in, after which an alert was issued.

Constable Prashant Gharat, who was patrolling in a trawler, spotted the sinking ferry and rescued 80 people through the trawler while the 10 were rescued by a speed boat that reached after Mandwa jetty was alerted. "The boat is still stuck in the seabed," Mr. Sonke said.

Backing Mr. Parmar's demand, Leader of Opposition Paresh Dhanani said the session could be postponed as discussions on the budget had been completed, adding that the government had already ordered closure of schools, colleges, cinema halls, and other places at

tracting footfalls. He also cited the example of neighbouring Maharashtra where the budget session ended ahead of the schedule.

However, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani opposed the demand saying such a move would send the wrong message to people amid the coronavirus threat.

Mr. Rupani claimed the Congress was more concerned about the crisis rising from five of its MLAs resigning ahead of the March 26 Rajya Sabha polls.

Congress MLA from Ahmedabad's Danilimda, Shailendra Parmar, requested Speaker Rajendra Trivedi to postpone the budget session, scheduled to end on March 31, and resume it when the virus scare dies down.

"We should stay back here and worry about the people of the State. If we run away scared, then what will happen to citizens? This is why, as public representatives, we should not be scared, but care about people," the CM said.

"Their demand for suspension is more due to *toda-na* (break up) (play on the word corona and a reference to the quitting of MLAs) scare because of the upcoming Rajya Sabha election," he said.

WB HIDCO  
N.I.T No.56 of AE under SR,GM & SE of 2019-2020  
Sealed tenders are invited from bonafide, resourceful, experienced outsiders having experience in execution of similar nature of works from any Organization for the work- "Supplying, fitting and fixing of different sizes of directional signage board at Eco Park, New Town, Kolkata." Last date of receiving application 17.03.2020 upto 2.00 P.M. in the Camp office of Assistant Engineer, WB HIDCO.  
Assistant Engineer  
Under Sr. G.M & SE  
WB HIDCO

IKA-T1589(4)/2020

## IN BRIEF



Discharge petition by Bishop Franco dismissed

KOTTAYAM

The Additional District and Sessions Court I, Kottayam, on Monday dismissed a petition seeking to discharge Bishop Franco Mulakkal, former head of the Catholic diocese of Jalandhar, from a case pertaining to the rape of a nun. Considering the petition, Judge G. Gopakumar directed the bishop to stand trial in the case, registered by the Kuravilangad police on the basis of a complaint filed by a nun of the same diocese.

## Nine killed in two accidents in Telangana

MEDAK

As many as nine persons were killed and several others injured in two road accidents that took place in Medak, Telangana on Monday. According to the police, three persons were killed and two were injured when a car coming from the Shamshabad airport hit a lorry parked on the roadside at Narsingi. In another accident, six persons were killed and several others injured at Sangaipet and Ghanapur road on Monday afternoon. According to the police, the six persons were killed in the accident when an RTC bus hit a DCM van.

## Infection in ducks under control, says official

ALAPPUZHA

The bacterial infection that caused the mass death of ducks in Kuttanad, Kerala in recent days has been brought under control, according to the State Animal Husbandry Department. Speaking to presspersons here on Monday, officials said that 4,830 ducks had perished in Champakulam, Kandankary and Thalavady. "The situation has changed. We have brought the disease under control," said an official.

## 3 more persons test positive in Kerala as virus cases rise to 24

Two of them are in Malappuram, one in Kasaragod

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Three more persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Kerala on Monday. Two of them are in Malappuram and one in Kasaragod. With this, the total number of COVID-19 patients in the State rose to 24.

Of the three, two are from Dubai and one from Saudi Arabia. They had been put in home quarantine on their arrival itself, Health Minister K.K. Shylaja said.

With Keralites arriving in hoards from all over the world, the number of people under surveillance has been going up steadily. On Monday, 1,815 more people went into home quarantine, while another 72 were admitted to isolation wards in hospitals. The total number of those in home quarantine now is 12,470, while those isolated in hospitals is 270.

## COVID-19

Briefing the media after the all-party meeting held to discuss the COVID-19 situation, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan reiterated that tourism was very important for the State and that while Kerala was in for a long engagement with COVID-19, people should not give a bad impression about the State by treating foreign tourists with hostility.

He expressed concern that the COVID-19 containment efforts of the Health Department were being derailed by people who refused to observe home quarantine properly, in the process en-



Preventive measures: A woman being screened using a thermal scanner at the Ernakulam junction railway station on Monday. ■ V. VIBHU

## Close down liquor outlets, says Chandy

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Congress veteran and former Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on Monday urged the LDF government to close down State-run liquor outlets in view of the outbreak of COVID-19 in the State.

"With coronavirus spreading in the State, the

outlets under the State-run Beverages Corporation and Consumerfed should be closed down to avoid gatherings," he said.

## Seven proposals

In a letter to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, he also submitted seven proposals, including a moratorium on various loans taken by people

and financial aid to the needy who are under house surveillance, as part of extending maximum support to the people of the State during the time of the ongoing distress.

The annual school exams for the eighth and ninth standards, scheduled for March 20, 27 and 30, should also be cancelled, he suggested.

dangering more in the community.

He said more staff were being deployed and more counters were being opened at airports to ease the immigration process so that there was less crowding in airports.

He appealed to all religious places of worship to take all efforts to ensure that there was no crowding. No more than 100 persons should gather for weddings.

The government has asked for the entire list of hospitals which are non-functioning in the State to

create quarantine facilities.

## Councillors quarantined

Six councillors of the Kozhikode Corporation have been advised to remain in home

quarantine for the next 14 days after they flew back from Dubai on Friday after cutting short a visit to the Gufa.

The CPI(M) councillors who had left for Dubai on invitation from friends and relatives on March 7 were scheduled to return on March 15.

The Health Department has launched a help desk at Kuttanellur, near Thrissur, since it has been confirmed that a British tourist who tested positive for COVID-19 had attended the Kuttanellur temple festival on March 8.

## Doctor locked up

The police arrested the residents' association office-bearers of an apartment complex at Mundupalam in Thrissur on Monday who locked a doctor and his wife inside their flat, citing COV-19 threat.

The doctor and his wife had returned from Saudi Arabia recently after visiting their son.

## Karnataka medical colleges to act as COVID-19 'war rooms'

An entire floor will be converted into an isolation zone

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

All government medical colleges in the districts will henceforth act as COVID-19 'war rooms' in Karnataka. An entire floor in these colleges will be converted into a full-fledged isolation zone with 150-250 beds, ICUs and the required number of ventilators. Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar said on Monday.



Safety first: A health official conducting a thermal screening test in Bengaluru on Monday. ■ PTI

## Private colleges

Briefing presspersons after an emergency meeting with the directors of different government medical colleges, the Minister said private medical colleges would be roped in districts where there were no government

medical colleges.

Only 17 districts have government medical colleges in the State.

"In Bengaluru, we are holding talks with various medical colleges such as East Point Medical College, Akash Institute of Medical

Sciences and Research and MVJ Medical College. In private hospitals, too, we want to convert one floor into an isolation zone. We want to make sure that we have at least 3,000 beds for isolating patients in Bengaluru," he asserted.

## Another positive case confirmed in Telangana

The man had returned from Scotland

## STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has filed petitions in the Supreme Court and the High Court on Monday over the issue of the State Election Commission (SEC) postponing the local body citing the COV-19 threat.

The government, in its petition before the apex court, accused the SEC of not taking it into confidence while taking the major decision of deferring the polls and called the move anti-constitutional.

The government also found fault with the SEC for not consulting the High Court on whose instructions the elections were scheduled.

Pune, for confirmation. A person is declared positive for the virus after the sample tests positive at the Pune lab.

Four COVID-19 positive cases were confirmed in Telangana since March 2. The first positive case had a travel history to Dubai, the second positive patient had returned from Italy, the third patient from the Netherlands and the fourth case has a travel history to Scotland.

Of them, the index (first) case was discharged on Friday. The three remaining patients are undergoing treatment at Gandhi Hospital. The father of the second positive patient tested negative for the virus.

## PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

## See Section U/S 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Madan Rana, S/o Sh. Narayan Samser, R/o S-405, 4th Floor, School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 184/19 U/S 420/468/471 IPC, dated 04.07.2019, P.S. Shakarpur, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Madan Rana cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Madan Rana has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Madan Rana of FIR No. 184/19 U/S 420/468/471 IPC, dated 04.07.2019, P.S. Shakarpur, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 18.05.2020.

By Order  
Ms. Aakansha Vyas,  
Metropolitan Magistrate  
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

DP/05/ED/2020(Court Matter)

## HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

## e-Procurement Notice

## INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer, Shimla, Division No.I, HPPWD, Shimla-3, H.P.on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Cost of Tender	Time Allowed
1.	Construction/Improvement of Pedestrian path on Circular road in Shimla Town (SH)- construction of Foot path, covered drain ,paver Blocks flooring and safety railings V. Shape and U-shape drain on KSC/MRR road at RD. 148/30/ to 148/345, 148/380 to 148/435, 148/750 to 148/798, 148/795 to 148/915 and 151/060 to 151/125.	1,23,83,033/-	1,56,400/-	5000/-	180 days

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://htenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <https://htenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

## 3. Key Dates:

1. Date of Online Publication	26-03-2020 18.00 HRS
2. Document Download Start and End Date	26-03-2020 18.00 HRS upto 08-04-2020 16.00 HRS
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	26-03-2020 18.00 HRS upto 08-04-2020 16.00HRS
4. Physical Submission of EMD and Cost of Tender Document	09-04-2020 upto 10.30HRS
5. Date of opening of Technical Bid	09-04-2020 11.00 HRS
6. Date of opening of Financial Bid.	

## 4. TENDER DETAILS:

The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover.

i). Cover 1: Shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical documents/Eligibility information."

ii). Cover 2: Shall contain "BOQ / Financial Bid", where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

5. SUBMISSION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS: The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and other Technical Documents in the O/o Executive Engineer Shimla Division No-I HPPWD, Shimla-3 as specified in Key dates Sr. No. 3 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. BID OPENING DETAILS: The Technical bids shall be opened on 09-04-2020 at 11:00 HRS in the office of Executive Engineer, Shimla HPPWD Shimla, H.P. by the authorised officer. In their interest the tenderer are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

## Eligibility criteria:-

(i) The bidders must have successfully completed similar nature of one work not less than 40 % of estimated cost during the last five years under Govt. Department State or Central PSUs (without liquidated damages or compensation).

(ii) The executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason.

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



Anshul

General public is hereby informed that one boy namely Anshul S/o Shri Niwas R/o H.No. 5 Kh. No. 56, Maharanji Pratap Chowk B-Block Janta Vihar, Mukundpur, Delhi Age-16 years, Height-5'4", Complexion-Fair, Face-Round, Built-Medium, Wearing-Black Colour T-Shirt and Pant and Matmelia Colour Shoes in his feet has been missing/kidnapped since dated 28.01.2020 at about 7.30 AM from house. In this regard a FIR No.78/2020 dated 31.01.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this boy but please inform undersigned.

E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)

Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax : 011-24368639

SHO P.S. Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi

Ph.: 011-27811933, 27811934

7065036328

DP/27/ON/20

## EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

## OFFICE OF THE Ex. ENGINEER (ELECT)-I

SHAHDARA (N) ZONE, Keshav Chowk, Delhi-110053

NIT No. E.E.(Elect)-I/2019-N/EDMC/2019-20TC-39 Dated : 13.03.2020

## PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

The Executive Engineer (E) on behalf of Commissioner, EDMC invites online tenders in two Bid System for the following work:



**Nationwide alert:** A Health Department official scanning a passenger for fever at the Walayar check post on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border near Coimbatore on Monday; an employee disinfecting coaches of the Delhi-Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express at the New Delhi railway station; a member of an NGO distributing masks free of cost in Ahmedabad; and workers arriving at the Guwahati railway station donning masks. ■ M. PERIASAMY, SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA, VIJAY SONEJI & RITU RAJ KONWAR



## Private firms ready to test for COVID-19

The relatively low mortality and cases compared with other countries likely guiding govt's approach'

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

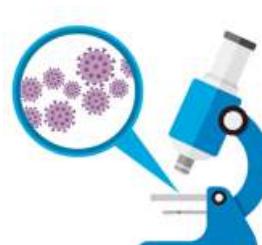
Companies that offer diagnostic tests say they have the capacity to mass-test for COVID-19 but have mixed responses to India's policy of restricting testing to government laboratories.

The Mumbai-headquartered Metropolis Labs, a chain of diagnostic labs with a presence across India, said they had already set up a "dedicated and isolated" COVID-19 laboratory and were awaiting the Union Health Ministry's permission. The company had already been "approved" by the Mumbai Municipal Commissioner for offering testing services. "We are getting another facility ready on standby and this

would be ready in the next seven days. We are importing kits from Altona, Germany for sample testing," Ameera Shah, Promoter & Managing Director, Metropolis Healthcare Ltd, said in a statement.

The tests are real time polymerase chain reaction tests (RT-PCR) that can, within a day – sometimes in hours – confirm the presence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the ongoing pandemic. All of these tests are proprietary products of multinational pharma companies and Indian laboratories must firm up licensing deals, order kits and appropriate chemicals, and train staff to use them.

Other leading laboratories



The ICMR has currently authorised 65 diagnostic centres across the country to test for COVID-19.

said they were having "discussions" with the Health Ministry regarding allowing private diagnostic companies to test. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has currently authorised 65 diagnostic centres across the country and

claims to be able to test at least 10,000 a day but, as a policy, has restricted testing to only those with symptoms – of cough, fever and breathing difficulties – and having a travel history, or a link, to COVID-19-affected countries.

**Help during swine flu**  
One company official said the relatively low mortality in India and cases compared with other countries and directives to quarantine international travellers were likely guiding India's approach to testing. "We are interacting with government every day," said Arvind Lal, Chairman and Managing Director, Lal Pathlabs, "The sense is that the government has enough capacity now and

when they need us we are there. During the swine flu outbreak of 2009, the government eventually involved the private sector and we offered tests at ₹4,500."

Navin Dang, Co-founder and Director, Dr. Dangs Labs, said the industry as a whole was equipped to handle a "million cases in India" if the need arose, however given the global nature of disease there could be shortages in procuring reagents as well as difficulty in scaling demand to produce test kits. "There's a concern among people and I've personally met some who feel they are sick but are afraid of going to government hospitals. Shouldn't they have that option?" he argued.

## India still in second transmission stage'

Will know trends by tomorrow: officials

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI

Senior scientists and health officials have said that India currently is showing no evidence of any community transmission and that enough tests were being done to pick up any early indication of third stage transmission.

### COVID-19

"We are testing enough and so far there is no evidence for the need to go in for mass testing. You have to remember that India started proactive action from January 17, whereas our first cases came in the end of January. The country had put in early measures to ensure that transmission stays localised and any indications otherwise are picked up," said Dr. Raman R. Gangakhedkar, head of the Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases-I, Division, Indian Council of Medical Research, on Monday.

He said the ICMR was doing random testing to understand and gain any indication of community transmission.

"We will be getting the results of our

random sampling by Wednesday, which will give us a flavour of where we are headed. As of now, the transmission is localised and our labs are receiving very few samples, and can test far more than the number of samples that we are getting," he said.

The ICMR has also noted that it has intensified random sample testing of people who show flu-like symptoms but don't have a travel history to any coronavirus-hit nation. "We have picked up 20 samples from over 50 labs for testing community transmission. We had previously taken a smaller group of samples from our labs to check for community transmission between February 15 and 29. But since this is an evolving virus, we need to keep a check," Dr. Gangakhedkar said.

Asked if weather conditions had an impact on the virus, he said: "Since the virus hasn't seen many seasons, we cannot say conclusively that the virus will slow down with higher temperature."

### Odisha reports first COVID-19 case

BHUBANESWAR

A student who returned from Italy tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday, the first positive case in Odisha. He belongs to Bhubaneswar. The student is under observation at the Capital Hospital here. His father and domestic help have also been kept in isolation.

### T.N. shuts schools, colleges, malls, cinemas

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Monday ordered closure of all educational institutions, malls, cinemas, amusement parks, gyms, zoos, swimming pools and museums in the State till March 31. However, "Board exams for Class 10, 11 and 12 and exams in colleges would be held as scheduled.

### Quarantine facilities near T.N. airports soon

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Monday said that to the extent possible, facilities will be established near the international airports in Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchi and Madurai to quarantine Indian nationals returning from 14 countries.

### 53 Indians evacuated from Iran: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI

A fourth batch of 53 Indians returned to India from Iran on Monday, taking the total number of people evacuated from the COVID-hit country to 389. They arrived in a Mahan Air flight at the Delhi airport around 3 a.m., officials said. They were later taken to Jaisalmir in an Air India flight to be quarantined. +

## SC calls for steps in prisons against virus

Lauds Kerala for testing and isolating prisoners

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday took *suo motu* cognizance of the risk of COVID-19 infection spreading within and from overcrowded prisons across the country.

Making its pleasure known for the preventive steps taken by the Government of Kerala to isolate and

test prisoners in the State, a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde ordered States and Union Territories to respond on the preventive measures in place in prisons against the virus by March 20.

The Director General of Prisons, Kerala, has set up isolation cells within prisons across Kerala. Those suffering with COVID-19 symptoms such as cold and fever are being moved to these isolation cells. All the new inmates who will be admitted

to the prisons in Kerala will be isolated in the isolation cells in the admissions block for six days before permitting their entry into the regular prison cells," the Supreme Court order said.

**Isolation ward in Tihar**  
The apex court noted that similarly an isolation ward has been set up in the Tihar Jail in Delhi and all the 17,500 inmates were checked for COVID-19.

It was found that none displayed any symptoms relat-

ing to COVID-19. The Tihar Jail authorities have also decided that new inmates will be screened and put in different wards for three days, the order said.

The court observed that social distancing, an effective antidote against the virus spread, is difficult in prisons. There are 1,339 prisons with approximately 4,66,084 inmates. The court said the National Crime Records Bureau shows the occupancy rate of Indian prisons is at 117.6%.

**Army team in Maldives to set up testing lab**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A 14-member medical team

of the Indian Army has

been deployed in the Maldives since March 13 for setting up a testing lab for coronavirus, Army spokesman Col. Aman Anand said on Monday. A team of six doctors and eight para-medical personnel has been deployed in Maldives, Col. Anand stated.

He said the ICMR was doing random testing to understand and gain any indication of community transmission.

"We will be getting the results of our

## West Bengal invokes Epidemic Diseases Act

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

The West Bengal government on Monday invoked the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and also extended the closure of the educational institutions from March 31 to April 15.

The Centre has advised

States and Union Territories to invoke provisions of the Section 2 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 so that all government advisories are enforceable. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the Act had been invoked to ensure that people with symptoms remain in isolation.

### WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 19.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty wind likely at isolated places over Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	33.2	22.8	18.8	Kozhikode	...36.0	26.2	21.2
Ahmedabad	33.7	22.8	18.2	Kurnool	...37.3	23.3	19.0
Aizawl	22.8	11.7	11.7	Lucknow	...26.6	15.4	11.0
Allahabad	29.3	15.8	15.8	Madurai	...37.4	24.1	19.0
Bengaluru	34.2	20.2	20.2	Mangaluru	...35.4	24.6	19.0
Bhopal	30.1	12.9	12.9	Mumbai	...37.5	20.6	16.0
Bhubaneswar	33.1	22.7	22.7	Mysuru	...34.9	22.1	17.4
Chandigarh	25.1	11.2	11.2	New Delhi	...26.7	12.6	12.6
Chennai	34.0	26.9	26.9	Patna	...29.9	17.4	12.0
Coimbatore	35.0	23.2	23.2	Port Blair	...32.7	26.0	19.0
Dehradoon	26.2	10.5	10.5	Puducherry	...33.4	24.2	19.0
Gangtok	18.2	7.6	7.6	Pune	...35.7	16.3	11.0
Goa	33.2	23.2	23.2	Raipur	...30.0	20.5	15.0
Guwahati	28.3	16.2	16.2	Ranchi	...27.6	16.8	11.0
Hubballi	35.0	23.0	23.0	Shillong	...21.7	15.0	10.0
Hyderabad	34.0	21.1	21.1	Shimla	0.2	16.0	5.1
Imphal	31.1	13.5	13.5	Srinagar	...18.9	12.2	7.0
Jaipur	27.1	16.4	16.4	Thiruvananthapuram	...35.7	24.8	18.0
Kochi	33.4	27.6	27.6	Tiruchi	...37.4	24.0	18.0
Kohima	25.2	12.8	12.8	Vijayawada	...34.8	22.6	17.0
Kolkata	32.3	22.9	22.9	Visakhapatnam	...33.3	25.2	19.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO <sub>2</sub>	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	36	41	12	.63	.93	■■■■■
Bengaluru	12	25	17	.24	.61	■■■■■
Chennai	58	19	52	.78	—	■■■■■
Delhi	21	28	12	.216	.141	■■■■■
Hyderabad	.3	.48	31	.73	.81	■■■■■
Kolkata	29	65	.73	.87	.104	■■■■■
Lucknow	.5	.24	.55	.122	.244	■■■■■
Mumbai	25	.74	.26	.133	.244	■■■■■</td









## Ranjan Gogoi nominated to Rajya Sabha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday nominated former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi to the Rajya Sabha.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-clause (a) of clause (I) of Article 80 of the Constitution of India, read with clause (3) of that article, President is pleased to nominate Shri Ranjan Gogoi to Council of States to fill the vacancy caused due to the retirement of one of the nominated members [K.T.S. Tulsi]," the Home Ministry said in its notification.

Justice Gogoi, who retired in November, headed the five-judge Bench that delivered the verdict in the Ayodhya land title dispute on November 9.

Soon after the unanimous verdict was delivered, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had lauded the judiciary for bringing an end to the decades-old Ayodhya land title dispute.

"The picture says it all," tweeted Congress communications chief Randeep Surjewala with two screenshots: Justice Gogoi's nomination to the Rajya Sabha and a news headline, "India's judiciary is facing an increasing lack of trust by public".

## Nirbhaya convict's plea quashed

Mukesh had sought restoration of legal remedies against the death sentence

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a petition filed by one of the Nirbhaya case convicts, Mukesh, for restoration of his legal remedies, including a curative petition, against his death sentence.

The four convicts in the case are scheduled to be hanged to death on March 20. Mukesh, through his counsel M.L. Sharma, said his earlier lawyer had coerced him to sign documents for vested political interests hatched in a joint criminal conspiracy.

The petition said: "Petitioner (Mukesh) is victim of criminal conspiracy and



Mukesh Singh

fraud played and hatched jointly by the R-1 (Ministry of Home Affairs), R-2 (Delhi government) and R-3 (Vrinda Grover) and other advocate who appeared in the Ses-

sions Court, High Court and the Supreme Court in the petitioner's death warrant case."

The petition claimed the limitation period to file a curative petition was three years from the date of dismissal of the review plea. He sought to "restore" the rights available to him and allow him to file curative and mercy petitions till July 2021.

A Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra refused to entertain the plea, saying it was not maintainable. Mr. Sharma was finally allowed to withdraw with the court dismissing the case.

As of now, all four – Pawan, Mukesh, Vinay and

Akshay – have exhausted their available remedies.

In Mukesh's case, the top court had on July 9, 2018 dismissed his review plea. His curative and mercy pleas were rejected by it and President Ram Nath Kovind, respectively.

A 23-year-old physiotherapy student was gang-raped in a moving bus in South Delhi on December 16, 2012. She

died after a fortnight from the massive injuries she suffered. Six people, including the four convicts and a juvenile, were named as accused. Ram Singh, the sixth accused, allegedly committed suicide in Tihar Jail days after the trial began.

## No pre-arrest bail for activists Navlakha and Teltumbde

Supreme Court gives them three weeks to surrender

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday rejected pleas made by activists Anand Teltumbde and Gautam Navlakha for pre-arrest bail in the Bhima Koregaon case.

A Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and M.R. Shah invoked Section 43D (4) of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and held that the provision "bars" the relief of anticipatory bail.

The Bench made it clear that there seemed to be "prima facie evidence" under the UAPA.



Anand Teltumbde, left, and Gautam Navlakha

three weeks to surrender. It directed them to surrender their passports immediately.

"We give them [Teltumbde and Navlakha] three weeks to surrender as they have enjoyed protection from arrest since January 21, 2018, appropriately one-and-a-half years," Justice Mishra said.

The order came after a lengthy hearing.

The court decided to pass a short order after considering the uncertainty surrounding its functioning in the wake of the spread of COVID-19.

## No going back



**Almost 100 days:** Women waiting for supplies in Shaheen Bagh on Monday, as protests continue against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens.

— SANDEEP SAXENA

## Kerala women in Kabul jail quizzed

They had joined the Islamic State in Khorasan Province with their husbands

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A group of Indian women who travelled to Afghanistan to join the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) between 2016 and 2018 have been interrogated by Indian security agencies in Afghanistan. The government is discussing if the women and their children can be allowed to return since their husbands have been killed in airstrikes and if so would they pose a security risk.

stratnewsglobal.com, a strategic affairs website, published a video of the December 2019 interrogation of three of the 10 women in the custody of Afghanistan authorities at a prison in Kabul.

The women are among

Once we reached here many things were not up to our expectation

thousands of IS fighters and affiliates, including children, who surrendered before the Afghanistan authorities in November and December.

A group of 21 men and women from Kerala left India in 2016 in batches to join the ISKP in Afghanistan.

The three women who appear in the video published by the web portal are Sonia Sebastian, alias Ayisha, Rafieela and Nimsisha, alias Fathima Isa.

A 2017 chargesheet filed by National Investigation Agency says Sonia of Kasaragod in Kerala left India on May 31, 2016 with her hus-

band, Abdul Rashid Abdulla, from the Mumbai airport.

In her interview with the Indian security officials, Sonia said she came with her husband as he would have gone to Nangarhar in Afghanistan anyway, and this way, she got to spend three more years with him.

"Once we reached here, many things were not up to our expectation; we came here expecting an Islamic life. No system here, people don't come to the masjid to pray five times a day. He [her husband] stopped making audios (propaganda material). A brother who witnessed his death said his last words were 'I am done with this dunyā (world)'," Sonia, an engineering graduate, is heard saying, accompanied

Rafieela recalls that they were given ₹5,000 by a Pakistani woman to reach a safe haven from IS-controlled territory. "After Rashid's death we have been running only," she says.

## Indonesia again flags concerns over CAA, riots

Public reaction to Indian events posing issue for Jakarta'

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

Ties between India and Indonesia have been strained further over a series of growing protests in Jakarta. The Indonesian government has reached out to New Delhi again to "convey concerns" over the violence in Delhi and riots that left 53 people dead, while India has demanded security assurances for the Indian embassy in Jakarta and the Indian consulate in Medan.

The message that the Widodo government in Jakarta has delivered is two fold: that it is committed to assuring safety and security for the Indian Embassy in Jakarta and the Indian consulate in Medan, while at the same time asking India to engage with the negative public perception in Indonesia.

"[Our] civil society and many organisations had a message and those messages were conveyed [to the government of India]. People have concerns, but the Indonesian govt. is confident that we are both pluralistic, democratic countries," sources said,



Sidharto Suryodipuro

referring to the fact that Indonesia that has an 80% Muslim majority is also home to Buddhists and Hindus, and is not an Islamic state.

The source also added that Indonesia would not "interfere" in India's internal issues, but that the Indonesian public's reaction to events in India was becoming an issue for their government as well.

On March 1, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had called in Indian Ambassador Pradeep Kumar Rawat to discuss the concerns, while Indonesian Ambassador to India Sidharto Suryodipuro has held more than one meeting with the Ministry of External Affairs to raise the issues and discuss security arrangements for the Indian mis-

## Rajasthan moves SC against CAA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

The Congress government in Rajasthan on Monday moved the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) contending that the law was against the country's secular fabric and violated fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. Rajasthan is the second State after Kerala to challenge the CAA in the top court.

The Left Democratic Front government of Kerala had on January 13 filed the plea under Article 131 seeking declaration of the CAA as violative of constitutional provisions.

Of particular worry was a meeting of the Indonesian Ulema Council on Thursday that called for a "fact-finding team" from the United Nations to be sent to India to look into the CAA, riots and actions in Jammu and Kashmir, condemning what it called "the actions of Hindu extremists....against Indian Muslims" and even called on the Indonesian government to "boycott Indian goods".

India has not reacted thus far to the events in Indonesia.

The Rajasthan government's suit under Article 131, filed through Additional Advocate General Manish Singhvi, said the States had a stake in the impugned Central legislation because it was going to affect the citizens by its arbitrary provisions.

"It is a dispute between the Centre and the State that needs to be adjudicated by the highest court of the land," said the petition.

## Bill on Central status to 3 Sanskrit deemed universities passed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A Bill to grant the status of Central universities to three deemed Sanskrit universities was passed by the Rajya Sabha on Monday. Several Opposition MPs raised concern that the other five classical Indian languages are being neglected.

The Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2020, was passed by the Lok Sabha in December 2019. Its title was amended in the Rajya Sabha to change the year. The amended Bill will now be sent back to the Lok Sabha. It gives Central status to the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth in Delhi and the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth in Tirupati.

GOVT. OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER DRAINAGE CIRCLE, UNIT-8, BHUBANESWAR-751012	
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE NO.SEDC-BBSR-02/2019-20	
email Id :- sedrainagebbsr12@gmail.com	
1. Name of Works	Renovation of Bhargavi-Ratnachira drainage system with structures (Partly covered Luna-Ratnachira drainage system) under DIP (Part-II) (Package-1) I. Bhargavi-Ratnachira Drainage Channel- DOAB-VII II. Nuagaon Drainage Channel- DOAB-VI
2. Total Number of Packages	1 nos. individual package
3. Estimated Cost of Individual Packages	Rs.4,30,31,997/-
4. Bid Identification No.	1. SEDC-BBSR/DD-PUR-04/2019-20
5. Period of completion	11 (Eleven) Calendar months
6. Availability of Tender On-Line	20.03.2020, 10.00 hours to 07.04.2020, 17.00 Hours.
7. Date of Opening of Technical Bid.	08.04.2020 at 11.30 hours in the O/o The Superintending Engineer, Drainage Circle, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar.
8. Date of opening of Financial Bid	17.04.2020 at 11.30 hours in the O/o The Superintending Engineer, Drainage Circle, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar.
9. Date of Lottery (If Required)	24.04.2020 at 12.00 hours in the O/o The Superintending Engineer, Drainage Circle, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar.
10. Procurement Officer	Superintending Engineer, Drainage Circle, Unit-8, Bhubaneswar-751012

Further details can be seen from the Govt. web site [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Drainage Circle, Bhubaneswar

OIPR-32375/11/002/1920

KASE KARNATAKA ACADEMY FOR SKILLS EXCELLENCE	
Registered Office: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Carmel Tower, Vazhuthacaud, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 014. Website: <a href="http://www.kase.in">www.kase.in</a>	Dated: 16.03.2020
<b>E-TENDER NOTICE - PROJECTS</b>	
1. Upgradation of Government ITI Ettumanoor on par with International Standards.	
2. Upgradation of Government ITI Kannur on par with International Standards	
KASE invites tenders from eligible entities for the above projects. Those who are interested may submit e-tender (Tender ID: 2020_KASE_350464_1 for Government ITI Ettumanoor and Tender ID: 2020_KASE_350464_1 for Government ITI Kannur) through <a href="http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in">www.etenders.kerala.gov.in</a> (RO/00678/D3/2020/I&PRD) Sd/- Managing Director	

Dates for submission of Bid: 27.03.2020 upto 16.00 Hrs. Tender Document ID: 2020\_KASE\_350464\_1

Detailed GNIB may be viewed in websites: [www.tenders.tn.gov.in/www.tnpl.com](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in/www.tnpl.com)

DIPR/1424/Tender/2020 TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper

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Detailed GNIB may be viewed in websites: [www.tenders.tn.gov.in/www.t](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in/www.tnpl.com)

# Shutdown in Spain as virus spreads

More countries impose lockdowns and close borders; the worst is ahead of us, says U.S. doctor

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
REUTERS

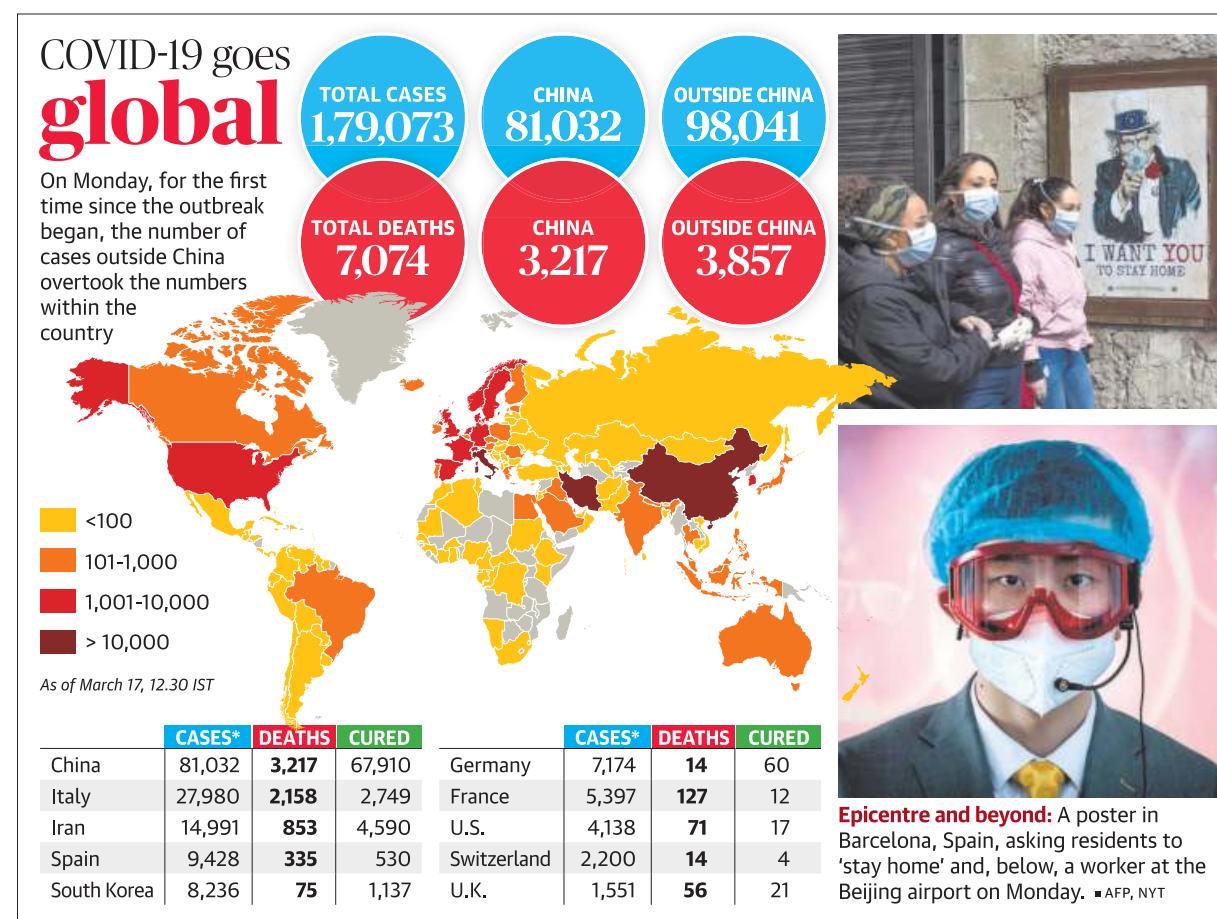
MADRID/NEW YORK

Spain moved to close its land borders as the number of infections inched ever closer to 10,000 despite a nationwide lockdown that officials said would likely extend beyond a fortnight.

The move came after Spain imposed a string of unprecedented restrictions, ordering its 46 million population to stay home, shuttering everything except food shops, chemists and petrol stations. But by 2.30 p.m. on Monday, the Health Ministry had counted 9,191 cases and 309 deaths, prompting the government to announce the closure of its land borders.

Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said the closure would come into effect at midnight, with only Spanish citizens, residents or accredited diplomatic personnel allowed in, and any cases of force majeure.

In the worst-case scenario, infections were likely to "continue rising for at least



Epicentre and beyond: A poster in Barcelona, Spain, asking residents to 'stay home' and, below, a worker at the Beijing airport on Monday. ■ AFP, NYT

## COVID-19

another 10 days," said Fernando Simon, the Health Ministry's emergencies coordinator.

Across the world, bars, restaurants, cinemas and schools were shutting down from New York and Los Angeles to Paris and Dubai in a worldwide effort to combat the pandemic.

Germans were asked to cancel all vacations as Canada and other countries closed their borders to all visitors. Airlines slashed flights, shed jobs and asked governments for billions of dollars in loans and grants.

In contrast to much of the world, Mexico and Brazil still

held large political rallies and the United Kingdom kept its schools open.

### 368 deaths in Italy

In Italy, there were 368 new deaths from the outbreak on Sunday, a daily toll more dire than even China was reporting at the peak of the outbreak that first hit its central city Wuhan.

"Many children think it is scary," Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg told a news conference dedicated to answering children's questions about the pandemic. "It is OK to be scared when so many things happen at the same time," Ms. Solberg said.

U.S. States pleaded with

the Donald Trump administration on Monday to coordinate a national response to the outbreak, saying patchwork measures enacted by State and local authorities were insufficient to confront the coast-to-coast emergency that has killed at least 71 Americans. "This should be a reality where the United States is put on a war footing, where the federal government mobilises all the resources necessary – and it begins with testing," New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio told MSNBC.

Without a coordinated federal response, the States of New Jersey, New York and Connecticut, home to more than 22 million people, struck a regional agreement to shut all movie theatres, casinos and gyms on Monday night. Maryland and Washington State enacted similar restrictions.

### Shutdowns in Dubai

The business and travel hub of Dubai said it was closing all bars and lounges until the end of March. Thailand plans to close schools, bars, movie theatres and popular cock-fighting arenas.

"The worst is yet ahead for us," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top infectious diseases expert in the United States, a warning echoed by officials in Switzerland, where 14 have died.

Italy's Prime Minister Giu-

seppe Conte told daily *Corriere della Sera* that the outbreak was still getting worse.

Britain has asked manufacturers including Ford Motor Co, Honda and Rolls Royce to help make health equipment, including ventilators to cope with the outbreak, and will look at using hotels as hospitals.

The International Olympic Committee will hold talks with heads of international sports organisations on Tuesday, a source said, amid doubts that the Tokyo 2020 Olympics set to start on July 24 can proceed.

The Jewish faithful should avoid kissing the Western Wall, the chief rabbi of the Jerusalem holy site said.

Former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has urged the President to con-

vene an all-parties meeting to discuss ways to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and possibly postpone poll in the wake of such a health crisis, the *Daily FT* newspaper here reported.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) on Monday said it was concerned about the possible spread of COVID-19 and noted that the safety of the public is "our paramount concern". "For this reason, and for the reason that all democratic aspects cannot be properly adhered to in this abnormal situation, we request the postponement of the general election due to be held on 25th of April 2020," its spokesman M.A. Sumanthiran said in a statement.

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) took a similar position. "This is a big public health concern and as a country we must focus on preventing it from further spreading," said Bimal Rathnayake, who represented the party in Parliament in the last session. On March 3, President Rajapaksa dissolved Parliament and announced polls on April 25.

"In the current situation, you can't campaign or hold rallies and that affects the Opposition parties the most, because government still has state media and even some private media to put out its messages. This situation gives the incumbent government an unfair advantage," he told *The Hindu*.

The Tamil Progressive Alliance, a grouping of Malayala [hill country] Tamils, also sought a postponement.

## French priest jailed for child sex abuse

Former army chief won recommendations from 61 MPs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
JERUSALEM

A French court on Monday convicted a former Roman Catholic priest of sexually abusing children and sentenced him to five years in jail, his lawyer said.

Bernard Preynat was found guilty of abusing dozens of boy scouts in the 1980s and early 1990s. Prosecutors had portrayed the 74-year-old as a serial paedophile and said he preyed on children entrusted to his care by their parents.

Preynat told the court he had not understood how grave his acts were nor how traumatic the consequences would be for his victims.

Prosecutors had sought an eight-year jail term.



do everything to form in as few days as possible a national, patriotic and broad government."

### Call for unity

Mr. Gantz, 60, won recommendations on Sunday from 61 lawmakers, a razor thin majority in the 120-member Knesset, or Parliament. His backers did not include Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing Li-

kud, but Mr. Rivlin has urged the two men to work together in an emergency unity government, in order to avoid a national policy vacuum in response to the pandemic.

"It is possible that forming a government quickly will require interim arrangements for the coming months", Mr. Rivlin said on Monday.

Mr. Gantz's path to a longer-term stable coalition is difficult given the deep divisions within the factions that backed him, which include the mainly Arab Joint List and the nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu.

Mr. Rivlin officially granted Gantz 28 days to try to form a government, a task which proved impossible for any candidate following the two elections last year.

## Biden, Sanders hit out at Trump

Debate focusses on U.S. response to COVID-19 pandemic

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON



Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders in Washington on Sunday. ■ REUTERS

White House hopefuls Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders launched a joint attack on President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as they faced off in a high-stakes debate on Sunday, accusing the President of undermining his own scientists with misinformation.

The two rivals also sparred about their record, taking advantage of the first one-on-one format of the marathon campaign to engage in extended – though civil – policy clashes on everything from universal healthcare and climate change to deportations and foreign policy. But with Mr. Biden appearing to have a

good night, riding high as the frontrunner following three weeks of strong performances in multiple primaries, he made a splash by saying he will "commit" to picking a woman running mate if he is the Democratic nominee.

Mr. Sanders said he would

"in all likelihood" do the same, following the most diverse nomination contest in U.S. history that saw no fewer than six women in the running to take on Mr. Trump in November.

Mr. Sanders took a stinging shot at the President, accusing him of fomenting confusion and eroding public trust in a time of crisis.

Mr. Biden essentially agreed, saying: "the existential threat to the United States of America is Donald Trump."

With the debate overshadowed by the fast-moving health crisis, Mr. Biden and Mr. Sanders spent the first half-hour on how to address the pandemic which has already caused almost 70 deaths and more than 3,600 COVID-19 cases nationwide.

## Japan knife attacker gets death sentence

REUTERS  
YOKOHAMA

A Japanese man was sentenced to death on Monday for killing 19 disabled people in a knife-wielding rampage in 2016 that was one of post-war Japan's worst mass killings.

Satoshi Uematsu, 30, had admitted to stabbing to death or injuring the victims at a care centre for people with mental disabilities where he had once worked in Sagamihara, southwest of Tokyo. Twenty-six others were wounded.

The carnage sent a shockwave through the nation, where violent crime is rare due to strict gun control.

## SUDOKU

8	6	4				9	7	
2	9	7	1				8	
	3	8		2				
5	2		6	8				
2		5	4					
5			3	2	4		9	
9	3			9	7		1	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12884

EXCLAIM INERTIA  
PERCEIVED GAWKS  
OPAEEENU  
REORDERING MYNA  
IRIITFAD  
ADEQUACY HANDLE  
ARKBZI  
ASLEEP REVERSAL  
GANDHI  
ITEM CENSORIOUS  
TIMING TONIGHT  
AROMA ACETYLENE  
TULITAAS  
EPITOPE DILUTES

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7 8 3 6 9 5 2 4 1  
4 2 9 8 1 7 3 6 5  
1 5 6 4 3 2 8 7 9  
9 1 5 3 4 8 6 2 7  
3 4 2 1 7 6 9 5 8  
6 7 8 2 5 9 1 3 4  
5 3 1 9 6 4 7 8 2  
8 9 4 7 2 3 5 1 6  
2 6 7 5 8 1 4 9 3

## FAITH

### Basis of esoteric quest

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* teaches disciple to look at the oneness in creation that unites the individual being, the world and the Supreme Reality, pointed out Swami Nirviseshananda in a discourse. The rishis in this Upanishad are engaged in the enquiry into the First cause of this entire universe. How is this universe born? By what is life sustained and on what are all beings established? What is the cause of experience of joy and sorrow in all beings?

The rishis undertake 'dhyana yoga,' the practice of sincere and undistracted contemplation and meditation to find answers to these doubts. They then realise the presence of a Divine Power hidden in all aspects of this entire universe. It then becomes clear to them that the manifest Nature is not independent and that it is totally dependent on the 'Deva atma shakti,' the power of the Divine Self, also known as Maya Shakti. This power is inseparable from the Supreme Lord. They are hence able to experience oneness with the Brahman, that is, they have the vision that their individual consciousness is no different from the universal consciousness which is the very Brahman. This is the 'Brahmatma Ekatva bodha,' the awareness of the truth of Brahman from the standpoint of the impersonal Self.

No rishi could have asserted this truth with so much assurance had he not been totally engaged in this experiment of discovering the First Cause through meditation on the variety of experiences that the manifested world offers to all. The rishi states with confidence: "I know the Supreme Brahman of sunlight lustre beyond darkness. By knowing Him one passes over death. There is no other path for going there." These words transcend the personal identity of the speaker though he expresses a subjective experience.

## ELSEWHERE



Test every suspected case of COVID-19: WHO

GENEVA

The World Health Organization (WHO) called on Monday for countries to test every suspected case of COVID-19, as the rest of the world registered more cases and deaths in the pandemic than China. "You cannot fight a fire blindfolded," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in a virtual press conference from WHO headquarters in Geneva. The WHO, he said, was urging countries to "Test, test, test. Test every suspected case." AFP

## MARKET WATCH

	16-03-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	31,390	-7.96
US Dollar	74.25	-0.61
Gold	41610	1.11
Brent oil	30.40	-11.16

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	261.40	-31.35
Asian Paints	1683.40	-114.30
Axis Bank	508.60	-60.20
Bajaj Auto	2339.55	-17.55
Bajaj Finserv	7495.60	-246.40
Bajaj Finance	3672.25	-280.30
Bharti Airtel	464.80	-27.05
BPCL	364.65	-11.40
Britannia Ind	2709.00	-54.60
Cipla	396.40	-29.15
Coal India	143.90	-10.20
Dr Reddys Lab	2826.95	-58.15
Eicher Motors	16493.70	-1178.45
GAIL (India)	78.15	-6.40
Grasim Ind	576.90	-28.05
HCL Tech	450.70	-42.20
HDFC	1841.75	-225.05
HDFC Bank	999.60	-70.30
Hero MotoCorp	1783.50	-100.45
Hindalco	115.65	-11.80
Hind Unilever	1941.90	-91.30
ICICI Bank	402.90	-44.30
IndusInd Bank	664.15	-139.60
Bharti Infratech	209.40	-17.85
Infosys	583.15	-59.20
Indian Oil Corp	89.70	-2.55
ITC	147.25	-15.00
JSW Steel	186.00	-28.90
Kotak Bank	1383.70	-86.35
L&T	968.70	-82.75
M&M	391.80	-37.05
Maruti Suzuki	5480.25	-358.35
Nestle India Ltd.	14397.20	-594.60
NTPC	90.80	-7.25
ONGC	60.15	-5.75
PowerGrid Corp	157.95	-9.95
Reliance Ind	1015.70	-89.60
State Bank	223.35	-18.65
Sun Pharma	368.55	-15.65
Tata Motors	82.95	-6.80
Tata Steel	289.60	-37.10
TCS	1696.40	-109.90
Tech Mahindra	603.40	-52.55
Titan	1011.35	-73.00
UltraTech Cement	3518.05	-270.85
UPL	376.80	-34.05
Vedanta	74.85	-9.20
Wipro	179.75	-17.65
YES Bank	37.10	11.55
Zee Entertainment	166.35	-16.45

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.07	74.39
Euro	82.78	83.14
British Pound	91.16	91.57
Japanese Yen (100)	70.02	70.33
Chinese Yuan	10.56	10.61
Swiss Franc	78.48	78.83
Singapore Dollar	52.10	52.34
Canadian Dollar	53.21	53.46
Malaysian Ringgit	17.19	17.28

Source: Indian Bank

## BULLION RATES CHENNAI

March 16 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g) ... 40.8... (48.9)

22 ct gold (1g) ... 3943... (4157)

# Virus tightens grip, Indian indices at lowest since Sept. 2017

Sensex loses 2,713 points, Nifty plunges 758; over 2,000 stocks decline on BSE

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Global equity markets continued to be in turmoil on Monday on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, even as the Indian benchmarks registered their second biggest single-day fall in absolute points and fell to their lowest level since September 2017.

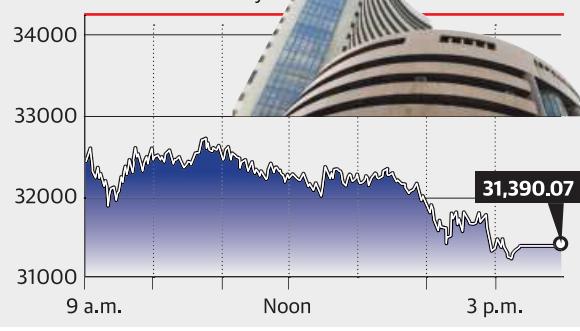
The 30-share Sensex lost a whopping 2,713.41 points, or 7.96%, to close at 31,390.07. The Sensex has now lost 10,884 points or nearly 26% from its record high of 42,274 touched in January.

The broader Nifty plunged 757.80 points, or 7.61%, to close at 9,197.40. The India VIX index spiked over 14% on Monday.

This was the second biggest single-day fall for the indices, having recorded their

## Monday blues

Stocks in the metal sector declined the most as the BSE Sensex fell 8% on Monday



worst fall on March 12. More importantly, market participants believe that there still exists uncertainty as to whether the markets have reached their bottom given that concerns around the pandemic are far from over.

"The equity market will bottom out once the infection numbers peak and start to recede... and then bottom-fishing opportunities could open up, but that is possible after clarity emerges in the next few months

with respect to an effective cure for the disease or the effectiveness of strong policy actions," global financial major Credit Suisse said in its latest India strategy report.

Monday saw leading Asian benchmarks such as Nikkei, Hang Seng and Kospi losing heavy ground as the virus outbreak threatens to impact global economic activity.

On the BSE, more than 2,000 stocks declined on Monday, as against only around 411 gainers. Provisional numbers showed that foreign investors were net sellers at ₹3,809 crore on Monday. In the Sensex pack, stocks such as Infosys, Axis Bank, HDFC, Tata Steel, ICI-CI Bank, ITC and IndusInd Bank all lost more than 9% on Monday.

A sharp cut in interest rates by the Federal Reserve to near-zero only added to the alarm, while traders worried that the pandemic was paralysing supply chains and squeezing company finances.

Apple, Amazon and Microsoft together lost nearly \$300 billion in market value. Wall Street's fear gauge jumped 13 points to 70.83.

## Vodafone Idea pays ₹3,354 cr. in AGR dues

Claims it has paid full principal amount

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Vodafone Idea on Monday paid ₹3,354 crore to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), amounting to the balance of the principal amount of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) liability, according to its self-assessment of the dues.

On March 6, Vodafone Idea had filed its self-assessment of the AGR liabilities with the DoT, in which the principal amount was determined at ₹6,854 crore for the period from FY2006-07 to FY2018-19. "Thus, the company has paid the full

principal amount of ₹6,854 crore towards AGR dues," the company said in a filing.

The telecom major had paid ₹2,500 crore on February 17 and a further ₹1,000 crore on February 20 towards this liability.

Separately, the Supreme Court earlier on Monday dismissed a petition by the firm challenging the levy of one-time spectrum charges by the government. Vodafone Idea Ltd. has assessed its telecom dues, arising from an October SC order, at ₹21,533 crore, less than half the over ₹50,000 crore the government had estimated.

An Indiabulls spokesman said no summons had been received.

## ED summons Anil in Yes Bank probe

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned for questioning senior officials of five top defaulters in the Yes Bank case.

A senior ED official said they had been summoned between March 17 and March 21. Among those summoned are Reliance Group chief Anil Ambani, Wadhavans of DHFL, Jet Airways' Naresh Goyal, Essel Group's Subhash Chandra and Indiabulls' Sameer Gehlaut.

An Indiabulls spokesman said no summons had been received.

## No proposal to ban short selling: exchanges

Deny any such move by regulator SEBI

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The stock exchanges on Monday clarified that the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was not considering any proposal regarding a ban on short selling to curb the ongoing volatility and equity sell-off.

The spokespersons for BSE and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) said 'there is no proposal on ban on short selling with SEBI', after a media report suggested that the capital markets regulator was considering such a ban among other measures.

Indian indices have fallen more than 25% from their record highs reached in January.

In market parlance, a fall of over 20% is looked upon as a sign of the markets entering a bear market.

## Hyundai Motor India rolls out all-new Creta

SUV prices start at ₹9.90 lakh

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

South Korean carmaker Hyundai Motor India Ltd. (HMIL) rolled out its sport utility vehicle (SUV) the all-new Creta in New Delhi on Monday.

Addressing a gathering, the company's managing director and chief executive officer, S.S. Kim said the new variant would be available throughout the country from Monday at one price, starting at ₹9,90 lakh for the base model and going up to ₹17.20 lakh for the top-end model.

According to him, the 'all-new Creta' comes with five new powertrain options and in 10 colours, including a two-tone options. It comes with an advanced BlueLink that offers over 50 connectivity features, giving freedom to remotely start engine for auto

as well as manual transmission.

The new car is loaded with features such as tri-beam LED headlamps, voice-enabled smart panoramic sunroof, 26.03 cm HD infotainment, premium interiors, drive mode select, traction control modes, Bose premium sound system, paddle shifters and electric parking brake with auto hold, according to the company officials.

## RBI tells banks to assess impact of COVID-19

Asset quality, liquidity to be studied

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has asked financial institutions to assess the impact on their asset quality, liquidity and other parameters due to spread of the COVID-19.

While announcing operational and business continuity measures in the wake of the deadly virus, RBI said, "supervised entities should also assess the impact of the disease within the organisation, and should make timely interventions for preventing further spread in case of detection of infected employees, including travel plans and quarantine requirements, as well as avoiding spread of panic among staff."

Banks have also been

## Damanis buy more stake in India Cements

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Radhakishan Damani has raised his stake in the India Cements Ltd. (ICL) by 4.02 percentage points to 16%.

Mr. Damani, along with Gopikishan Damani and Shrikantadevi R. Damani and Derive Investments (partners – Mr. Gopikishan Damani and Mr. Radhakishan Damani) originally held 4.71% equity stake in ICL. This became enhanced to 11.98% by the end of February 2020 following purchases made by the Damanis.

In a regulatory filing on Monday, Mr. Radhakishan Damani said that he, along with his associates, purchased 1,24,57,180 shares of ICL through open market deals in the BSE and NSE respectively on various dates from February 27 to March 16.

asked to encourage their customers to use digital banking facilities as far as possible.

These entities have been asked to take immediate contingency measures to manage the risks following the impact assessment.

The banking regulator said banks and financial institutions will have to devise strategy and monitoring mechanisms concerning the spread of the disease within the organisation, and should make timely interventions for preventing further spread in case of detection of infected employees, including travel plans and quarantine requirements, as well as avoiding spread of panic among staff.

Gateway Partners is co-founded by former Standard Chartered Plc. banker V. Shankar.

## Gateway buys stake in TVS arm

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Singapore-based private equity firm Gateway Partners has acquired a minority stake in a TVS Group company, TVS Supply Chain Solutions (TVS SCS), for ₹100 million.

This investment involves both primary portion and secondary element. The deal is the second largest private equity investment in TVS SCS after CDPQ – one of North America's largest pension fund managers – which had invested ₹155 million in TVS SCS in 201

Vir Das talks about *The Loved Tour*, his audience, and his writing process, among other things

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

Vir Das is, perhaps, in the hottest streaks of his life. Over the last two years, he has performed to full houses at home and abroad. He has opened for *Conan on TBS* and has been on Netflix and Amazon Prime. He will soon return to movies this year (the sequel of *Go Goa Gone* is being readied).

One could argue that it is tougher for a comedian to prolong his success than it is for other artists, say a musician. A tune, like wine, can get better with time. But jokes, usually, go stale soon. To remain relevant, Vir attempts to veer away from the usual. Take his latest Netflix show, *For India*, for instance. It was neither a political satire nor a collection of exaggerated personal stories – the two themes that is oft-repeated in the Indian stand-up scene.

With *For India* he chose to speak, sitting in front of a door on stage, to an audience segregated into Indians, foreigners and expats. He was talking about what he thought made India to those who knew about the country and those who wanted to know. Vir's *The Loved Tour*, which was supposed to tour 49 cities across India, including non-metro ones like Patna, Meerut, and Shillong has been indefinitely postponed.

"This new show is going to be about love. How one man questions all kinds of love – love for your family, your spouse, nation, God," he says. Vir speaks about *For India*, his process of writing comedy and more. Excerpts from a conversation.

**You said in an interview that *For India* was born out of this question: 'If I could tell you four things about my country, what would they be?' There have been a few major developments in our country, like the Citizenship Amendment Act, since the**



# 'Stand-up has a larger audience in rural India'

**show. Today, if you were to tell four things about India, what would they be?**

● It will be the same. In the show, I tried to talk about an India that can endure whatever is going on now. Leaders of today will be gone tomorrow. The tragedies of today will be gone tomorrow. But things like Old Monk, respecting your elders and Taj Mahal will live on.

**For India's audience had an interesting seating arrangement, wherein a segment of expats and foreigners were seated separately. What was the idea behind that?**

● The idea was simple. You have a group of people, who are not from the country. And, when you are talking about something that is relevant to you; try to be inclusive and make it relevant for them as well. The reason why I seated them separately is because I take some time to explain certain things exclusively for them. So, it is easy to highlight them with the lighting [when they are seated separately]. And, visually, it is interesting as well.

**Was it especially challenging to write for this show considering there were two sets of audience?**

● The idea of this show was to challenge myself. A Netflix [comedy] special is usually 10 stories about your life. In this case, it wasn't about me at all. It was 10 categories and five things per category. So, you are writing about 50 to 55 things as opposed to 10 things. It was definitely challenging. But I kind of enjoyed that.

**With *Jestination Unknown*, you took stand-up comedy to places such as Patiala and**



**Letting the audience draw the line** Vir Das on what keeps him ticking

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Kumarakom. Do you think stand-up comedy would find a substantial audience in rural parts of India as well?**

● I think stand-up comedy has a larger audience in rural parts of India than in metro. You find Hindi stand-up comedy videos getting 25 million views and English getting one or two million views. So, the larger audience is the regional segment. [With *Jestination Unknown*], the idea was to take live English comedy to these places. Hopefully, there will be an audience for that too.

**You speak about looking at stand-up comedy as art. And, it is increasingly becoming popular in India. Do you think it can be formally taught in educational institutions?**

● I don't think so. It can be learnt by watching. Of course, you have workshops about joke-writing. But you have to be a fan of the art form.

**Could you talk about the difficulty in writing comedy. One would assume experience makes it easier. However, there might also be**

**the challenge to differ from your previous work.**

● For me it is getting harder. Because I make it that way. I like to have a healthy fear of failure on every subsequent project. You are never really in a comfort zone. You try and write something different each time.

**Do you talk to your audience after every show?**

● No. But the audience talk to you during the show. And, I am not talking about comments, but about laughter. The kind of laughter is more informative than the comments. So, I record every show and listen to it later.

**Comedians usually exaggerate something to make it sound funny. But if you do too much, then, it becomes forced. Where do you draw the line?**

● I don't draw the line. The audience does. I figured that out a while ago. I am not in charge of the line, they are. I just have to keep writing and they will let me know where the line is. But if you are worried about drawing the line yourself, you are not going to write anything great.

## PEOPLE

### 'A brand-new world'

Says author Sarah J. Maas, on her debut in adult fantasy with the Crescent City series



After two YA fantasy series, *Throne of Glass* and *A Court of Thorns and Roses*, Sarah J. Maas makes her debut in adult fantasy with *House of Earth and Blood* (Bloomsbury), a part of the Crescent City series. The 800-page tome, like Maas's other books, moves at warp speed following the adventures of Bryce Quinlan. The part-fae, part-human Bryce is a party girl, whose world comes crashing down when her best friend is brutally murdered. In uncovering the truth behind her friend's death, Bryce uncovers a bunch of unsavoury truths and monsters. There is also the dishy fallen angel, Hunt Athalar, to keep Bryce company as she plunges into the various circles of hell or hel as the book spells it.

When asked about the pros and cons of writing a series, the 34-year-old author writes in an email, "The pros are getting to know the characters and the world really well and exploring everything to my heart's content. The cons are having to keep track of all those things!"

In interviews Sarah has said the *Throne of Glass* series is a retelling of the Cinderella story. *A Court of Thorns and Roses* is said to be a re-imaging of Beauty and the Beast. Sarah says *House of Earth and Blood* isn't a retelling of any particular story. "Creatures from various mythologies do make their way into this world."

The title Sarah says, "Relates to the city the book takes place in, and the four houses the people of their world are divided into." Envisaged as a trilogy, Sarah says, "There definitely might be room for more."

The switch to adult fantasy Sarah says is because, "The story called to me, with a protagonist that fit into the adult age range." She picks Bryce as her favourite character in the series. "She was the character who inspired this series, and is very close to my heart. She still keeps surprising me, which is my favourite kind of character to write."

Computers and cellphones co-exist with the fae, angels and nasty demons in *Crescent City*. "Again, this was just the world that called to me and appeared in my mind. I can't quite explain where the ideas come from – it often feels like magic. When Bryce and her world popped into my head, this was how it all appeared."

The climax of *House of Earth and Blood* has all the ingredients of a blockbuster – hideous demons pouring out the gates of hell, frenemies taking the last stand and Bryce digging into reserves of strength she did not know she had.

With fantasy a great favourite on streaming platforms, Sarah says though the series has not yet been optioned, "I am hoping it will be. I think it would work really well as a television show."

MINI ANTHIKAD CHHIBBER

## PRODUCTS

### For a summer bride

Anjul Bhandari has unveiled *Tala-E-Daura*, meaning era of gold, a Chikankari bridal collection for Spring Summer 2020. Each garment will have a touch of *zardozi*, *kamaani*, *badla*, *mukaiash*, *ari*, cutwork, and beadwork. There are *Jama* (flowy jacket), *Peshwa* (a voluminous floor-length *Anarkali*), *Gharara* (a short kurta with flared bottom and 3.5-metre *chadar* or *dupatta*), and *Dagla* (an overlap jacket in muslin, fine cotton or *Chanderi*), along with lehenga sets and saris. The palette is in keeping with summer lightness: dark ivory, pale daffodil yellow, pink lavender, and pastel grey.



At Ogaan, Hauz Khas Village; ₹1,50,000 upward

Contact us at [delhimetro@thehindu.co.in](mailto:delhimetro@thehindu.co.in)

## 5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



### EXHIBITION

**Oil paintings**  
Melange: The Art of Raghu Vyas, a solo show of oil paintings by Delhi-based artist Raghu Vyas is on display at Shridharani Art Gallery. Vyas is known for his luminous oil paintings reminiscent of the renaissance art technique. His motifs range from scenes from the *Mahabharata* and gods and goddesses to Nanak and Buddha.  
**VENUE:** Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House  
**TIME:** 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



### CELEBRATION

**St. Patrick's Day special**  
The Irish House is celebrating St. Patrick's Day, observed on March 17 each year. There will be a week-long special menu in all its outlets. On till March 22, the menu offers dishes such as Dublin Coddle, Irish Chip Butty, Belfast Carrots and Cabbage, Leprechaun's Spicy Drumsticks, all paired with a beer bucket.  
**VENUE:** The Irish House, Nehru Place & Noida  
**TIME:** 12 noon to 12 midnight



### GIG

**Jazz**  
The Piano Man Jazz Club is hosting Parvati & Rythem live tonight. Parvati Krishnan is trained in Hindustani classical music, sings in five different languages and weaves stories effortlessly through her songs. She will be accompanied by pianist and educator Rythem Bansal on the piano.  
**VENUE:** B6-7/22 Safdarjung Enclave Market  
**TIME:** 9 p.m. - 11:55 p.m.



### FOOD

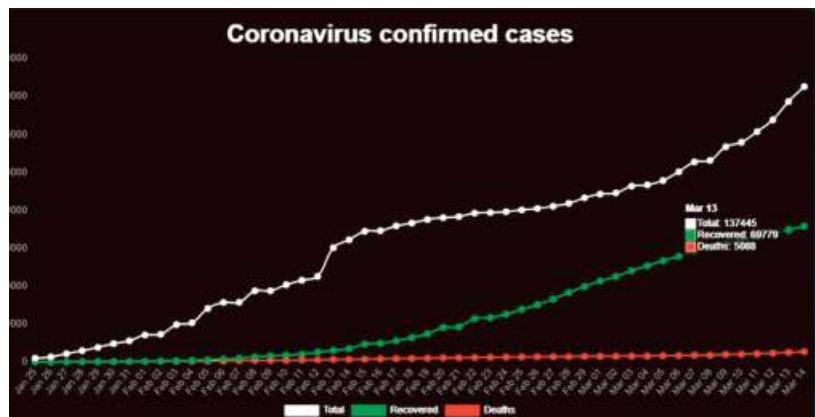
**Party menu**  
Malacca, The Malaysian Kitchen has introduced a party package menu with veg and non-veg options. On till 30th March, food enthusiasts can choose their favourite item from the assorted dishes on offer such as Sweet Potato, Spinach and Corn, Pok Choi, Basil Chicken, Steamed Fish, Chicken Chilli Mountain.  
**VENUE:** Sector 15 Part 2, Gurugram  
**TIME:** 12 noon - 12 midnight



### EXHIBITION

**Flower art**  
The Korean Cultural Centre in Delhi has organised the 6th Dae Hwa Flower Arrangements exhibition titled An Outing with Collage, at its premises. On view till 20th March, it showcases 22 artworks by 20 artists including Korean and Indian students and teachers, who have used the collage technique of visual art.  
**VENUE:** 25-A, Ring Road, Lajpat Nagar IV  
**TIME:** 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

## CMYK



App developers and data artists offer new ways of tracking the path of the Coronavirus



# Coding for COVID-19?

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

As more people across the country are encouraged to work from home, televised news, social media, and online forums combined can either be an enlightening or fear-mongering source of information. And with social distancing now a thing, one can only look at their phone or laptop so many times a day for accurate updates about the spread of COVID-19.

#### Tech times

Fortunately, a few tech companies are looking to make a contribution to eradicate the fake news floating around, using apps backed by data from official health organisations and medical institutions. First, the world saw an app launched on February 8 by NHC, General Office of the State Council and China Electronics Technology Group Corporations (CETC) with support from other government agencies.

This app's goal is to help people find their risk of contracting coronavirus referred to as 'close contact detector'. Users must provide their phone numbers, names, and ID numbers to check if they were in close contact – being in close distance, without any effective protection, with confirmed, suspected or mild cases when the person was ill

or asymptomatic – with an infected patient.

A February 11 article by *MIT Technology Review* critiques the app, explaining, "Such an app would not be possible without the Chinese government's pervasive, high-tech surveillance of its citizens. A national video camera network, facial recognition software, and Artificial Intelligence combine to ensure that anonymity is almost impossible, although it is not clear which elements are being used to power the app. In any case, it is unlikely to be controversial in China, where attitudes to privacy and freedom differ to the West's." However, there is no concrete information on the accessibility of this app to those outside of China.

#### A map for mankind

Shriphani Palakodety, a data scientist and artist based in Palo Alto, California, points out that the data visualisations bred from different corners of the Internet are inspiring, even if the subject matter is harrowing.

"This time around, a lot of dashboards went up very quickly showing deaths by location, and other instances. Almost all of them use the dataset compiled by Johns Hopkins which they update everyday. Some of the more interesting stuff came after the last Ebola outbreak, especially from the New England Complex Systems Institute. This is where the value of intervention becomes clear – that is for Ebola but you can switch the parameters and it'll work fine for COVID-19 on a possibly accelerated timeline."

Shriphani adds that some of the interesting visualisation-animations have come from *The Washington Post* on March 14 which speaks about social distancing. The simulation sees dots in three colours interacting with each other in certain spaces, charting the changes from good health to infection to treatment, or healthy to sick to recovered. Some simulations, like this one, do not track the progress but do provide perspective on the ripple effect of not socially distancing oneself.

#### Apps to track

A highly-recommended interactive visual map is that by the folks at HERE Technologies, who have created a detailed and interactive map of the progressing situation, including the total

number of confirmed cases, as well as deaths and recoveries. As Shriphani suggested, Johns Hopkins University's dataset on GitHub was the chosen source. The details are also minute in that you can explore these numbers by country, and in the case of China, by province.

There is also an app version, according to a blog post dated February 26, which details the development journey of the creation of the interactive map. "Working with live data from different data sources during an evolving virus outbreak meant that we had to adapt and be flexible regarding data collection and processing," writes Richard Zimmerman.

He adds, "For the [design of] the map itself we opted for Leaflet and Tangram, powered by the HERE Data Hub and HERE Vector Tile API. To allow users to search for specific places, we used the HERE Geolocation Auto-complete API." This map features a time slider which helps those who want to know the full path of the virus since day one.

Data diaries (Far left) The line graph from Windy App, (left) the interactive visualisation by HERE Technologies ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

#### MOBILE CONUNDRUMS

An app, by definition, has to make mobile life easier so it is understandable that an app will not be a go-to for medical data. In fact, do a simple search of COVID-19 on any app store and you may not see promising results. A number of questionable apps flooded into app stores across compatibilities since Coronavirus started making headlines, and many of these apps have been flagged for phishing and other malicious activity.

Apple's App Store and Google Play store moderators are rejecting these apps after doing intense background checks with alerts from suspicious customers. There are, however, developers who want to create helpful apps but they have been rejected as they are not from recognised institutions like governments or hospitals. This is where developers have decided to collaborate with these verified institutions, but need more diversity in providing accurate by-region data internationally.

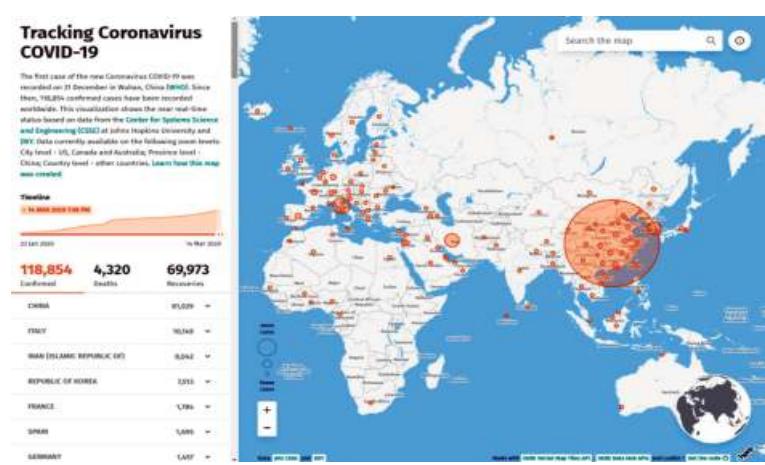
about once a day, and all of this is pushed to the HERE Data Hub to be consumed by our app."

The visualisation, though, is what makes the data accessible, when there are so many numbers floating around the public sphere. The data imagery make big and small data easier for the human brain to understand, and visualisation also makes it easier to detect patterns, trends, and outliers in groups of data.

"Our map displays data as scaled bubbles, indicating confirmed cases as absolute numbers, rather than normalised values in relation to the population of the place. With absolute counts, choropleth maps are generally not a good option...We opted for a linear scale to show an accurate relationship of the absolute numbers on a global scale."

Unfortunately, the HERE Technologies visualisation is lacking a few more datasets from international medical institutes which could provide case population data for India by state and city. Another potential data visualisation is by the Prague-based Windy App. Probably the more interesting infographic is the line graph, where three sets of data are shown in three distinctly-coloured lines: Total, Recovered and Deaths, as per OpenStreetMap networks' datasets.

Some may glance at the line graph and point out a somewhat positive correlation which is indicated as more resources are pumped into the medical industry for treatment and isolation. This map does not show cases by location nor by age group so this is for those who want a quick overview.



interesting stuff came after the last Ebola outbreak, especially from the New England Complex Systems Institute. This is where the value of intervention becomes clear – that is for Ebola but you can switch the parameters and it'll work fine for COVID-19 on a possibly accelerated timeline."

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"To provide more frequent data updates for the situation in China, we decided to source data directly from the DXY website every 60 minutes. This process is automated, and the data is merged with what is published by JHU

## POOCH CAFE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## PEANUTS



## TIGER



## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13329

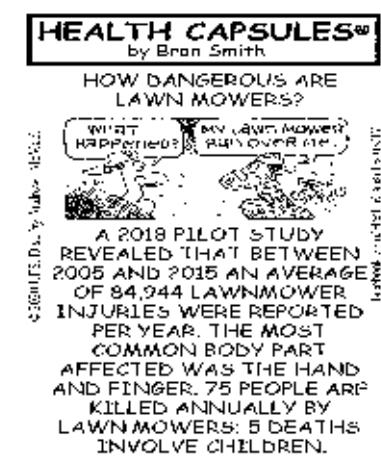
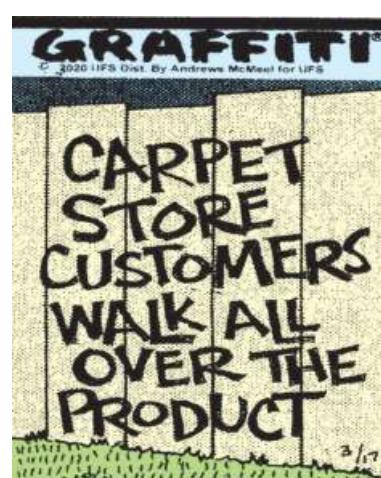
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To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

- 4 Shed feathers or hair (5)  
5 Special anniversary (7)  
6 Substance used to curdle milk (6)  
11 Showing no emotion (9)  
13 Garb (7)  
14 Eradicate (4,3)  
15 Garb (7)  
16 Tyrant (6)  
18 In an appropriate way (5)

The solution will appear on March 18, 2020.  
Solution No. 13328

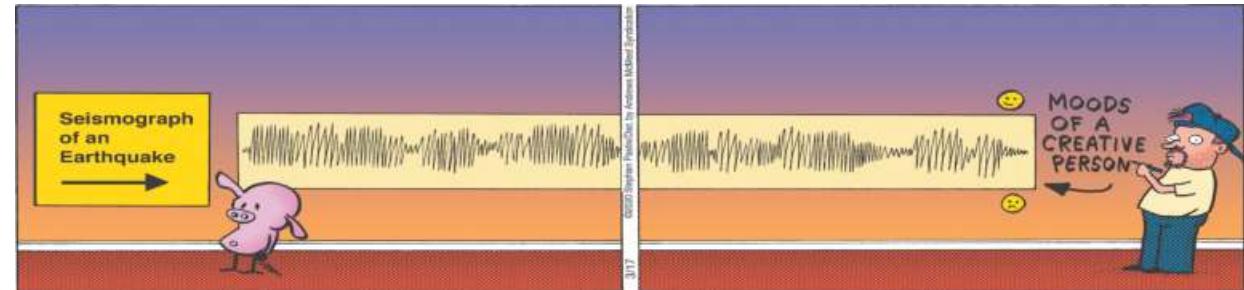
## WUMO



- Across  
1 Kind of tea or coffee (6)  
4 Military rank (5)  
7 Bumble – stumble (6)  
8 South African seaport (6)  
9 Uncomfortable skin sensation (4)  
10 Tactful untruth (5,3)  
12 Measure of light intensity (11)
- Down  
17 Stress (8)  
19 Remunerated (4)  
20 Equivalence (6)  
21 Pressed (6)  
22 Savalas, actor, d. 1994 (5)  
23 Scram! (4,2)

- 1 Extremely rigorous (7)  
2 Become popular (5,2)  
3 Leave-takings (9)
- CROSS THE FLOOR  
EUROPE RELIC  
BIT DEMEURE  
AJAR TOREADOR  
UCMNR  
DIRKAT CLIQUE  
ACWYUN  
CRACKPOT DEBT  
IUEPR  
OLDER STYLISH  
UIEERED  
SWOLLENHEADED

## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



# Tour Down Under was a success: Raman

Indian women's team coach says it's also time to identify a couple of fast bowlers and groom them

## INTERVIEW

**AMOL KARHADKAR**  
MUMBAI

A week after returning from the Indian women's tour of Australia, where Harmanpreet Kaur's young bunch made it to the final of the tri-series featuring Australia and England and followed it up by reaching the T20 World Cup summit clash, head coach W.V. Raman recalls the journey with *The Hindu*. Excerpts:

How would you sum up the tour Down Under?

In both the tournaments, the girls definitely did well. They were in the tri-series against two better sides and in the World Cup, we were placed in a tough group.

To have won all the league games and qualify was quite an achievement given that it's a young side that's still on a learning curve in T20s. If you take all this into account, the tour was definitely a success. Yes, winning the final would have been great but these things happen in sport. You can't help it.

What exactly went wrong in the final? Did the packed house at MCG get to the girls? Or was it the big-match pressure?

The point is, in a T20 game, you can hardly make a comeback. When the first 30-40 minutes go away from you, it's very difficult for you to make a comeback.

Just to make a point, when I was with KKR (as assistant coach), we were playing the CLT20 final (in 2014) against CSK. Raina made a mockery of a chase of 180-plus when



**Candid observation:** W.V. Raman, while praising the efforts put in by the women's team in Australia, says being overkeen could have affected Harmanpreet, in pic., and Smriti's performances. ■ AFP

he got off to a start and never looked back. A similar innings was played by Alyssa Healy. Whatever she tried that day, it came off. All other factors, and other reasons we can think of, are just incidental. The long and short of it is that in T20s, these things will happen.

Would you say the rise of three teenaged batters is the biggest gain from the tour?

Of course. I mentioned before leaving India that we have players who can go on to become match-winners on their own and the batting side is definitely far well-equipped than it was when I took over.

We have identified the talent, and players who can measure up to what is required at the top level. And also worked on their skills as well as fitness. That gives you a bit of confidence than it did some time ago.

While the spinners continue to come good, the pace bowling, barring Shikha Pandey, remains a concern ahead of next year's ODI World Cup...

Spinners have been calling the shots for a couple of years now. We need to identify a couple of fast bowlers and it will take them some time to become consistent performers. It's not an easy job, bowling fast, especially for the Indian girls who are comparatively frail than Caucasian girls. Fast bowling is a lot of hard work, be it man or woman. The challenges are going to be slightly more in women's cricket.

The two senior batters – Harmanpreet and Smriti – had a mediocre World Cup. What would you attribute it to?

I personally felt that they were overkeen to do well. I

think once they saw the team perform in the tri-series, they thought this may be a great chance to claim the summit and must have probably felt they needed to up their game.

Sometimes, even for the most experienced or acclaimed performers, a tendency to get overkeen comes in. That was probably the reason because you can't attribute it to anything else. Both of them have performed, for long, across formats. Perhaps, they got too eager and desperately wanted to do well.

## CAB's precautions for SA's safe return

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA

The Quinton de Kock-led South African team on Monday had checked into a city hotel near the airport as the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) took all precautions for their safe return home amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

After their three-match ODI series against India was called off due to the virus outbreak, the South African players and support staff stayed in Lucknow where the second match was slated to be held. They had the option to fly to Delhi, but preferred the 'safest city' Kolkata as the Eastern metropolis was yet to record a single positive case for COVID-19.



**Taking care:** The South African players preferred to stay in Kolkata, the safest city, on their way home. ■ TWITTER

## I played my best in the final: Sharath Kamal

Feels that the coronavirus threat has put a question mark over Olympic qualifications

### TABLE TENNIS

#### RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI

Sharath Kamal never ceases to surprise. At 37, Sharath he provided another evidence to his undiminished hunger to win as he claimed the Oman Open title in Muscat on Sunday. The surprise triumph ended a 10-year international title-drought following his victory in the 2010 Egypt Open.

On Monday, World No. 38 Sharath spoke at length to *The Hindu* on how well he played to win in a strong field and the impact of coronavirus on the process of qualification to the Olympic Games.

"Winning on pro tour is fantastic. Actually, I didn't think about winning the Oman Open when I went into it. But looking at the draw looking and my form, I thought... okay, I should be able to make it to the semifinal at least, probably, even to the final."



**Getting lucky:** Sharath says he had a favourable draw though the competition was stiff at the Oman Open. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

top-level players who didn't withdraw because of the forthcoming Olympic Games. Though I was the fourth seed, around 16 players were pretty close to me.

"So I think the competition was pretty stiff. I was just lucky to have a draw which was more suitable to me and I did well."

**Phenomenal backhand**

Reflecting on his performance in the final, which he won 4-2, Sharath said, "I played one of my best table tennis in the final. My backhand, I think, was phenomenal. I was surprised how I could hit those backhands so hard, with such good timing."

Even Marcos appeared very, very surprised by the way I was hitting the backhands, and he really didn't know where exactly to play.

"I think throughout the tournament, especially in the semifinal and final, I played much better when I was trailing than when I was ahead."

"I think, I was very composed, especially when I was trailing. And even in the end, I saved five game-points in the sixth set. But all these five-six game points I gave away, were points which I could have converted myself."

Looking at the impact of coronavirus that has sent the schedule for a toss, Sharath said, "It's been huge. Olymp-

pic qualifiers are supposed to happen three weeks from now."

"But then, for the next six weeks, there is no tournament. And we don't know when the next tournament will be held. In May, there are tournaments in Hong Kong and China, which I doubt if they will be organised at all. So, we really don't know what is the fate of the tournaments in the next couple of months."

"And also what will be the qualification process for the Olympic Games because if the qualifying tournaments don't happen, then what will be the process for qualification to Tokyo? Everything is a question mark."

## Caruana favoured to come out on top

COVID-19 notwithstanding, Yekaterinburg all set to host Candidates meet

### CHESS

#### P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Cinemas are closed. Shelters are down on malls. Stadia are empty. Coronavirus has pressed the pause button on the world.

Every day dawns with the news of the cancellation or postponement of a major sporting event. On Tuesday in Russia, though, one of the biggest tournaments of the year in chess will get underway.

The Candidates tournament opens at Yekaterinburg, which boasts some of the tallest buildings in Russia.

**Three weeks of action**

The next three weeks will tell who, from among the eight players, will stand the tallest and stake a claim to challenge Magnus Carlsen for the next World Championship, to be held later this year.

Imagine the defending champion at Wimbledon getting a direct passage to the final!

However, the World chess champion has the privilege of playing the title match directly and this has been the custom in chess for decades.

So it is indeed extremely difficult for someone to emerge as the new champion. In its 134-year-history, there have only been 16 un-

## The day Tendulkar completed a century of centuries

He achieved the feat on March 16, 2012, in the Asia Cup game against Bangladesh

### IANS

#### DHAKA

March 16, 2012 will be etched in the minds of cricket fans across the globe as the day when Sachin Tendulkar scored his 100th international century.

During the Asia Cup clash against Bangladesh here, Tendulkar played a brilliant knock of 114 to bring up his 49th ODI century.

The maestro already had 51 hundreds to his name in the longest format.

His century was also special in the sense that he breached the three-figure mark after a gap of one year.

However, Tendulkar's knock was not enough to

seal victory for India as it was unable to defend 290 and the host won the match with four balls to spare.

The century record of Tendulkar still stands untouched. The 47-year-old also has 164 half-centuries to his name, while he amassed a whopping 34,357 runs during his stellar career.

Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting, with 71 hundreds, is second in the list of players with most international centuries.

Virat Kohli is third with 70 international hundreds and he is the only one who seems to be in line to break Tendulkar's record of 100 hundreds.

Only Rohit capable of 200 in T20, says Hogg



Rohit. ■ FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

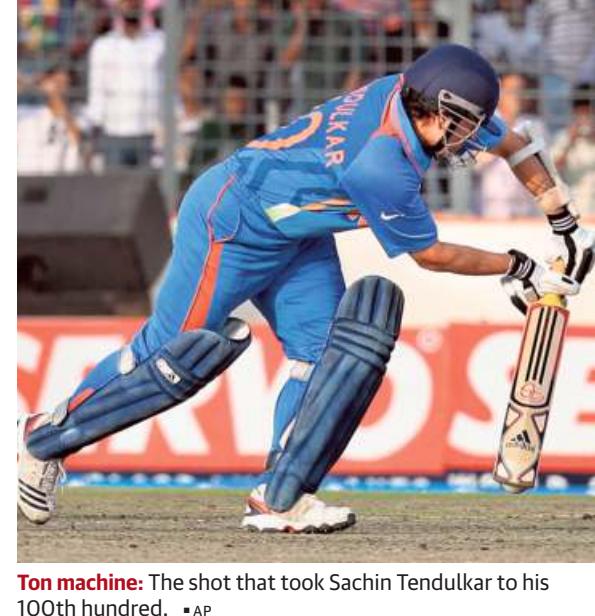
### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SYDNEY

India's swashbuckling batsman Rohit Sharma is the only player capable of scoring a double hundred in the T20 format, says former Australia spinner Brad Hogg.

"At present, Rohit Sharma is the only player I think is capable of it. He has a good strike rate, timing, and plays cricketing shots finding options to score sixes all around the ground," Hogg said, while responding to questions from fans on Twitter.

Rohit made his T20 debut against England at Durban in September 2007. He has played 94 T20s for India so far and scored 2,331 runs with an average of 32.37 and a strike rate of 137.68, including four centuries and 16 half-centuries. The India opener's highest score in T20s is 118.



**Ton machine:** The shot that took Sachin Tendulkar to his 100th hundred. ■ AP

## Kapil and Laxman advise caution

### VIJAY LOKAPALLY

#### NEW DELHI

For Kapil Dev and V.V.S. Laxman, it is "time to spend time with family" and they also advocate caution and restraint even as the world battles the coronavirus pandemic.



Kapil Dev. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

With more and more sporting activities being cancelled or rescheduled, there is a rare lull among the players' fraternity. "Yes, forced to stay indoors but we all have to understand the seriousness of the situation," said Kapil, who is a compulsive outdoor person, ready to tee off at a golf course at the break of dawn.

"I know it would be a new experience for many of us to

be with the family and also be careful and responsible.

"The authorities are working to arrest the spread of this virus and we all have to avoid public places in the interest of everyone," said Kapil, having curtailed his visits outside the house.

### Gravity of the situation

For Laxman, it was "important" to understand the gravity of the situation. "We have to stop venturing out and have to behave like responsible citizens. For sportsmen, it can help them get the rest they would have desired. We must stay as much time at home as possible.

"Let us be responsible and disciplined."

## Caruana favoured to come out on top

COVID-19 notwithstanding, Yekaterinburg all set to host Candidates meet

### CHESS

#### PRAVIN THIPSAY

I think Caruana is too strong for this field. As he proved in the last World Championship, he could pose the toughest challenge to Carlsen

— PRAVIN THIPSAY

disputed champions.

Carlsen became the 16th when he dethroned Viswanathan Anand in 2013 in the latter's hometown of Chennai. In late 2018 at London, the Norwegian genius was given a tough fight in the title match by Fabiano Caruana.

The match was tied 6-6 and it was through the tie-breakers that Carlsen emerged victorious.

Caruana is very much the favourite to be the challenger.

"As he proved in the last World Championship, he could pose the toughest challenge to Carlsen." Caru-



**Front-runner:** Fabiano Caruana has the credentials to emerge as Magnus Carlsen's challenger yet again. ■ AFP

na's toughest challenge at Yekaterinburg could come from Liren. He had arrived, along with his team, from China (the epicentre of Corona) and had been in quarantine.

Not every chess player wanted to take a risk with Corona and play at the Candidates.

Teimour Radjabov of Azerbaijan had pulled out and had requested the world chess governing body, FIDE, to postpone the tournament (he was replaced by Vachier-Lagrave).

Caruana found his flight to Russia cancelled without notice, but was able to board another later.

FIDE was in no mood to change the schedule of the Candidates, stating that an eight-player tournament could not be compared to a large event.

### Anand's new role

One can follow the tournament live online and on chess.com, one can listen to the commentary of Anand, who is stuck in Germany, after competing in the Bundesliga chess league, because of travel restrictions.

The five-time World Champion is making his debut as a commentator. Given his deep knowledge, experience, the ability to analyse quickly, articulation and sense of humour, Anand should be a treat to listen to.

# Kashyap wants BWF to freeze World rankings

Says it will help those hoping to make it to the 2020 Olympics

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM  
HYDERABAD

Former Commonwealth Games gold medallist, P. Kashyap, feels that the Badminton World Federation should immediately freeze the World rankings in the wake of the suspension of all major tournaments till the second week of April.

"This should be the first thing they should do. It is imperative for the BWF to do this as it will not only ensure justice to those who have done exceptionally well and also those who are hoping to make it to the Tokyo Olympics this July," the 33-year-old Kashyap, who returned from the recent All England championship, told *The Hindu* on Monday.

According to the existing norms, April 30, 2020 is the cut-off date to determine the spots for Olympics from each country. And, to be in contention in singles, one has to be ranked in the top 16 in the World.

"The BWF has to be pragmatic in its approach and respect the players' sentiments. Any decision by it should be in the interest of the players especially when deciding on the new norms for qualification for the Olympics," he said.

"It would be great if the BWF keeps in mind the minimum number of tournaments the players need to



**Pragmatic approach:** P. Kashyap feels the BWF has to respect the sentiments of the players and any decision by it should be in their interest. ■ FILE PHOTO: R. RAGU

compete to make the cut," Kashyap said.

#### Fresh guidelines

"See, right now we are not training till March 31 because the academies are closed. So, when the BWF eventually takes a call on the fresh guidelines, they have to take into consideration a lot of factors before finding a way out to be of help to the players," he said.

On his injury which saw him pull out of the All England championship, Kashyap revealed that a back problem (which first hurt him

during the 2018 Singapore Open in April) propped again, posing serious discomfort.

"Honestly, because of the coronavirus threat and the subsequent cancellation of these big events including the Swiss, India, Malaysia and the Singapore Opens, I will be the worst hit as it affects world rankings," he said.

"I am sincerely hoping that the BWF will come up with a please-all solution soon giving enough time to train, prepare and be in the right frame of mind for the Olympics," Kashyap said.

The London Olympics quarterfinalist also wondered how the All England championship went on.

"I tell you we went there when there was so much of concern. But, the atmosphere there was totally different. The stadium was packed and look at how the eventual champion Viktor Axelsen mingled with the crowds, giving high-fives after winning the title," he said.

"I mean, if something goes wrong in the wake of the virus, who will be responsible," he questioned.

## Shreya tops the charts among men and women

Qualification scores to be considered for selecting shooters for Tokyo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Despite the coronavirus threat, Indian shooting has kept itself occupied with the Olympic trials at the Dr. Karni Singh Range here.

With the World Cup scheduled to have been hosted at this time now postponed, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) opted to conduct the Olympic trials for the shooters who were selected to compete in the World Cup, including the MQS shooters.

Shreya Agarwal shot remarkably well to be at the top with a score of 631.2 among the 10 air rifle shoot-

ers, men and women, while Deepak Kumar was 0.1 point behind her.

**Apurvi not at her best**  
Apurvi Chandela who had shot two gold medals in the World Cups last season was not at her best and had a score of 624.4.

In the women's 25-metre sports pistol, Asian Games gold medallist Rahi Sarnobat shot 583, and was followed by Chinki Yadav and Manu Bhaker.

It was decided not to have the finals and consider only the qualification scores to make the final choice of shooters for the Tokyo

Olympics.

In men's trap, Kynan Chennai and Prithviraj Tondaiman were in joint lead on 71, after three rounds, while former World Champion Manavjit Singh Sandhu shot 66. Two more rounds will be shot on Tuesday.

In the women's section, Shreyasi Singh and Darshna Rathore led with 69 each in trap and skeet respectively.

#### The results:

**Men: 10m air rifle:** 1. Deepak Kumar 631.2; 2. Pankaj 628.8; 3. Shahu Tushar Mane 628.5; 4. Sandeep Singh 627.7; 5. Divyansh Singh Panwar 626.1.

**Trap:** 1. Kynan Chennai 71; 2. Prithviraj Tondaiman 71; 3. Manavadi-

tya Singh Rathore 70; 4. Jungsheri Singh Virk 68; 5. Manavjit Singh Sandhu 66.

**Skeet:** 1. Angad Vir Singh Bajwa 74; 2. Gurjot Singh 73; 3. Amritpal Singh Cheema 72; 4. Mairaj Ahmad Khan 71.

**Women: 10m air rifle:** 1. Shreya Agarwal 631.2; 2. Elevenil Valarivan 629.9; 3. Anjum Moudgil 626.9; 4. Mehuli Ghosh 626.6; 5. Apoorvi Chandela 624.4.

**25m sports pistol:** 1. Rahi Sarnobat 583; 2. Chinki Yadav 579; 3. Manu Bhaker 578; 4. Annu Raj Singh 576; 5. Abhidnya Patil 570.

**Trap:** 1. Shreyasi Singh 69; 2. Kiriti Gupta 64; 3. Seema Tomar 63; 4. Rajeshwari Kumari 62.

**Skeet:** 1. Darshna Rathore 69; 2. Areeba Khan 68; 3. Ganemat Sekhon 66; 4. Jasmeen Kaur 65.

## Doubts grow in Japan over Olympics

People voice concern about fans coming in from abroad

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TOKYO

Doubts are growing in Japan about the Tokyo Olympics, with growing opposition to holding them as scheduled and some urging officials not to risk lives by pressing ahead during the coronavirus emergency.

Officials like Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach have repeatedly insisted preparations should continue to light the Olympic flame on July 24.

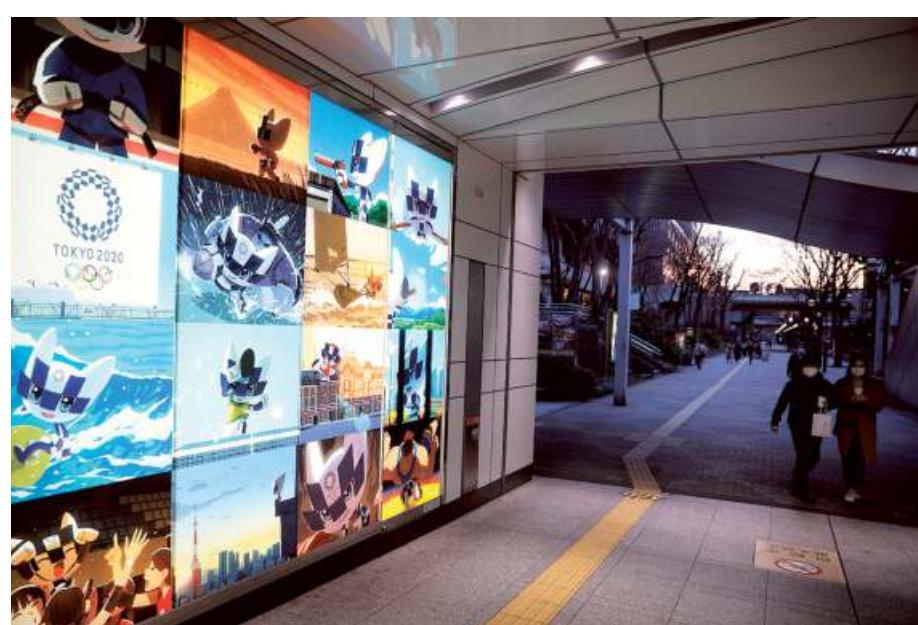
But with events from the Premier League to NBA basketball scrapped, and Japanese sport also at a standstill, even US President Donald Trump has suggested putting the Olympics on hold.

Japan has seen relatively few cases, with 814 testing positive and 24 dead. But some people on the streets of Tokyo voiced concern for the fans that would pour in from abroad.

Koki Miura, a 27-year-old employee at an internet company, told AFP: "To be honest, even if Japan overcomes this crisis, we wouldn't receive visitors from the world. I think we'd better not hold it."

"We cannot sacrifice people's lives for it," added Miura, who said the Games should be postponed – if not cancelled outright.

**Public opinion**  
Public opinion in Japan appears to be moving against



**Will it, won't it?** People wearing protective masks walk in front of an advertising billboard for the Summer Games, which now has come under the shadow of coronavirus. ■ REUTERS

the Games. A poll for public broadcaster NHK taken March 6-9 suggested 45 percent were opposed to going ahead as planned, with 40 percent in favour.

And a new poll of more than 1,000 people released Monday by Japan's Kyodo news agency showed 69.9 percent of respondents believe Tokyo will not be able to hold the Games as scheduled.

Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike has said it is "unthinkable" to cancel the Olympics but the decision rests with the IOC, which is planning emergency talks with international sports federations on Tuesday, according to an IOC source.

#### 'Look at the panic'

Masao Sugawara, a 90-year-old pensioner, told AFP: "Personally, I think it would be safer to postpone the Olympics for a year, just as

Bach has stressed the IOC will follow World Health Organization recommendations regarding a possible postponement. But he has also acknowledged that the cancellation of qualifying events was posing "serious problems."

At the beginning of March, Bach said the IOC would show "flexibility" regarding qualifications for the Tokyo, and encouraged "all athletes to continue to prepare" for the Games.

"If the outbreak does not get controlled by June or July, I think we should postpone it," said Otto.

The betting odds are increasingly shifting towards the opening ceremony not taking place on July 24. Bookmaker Paddy Power is offering 4-1 against the Games opening on time.

## Sports ministry aid for Novy Kapadia

Rijiju sanctions ₹4 lakh from sports welfare fund

VIJAY LOKAPALLY  
NEW DELHI

The Union Sports Ministry on Monday sanctioned an amount of ₹4 lakh to ailing sports commentator Novy Kapadia to meet his medical expenses.

It had come to notice of the Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju that Kapadia had not been receiving his pension from Delhi University, where he taught for 40 years.

Speaking about the one-time financial assistance, Rijiju said, "Novy Kapadia has contributed to Indian sports for decades.

"When I got to know that his pension from Delhi University is pending and he is suffering from a rare autoimmu-

nous disease and needs urgent medical attention, we decided to give him immediate relief with this money.

"We are also following up with the Ministry of Human Resource Development to ensure that his pension

comes through soon."

Kapadia has been given the financial assistance from the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sports persons.

"The earlier guidelines of the fund to provide financial assistance were rather restrictive.

"We have now made amendments so that assistance can be extended to more people who have served in the area of sport. Mr. Kapadia is one of the first beneficiaries of the new guidelines," added the Sports Minister.

The Sports Ministry is keen to assist other deserving sports persons and those who have worked in the area of sport through this fund.

Novy Kapadia. ■ FILE PHOTO:  
SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

The AFI's competition committee, which recommended these changes, has also revised the events' list for the first and second legs.

The men's 100m, 110 hurdles, high jump have been dropped from the first leg while the men's and women's discus throw has been pulled out from the second.

The federation has also made it clear that spectators

will not be allowed.

Personal coaches, support staff, friends and family members of athletes who are not part of the national camp will also not be allowed. Non-campers will be permitted inside only after a medical check-up by the AFI or SAI medical team at the entry gate. Athletes have also been asked to leave the venue after completion of their events.

Ban on FMSCI president overturned

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
COIMBATORE

The Indian Motor Sport Appellate Committee (IM-SAC) overturned a ban imposed on J. Prithviraj, the FMSCI president, from officiating in national championships following the death of three trespassing motorists during the Rally of Jodhpur last year.

A release from the Coimbatore Auto Sports Club, said the IM-SAC has upheld his appeal, declaring the ban imposed on Prithviraj was violative of all principles of natural justice.

"He was not put on sufficient notice before imposing (such a) major punishment," the release, quoting the order, declared, absolving him of any lapses while organising the rally. Prithviraj was not even given an opportunity to defend himself and his indictment was announced.

"I am glad that justice has prevailed," a relieved Prithviraj said.

"As COC of the Rally, I had taken all the required precautions," he added.

## No WTA season until May 2

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

The WTA Tour announced on Monday it was suspending the women's tennis season until May 2 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"At this point in time, the WTA Tour is now suspended until May 2," a WTA spokesperson said.

"Due to the ongoing global coronavirus outbreak, the WTA tournaments in Stuttgart, Istanbul and Prague will not be held as scheduled.

## AFI to bring back Neeraj, Rohit from Turkey

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

With India deciding to close its doors to passengers arriving from many countries, including the European Union, Turkey and the United Kingdom from March 18, to contain the spread of coronavirus, there is a scramble to bring back star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra.

"We don't want our campers to travel about two hours to go to Sangrur from Patiala. In fact, we don't want our campers to go out of the national camp," said an AFI official on Monday evening.

"Regarding the third leg, we will study the situation in Delhi and take a decision but it will surely happen."

Neeraj and another javelin thrower Rohit Yadav are currently training in Turkey and the national body AFI is working on bringing them back immediately.

"We are trying to bring them back tomorrow itself if there is a flight available but many flights are cancelled," said an AFI official on Monday night.

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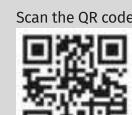
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# Comforting sermons in empty cathedrals

As COVID-19 forces people to stay put at homes, believers access livestreaming of religious services

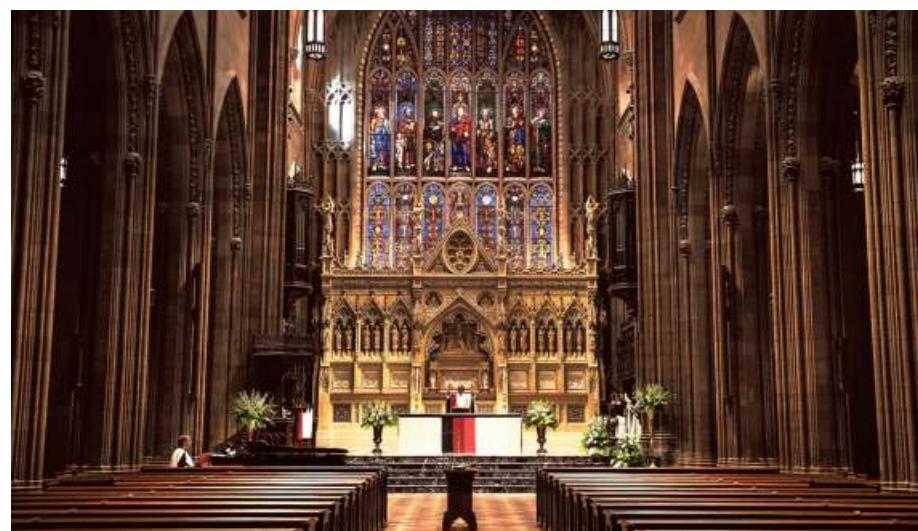
LIAM STACK  
NEW YORK

At 11:15 on Sunday morning, the Reverend Kristin Kaulbach Miles, a priest at Trinity Church Wall Street, stepped into the sanctuary of the soaring 1846 Gothic Revival building in Manhattan and delivered a sermon about the need to come together in the face of COVID-19.

But no parishioners were there.

The scene was repeated at some of the most well-known houses of worship in New York: St. Patrick's Cathedral, the seat of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York; Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church; and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, seat of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. Something similar had already played out in the city's mosques during Friday prayers and in synagogues at Shabbat services on Saturday.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of religious services across New York and much of the country this weekend, but faith leaders have stepped into



**Message of hope:** Reverend Mark Bozzuti-Jones performing Sunday service as it gets livestreamed at Trinity Church in Manhattan. ■ NYT

the breach in an effort to comfort and lead communities that are increasingly anxious and unsure about where to turn.

On Sunday, ministers preached messages of calm and compassion to empty churches as their congregants watched on livestream, isolated at home by public health warnings that convinced the Catholic Church

and several major Protestant denominations to shut their doors.

## COVID-19

At Trinity Church, Miles told the story of Jesus asking a Samaritan woman for water "in a way that follows the COVID-19 safety protocols." Looking across the empty pews, she urged the wor-

shippers at home to be there for each other.

"Every hand we don't shake must become a phone call we make," she said from the pulpit. "Every inch and every foot of distance we put between ourselves and another must become a thought about how we could help that other should the need arise."

The only people seated in

the pews were other parish priests, who clapped for each other when the Mass was done.

There have been more than 600 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in New York and two deaths, officials said, sending a wave of fear across the region that has upended daily life.

## Resist panic

"The government is utterly failing to provide rational, reliable leadership," said Jeffrey Cahn, executive director of Romemu, a popular Upper West Side synagogue that he said was the first in New York to cancel in-person Shabbat services. "As religious leaders we have a pulpit," Rabbi Cahn said.

On Friday night, Rabbi David Ingber used the livestream service to offer comfort to worshippers.

Father James Martin, a Jesuit priest urged his viewers to "resist panic" and not to "demonize or scapegoat" Asian people for a pathogen first detected in Wuhan, China. "This virus is no one's fault." ■ NY TIMES

# China empowers its Internet police to mute virus anger

Online critics of government's response face backlash

PAUL MOZUR  
SHANGHAI

As China tries to reshape the narrative of its fumbled response to the COVID-19 outbreak, it is turning to a new breed of police that carry out real-world reprisals for digital misdeeds.

The Internet police, as they are known here, have gained power as the Communist Party has worked to seize greater control over the thoughts, words and even memories of China's 800 million web users. Now, they are emerging as a bulwark against the groundswell of anger over governance breakdowns that exacerbated the epidemic.

Officers arrive with an unexpected rap at the door of online critics. They drag off offenders for hours of interrogation. They force their targets to sign loyalty pledges and recant remarks deemed politically unacceptable, even if those words were made in the relative privacy of a group chat.

In the central city of Chengdu, a recent law school graduate, Li Yuchen, said he was pulled from his home in early February after writing a sarcastic treatise in classical Chinese about censorship. The police questioned him from late afternoon until midnight, first asking him whether he loved his country, to which he said yes. Li said he was forced to sign a statement disavowing his views and pledging loyalty to the party.

The experience mirrored what happened to the hero of Mr. Li's essay, a Wuhan doctor named Li Wenliang, who tried to alert colleagues about the spread of a mysterious virus in a chat group, only to be called to a police



**New messaging:** China is trying to reshape the narrative of its fumbled response to the coronavirus outbreak. ■ NYT

station and forced to sign a confession for spreading rumours.

## Many voices

When Li died of the coronavirus, waves of mourning and anger swept across China's Internet.

"Li Wenliang said that a healthy society shouldn't have only one voice," wrote Li Yuchen, who is not related to Li, the doctor. "I think the best way to mourn him is to continue to be a citizen" and continue writing, he wrote in a later post on WeChat.

That has become more difficult. To check anger over Li Wenliang's death, and the deaths of the many others his warning might have saved, authorities have doubled down on the very tactics that drove the fury in the first place: using the Internet police to muzzle the most outspoken.

Little is known about the group, formally part of the Cybersecurity Defense Bureau, which has long policed hacking and online fraud. But occasional government releases offer clues. In 2016, the 50-million person region of Guangxi said it had almost 1,200 Internet police offic-

ers. The goal was to have one Internet police officer for every 10,000 people in the region, a sign of the force's ambitions.

## Enlarging roles

In the early years of Chinese social media, punishments doled out to critics were rarely severe. As millions took to clones of Twitter and Facebook, which are banned in China, censorship usually meant disappearing posts and inaccessible foreign websites. Now the police actively pursue the authors of forbidden material, and irritation has been replaced by fear.

Friends and families warn each other not to speak too openly in group chats. The changes have come as China's leader, Xi Jinping, has pushed hard to extend the party's iron-fisted rule over the Internet.

Mr. Xi has given new resources to domestic security forces. The Internet police's uncanny speed in finding people, who might believe they are hidden among the Internet's hordes of anonymous grumblers, is the result of billions of dollars in new spending on surveillance technology. ■ NY TIMES

# To track virus, Israel to tap cellphone data

The aim is to find people who came into contact with virus carriers, and ask them to isolate themselves

DAVID M. HALBFINGER  
ISABEL KERSHNER  
JERUSALEM

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel has authorised the country's internal security agency to tap into a vast and previously undisclosed trove of cellphone data to retrace the movements of people who have contracted the COVID-19 and identify others who should be quarantined because their paths crossed, officials said.

The unprecedented move to use data secretly gathered to combat terrorism for public health efforts was authorised on Sunday by Mr. Netanyahu's holdover Cabinet. But it must still be approved by Parliament's Secret Services Subcommittee before its existence lapses at 4 p.m. on Monday, upon the swearing-in of a new legislature. That is by no means assured.

The existence of the data trove and the legislative fra-

mework under which it is amassed and used have not previously been reported. The plan to apply it to fighting the virus, alluded to only vaguely by Mr. Netanyahu, has not yet been debated by lawmakers or revealed to the public.

The idea is to sift through geolocation data collected from Israeli cellphone providers about millions of their customers in Israel and the West Bank, find people who

came into close contact with known virus carriers and send them text messages directing them to isolate themselves immediately.

## Threat to democracy

Disclosure of the plan is certain to raise alarms among privacy advocates and among critics of Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Netanyahu's caretaker government on Sunday authorised prison sentences of

up to six months for anyone breaching isolation orders; barring visitors, including lawyers, from prison and detention facilities and allowing the police to break up gatherings – as of now, more than 10 people.

It is the existence of the cellphone metadata trove and its use to track patients and carriers that privacy advocates say poses the greatest test of Israeli democracy at a fragile moment. ■ NY TIMES

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, have complicated that image over the last few years, codifying for women the right to drive, attend sporting events and travel without a man's permission, among others.

As the social codes that long governed their lives relax their grip, more women are wearing their hair unco-

vered and mingling openly with men – at least in larger cities. But whether reality lives up to the law depends on the dice roll of birth. Day by day, it still falls to women in many households to negotiate their freedom with the fathers, husbands, brothers and sons, who serve as their legal guardians.

Even before the legal changes, Saudi women from tolerant families rarely had to chafe under requirements that a male guardian approve plans to get jobs or travel abroad. For them, permission was nearly always granted.

Women remain legal minors when it comes to marrying, living on their own and other matters. Those from more traditional families are still yoked to male guardians for whom fear of God, change or what the neighbours will think often outweighs the letter of the law.

The easing up of attitudes has mirrored a general loosening of Saudi society, much of it owing to the changes brought by the Crown Prince, who has erased many restrictions and defanged the religious police. ■ NY TIMES

## IN BRIEF



**Journalist says he got virus from Hanks' wife**

CANBERRA An Australian TV network's entertainment editor has tested positive for COVID-19 after meeting Tom Hanks' wife, Rita Wilson. Richard Wilkins said that he was tested because he met Ms. Wilson at the Opera House. ■ AP

# + New avenues for Saudi women as social codes relax their grip

Though they remain legal minors when it comes to marrying and living on their own, there is a general easing up of attitudes



**Driving to freedom:** Saudi women at a driving school in Riyadh. ■ NYT

VIVIAN YEE  
MEDINA  
For Westerners – squinting at Saudi Arabia across a vast landscape of stories about oppressed women, ultraconservative Islam and human rights abuses – the desert kingdom often leaves a single, damning impression: Here is a country that women are desperate to flee.

But the changes driven by

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, have complicated that image over the last few years, codifying for women the right to drive, attend sporting events and travel without a man's permission, among others.

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