



India asks Pak. to look into cause of Kartarpur dome collapse
page 8



If WHO has limitations, these were imposed by nations: Shashi Tharoor
page 9



Checking food shortage priority for South Asia, says Hans Timmer
page 10



Donald Trump warns China could face consequences for virus outbreak
page 12

PRINTED AT • CHENNAI • COIMBATORE • BENGALURU • HYDERABAD • MADURAI • NOIDA • VISAKHAPATNAM • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • KOCHI • VIJAYAWADA • MANGALURU • TIRUCHIRAPPALLI • KOLKATA • HUBBALLI • MOHALI • MALAPPURAM • MUMBAI • TIRUPATI • LUCKNOW • CUTTACK • PATNA

NEARBY



Longer wait for Gurugram industry

GURUGRAM

Though the Centre has allowed the States to permit select economic activities from Monday, the wait for Gurugram industries would be a little longer. Additional Chief Secretary V.S. Kundu said applications would be invited from industries and a committee would look into them and grant approval.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Pradhan held for beating Dalit youth in Meerut

GAZIABAD

A video of two Dalits being mercilessly beaten by the 'pradhan' of a Meerut village surfaced on Sunday. The police said the pradhan of Kaili village has since been arrested. In the video, the pradhan is seen beating the youths with a stick.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

Rumour of food shortage leads to near-stampede

NEW DELHI

A near-stampede ensued at a school in Jahangirpuri when locals rushed inside after a "rumour spread that food stock was over". A local Congress leader said similar scenes are witnessed daily with 100 to 150 people left wanting for food.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGE 11

E-commerce firms can't supply non-essential goods, says govt.

MHA issues guidelines for movement of migrant labourers within State

VIIJA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Sunday clarified that supply of non-essential goods by e-commerce companies will remain prohibited during the lockdown.

The Ministry also issued guidelines for the movement of migrant labourers living in relief camps to their workplace, within the boundaries of a State, in areas where the lockdown will be relaxed from April 20.

The Ministry asserted that there will be no inter-State movement of labourers. They will be registered, screened and those who are asymptomatic would be transported to their places of

Fresh guidelines

The government revised the advisory it issued earlier to allow States to decide on activities to be allowed from today

- The Ministry of Home Affairs issued guidelines on April 15 that States will decide the additional public activities to be allowed from April 20 in non-hotspot zones and rural areas
- The guidelines mentioned e-commerce firms but did not specify the products, other than essential items to be sold online
- On Sunday, the MHA clarified that supply of non-essential goods by e-commerce companies will remain prohibited
- States have to adhere to the guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act 2005, invoked for the first time

would have to be based on strict compliance with the existing guidelines on lockdown measures.

As per the April 15 order, "e-commerce companies" and vehicles used by their operators had been allowed but it was not specified if it was applicable to items other than essentials.

On Sunday, the MHA wrote to the States to exclude the e-commerce category from the revised guidelines.

In another letter, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla clarified that e-commerce firms would continue to operate for home delivery of es-

sential goods, as earlier.

Commerce and Railway Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted that he was grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the clarification that "e-commerce companies can only supply essential goods during the lockdown". "This will create a level playing field for small retailers," he added.

The Confederation of All India Traders issued a statement claiming credit for the exclusion of e-commerce companies.

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

Goa is now COVID free

Goa on Sunday became the first zero COVID-19 State in the country with the last seven positive cases also turning negative. This makes Goa the first green State in the country with no case of coronavirus being reported since April 3. The State had a total of seven cases, of whom six had travel history and one was the brother of a positive patient. ▶ PAGE 9

Centre stops flight bookings

The government on Sunday directed airlines to discontinue advance bookings for travel from May 4. "No decision to commence the operation of domestic/international flights with effect from May 4 has been taken yet. All airlines are hereby directed to refrain from booking tickets," the Civil Aviation Ministry told domestic and foreign airlines. ▶ PAGE 10

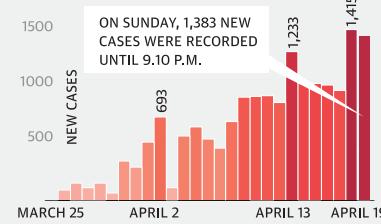
Confusion over mismatch in Health Ministry, ICMR figures

On Sunday, ICMR reported 17,615 positive individuals

Cases, tests touch new high

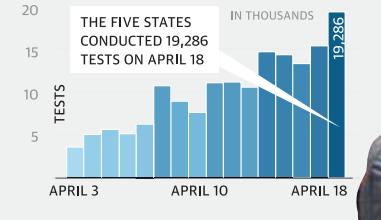
■ SUDDEN GROWTH

The graph depicts the new cases recorded from March 25 to April 19



■ MORE TESTING

The graph shows the number of daily tests conducted in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu from April 3



TOTALS BASED ON STATE GOVERNMENTS' TALLIES. ICMR REPORTED A HIGHER TALLY ON SATURDAY NIGHT.

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

A day ahead of a possible relaxation in lockdown curbs, confusion reigned on the actual number of COVID-19 cases in the country registered on Saturday.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which coordinates testing and is the central node of data regarding the daily infections, reported that 16,365

individuals had been confirmed positive. Of these 2,154 were confirmed on Saturday alone – the first time the daily case load breached the 2,000 mark.

However, the Health Ministry, the point-Ministry for all information regarding COVID-19, reported only 14,792 cases and 957 new cases.

On Sunday, the ICMR reported that 17,615 indivi-

duals have been confirmed positive. However, the Ministry, which updates figures twice daily, continued to report the lagged figures. At the daily afternoon briefing, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry Lav Agarwal updated this to 15,712. By Sunday evening, this had crept up to 16,115 but still fell short of the ICMR's Saturday numbers.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

PM-CARES donations cut from govt. staff salaries

Circulars were sent to all departments

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
VIIJA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Employees from a number of government departments and agencies have donated a day's salary toward the PM-CARES fund.

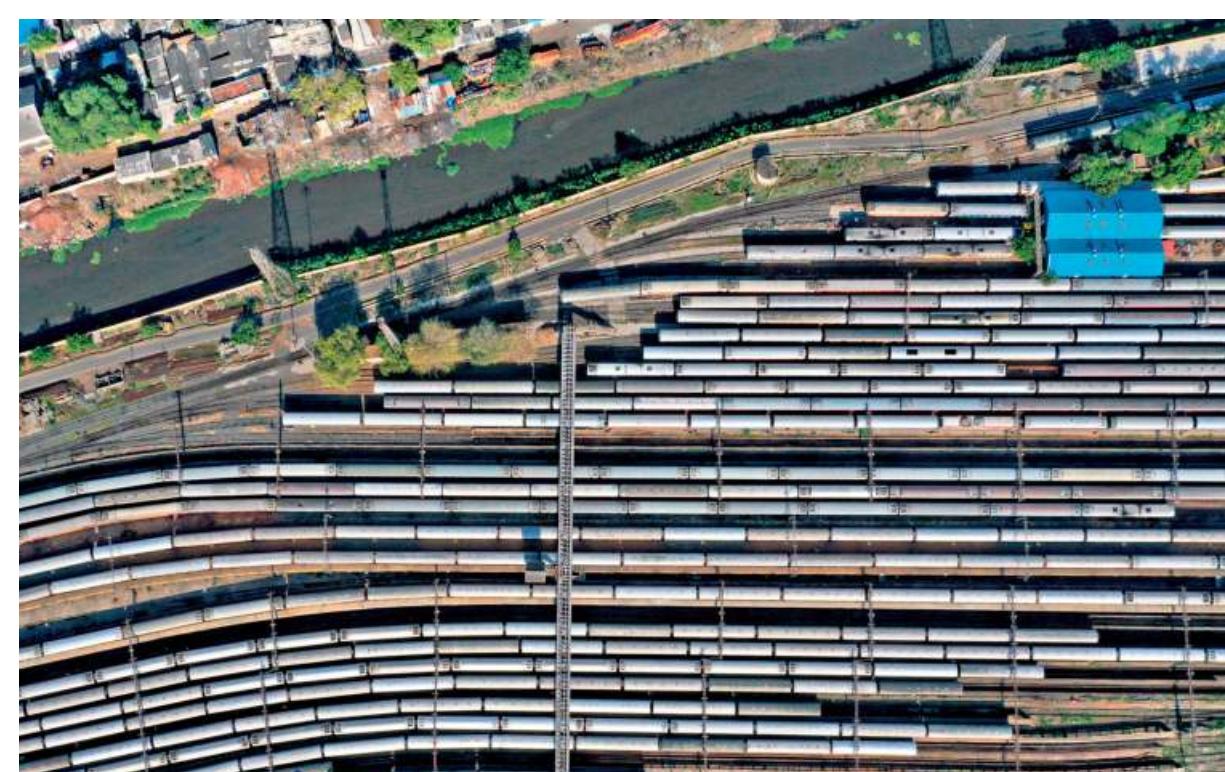
March 2021 to the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situation (PM-CARES) Fund to aid the Government's efforts to fight the coronavirus pandemic," the circular read.

Objections in writing
"Any officer or staff having objection to it [the donation] may intimate Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) in writing mentioning his/her employee code latest by 20.04.2020," the circular added.

The communication came as a surprise to the officers and staff of the department as they say, typically requests for such contributions come through the employees' association. Furthermore, employees were never asked to give it in writing if they did not want to donate.

STAFF UNEASY ▶ PAGE 8

Trainspotting



Emergency break: With all services suspended till May 3 as part of the efforts to control the spread of coronavirus, rakes are now idling at railway yards in various parts of the country. Captured above is an aerial view of trains parked at the Basin Bridge yard in Chennai on Sunday. ▶ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Pharma units still not able to operate freely

Raw material supplies are hampered

VIKAS DHOT

MUMBAI

A week after the Department of Pharmaceuticals warned of an impending shortage of drugs if pharmaceutical units are not able to operate freely during the lockdown, there has only been a marginal improvement in their functioning, with employee movement, transport and raw material supplies still hampered, and courier services remaining non-functional.

Most domestic pharmaceutical producers are operating at 30%-50% of capacity, while larger research-driven players say they have hit 40%-50%.

On April 11, the Department of Pharmaceuticals told the Home Ministry that the industry was operating at just 20%-30% of capacity and called for immediate measures to bring the out-

put back to the pre-lockdown level.

The Department is co-ordinating with the Ministry of Civil Aviation to bring in raw materials, finished drugs and vaccines on special flights operated by Air India. The Department of Posts and the Railways have offered pharma producers their services to help reach products to the hinterland.

"Manpower availability has improved a little, but people who have left the cities and gone back are hard to replace. Materials movement hasn't improved much and packaging also remains difficult to procure," said Daara Patel, secretary-general of the Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association, which represents over 1,000 large, small and medium companies.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Spare monkeys the virus, say biologists

Feeding primates could lead to mutated SARS-CoV-2 infecting hapless animals

ROHAN PREMKUMAR

UDHAGAMANDALAM

Feeding monkeys during the COVID-19 pandemic could have profoundly negative effects in the long-term, such as helping the SARS-CoV-2 virus mutate and infect primates, biologists have said in a note, advising caution.

Honnavalli M. Kumara, principal scientist at the Salim Ali Center for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), said it was well documented that viruses and endoparasites could transmit between humans and primates.

"The worst-case scenario is that SARS-CoV-2 mutates and infects other primate species. This could lead to many scenarios, such as the



Hungry troop: A forester feeding monkeys, facing a food shortage during the lockdown, near Madurai. ▶ S. JAMES

to minimise problematic human-primate interaction.

Ashni Dhawale, a researcher at the National Institute of Advanced Studies at Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, who is studying ecology and behaviour of the endangered lion-tailed macaque, said primates and humans share a complex relationship.

A 'provocation'
Monkey troops accustomed to being fed by people could view denial of food as a "provocation," leading to hostile interactions. "Monkeys start associating humans with food, and when food is denied, can attack them," she said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

No relaxation in lockdown, says Kejriwal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A spike in the number of asymptomatic COVID-19 cases detected in the Capital is due to the community sampling exercise being conducted in 77 containment zones, a State government official said on Sunday.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal justified his decision to continue the lockdown in the Capital, pointing to the fact that all 186 patients who tested positive on Sunday were asymptomatic.

This, he said, was 25% of the total test results (736) that came in on Saturday.

**'COMMUNITY TESTS SPOT 186
CASES IN DELHI'** ▶ PAGE 9
SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 3

Meerut hospital's ad kicks up a row

FIR registered against proprietor for 'hurting sentiments'

C A notice has been sent stating that in a secular country such discrimination cannot be accepted

DR. RAJ KUMAR

Chief Medical Officer

case of emergency, the hospital will send the samples of the patient and the attendant for testing and will charge ₹4,500 each.

A day later, the hospital issued a clarification in the same paper, regretting if the circular had hurt the feelings of any community. People said the regret was directed towards the Hindu and Jain communities as one of the points in the advertisement described them as "misery"

and appealed to them to contribute to the PM Cares Fund.

Haris Mehmood, who runs Saif Herbal Clinic in Meerut, further said in

said the discrimination was already happening. "Some doctors are looking at the name before treating a patient. It's just that in this case, the doctor has openly talked about it," he said.

Chief Medical Officer Raj Kumar told *The Hindu* that he has issued a notice to the hospital. "The notice says that in a secular country such kind of discrimination cannot be accepted. If the hospital doesn't give a credible response, further action could be initiated against it."

Senior Superintendent of Police Ajay Sahni said an FIR has been registered under Sections 188, 295-A and 503 (3) of the IPC against Ajay Jain, the proprietor of the hospital, for hurting the sentiments of a community. Dr. Jain did not respond despite repeated attempts.

A ND-NDE

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

On the approach road to the ISCKON temple in Dwarka, a serpentine queue of e-rickshaws moves slowly through a makeshift checkpost manned by police personnel and government officials.

The checkposts, which have come up at various locations near the temple, are meant to sanitise the e-rickshaws, check the drivers' temperature and issue slips mentioning the destinations the vehicles are expected to reach, carrying the cooked food.

The ISCKON administration has been feeding scores of poor people since the lockdown was announced. The initiative is being supported by the Delhi government, which takes care of the logistics and administration.

The temple is feeding around 4 lakh to 4.5 lakh people daily, said Piyush Goyal, chairman of ISCKON, Dwarka, adding that people from seven Assembly constituencies in South Delhi district are being fed by the temple administration.

"Until now the entire cost has been borne by ISCKON itself. Now that the lockdown has been extended, the Delhi government has offered to pay a subsidised amount to us. We are working closely with the government as norms like social distancing during food distribution need to be adhered to and that can be enforced by government officials," said Mr. Goyal.

The food, delivered twice a day, is being distributed at approximately 200 localities in the district, officials said.

"Our major focus is on areas like Uttam Nagar, Vikaspuri and



(Clockwise from left) Food being prepared at ISCKON makeshift kitchens; e-rickshaws collecting barrels of food and an e-rickshaw being sanitised before it is allowed to enter the ground. *V.V. KRISHNAN

DIVINE SERVICE

The ISCKON temple in Dwarka has been feeding lakhs of poor people since the lockdown was announced. The initiative is being supported by the Delhi government, which takes care of logistics and administration

Matiala, as there are a lot of slums there and several migrant workers also stay there," said R.K. Sharma, the nodal officer of Hunger Relief Cell, South West.

Drone monitoring

While volunteers are seen making regular announcements on loudspeakers, asking everyone present to maintain social distancing and use masks, drones are also seen hovering over the ground.

"We get real-time images from the drones and with the help of that we can ensure that all norms are followed. The e-rickshaws have also been provided with GPS so that we can track them and ensure that they reach

the correct destination," said Mr. Sharma.

The e-rickshaw drivers then leave for their destinations where volunteers are already stationed to distribute the food. People are asked to bring their own utensils to receive their share. They avoid distributing food packets as that leads to unnecessary littering on the roads.

Healthy food

In the parking area of a building adjacent to the temple, a mas-

sive kitchen has been set up where several people are engaged in cooking three types of pulses and vegetables.

"We aim to send healthy food to people to ensure a better immune system. Even when the food is distributed, the volunteers ensure that social distancing is maintained. While food for around 2.5 lakh people is the demand from the State government, for at least another 50-70 locations, the MLAs are taking food directly from us," said Mr.

Goyal.

For the e-rickshaw drivers, delivering food twice a day means their income is not halted as a result of the lockdown.

Rajkishore Mehta, a resident of the Kakrola area, said, "Earlier I used to earn around ₹700 per day and now after delivering food twice I earn approximately ₹400. But this is still better than dying hungry. When the lockdown was announced, we ran out of work overnight. I have a family of four to sustain and this work has helped me immensely."

While a 60-member team from the Delhi government is stationed at the temple to ensure smooth functioning of the entire process, another 700-800 officials are on the field in this particular district, Mr. Sharma said.

Coordination with agencies

In order to keep the kitchen and the delivery system well-oiled

and running, coordination between various government agencies is taking place on a daily basis, said Mr. Sharma.

"We also have a helpline centre here and we get distress calls from across the country. The calls from outside the city are redirected to the authorities concerned, while those from within the city are attended to and requisite help is provided," added Mr. Sharma.

Asked about the kind of distress calls they receive, he said most of them pertain to people asking for ration and food. Some even ask questions such as availability of transportation facilities or when the trains will start running, which the officers are obviously not able to respond to.

If it's a ration-related call, they either attend it themselves or give details about the particular district contact person, said Mr. Sharma.

Street vendor gets job offer, financial help

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Deepak Gupta, a 29-year-old street vendor who is living with his one-year-old daughter at a shelter in Tihar Village, received monetary help and a verbal job offer after *The Hindu's* report on Sunday.

Deepak, who used to sell cosmetics on the street and lost his wife two months ago,

said that he has so far received ₹15,000-16,000. "I have also received a job offer from a company in Noida and I told them about my daughter. They said they will discuss after the lockdown ends," he said.

The Hindu had reported that the extension of the lockdown pushed Deepak and his daughter to live in a shelter-cum-government school.

Film fraternity condemns 'witch-hunt' of CAA protesters

Noted personalities issue statements lambasting abuse of the lockdown and targeting of minorities

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Activists, writers, teachers as well as filmmakers and actors condemned the "witch-hunt" against people who participated in the anti-CAA protests in two sets of statements on Sunday.

Demanding the release of student activists, filmmakers and actors such as Mahesh Bhatt, Anurag Kashyap, Vishal Bhardwaj, Hansal Mehta, Nandita Das, Ratna Pathak Shah and about 20 others signed a statement urging the Delhi Police "to stop abusing the lockdown, respect the human rights of our fellow citizens and put an end to this witch-hunt."

"In a twisted fairy tale that the Delhi Police is trying to

Students protesting against CAA at Jamia Millia Islamia.
■ FILE PHOTO: BIBEK CHETTRI

weave" students and activists who had taken part in the anti-CAA protests were being implicated in cases of rioting and communal violence that took place here in February, they said.

"A riot in which the minorities suffered the maximum damage, both in terms of lives and livelihoods, has now become a pretext for the Delhi Police to further witch-hunt activists, most of whom also come from the minority community," they argued.

Abuse of rights

They called the police actions "inhuman and undemocratic", an abuse of rights that involved pushing activists to jail while undertrials in many States were being released. In a separate statement, they pointed out the weak basis for particularly targeting Muslim activists and scholars with the use of sedition laws and preventive detention.

The statement signed by Aakar Patel, Anand Patwardhan, Mukul Kesavan, Nandini Sundar and about 17 others, argued that the targeting of people like Sharjeel Imam, Kafeel Khan, Khalid Saifi and others was not a question of instigating violence through their speeches but "a lesson for all Muslims."

"Fall silent. Be afraid. Learn to accept to live on the terms dictated by a majoritarian State," it said.

Holes in FIR

The statement picked holes in an FIR allegedly being used to tie anti-CAA activists to the riots that erupted in north-east Delhi, arguing that the "FIR does not speak of any specific act of violence

but creates a grand theory of inflammatory speeches, and links these speeches to the outbreak of violence."

They also pointed out statements made by individuals reportedly charged with sedition, questioning the basis for their arrest and the breakdown of the alleged judicial process in some instances. Stating that Sharjeel Imam's speech called for at best a roadblock, the statement argued that there were

"many other questions in his speech – the nature of leadership, the terms on which solidarity across different social and political groups is to be forged – but these are questions that all movements engage with, and cannot constitute sedition."

Delhi Police distributes over 50 lakh food packets

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

In one of the biggest relief operations by Delhi Police, it has distributed more than 50 lakh food packets to the poor and homeless in the city with the help of NGOs and good samaritans.

The police said that they had received more than 20,000 calls on their 24*7 helpline number that was introduced to resolve issues related to the lockdown through direct intervention as far as possible.

A food delivery network system, put in place by the Delhi Police in all the 15 districts of the Capital with the involvement of nearly 400 NGOs, RWAs and good samaritans, made the distribution of more than 50 lakh food packets and around 50,000 dry ration kits possible, the police said.

"We are distributing dry ration kits consisting of wheat, rice, pulses, edible oil, salt, spices besides masks, sanitiser, soaps etc. to families of four-five members. It is just an effort to help the ones in need with the help of dedicated police teams and NGOs," said a police officer.

The areas were selected on the basis of analysing calls.

Atul Thakur, DCP (South) said that around 23,000 food packets are being distributed every day.

Delhi riots: lawyers write letter over continued summons, arrest

Ongoing arbitrary police actions pose risk to health of affected individuals, their families and public

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

to the riots.

They said many of these summonses note that failure to comply with it would render the person liable for criminal action. However, as per the March 24 lockdown order issued by the MHA, ordinary residents and citizens are permitted to step out only for essential supplies, the lawyers argued. "In trying to comply with such summonses, its recipients render themselves liable to penal action for violating lockdown orders, and in failing to comply with the summonses, they may be liable

for penal action... apart from exposing themselves, their families and the public to a grave health risk," the lawyers said.

They also said that people have been directed to appear at Crime Branch or Special Cell police stations that are at a considerable distance from their homes, making it extremely difficult for them to travel in the absence of public transportation.

In many cases, the police are detaining people from their homes and neighbourhoods without any notice or

information on the grounds of detention and without informing family members of the person, they alleged. "Moreover, there has been a troubling pattern of the police picking up family members of the person they seek to arrest, as proxies, and detaining them for hours on end, to threaten and coerce such families to produce the person they seek to arrest," they said.

They cited the example of a man from Chand Bagh area in Delhi who was detained overnight at PS Crime Branch, Chanakyapuri. The police of-

ficers had reached his house and asked for his nephew and on being told that the nephew was not home, had detained him. They also brought up the issue of police neither providing a copy of the FIR nor ground of arrest to the arrested persons and the family members.

The lawyers said in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, these ongoing and arbitrary police actions pose a significant risk to the health of the affected individuals, their families, and the public at large.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM

S.No. 1, E-Tender Notice No. L-Open-2019-20-31 Dated 03.03.2020. Name of works: Electricals work in connection with provision of AC at new GM building, old GM building & TA building at Hajipur. Tender Open On: 07.04.2020 Tender to be open on: 05.05.2020 Sr. Divisional Elect. Engineer (G) East Central Railway/Sonpur PR/51/SEE/ELEC/C/20-21/16

E-TENDER NOTICE No. 20 of 2019-20 (Corrigendum-II)

The Tenders are invited on behalf of Government of India, Ministry of Railways, New Delhi, for the supply of material required for the construction of Residential Quarters at Navsari Irrigation Colony, T.A., Dist. Navsari in B-2 form through online bidding system.

1. Estimated Cost Rs. 3,80,64,650.49

2. Date of uploading Up to DI 07/03/2020

3. Last Date & Time for receipt of online tender Up to DI 04/05/2020 instead of DI 20/04/2020 @ 18.00 Hours instead of Up to DI 20/04/2020 @ 18.00 Hours

4. Submission of EMD Tender fee & other Documents during office hours. Dt. 05-05-2020 to Dt. 11-05-2020 instead of Dt. 21-04-2020 to Dt. 27-04-2020 at 18.00 Hrs. In the office of the Executive Engineer, Ambica Division, Navsari. Opp. Tata Baug, Near Parsi Hospital, Lunsikui, Navsari-396445, Phone No.: 02637-258054 (Due to Corona Virus)

5. Tender Opening date for online tender received Date: 12/05/2020 instead of Date: 28/04/2020 @ 12.00 P.M. The Superintendent Engineer, Surat Irrigation Circle, Surat-395001 Ta- & Di-Surat

6. Name & Address of Division Office Executive Engineer, Ambica Division, Navsari Opp. Tata Baug, Lunsikui, Navsari, Pin code No. 396445, Phone No. (02637) 258054

The tender documents for the works will be available on the web site www.nprocure.com & further details notice can be seen at www.statetender.com MAHIT/NAV/10/2020

Timings

DELHI

MONDAY, APR. 20	
RISE 05:51	SET 18:50
RISE 04:35	SET 16:32
TUESDAY, APR. 21	
RISE 05:50	SET 18:51
RISE 05:05	SET 17:24
WEDNESDAY, APR. 22	
RISE 05:49	SET 18:51
RISE 05:35	SET 18:15

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 35 19

Safdarjung 35 19

Palam 37 20

Delhi Palam Today

37°C A pleasant morning turns

warm & dry weather with few

clouds. Chances of thunder

clouds development in parts.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

36°C Dry and very warm

weather with partly cloudy sky

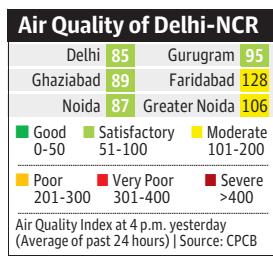
to continue.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019

All rights reserved.

THE HINDU

DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify the news from appropriate sources before responding to any published in this newspaper. THE HINDU PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Owner & Publisher of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertising claim made by any of the advertisers, products and/or services. In case of any dispute, the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director(s), Employees of this newspaper/paper, company and its respective staff shall in no manner whatsoever be liable for any claims and/or damage for advertisements in this newspaper.



Capital reports 110 new COVID-19 cases, 2 deaths

Chief Minister says no relaxation of lockdown restrictions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

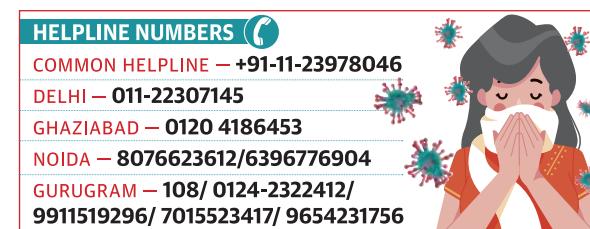
The Capital on Sunday reported 110 new COVID-19 cases and two deaths, taking the total number of cases to 2,003 and deaths to 45. On Sunday, 83 people recovered, taking the total number of people who have recovered to 290.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said as COVID-19 was still spreading in the Capital, the government has decided not to provide any relaxation to the ongoing lockdown.

'Review after a week'

"All 11 districts in the city have COVID-19 cases and therefore the lockdown needs to continue. The government along with experts will review the situation after a week to see if it is possible to provide relaxation in restrictions depending on the number of active cases," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added that currently, Delhi has the second-highest number of cases after Maharashtra and that in the last few days, there has been a considerable rise in the number of COVID-19 cases. "Even though Delhi accounts for 2% of India's pop-



Virus spread	
Total number of COVID-19 cases	2,003
Total deaths	45
New cases in the past 24 hours	110
New deaths in the past 24 hours	2

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

ulation, the cases account for 12% of the total cases in the country. Delhi has 78 containment zones that have been sealed to control the spread of the disease," he said.

Mr. Kejriwal in his digital conference assured Delhites that although the virus is spreading, the situation is under control and that there is no need to panic.

"If the lockdown had not been imposed, we would be on par with other nations where the numbers are

quite high. What if 3,000 people would require the ICUs and 2,500 people ventilators? We have observed a similar pattern in Italy, Spain and the U.S. where the ICUs, ventilators and the entire healthcare system were not sufficient in treating all the patients. Our country would be suffering from a similar fate if the lockdown had not been imposed," he said.

Random testing: CM
The Chief Minister urged people to be patient and strictly follow the rules of the lockdown. "We did random testing in the containment zones and it was observed that no cases were reported in the areas where rules were strictly followed. However, a surge in cases was observed where the protocol was not followed and people defied the norms of social distancing and lockdown," he concluded.

Longer wait for Gurugram industry

District administration in process of preparing mechanism to grant permission

ASHOK KUMAR

GURUGRAM

Though the Central government has allowed the States to permit select additional economic activities from Monday with adherence to the lockdown measures, the wait for industries and companies here would be a little longer.

Additional Chief Secretary V.S. Kundu, supervisory officer for COVID-19 preparations in Gurugram, told *The Hindu* that the district administration was in the process of preparing standard precautions for the industry to put in place to resume operations.

Applications invited
He said applications would be invited from the industries interested in resuming operations and a committee would look into them before granting them approval. "The committee would look into the capability of the industry to implement the measures to ensure the safety of the workers and prevent the spread of COVID-19," said Mr. Kundu. He



Workers stepping out from a garments industry in Manesar Industrial Model Township during lunch break. ■ FILE PHOTO

added that there could not be any time frame for grant of permission.

Mr. Kundu said "minimal" relaxation would be granted in Gurugram and he could not "foresee" any company resuming its operations on April 20. "The Union government has said that relaxation can be allowed from April 20, and not that it must come into force from tomorrow [on Monday]," he said.

Mr. Kundu said that a lot of industries had approached them and the district administration would determine its own mechanism to grant permission in a "fair and transparent way."

He said that only hardcore Information Technology companies and those assisting the essential services companies would be allowed. He ruled out permission to all call centres and BPOs. Mr. Kundu said that big industries had also approached them, but they too would be allowed with full measures in place.

Sectors willing to work
Manesar Industries Welfare Association vice-president Manmohan Gaid said that around 200 MSMEs in Manesar Industrial Model Township were willing to resume operations and "raring to go", but the State government and the local administration had been slow in granting the permission. "When the Union government has given a go-ahead and the entire district is not in containment zone, what purpose is achieved in delaying the process," said Mr. Gaid.

He added that the industrialist wanted the economic activity to resume so that revenue could be generated.

Delhi govt. runs trial of rapid antibody kits

Equipment to be used across city today

added.

Mobile van

Nidhi Srivastava, District Magistrate, Central district, launched a COVID-19 testing-on-wheels initiative in the district to make testing more accessible and at the same time ensuring safety of health workers.

The fabricated vehicle will be able to cater to narrow lanes, larger and dense areas of the district, increasing the number of samples collected in a day. "The mobile van can collect two samples at a time. It will take both nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs, seal them tight in double packing and transfer the sample to the testing facility. It will not only save time but also the people who are collecting the samples. The person who will collect the sample will be in the enclosure, so will not have to wear scarce PPE," the DM said.

"There is no point in doing random testing. Only those who are showing some symptoms of the virus will be tested as it is not a confirmatory test. In rapid antibody test, the result will be positive only if the antibodies have been generated. We will then send the samples for a reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) which is a laboratory to confirm. We plan to use the kits within the span of a week, he

Rumour of food running out at school leads to near-stampede

Complaint lodged against Jahangirpuri resident: govt. official

SIDHARTH RAVI

NEW DELHI

A near-stampede ensued at a school, currently acting as a food distribution centre, in Jahangirpuri on Friday when locals rushed inside its gates after a "rumour spread that food had run out".

Ashwini Bagadi, a local Congress leader, said similar situations take place daily with around 100 to 150 people left wanting food.



A food distribution centre in Jahangirpuri saw a near-stampede as people rushed to queue up for dinner on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Local, who had allegedly spread the rumour, had earlier complained about the location of the centre. Also, the school gate would remain open from now on and the locals have been requested to queue up only at 5 p.m.

SENIOR GOVT. OFFICIAL

Additionally, the school's principal had shut the compound's gate as people were regularly queuing up three hours prior to dinner, which is served at 6 p.m..

A video of the incident shows people in masks or cloth tied around their faces racing towards the food distribution point soon after the gates opened.

AIIMS doctors seek Minister's help in gender, caste bias case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) has written to the Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan over the alleged inaction of administration over caste and gender-based harassment of doctors at the institute.

"...Despite multiple letters, there has been no adequate action taken to address this issue of grave concern and eventually leading a resident to the edge after losing hope of justice in this prestigious institute," the letter read.

The RDA stated that she had also written to Women's Grievance Cell and SC-ST Welfare Cell at AIIMS and National SC/ST Commission, but no action was taken. "We appeal to the administration and Ministries concerned to expedite the process and address this injustice," it noted.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

**TO ADVERTISE
PLEASE CONTACT**

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

PH: 9820350726

selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

Mr. MANOJ KUMAR KUSHWAHA

PH: 999490055

manoj.kushwaha@thehindu.co.in

THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

Constable tests positive for COVID-19

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A Delhi Police constable has tested positive for COVID-19, said a senior officer on Sunday.

The constable, posted in the west district of the city, was immediately quarantined and asked not to

visit home, the officer added.

"His test was conducted on April 17 at the DDU dispensary and he tested positive on April 18," the officer said.

His family members and his colleagues who came in contact with him have

been asked to isolate themselves at home. The constable is "fine and doing well", said the officer.

Eight personnel so far
So far, at least eight police personnel have tested positive for COVID-19 and one of them has recovered.

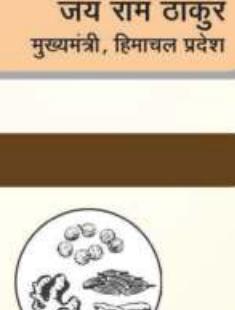
कोविड-19



रोग प्रतिरोधक क्षमता बढ़ाएं आयुर्वेदिक उपाय अपनाएं



कोविड-19 महामारी की कोई दवा अभी तक नहीं बनी है। इससे बचने के लिए शरीर की रोग प्रतिरोधक क्षमता बढ़ाने के उपाय करना ही बेहतर है। जीवन में प्राकृतिक रोग प्रतिरोधक प्रणाली की भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण है। आयुर्वेद शास्त्रों में वर्णित सरल उपायों के द्वारा व्यक्ति अपनी रोग प्रतिरोधक क्षमता बढ़ाएं। घर पर रहें, स्वस्थ रहें।



पूरे दिन केवल गर्म पानी पिएं।

प्रतिदिन कम से कम 30 मिनट योगासन, प्राणायाम एवं ध्यान करें।

हल्दी, जीरा, धनिया एवं लहसुन आदि मसालों का भोजन बनाने में प्रयोग करें।

आयुर्वेदिक उपाय

- च्यवनप्राश 10

Overcoming fear key to fight COVID-19, says Punjab patient

SBS Nagar district has managed to contain the outbreak with coordinated efforts

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

It has been 13 days since 48-year-old Harpal Singh, the sarpanch of Pathlawa village in Punjab's Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (SBS) district was declared COVID-19 free. But he stayed on till Sunday in the quarantine ward of the district hospital in Nawanshahr because his 72-year-old mother had also tested positive and was admitted to the hospital.

A very relieved Mr. Singh is all set to return home with his mother, who has also recovered from the infection.

The mother and son are among 19 COVID-19 cases from SBS Nagar district. Punjab's first death due to the virus – of a 70-year-old man on March 18 – was also recorded from Pathlawa.

No fresh case has been reported from the district since March 26 and 17 of the 19 infected persons have been treated and dis-



Harpal Singh with his mother Pritam Kaur. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

charged. Only a 15-year-old remains under treatment at the district hospital.

'Combat fear'

"I was admitted on March 22 after my samples tested positive and was discharged on April 7, but I didn't want to go without my mother. I decided to stay at the quarantine ward of the hospital. Today, I am happy that my mother has also been cured and we will both go back

home," Mr. Harpal said.

Thanking the hospital staff for their dedicated service, Mr. Harpal said people need to stay calm and overcome their fears if they test positive for COVID-19.

"Doctors and other staff at the hospital counselled me and kept motivating me, it helped me a lot. It may not be easy but one should overcome his/her fear. Practising hygiene and taking precautions are the important

things to be kept in mind," he said.

"In case there's any symptom of coronavirus, one should immediately get the treatment. The earlier the treatment starts, the better it is," Mr. Harpal emphasised.

"Also, I believe that a patient's family should stay in touch to keep up the morale. Loneliness is devastating. I kept listening to Gurbani (hymns from the Granth Sahib)," he said.

Successful strategy

Deputy Commissioner Vinay Bublani said as soon as the first COVID-19 death was reported from SBS Nagar district, the administration initiated a strategy to geographically tag affected areas.

"In this process 15 affected villages were sealed and the containment plan was strictly implemented," he said.

Woman tests positive in Ghaziabad

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

A 25-year-old woman who gave birth to a baby boy at a private hospital in Nandigram area of Ghaziabad on Thursday tested positive for COVID-19 on Saturday evening, an official release said. The baby has also been tested for the virus and the report is awaited. Both of them have been shifted to an isolation ward.

The doctor, who conducted the C-section on the woman, visited two more hospitals and conducted similar procedures on two more women. The doctor and the other medical staff have been quarantined. The woman hails from Kaila Bhatta, a densely populated area of Ghaziabad.

"Seven members of her family have been quarantined," said Dr. N.K. Gupta, Chief Medical Officer, Ghaziabad. "The woman and the baby have been put in isolation separately. The doctor who conducted the operation told us that the women had a temperature and other flu-like symptoms. So he told the hospital to get her tested for COVID-19 after the operation," he added.

On Sunday, three more persons tested positive in Ghaziabad.

Two new cases were also reported in Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Virus effect: sex workers worry about the months to come

Loss of income, unpaid loans and overdue rents haunt them

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

"I am now reduced to a beggar and rely entirely on free cooked meals distributed in our area," says Laxmi Mane (name changed), a 32-year-old sex worker in Pune's largest red light district, Budhwar Peth.

The lockdown and the fear of COVID-19 means that this primary bread winner of her family of five has no source of income now, and perhaps for months to come.

The financial worries continue to mount – an unpaid loan, overdue house rent, maintenance costs and an uncertainty over the future of her business.

"After the lockdown is over, there will be no business. Earlier, it was the note ban which reduced our earnings from ₹15,000- 20,000 to ₹7,000 as many clients stopped visiting us. Now, clients will worry about who all we have come in contact with. These thoughts keep gnawing on me," she says in a telephonic interview. She earns about ₹7,000 per month, while her husband earns ₹6,000 monthly from his roadside food stall, which is also shut.

With the lockdown being extended into May, she is also anxious about her three children who study at a boarding school in Ahmed-

Childcare has become a huge problem as day and night care shelters have shut down and children spend their entire day in cramped brothels

TEJASWI SEVEKARI
Executive Director, Saheli Sangh

nagar and had to return home next month for the summer break.

Least of worries

There are approximately 1,700 sex workers living in Budhwar Peth, apart from nearly 300 who have fled to their homes because of the lockdown. Food provision is the least of their worries.

"There are other needs too. Many women have families to support in their home towns, childcare has become a huge problem as day and night care shelters have shut down and children spend their entire day in cramped brothels. Routine medical needs of those who suffer from diabetes and hypertension are being ignored and then there is the issue of mental health, especially with uncertainty over resumption of business," says Tejaswi Sevakari, Executive Director, Saheli Sangh – a sex workers collective.

She is concerned that it

may take 8-12 months for sex workers to resume their livelihood.

In the initial days of the lockdown, HIV+ women were unable to access third-line anti-retroviral therapy (a higher treatment regimen for those who fail first and second line treatment) as it entails travelling to Mumbai. After a sex workers' organisation, Veshya Anyay Mukti Parishad (VAMP), moved the Bombay High Court, district authorities were ordered to make suitable arrangements.

In Jharkhand's Gumla, where sex workers earn ₹40-50 per client or sometimes offer services in kind, such as in return for tilling or harvesting by a male on her farm land, there may be problems faced by HIV+ survivors in accessing anti-retroviral therapy (ART) for which they need to travel to Sadar Hospital in Ranchi, explains Pushpa Sharma from Srijan Foundation.

'Can't avail benefits'

Many daily wagers, who travel to Ranchi on a daily basis and sometimes provide sex when they can't find other work, found themselves stranded and unable to return home when the lockdown was announced. "As a result, they have no identity proof, no ration card to avail benefits," adds Ms. Sharma.

Use of Chinese PPE kits after doctors nod'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Assam government has decided to use the Chinese personal protective equipment (PPE) kits only after doctors are satisfied with their quality in view of the controversy over having allegedly imported them by bending rules.

Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had last week said Assam was the first State in the country to directly order 50,000 PPEs from China. He also said the Centre, which had earlier imported such kits separately, had been kept in the loop.

The PPEs had come directly in a cargo flight from Guangzhou to Guwahati on April 15 evening. However, reports that the Defence Research and Development Organisation had trashed the PPEs have made the State government decide not to use them for now. Mr. Sarma said he checked with the DRDO, which denied having rejected the kits.

Farmer's family spends all for the poor

Local youths have joined as volunteers to make sure that no one goes hungry

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

A farmer's family in Osian town of Rajasthan's Jodhpur district is spending its entire life savings worth ₹50 lakh to distribute ration kits among the poor, destitute and daily wage earners deprived of their livelihood during the ongoing lockdown. Several youths in the region have joined the initiative as volunteers to make sure that no one goes hungry.



Ration kits being distributed by a farmer's family in Osian block of Jodhpur district. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Paburam Manda, 67, and his two sons have provided food kits to 6,500 families in 83 villages of the region with the help of a large team of volunteers.

The farmer family, which grows crops like cumin, garlic, onions and bajra, decided to extend help to the needy despite uncertainties about the its own agricultural yield after the recent unseasonal rains and hailstorms.

The doorstep delivery of food has especially helped the migrant labourers from other States stranded in the villages of Osian, Tinwari

ed the delivery of kits from April 2. Those who offered to contribute were politely asked to come later if the family's entire funds were used up.

Each ration kit comprises 10 kg of wheat flour, 1 kg pulses and 1 kg oil, along with biscuits, soap and spicess.

Priced at ₹800, one kit has sufficient food for five members of a family and can last for 10 days.

'A small contribution'

While Mr. Manda affirmed that he, as a farmer who had dealt with adversities,

had decided to stand up for the nation during the present crisis, Dr. Bhagirath Manda told *The Hindu* on Sunday that the initiative was his family's small contribution to support the underprivileged rural families which were on the brink of starvation.

'Huge response'

"The response we have received is overwhelming and our initiative has inspired others as well," Dr. Manda said. He said the 400 volunteers engaged in the supply of kits were adhering to all precautionary measures and informing the recipients of the safeguards to protect themselves against the virus infection.

The farmer's family has received the calls for help from more villages after the extension of lockdown till May 3. Dr. Manda – the physician-turned-civil servant – said the family would make arrangements for supply of 2,000 ration kits in the second round of its philanthropic work, beginning next week.

Man stranded in U.S., watches father's funeral on video call

Sudip's father died of heart attack in Odisha's Berhampur

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Stranded abroad and unable to reach home even for the funeral of parents following COVID-19 restrictions, young technocrats have no other means except video calls to have glimpses of last rites of the deceased.

An example of this sad situation occurred in Odisha's Berhampur on Saturday. K. Narasimha Subdhi (70) died of a heart attack at his residence at Kapileswarapeta Street of Berhampur. His only son K. Sudip, a software engineer, is working in the U.S. for the past one year. He had planned to visit home in April, but COVID-19 had shattered his plans.

Even after receiving information about his father's death, there was no way Mr. Sudip could reach Berhampur to perform the last rites. According to the family members, Mr. Sudip had spoken with his father only half an hour before he suffered the fatal heart attack.

Friends and relatives then decided to perform the funeral of the deceased in absence of his son. His pyre was lit by Mr. Sudip's brother-in-law.

As a last resort, Mr. Sudip



Sudip watching his father's funeral. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

watched the funeral rituals and last rites of his father at Nilakantheswar cremation ground in Berhampur through live video call.

A similar incident was reported from Laikera in Jharsuguda district of Odisha in March.

An elderly person with two sons had passed away on March 17. His elder son, working in Mumbai, had managed to return home and the funeral was conducted two days after the death. But the younger son, Ranjan Nayak, who stays abroad with his wife and daughter, could not return.

Here also video call was the only mean through which the son could remain in contact with bereaved family during the funeral process.

18 new cases reported in Haryana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Eighteen fresh cases of COVID-19 surfaced in Haryana on Sunday, taking the total tally to 250 in the State, according to a government statement.

State health department said out of total 250 confirmed cases, 24 are foreign nationals.

J.S. Punia, Chief Medical Officer, Gurugram, said a jail warden at Bhondsi Jail has been tested positive for COVID-19. "He was absent from the duty since April 9 and returned to work two days ago. But he was asked to get his test done and was not allowed to join. His result came on Saturday. He was found to be infected with the virus. Since he had not joined duty, the staff and inmates at the jail did not come in contact with him," he said.

plore alternative methods which are regularly used in the labs the tests can be carried out at a cheaper cost. It can be done by reagents which are cheaper. We do not know whether these have been explored substantially. What we are suggesting is alternative testing should be encouraged and the dependence on the imported kits should be reduced. In that way both the price of testing can be made more realistic and more testing labs can be engaged.

'deal with the situation?

■ We have seen countries like Germany, Italy going up to 13,000- 14,000 tests per million. In the U.S. the number is 7,000 per million. I really don't know if it is possible to achieve such numbers in India. We are saying that there is a need to increase testing in places where you are seeing infections. There is an urgent need to test asymptomatic people, people under quarantine or contacts of infected people. Because of high infectivity of the virus the insistence on testing comes into play. If we are able to test and isolate infected persons then we should be able to break the chain of transmission.

'There are concerns about the cost of the tests which comes to ₹4,500 per test.'

■ The way such viral transmission is stopped is by development of herd immunity. Herd immunity is when a large section of the population develops immunity against the virus and thereby stops its further spread. Herd immunity can only develop if people start developing antibodies against the virus. For that certain level of interaction has to be there among the population.

'So lockdown cannot be the only strategy?'

■ Lockdown should be part of a broad well planned comprehensive strategy. Lockdown is just one aspect of the strategy. Other measures like enhanced testing, effective isolation of infected individuals, monitoring of development of herd immunity should go hand in hand with lockdown as part of comprehensive strategy to fight the COVID-19 outbreak.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

RESPECTFUL HOMAGE ON THE FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARY



SRI PRAKASH CHAND DUGAR
S/o. LATE BHERUDANJI DUGAR
EXPIRED: 20.04.2019

Memories spent with you are precious and infinite wealth
You have been the pillar and strength of our lives
You will always be alive in our thoughts
We will never forget the pathway you have shown to us

Inserted by:
Wife, Brothers, Sister-in-law, Daughters,
Sons, Daughter-in-law and
M/s. BHERUDANJI DUGAR FINANCE LIMITED

In memory of your loved ones
To dedicate a space in this section, Please contact:

011-43579797

from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. &

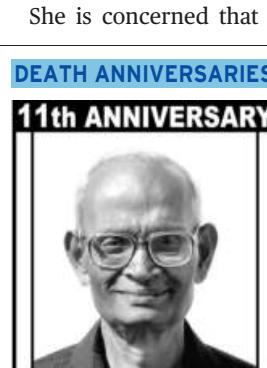
For Placing Advertisements Online log on to

www.thehinduads.com

DONATE EYES-GIFT SIGHT

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

11th ANNIVERSARY



K.A. CHANDRASEKARAN
Retd. Additional Secretary,
Govt. of India.

In Loving Memory

Wife : M. Chellamal

Daughter : Kalavathi

Son-in-law : Ganesh

Lockdown in Telangana extended to May 7

CM says all measures will be implemented strictly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday announced that the ongoing lockdown in the State has been extended to May 7.

COVID-19

Briefing presspersons after a State cabinet meeting, he said the lockdown would be implemented in a tough manner in the State.

He also said food delivery apps would not be allowed to operate in the State from Monday.

The Chief Minister said the containment measures initiated by the government has brought down the doubling rate significantly.

Against the national average doubling rate of less than eight days, doubling



Long wait: People maintaining social distancing while they wait to collect relief material in Hyderabad. ■ PTI

rate in the State was more than 10 days and the death rate too was significantly lower at 2.44 per cent compared to the national average of 3.22 per cent with 507 deaths reported across the country.

The State has far surpassed the national average in the recovery rate which stood at 22 per cent as compared to 14 per cent across the country.

Tests per million population in the State stood at 375 as compared to the national average of 254.

Four districts - Warangal Rural, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Wanaparthy and Siddipet reported zero COVID-19 cases.

In Andhra Pradesh, Kurnool, one of the most affected districts, recorded one death and 26 fresh cases.

The Health Department in Karnataka said a 65-year-old woman resident of Bengaluru passed away. A 50-year-old woman from Bantwal died in Dakshina Kannada.

Tests per million population in the State stood at 375 as compared to the national average of 254.

Four districts - Warangal Rural, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Wanaparthy and Siddipet reported zero COVID-19 cases.

Six new positive cases were reported from across the State, taking the total number to 390. This included the 16 deaths and 111 patients discharged.

While four new cases were from Mysuru, two were

from Dakshina Kannada. Of the Mysuru cases, two had a travel history to Delhi and the other two belonged to the Nanjangud cluster.

As of Sunday, 10 out of the 30 districts in Karnataka had not reported COVID-19 posi-

tive cases.

More fresh cases of COVID-19 were reported in Andhra Pradesh. In the 24-hour period till Sunday, 44 new cases and one death were reported in six districts, a State bulletin said. The case tally

Under the sun



Heavy burden: Children carrying cans to collect water being distributed by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board at the Borabanda slum in Hyderabad on Sunday. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

IN BRIEF



APSRTC buses converted into farmers' markets

VIJAYAWADA
Buses belonging to the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC), which are off the roads due to lockdown, have been given a makeover. A few have been converted into mobile 'rythu bazars' (farmers' markets) and a few others into mobile supermarkets, taking vegetables and groceries to the doorstep of residents in areas identified as red zones.

Rise in volunteer force enrolment in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
The ongoing COVID-19 relief efforts in Kerala have buttressed the government's efforts to cultivate a volunteer force that can be deployed to assist law enforcement agencies during exigencies. A clarion call by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to the public to become active partners in the State's efforts to contain the pandemic has seen the Samohika Sannadha Sena (community volunteer force) rapidly nearing its enrolment target of 3.4 lakh volunteers. The Sena was launched in January.

GVMC sets up helpline numbers for the needy

VISAKHAPATNAM
In an attempt to provide food or essential commodities to the needy, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has set up two helpline numbers 7032017389 and 8247231403. People in need of food or essential commodities can dial these numbers to approach the GVMC Command and Control Centre, GVMC Urban Community Development Project Director Y. Srinivas Rao said on Sunday.

Online, takeaway liquor sale put on hold in Kerala

Appeal against embargo unlikely

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala is unlikely to appeal against the Centre's embargo on liquor retail before the national COVID-19 lockdown ends. For now, the State government has put on hold the proposal to buy liquor from bars as takeaways and permit consumers to purchase alcohol from State-run outlets by ordering online.

With social distancing measures likely to be in place well beyond May 3, the government might also introduce limitations on the on-premise retail and consumption of alcohol.

Officials said the non-availability of legal alcohol has spawned black markets and illicit supply chains centred around shuttered bar hotels.

The Excise Department had not enumerated and sealed liquor stocks in bars after the announcement of the lockdown on March 21. It has now begun the process. The emergence of domestically distilled hooch as a substitute for legal liquor is worrying enforcers. Officials said commercial level distillation of hooch has resurged in several localities.

Congress urges Karnataka CM to step up COVID-19 testing

Follow WHO norms of testing 10,000 per 10 lakh people'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A Congress delegation that met Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Sunday urged him to increase testing for COVID-19 as per WHO protocols and provide salaries to frontline workers on time.

The delegation said testing of 10,000 per 10 lakh population as per the WHO guidelines had to be done. It also urged the State to meet the losses incurred by farmers who were unable to bring their produce to the market.

The delegation that included Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah, KPCC president-designate D.K. Shivakumar, and former Mi-



The Congress delegation with Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

nisters R.V. Deshpande, G. Parameshwara, and Dinesh Gundu Rao, also highlighted targeting of a particular community as responsible for spread of virus. They said that a few BJP MPs and MLAs had issued derogatory statements. The team drew the

Chief Minister's attention to politicians pasting their photographs on relief materials issued by the government.

"The government cannot keep quiet despite poor financial condition in the State. The Congress as an Opposition party will cooperate with the State government," said Mr. Siddaramaiah. He referred to the alleged discrepancy in relief work. "Just about ₹30 crore has been released from the Construction Workers' Welfare Board and so far only one lakh workers have received dry ration kits in Bengaluru. There are lakhs of workers, who do not have income nor are getting relief from government. Announce a package to safeguard them," he added.

It's Bangalore Blue for Karnataka's grape farmers

With juice-making units and wineries shut, nearly 3,500 tonnes of fruits remain unharvested

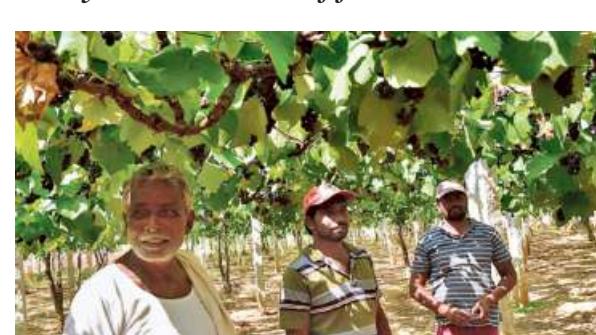
B.S. SATISH KUMAR
BENGALURU

Just a month ago, there was a festive mood in the house of 60-year-old Sonnappa, a farmer from Hoovegal village in Karnataka's Chickballapur district, as he was hopeful of earning a handsome income from the Bangalore Blue variety of grape grown on his 1.5-acre vineyard.

The farmer, who had sold the crop during the previous year for ₹3.80 lakh to some middlemen without making proper market enquiries, was optimistic of getting a higher price.

But his hopes came crashing as the COVID-19

growers of Bangalore Blue grapes are now in dire straits as their crops have started drying up with no takers.



No end to distress: Sonnappa and his sons at their farm in Hoovegal village, Chickballapur district. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bangalore Blue variety of grapes still remains unharvested in the fields of farmers. This variety of grapes is mostly used for juice and wine/spirit making.

While juice centres are closed, wineries too have shut their operations, pointed out N. Narayanaswamy, a grape trader in Southern Karnataka. This variety is generally sent to Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha for juice making, and to Maharashtra wineries.

Farmers are upset as they feel that the government did not act in a swift manner to safeguard their interests.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Monday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning, hail and squall (speed reaching 50-60 kmph) very likely at isolated places over Jharkhand, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and with lightning and squall (speed reaching 50-60 kmph) very likely at places over West Bengal.

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agartala	3.4	35.5	21.5	Kozhikode	—	37.2	26.8
Ahmedabad	—	39.6	26.3	Kurnool	—	39.9	28.8
Aizawl	—	28.3	16.1	Lucknow	—	37.2	23.7
Allahabad	—	41.5	24.7	Madurai	—	38.4	26.2
Bengaluru	—	34.2	24.0	Mangaluru	—	36.2	25.9
Bhopal	0.1	37.4	25.6	Mumbai	—	34.9	27.0
Bhubaneswar	—	36.6	21.8	Mysuru	—	34.9	23.9
Chandigarh	40.3	33.4	19.6	New Delhi	2.2	36.3	19.4
Chennai	—	34.6	28.4	Patna	—	36.8	25.7
Coimbatore	—	37.4	26.2	Puducherry	—	35.4	27.6
Dehradoon	0.1	20.6	13.2	Pune	—	39.4	24.6
Gangtok	28.8	18.7	13.2	Raipur	—	41.4	24.6
Goa	18.5	34.5	25.3	Ranchi	—	36.6	21.5
Guwahati	50.4	29.6	18.9	Shillong	25.0	23.6	—
Hubballi	—	37.0	23.0	Shimla	6.6	20.7	7.7
Hyderabad	—	36.6	26.2	Srinagar	—	13.7	6.4
Imphal	10.6	30.0	15.6	Tiruchi	—	39.1	28.6
Jaipur	—	34.6	21.8	Vijayawada	—	—	—
Kochi	—	33.4	27.4	Kolkata	—	34.6	24.8
Kohima	5.4	20.6	11.6	Visakhapatnam	—	33.0	27.4

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

Pollutants in the air you are breathing Yesterday

CITIES SO. NO. CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

Ahmedabad	25	18	36	63	■
Bengaluru	11	22	42	64	—
Chennai	08	02	38	08	—
Delhi	—	29	120	—	—
Hyderabad	14	49	62	81	■
Kolkata	05	05	13	20	—
Lucknow	05	36	49	170	—
Mumbai	07	04	106	33	—
Pune	28	10	52	36	—
Visakhapatnam	11	42	66	23	—

In observation made at 6.00 p.m., Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 195 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 18.

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

lockdown, coupled with several other issues, meant no takers for his crop. "I have a standing crop of 15 to 20 tonnes. But so far not even a single buyer has either made enquiries or even visited my farm for buying," said Mr. Sonnappa. "I heard that some middlemen are quoting a throwaway price of ₹2 per kg. But even such people did not visit our farm," he said. "I



Focus on the curve

Reducing the pace of new infections depends on locating hotspots through accurate data

As India prepares to partially relax the national lockdown for COVID-19 in zones that do not have high concern, from April 20, attention is focused on how successful 'flattening the curve' of infection has been. There is some evidence, based on reported cases put out by the Health Ministry that for a 48-hour cycle ending April 17, the growth in total cases was slower than during the preceding comparison period – 16% versus 28%. These data, and others indicating a slowing pace of case doubling, must be viewed against the backdrop of vastly different testing rates among States. Delhi has ramped up tests per million people and also reported a higher percentage of positive cases, compared to populous West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh which have done far fewer tests and yet find a higher share of positive cases. Kerala has managed to test, trace, quarantine and treat effectively, preventing new infections. The highest prevalence can be mapped to States with high economic output or significant urbanisation, or both, such as Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu. Other factors may be driving up case numbers in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. The most recent ICMR data appear to show a spike – 2,154 new cases in a single day reported on April 18. These are clear pointers for the Centre and States, as they try to reconcile public health and economic measures to alleviate the deep distress and damage caused to millions.

Given the uncertainties surrounding the long-term effects of SARS-CoV-2 on people, including medical outcomes for those who have recovered from severe infection, India's COVID-19 strategy has to focus on testing, containment and treatment on the one hand, and distress alleviation for vulnerable sections on the other. As the disease has demonstrated once again, pandemics have the ability to quickly expose underlying inequalities. From a medical perspective, it has laid bare the inadequacy of the public health system to roll-out enough tests in all States, to determine where containment measures would achieve the best outcomes, and also to provide intensive treatment for acute respiratory illness. Looking ahead, the need for testing can only grow when a phased exit strategy is attempted. The testing data generated by all laboratories should be complete and shared in real time transparently by the Centre to aid policy-making. As psychologists are pointing out, the response to HIV testing over two decades ago dramatically improved when people saw hope of treatment, got access to tests and were protected against stigmatisation and xenophobia. This would apply in good measure to COVID-19. Flattening the curve will require clear messages on preventive health, and steps to help people maintain strict quarantine where indicated without suffering economic losses, and carry out regular surveillance testing and symptom monitoring.

Economy in lockdown

After the IMF's revised projections, India must adopt plans that avert the worst case scenario less than two months after asserting that "global growth appears to be bottoming out", the pandemic induced 'Great Lockdown' has forced the IMF to junk all its previous projections for economic output in 2020. Faced with the stark reality of sweeping shutdowns of almost entire economies worldwide, the fund last week acknowledged that the current "crisis is like no other". Forecasting the sharpest contraction in world output since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the IMF slashed its projection by 6.3 percentage points from its January forecast for 3.3% growth to a 3% decline. In contrast, the recession of 2009 saw world output contract by a mere 0.1%. That the IMF was blindsided by the comments from Chinese authorities and WHO is clear from the fact that as recently as February 22, the fund's chief, Kristalina Georgieva, told G20 Finance Ministers that "global growth would be about 0.1 percentage points lower" than forecast in January. China's GDP, she projected, would expand by 5.6% this year, 0.4 percentage points slower than assumed in January. Last week, the IMF slashed China's forecast to a growth of 1.2%, citing data on industrial production, retail sales, and fixed asset investment that, it said, suggested a contraction of about 8% in the first quarter. China reported a 6.8% first-quarter contraction. Still, in projecting an annual expansion in Asia's largest economy, the fund is rather optimistically foreseeing a sharp rebound in activity over the rest of the year.

On India, the IMF has cut its projection for growth in the fiscal year that started on April 1, from January's 5.8%, to 1.9%. This again appears predicated on the fund's baseline scenario that assumes that the pandemic would 'fade in the second half of 2020', allowing containment efforts to be unwound and economic activity to normalise. Another key assumption by the IMF's economists is the availability of policy support to nurture the revival once activity restarts. Jettisoning its storied fiscal conservatism, the fund's chief economist, Gita Gopinath, has advocated ramping up a broad-based and coordinated stimulus once the disease has been contained, a measure that would help avoid the errors of the Great Depression years when premature efforts to prune budget deficits prolonged the downturn. In this context, India's fiscal measures pale in terms of scale when compared with what several other nations have undertaken. Given the size of the informal sector in India as well as the anticipated prolonged disruption in labour supply even in more formal parts of the economy, the Centre needs to proactively commit to a substantial stimulus package in order to ensure that once the economy reopens, it has the legs to run.

A shot of hope with a game changing vaccine

Using lessons learnt, a social vaccine can build societal immunity to the devastating effects of pandemics, now and later



PRATHAP THARYAN &
T. JACOB JOHN

Over the initial phase of the national lockdown (March 24 to April 14), India reported a 20-fold increase in confirmed SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 cases (468 to >10,000), and a 36-fold increase in deaths (9 to 330). Increased testing may partly account for this; but testing is still inadequate and this data represent underestimates. The case-fatality of 2% to 3% is indicative of the large number of deaths India can expect.

Debates about the relative merits of mitigation to "flatten the curve" versus allowing "herd immunity" to build naturally are increasingly irrelevant. The failures in widespread testing for infection or for immunity imply that transmission-chains via asymptomatic, mildly-symptomatic and pre-symptomatic people remain undetected. Most countries, including India, are inadvertently employing hybrid strategies.

The lockdown (an extreme example of mitigation) has been extended to May 3. The dire socio-economic consequences and the scale of human tragedy that play out daily make a prolonged total lockdown undesirable. Alongside infection-control, a strategic plan of action to mitigate suffering and to stimulate economic recovery is urgently needed.

As a series of measures

In a recent interview, the Union Health Minister, Harsh Vardhan, asserted that lockdowns and social distancing are the most effective "social vaccines" available to fight the pandemic. A social vaccine will far broader implications.

So what is a social vaccine? A social vaccine is a metaphor for a series of social and behavioural mea-

sures that governments can use to raise public consciousness about unhealthy situations through social mobilisation. Social mobilisation can empower populations to resist unhealthy practices, increase resilience, and foster advocacy for change. This can drive political will to take action in the interests of society and hold governments accountable to address the social determinants of health by adopting progressive socio-economic policies and regulatory mechanisms that promote health equity and reduce vulnerability to disease.

When applied to pandemics, the effectiveness of a social vaccine is determined by the extent of dissemination and uptake of accurate information about personal infection risk and methods to reduce the risk through consistent core messages disseminated through a variety of means. A social vaccine addresses barriers and facilitators of behaviour change, whether attitudinal, social, cultural, or economic, and supplements information, education, and communication (IEC) with targeted social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) strategies.

Uganda and Thailand used these strategies effectively during the HIV/AIDS pandemic to bring down the incidence of HIV infection, before highly active antiretroviral treatment (HAART) was introduced in 1995. They demonstrated how an effective social vaccine helped "flatten the curve" till effective treatments were discovered that dramatically reduced mortality, viral loads and infection transmission.

Lessons from HIV pandemic

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is believed to have made the zoonotic jump from monkeys through chimpanzees to humans in Africa as early as the 1920s, but the HIV/AIDS epidemic was detected in 1981 and was a pandemic by



1985. From 1981 till December 2018, around 74.9 (range: 58.3 to 98.1) million people worldwide were HIV-infected, and around 32.0 (range: 23.6 to 43.8) million died (43%, range: 41 to 45%) from AIDS-related illnesses.

The early years of the HIV/AIDS pandemic were also a time of global panic. The cause was unknown (till 1984) and diagnostic tests were unavailable (till 1985). Since there was no treatment, a diagnosis of HIV infection was a death sentence. Widespread fears of contagion rendered many infected people homeless and unemployed. Many were denied access to care. Stigma, discrimination and violence towards infected individuals, their families, social groups (sex-workers, gay men, drug users, truck drivers, migrants), and even health workers, were common. Criminalising sex-work and injecting drug use followed. Conspiracy theories, misinformation and unproven remedies were widely propagated. The blame game targeted world leaders and international agencies. The preparedness of health systems, societal prejudices and socio-economic inequities were starkly exposed.

Reducing HIV transmission centred on acknowledging that everybody was potentially infected – even those apparently healthy – and that infection occurred predominantly through sexual transmission and intravenous drug use. The core preventive messages involved being faithful to one sexual partner or 100% condom use during sexual intercourse outside stable relationships.

ships; resisting peer-pressure for risky behaviours, and harm reduction for intravenous drug use. These measures conflicted with prevailing cultural, social, religious, behavioural and legal norms. IEC and SBCC activities targeted (and partnered) individuals, families, community leaders, peer-led community networks and social and health systems to change attitudes and behaviours. Religious and community leaders were key change agents. For example, the Catholic Church in Uganda did not initially support promoting condoms for safe sex since its use prevents life. After large numbers of people died of AIDS, their tacit acknowledgment that their religion did not preclude the use of condoms to prevent death was an important turning point. Thailand pioneered the effective use of social marketing of condoms for safe sex and used humour to defuse social taboos about publicly discussing sex.

These strategies and advocacy against stigma and discrimination were successfully adapted in India. These skills and experiences can be innovatively adapted for the current pandemic.

How it can work

The core infection-control messages are available from official sources. Maintaining physical distancing in social situations (unless impossible) and wearing cloth masks or facial coverings in public (especially where distancing is impossible) by 100% of people (and 100% of the time) is key to preventing infection along with regular disinfection of oneself and one's surroundings. Effective and innovative IEC and SBCC strategies should address the barriers and facilitators to implementation. People are more likely to practise these behaviours if all leaders (without exception) promote them publicly and consistently, the whole community believes in their importance, and if proper information, support, and materials are available and accessible. Coer-

cive or punitive methods are invariably counter-productive, as was seen with HIV/AIDS.

A social vaccine also requires people to hold leaders accountable to invest in: rapidly scaling-up testing; meeting the basic and economic needs of vulnerable sections; providing psychological support where needed; not communalising or politicising the pandemic; providing adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) to front-line workers in health, sanitation, transport and other essential services; and not compromising the privacy and dignity of infected individuals and their families in the interest of public health. Building trust is key if government-imposed mitigation strategies are to be embraced by the population.

Re-purposing and funding relevant industries and small and medium businesses to produce materials such as PPE, hand sanitisers and medical equipment; community groups to supply cloth masks, soap, etc., and innovative social marketing of these are other essential components of the social vaccine. The components of the social vaccine should be in place before relaxing or lifting the lockdown.

There is still no biomedical vaccine for HIV/AIDS. Considering the limited efficacy and uptake of influenza vaccines, vaccines for SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 may not provide a panacea. Effective treatments to reduce deaths with COVID-19 may emerge, but till then, and even afterwards, a social vaccine is needed. A social vaccine can build societal immunity to the devastating effects of future pandemics by the lessons learned about addressing the root causes, and our responses to the current one.

Dr. Prathap Tharyan is Adjunct Professor, Clinical Epidemiology Unit, Christian Medical College, Vellore. Dr. T. Jacob John, a retired Professor of Virology from CMC Vellore, is Chairman, Rotary Club of Vellore TB Control Society

Caught in the heightened arc of communal polemics

In the Tablighi Jamaat issue and its messages, it is important not to lose focus of the core subject – the pandemic fight



AMBREEN AGHA

Communal politics around the Tablighi Jamaat has been intensifying ever since this little known organisation was in the spotlight after dozens of people who attended a religious congregation the group held at its headquarters in Delhi in March tested positive for COVID-19. For a nuanced perspective on this polarising issue it is imperative to make a conscious attempt to read the history of this particular trend within Islam.

The attacks on the group by the right wing have gone as far as equating it to a case of 'health terror', and even urging the government to proscribe it. This impassioned suggestion is quite misplaced while at the same time dangerous as it is likely to instil fear among a section of those who follow Tablighi Islam.

This peripatetic group of preachers look at faith renewal and bringing back non-practising Muslims to the fold of 'true' Islam. Looking at their conduct suggests

that while the rest of the world was getting to know about the novel coronavirus outbreak in December 2019, the 'apolitical' Tablighis, who consciously distance themselves from 'worldly affairs', had already acquired and spread the virus among fellow travellers who were returning home after days and months of global spiritual patrolling.

While the Tabligh is responsible for not taking timely action in dispersing the gathering at the Nizamuddin Markaz, which is the global headquarters of the movement, the lack of care by the state in underplaying the threat of the novel coronavirus and the delay in initiating testing cannot be ignored. By this time, the Tablighis had travelled across the world becoming one of the major carriers of the virus in India.

The reaction of hate is both reductive and demagogic. The polemical narrative that is infused with Islamophobia is based on unfounded fears and deep-seated prejudices.

History as subtext
The political lexicon that has evolved around the Muslim minority within a right-wing stream operates on the presumption of their otherness, which includes stereotypical attitudes towards their eat-



ing habits. As the spread of the virus turns communal it is important to take a cursory glance at history.

History has lessons for all. The Tablighi Jamaat, a transnational Islamic revivalist movement, was founded in early 1926 British India by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi and spread by Ashraf Ali Thanawi, the two patriarchs of the movement. The political vicissitudes of 19th and 20th century India had a tremendous social, political and psychological impact on Muslims of the country, which led to vigorous religious expressions facilitated by the British. The 19th century was the period when a variety of new influential as well as controversial religious reform movements, both Hindu and Muslim, were emerging within India with a desire to rediscover their

'lost glory'.
In the search for this 'lost glory' and a sense of belonging and identity, the Tabligh emerged as a response to the Christian missionary and the Shuddhi Sangathan. There exist interconnected social and political patterns that led to the formation of the Tabligh with its original focus on 'detracted Muslims', and, later, evolving into a proselytising group. Though it emerged in an intensively political context, the Tabligh maintained an 'apolitical' demeanour, specifically in India.

The message for all players
There are lessons for the paranoid mind. Tabligh lays emphasis on individual social 'reform' and reversion of the political. This clearly means that the Tabligh does not directly hanker after state power; it has adopted a "bottom-up approach" to Islamise society and claimed a complete disengagement on issues that involve politics. Since the Tabligh is about a withdrawal from the political it does not emerge as a 'security threat'.

Despite its claimed distancing from politics, the movement exists, operates and travels through political boundaries and among political communities. The persistence of being apolitical has se-

rious political implications; the price of political ignorance or apathy is quite high, as seen today in the Tabligh being implicated in the spread of the pandemic and a demonisation of the larger community.

While there are lessons for the different sets of people embroiled in the current controversy, it is important to identify the problem at the moment – the 'common enemy', which is the SARS-CoV-2 virus. In the hierarchy of priorities, any action other than this would amount to inaction against the overarching threat that looms over us. Life in the steps being taken to flatten the curve as far as the virus is concerned is difficult. The politics of hate around the Tabligh only heightens this condition of national and global anxiety with isolation taking its toll on mental health.

Is it a coincidence that the novel coronavirus, much like the cow issue, has intensified communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims? Clearly, it is not a coincidence. It is a pattern; a political design to caricature, frame and endanger one part of the nation.

Ambreen Agha is Associate Professor at the Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal Global University. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Second class netizens

August 5, 2019 will be noted as a landmark day in the annals of Jammu and Kashmir as well as the rest of India. It was on this day a promise was made in Parliament that the people of J&K were about to notice a positive change in their lives hereafter. Months have elapsed since then but there are no signs of this promise. The immediate fallout, in the form of snapping connectivity, has hurt citizens here. There has been a rise in Net shutdowns, varying in duration and extent. While the judiciary has highlighted how the authorities could apply the doctrine of proportionality before passing any order intended to restrict fundamental rights of

individuals, the acts of the administration of the Union Territories of J&K circumvent this doctrine even in times of a life-threatening pandemic. The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought along several challenges which demand the better use of technology, which can only be facilitated by faster 4G service in comparison to slower 2G. Doctors in J&K are faced with the issue of treating patients remotely to reduce the pressure on hospitals and to minimise the risk of hospitals turning into hotspots. Doctors also raise another crucial point – that disseminating safety precautions especially to those living in far-flung areas and who do not read or write, has become very difficult with mobile speed

restrictions. Video is the easiest and most crucial ally in fighting a pandemic. Also, since research and awareness about COVID-19 is still in its infancy, a lot of new information is constantly emerging on all aspects of medicine. Webinars and conferences play a key role.

BASIT AMIN MAKHDoomi,
Srinagar

Social democracy pays
Ultimately in a crisis, a State which followed social rights and public trust could flatten the COVID-19 curve with grit and determination (Editorial page, "A virus, social democracy, and dividends for Kerala", April 18). In this context, last mile connectivity with rural areas scores, examples

being projects such as Kudumbasree community kitchens. As one associated with a rural livelihood project, namely Vaazhndhu kaattuvom, renamed Pudhu Vaazhvu, in Tamil Nadu, it is unfortunate that such a crucial link was hastily wound up. Such projects with livelihood groups strong on various vocational aspects would have helped a great deal. This aspect of strength helps in rapid percolation of crisis mitigation measures to remote places which cannot be easily reached ordinarily.

D. V. PURUSHOTHAMAN,
Chennai

■ This pandemic has taught us so much and we are still learning. We can examine,

learn and improve from our response to this crisis. Sectors such as health care, local-level democratic institutions, delivery apparatus to ensure government schemes have last mile coverage, coordination in a federal structure and a balance between lives and livelihoods need in-depth evaluation. All these systems cannot be upgraded overnight to deal with the crisis. Community participation and the strong involvement of local decentralised institutions are the key to making a difference. A State such as Kerala has always outperformed the rest of the country in nearly all social indices. This is a key lesson.

SALMAN MAHMOOD,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In "Coronavirus: South Asia remains an outlier in infections" (April 19, 2020), P.S. Raghavan was erroneously described as the convener of the National Security Advisory Board. He is the chairman of the board.

In the story headlined "To ease situation, RBI to pump in ₹1 lakh crore" (April 18, 2020), there was a reference to reduction in the reverse repo rate to 3.5%. It should have been 3.75%.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-2855263; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com



with the crisis. Community participation and the strong involvement of local decentralised institutions are the key to making a difference. A State such as Kerala has always outperformed the rest of the country in nearly all social indices. This is a key lesson.

SALMAN MAHMOOD,
Noida, Uttar

Preparing for a new political field in J&K

The Kashmiri is a mere bystander as the framework of a new political order is being worked by New Delhi



V. SUDARSHAN

With National Conference leaders Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah being released after over seven months of detention, there is an air of inevitability to the leader of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mehbooba Mufti, being released as well. There were expectations that Mr. Omar Abdullah and Ms. Mufti would be released in tandem, but nearly a month after Mr. Omar Abdullah's release, it is strange that her detention should continue. Ms. Mufti has merely been moved out of a sub-jail into her official residence, where she remains in detention.

New contours

Notably, since they've been set free, neither of the Abdullahs has rocked Delhi's political boat leading to speculation whether there had been some understanding reached prior to their release or whether they are keeping their powder dry following the Gupkar Declaration of August 4, 2019. During that meeting, politicians from across the spectrum, minus those from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), pledged to unite to safeguard the special status and autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir. Perhaps there is fear that Ms. Mufti could queer the pitch when she is unencumbered of her strictures and inconveniently starts harking back to August 5, 2019; after all, she has support among the Jamaat in south Kashmir. There is no doubt that Kashmiris have felt let down by their politicians, and although Ms. Mufti has been self-destructive as a politician, the longer she remains locked up, the more credibility she gains.

Competitive jostling for political space could have an undesirable domino effect as New Delhi struggles to create a new political playing field, the contours of which are becoming clearer now. For one, it would make the going much tougher for New Delhi's favourite, Apni Party, led by Altaf Bukhari and comprising a motley group of politicians who have defected, resigned or were fired from diffe-



"The Apni Party cannot provide an overarching political framework for Jammu and Kashmir." President of the party, Altaf Bukhari, in Srinagar. ■PTI

rent political parties. Left alone in the political field, the Apni Party will gain disdain and derision rather than political heft. This must have been a big factor in the rethink on continuing to keep the Abdullahs in detention. The question remains: what will be New Delhi's road map for Jammu and Kashmir?

A cauldron of resentments

Eight months of sustained lockdown has indubitably left many sections of Kashmiri society crushed economically and otherwise. There is perhaps a cauldron of resentments there, more susceptible than ever before to radical blandishments. Before the novel coronavirus came along, Kashmir's apple orchards did some business. But all other avenues of income, such as the handicrafts industry, small enterprises, the papier-mâché industry, the carpet industry and tourism, could not have thrived. There was a stranglehold on social media. Broadband as well as mobile

Internet services in the region were banned for months. Broadband and 2G Internet were restored in January, but they severely constrain all sorts of community, communication and business activities that normal societies thrive on.

It's spring in Kashmir, and the security forces confront a situation of increased armed activity. After claiming responsibility for the Kabul Gurwara attack on March 25 that killed over 25 people, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province said that the attack was "revenge for Kashmir." This mutual reinforcement could turn into a wellspring for the radicalised Kashmiri as well as for Pakistan which is set to get a better grip on Kabul via the Taliban. India temporarily closed two consulates in Afghanistan (Herat and Jalalabad) in the first week of April anticipating growing security threats, among other things. At least two of the five militants who killed para commandos in early April in

sudarshan.v@thehindu.co.in

Kupwara, close to the Line of Control, were local youth from south Kashmir.

The COVID-19 crisis has certainly changed the dynamic of the discourse somewhat. It has given time for the government to prepare the playing field better. Delimitation will be the key. There will be more electoral loading in Jammu, which will take away some of the emphasis from the constituencies in Kashmir, which have espoused separatist sentiments. Yet, delimitation based on the infirmities of the 2011 Census would make less sense than one based on 2021, which has been deferred indefinitely. Elections could happen once the seats have increased from 83 to 90, which gives plenty of time to get the panchayat elections right. The last panchayat elections were a disaster because the mainstream political parties boycotted it. Nearly 12,000 posts were left vacant. This time the government will be keen to ensure more healthy participation.

The road ahead

The rough road ahead looks something like this: if the COVID-19 crisis abates, the Amarnath Yatra will be held from mid-June to end-July, and if the security situation permits, the panchayat elections will be held. Later, the Census will be conducted and delimitation will occur. Following all this, the Assembly elections will take place. All this could take more than a year and a half. Somewhere in the middle dangles the carrot of promised statehood.

Though individual members are popular enough to stand on their own feet in their constituencies, the Apni Party cannot provide an overarching political framework for Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu BJP and Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference chairman Sajjad Lone might add some numbers. The rest the BJP may manage, as it did in Goa, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. It is unclear if the National Conference and the PDP, and others of the Gupkar grouping, if they contest, can come together to deny New Delhi political space. But right now the Kashmiri is a mere bystander as the framework of a new political order is sought to be worked and put in place by New Delhi.

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

No dissent, no democracy

No government, whatever be the circumstances, has the right to take away our freedoms, justice and equality



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

This newspaper carried a powerful editorial, "Perverse zeal" (February 17), on paediatrician Dr. Kafeel Khan's arrest. As the novel coronavirus is taking its deadly toll on lives and economies across the world, one would imagine that the focus of the government would be on containing the spread of the virus and coming up with ameliorative measures to reduce the burden on the people. Instead, the dominant mood seems to be to hand out punishment to dissenters. To make matters worse, the courts are not at the forefront of defending rights and limiting excesses.

Fate of dissenters

On the birth anniversary of the framer of the Indian Constitution, B.R. Ambedkar, civil rights campaigner Gautam Navlakha and scholar and activist Anand Teltumbde were forced to surrender to the National Investigation Agency for their alleged involvement in the Bhima-Koregaon riots of 2018. The Uttar Pradesh government has filed a case against the founding editor of the news portal *The Wire*, Siddharth Varadarajan, for allegedly spreading fake news against Chief Minister Adityanath and making an "objectionable comment" about him.

Scholars who condemned the excess of the U.P. government said: "A medical emergency should not serve as the pretext for the imposition of a de facto political emergency." In India, dissenters seem to either be killed, as we saw in the case of Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh, or are subject to an unfair judicial process, as is happening to Dr. Khan, Mr. Navlakha, Mr. Teltumbde and Mr. Varadarajan. And comedians risk being on the no-fly list.

While the courts over the past decade may not have delivered on protecting crucial rights as enshrined in the Constitution, there is a fine display of scholarship documenting India's glorious history of individuals and groups questioning, censuring and debating authority for over 3,000 years. *India Dissents* is an anthology that documents some of the sharp arguments, doubts and expressions of differences over three millennia.

From the Charavaks and Gautama Buddha to contemporary public intellectuals like Romi

la Thapar and Amartya Sen, the anthology speaks of the many defining texts by these writers that enabled people to question and hold those in power accountable. Ashok Vajpeyi, who established the Bharat Bhawan in Bhopal, and is a well-known administrator of cultural institutions, has not only edited this volume but has also written a very moving introduction. It is my earnest desire that all our elected representatives, learned judges, journalists and others read this anthology to understand the crucial role of dissent in a democracy. They need to move away from the comfort of patronage and return to the core calling of their respective vocations.

A couple of excerpts

I am sharing only excerpts from a couple of texts mentioned in the anthology as the paucity of space here prevents me from exploring the book in its entirety. At this time of rampant engineered social fissures, let us first look at a poem from *Purananuru*, a Sangam period Tamil anthology, written by Kovoor Kilar and translated by A.K. Ramanujan. It is a clarion call to warring clansmen to stop fratricidal

wars:

Your enemy is not the kind who wears the white leaf of the tall palmyra nor the kind who wears garlands from the black-branched neem trees. Your chaplets are made of laburnum your enemies are made of laburnum too. When one of you loses the family loses, and it is not possible for both to win. Your ways show no sense of family: they will serve only to thrill alien kings whose chariots are bannered like your own."

The second is an excerpt from a letter written by Jayaprakash Narayan from prison during the Emergency to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi: "Having muzzled the press and every kind of public dissent, you continue with your distortions and untruth without fear of criticism or contradiction. If you think that in this way you will be able to justify yourself in the public eye and damn the Opposition to political perdition, you are sadly mistaken."

What the anthology teaches us is that no government, whatever be the circumstances, has the right to take away our freedoms, creative impulses, justice, dignity and equality.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Singing the corona tune

Isolation isn't easy and may be music will keep us company through the trying times

KUNAL RAY

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us into necessary isolation. Many of us are spending anxious hours sitting inside our homes and surfing social media for further updates. We are surrounded by a mountain of anxiety. Amidst all-pervasive gloom, I couldn't help notice the steadfast outpouring of music on social media platforms. Many of the songs posted are new compositions specific to the situation. While most of these are indeed rib-tickling and perhaps merit no serious artistic attention, we ought not to dismiss this phenomenon. It perhaps reinforces the idea that tragedy invariably leads to comedy.



well-known devotional singer, Narendra Chanchal, singing "Kitte Aaya Corona Come From, Oh Goddess?" at a religious gathering and the audience looked deeply absorbed. There are numerous others using film songs to spread safety messages. Some are using familiar tunes while writing new lyrics pertinent to the situation. Many classical musicians are playing Facebook live recitals to stay in touch with their fans. On a lighter note, should we be surprised lest someone came up with a 'Raag Corona'?

Numerous rappers have also risen to the occasion. We had our Italy moment too when some residents of a housing society in Gurugram came out on their balconies to recite the Gayatri Mantra and "Hum Honge Kamyab" ("We Shall Overcome"). Music seems to have captured everyone's fancy in distress.

Immediate connect

But why music? After all, singing will not destroy the virus and restore better times. Easy ways to resolve this could be that a catchy tune will spread faster because it has an immediate mass connect. This music might also offer momentary relief or escape from our grim ongoing by eliciting some much-needed humour. It is an easy communication tool and thus an effective message dissemination service if properly used at a time when most of us are spending inordinate amounts of time online. Or is it that we are so vulnerable in the face of distress that we cling to anything that generates promise or serves as a distraction? The caveat, however, remains that none of these songs will be remembered after the pandemic. Is this only for temporary fame then? A poet colleague recently told me that this is also resistance. A catastrophe has been unleashed and there is very little that we can do other than trying to stay safe. Isolation isn't easy and may be music will keep us company through the trying times.

The pursuit of a 'Raag Corona'
Another video of a group of women singing "Corona Bhaag Jao" ("Run away corona") received much attention. It was sung akin to a religious offering or prayer for benediction purposes. The internet is also abuzz with some Bhojpuri singers using the COVID-19 outbreak to peddle several songs indicating what mayhem the virus might cause to the womenfolk. For anyone familiar with the raunchy lyrics of such Bhojpuri songs, the indications are obscene.

Someone also shared a video of

But why music? After all, singing will not destroy the virus and restore better times. Easy ways to resolve this could be that a catchy tune will spread faster because it has an immediate mass connect. This music might also offer momentary relief or escape from our grim ongoing by eliciting some much-needed humour. It is an easy communication tool and thus an effective message dissemination service if properly used at a time when most of us are spending inordinate amounts of time online. Or is it that we are so vulnerable in the face of distress that we cling to anything that generates promise or serves as a distraction? The caveat, however, remains that none of these songs will be remembered after the pandemic. Is this only for temporary fame then? A poet colleague recently told me that this is also resistance. A catastrophe has been unleashed and there is very little that we can do other than trying to stay safe. Isolation isn't easy and may be music will keep us company through the trying times.

Kunal Ray teaches literary and cultural studies at FLAME University, Pune



DATA POINT

Distress during lockdown

A survey of 11,159 migrant workers stranded in various States found that between April 8 and April 13, more than 90% did not receive rations from the government. Close to 90% of those surveyed did not get paid by their employers. From March 27 to April 13, 70% of the surveyed workers had only less than ₹200 left with them.

LOW ON FOOD AND MONEY | The chart shows the % of migrant workers who did not receive rations or cooked food from the government/ other sources, and were not paid by employers, between April 8 and April 13. While in this period, the % of workers who received cooked food from the government/ other sources improved marginally, most of them did not receive rations from the government or wages from their employers

DEPLETING STOCKS | The chart plots the % of migrant workers who had less than one day of rations left

As a high share of migrants workers received neither rations nor cooked food from the govt./NGOs, and were not paid their salaries, the share of workers having less than one day of rations left increased steadily

WORST-HIT STATES | The charts shows the % of migrant workers left without essential items such as rations and cooked food, and the % of those who had less than ₹200 to survive, between March 27 and April 13. Workers stranded in Uttar Pradesh were among the worst affected

RATIONS
% of workers surveyed across India who said they did not get rations from the government

EXISTING RATIONS
% of workers who said existing rations would last them only for two days

- In U.P., 100% of the migrant workers did not receive rations
- In Maharashtra, 99% of them did not receive rations
- In Karnataka, 93% of them did not receive rations

- In U.P., 100% of the migrant workers said that rations would last them only for 2 days
- In Maharashtra, 90% said the same
- In Delhi and Haryana, 82% said the same

COOKED FOOD
% of workers who said they did not receive cooked food from the government/ other sources

FINANCES
% of migrant workers who said they had less than ₹200 to survive during the lockdown

Source: Stranded Workers Action Network

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 20, 1970

Honouring 'Three Very Brave Men'

Honolulu: The three Apollo astronauts received the Medal of Freedom, the highest U.S. civilian award, from President Nixon and an ecstatic welcome from their relieved and overjoyed families here yesterday (Honolulu, April 18). The astronauts – James Lovell, Fred Haise and John Swigert – were showered with praise by the President, who flew out from Washington to honour them. President Nixon told them that they were "three very brave Men". The beaming Mr. Nixon, standing with Mrs. Nixon near the astronauts' families at Honolulu International Airport, presented the Medal of Freedom to each of the astronauts at an emotion-charged ceremony marked by kisses, hugs and round after round of cheers from a big throng of well-wishers. The astronauts headed straight to their families as soon as they landed at the airport after flight from Pago Pago in American Samoa. The families had flown aboard the Presidential aircraft from Houston where Mr. Nixon had stopped to present the Medal of Freedom to the Apollo ground operations crew. President Nixon put his arms around Lovell, the space ship commander, as the party walked to a platform on the airport apron before the ceremony. Standing under a blazing sun, the President said it was his proud honour on behalf of a grateful nation to welcome the three men back to the United States.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 20, 1920.

Kole cultivation.

(Fourth editorial)

Sometime back, we drew attention to the importance of Kole cultivation in the Cochin State and other parts of the West Coast. This species of cultivation, while being a very important source of paddy in the State, is subject to peculiar risks arising from the nature of the soil on which it is carried on. It is with pleasure therefore that we note that the Dewan of Cochin is arranging for a Conference of the principal owners and cultivators of Kole areas with a view to discuss and decide on measures of improvement. Complaints appear to have arisen that this year's cultivation has been hit by the paucity of engines to bale water out in the season. Though some of the Kole owners of the State possess engines of their own, their number is found insufficient and the cultivators have to rely on loans of machines from the Travancore side and thus take the risk of sowing late.

FROM PAGE ONE

Non-essential goods not on supply list, says govt.

The standard operating procedures (SOPs) for stranded migrant labourers issued on Sunday said that due to the spread of COVID-19, workers employed in industry, agriculture, construction and other sectors have moved from their places of work and are housed in relief camps run by the State governments. "Since additional new activities, outside the containment zones, have been permitted in the consolidated revised guidelines with effect from April 20, these workers could be engaged in industrial, manufacturing, construction, farming and MGNREGA works."

The MHA said that to facilitate their movement "within the State", the migrant labourers residing in relief camps should be registered with the local authority and their skill mapping

Confusion over mismatch in Ministry, ICMR figures

The discrepancy prompted several questions. "Numbers of positive cases put out today by the States, by ICMR and by Ministry of Health are conflicting and confusing," former Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, tweeted.

"I rely on the dashboard jointly hosted by M/Health and ICMR. The difference between the dashboard number and ICMR's number for April 18 is an astonishing 1,573. Will the M/Health and ICMR reconcile their reports from the States and report a uniform number every day?" he asked.

A lag in the numbers reported by the States, the Health Ministry and the ICMR has been a constant since March, particularly after the lockdown. The Health Ministry put it down to it reporting numbers only after breaking it up by State-and-district and getting ground-level confirmation. This, Mr. Agrawal said, led to the "occasional lag."

The ICMR has also increased the number of labs and widened the pool of people it is testing. As of April 18 (Saturday), there were 194 government or state-

Pharma units still not able to operate freely

The industry is hoping that things may start to improve from Monday, as parts of the country will relax the lockdown norms, and trucks carrying essential as well as non-essential goods have been allowed to move across State borders in the past week.

"There is a very slight improvement in the operating capacities among our big and small members - 30% to a maximum of 50%," said Mr. Patel, adding that raw material consignments were stuck at ports and airports for clearance, especially at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), the Mumbai airport

carried out to find out their suitability for various works.

"In the event that a group of migrants who wish to return to their places of work within the State where they are located they would be screened and those who are asymptomatic would be transported to their respective places of work," the MHA said.

The Ministry said there would be no movement of labourers outside the State or the Union Territory where they are located. "During the journey by bus, it would be ensured that safe social distancing norms are followed and the buses used for transport are sanitised as per the guidelines of the health authorities... The local authorities shall also provide for food and water, etc., for the duration of their journey," the MHA said.

The MHA said that to facilitate their movement "within the State", the migrant labourers residing in relief camps should be registered with the local authority and their skill mapping

PM calls for unity in COVID-19 response

He reached out to young professionals for business solutions that 'engage a large segment of Indians'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

COVID-19 does not see race, religion, colour, caste, creed, language or border before striking. Our response and conduct, therefore, should attach primacy to unity and brotherhood

NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER



across classes and communities.

The Prime Minister said that he too had been adapting to changes in his working style and professional conduct. "Most meetings, be it with ministerial colleagues, officials and world leaders, are now via video-conferencing," Mr. Modi wrote on LinkedIn.

The need of the hour is to think of business and lifestyle models that are easily adaptable, he added.

"Doing so would mean that even in a time of crisis, our offices, businesses and commerce could get moving faster, ensuring loss of life does not occur," Mr. Modi said.

Today, the world is in pursuit of new business models, he said, adding that India, a youthful nation known for its innovative zeal, can take the lead in providing a new work culture.

The most "transformational impact" of technology, he said, often happens in the lives of the poor. "It is technology that diminishes bureaucratic hierarchies, eliminated middlemen and accelerated welfare measures," he said giving the example of his own government's push, since 2014, of Jan Dhan Yojana, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Aadhar linkage.

This seemingly simple connection has not only stopped corruption and rent-seeking, which had been going on for decades, but also enabled the government to transfer money at the click of a button. India, with the right blend of the physical and the virtual, can emerge as the global nerve centre of complex modern multinational supply chains in the post COVID-19 world," the Prime Minister said.

Logistics were only seen from the prism of roads and highways, but these two can be worked out from the comfort of one's home, Mr. Modi said. "Let us rise to that occasion and seize this opportunity," he said.

He stressed that efficiency, adaptability, inclusivity and universalism should be the watch words of the "values of the new normal."



Armed forces are adequately protected'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

funded labs and 82 private labs. All labs have varying capacity and this has contributed to delays in communicating data, said officials in charge of testing labs.

"The very act of sorting out samples can take upto four hours as not all of them are uniformly labelled. It can take upto 6 hours to process a batch (and the number per batch varies too) and generate reports and send. So fluctuations in daily numbers can also be because of processing times," Rakesh Mishra, Director, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, told *The Hindu*.

Fewer fresh cases

All together 54 districts, spanning 23 states and Union Territories, have reported no fresh cases in 14 days and two - Mahe in Puducherry and Kodagu in Karnataka - have reported no cases in 28 days. The Health Ministry said the country will be graded as red, orange and green zones depending on the number of cases and hotspots, with the containment action and restrictions being most stringent in the red zones.

"The fight against COVID-19 is possibly the biggest invisible war in our lifetime. A war against humanity and having various impact on health and economic security of the nation," he said.

"We as a nation are fighting the COVID-19 crisis on a war footing and all agencies of the government are working in close coordination. The armed forces are assisting the nation in its fight against COVID-19," Mr. Singh added.

Asked whether the pandemic has impacted operational aspects of the military, Mr. Singh said they are prepared for all contingencies and ready to defend India's sovereignty from adversarial forces in all scenarios.

"The Indian armed forces are prepared for all contingencies and I can assure you that we are prepared to defend our sovereignty from adversarial forces in all scenarios," he added.

"Truck movement has improved, coming from a zero level (when the lockdown was initiated) to 40%-50%. Availability of cold chain services, critical for moving vaccines and insulin, are still at 30% of the pre-lockdown levels, and we have been alerting the government to this," he said.

Now the video will play in Newspaper



Address Kartarpur damage'

India urges Pakistan to rectify deficiencies in repair work

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

The COVID-19 outbreak has put India's electoral calendar on the back burner.

The absence of a vaccine or therapeutic intervention against the disease has necessitated a long period of physical distancing and sanitary measures, all of which, say experts, will change the great Indian poll circus forever.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, BJP general secretary Ram Madhav pointed to the recent national election in South Korea and said the conduct of elections should not be completely written off in India either.

He did, however, caution that the manner of campaigning and polling must reflect the changed reality.

"There seems to be no

question whether big rallies of the past will be able to survive this disease. Without mass vaccination, organising big rallies would be a hazard. I see more digital campaigning, and micro, man-to-man marking, gaining ground. With the digital, I also see a return of the print, that is, handbills and pamphlets which used to be distributed a lot in the past," he said.

Polling issues
Congress MP and former Union Minister Manish Tewari agreed that much of the campaign would have to shift to the digital sphere, but expressed more concern over the polling part of the electoral exercise.

"There has been much talk of developing software to hold polls digitally, and in the Atlantic Council (of

Sabha was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak by the Election Commission of India when only polling remained.

Away from political parties, pollster Pradeep Gupta, who heads AXIS-My India, located the whole issue in two spheres: one is of campaign, which he said is not a huge issue as there are many ways of reaching out to the people, and the second is to devise technology to ensure that proximity is not a factor in polling.

"Our voters list is not updated, we were hoping that the new census exercise with its extensive use of technology would lead to a better set of data. I feel that to a large extent the connection between the voters list, Aadhaar number and mobile phones should be attempted. It

stands at barely 30% now and needs to be extended," he said.

New trends in elections
Mr. Gupta also sees the acceleration of certain trends, which he has observed over the past few elections.

"It is no longer enough to play the identity card, it is a trend for many elections now that delivery on welfare and development matters a lot. After the COVID-19 outbreak and the role of governments being assessed so closely, this trend will completely overshadow identity politics," he said.

The next big election in India is the Assembly election in Bihar due in October-November. If it takes place on time, it will be the precursor to just how a pandemic affects electoral democracy.

Reduce prices of grains for relief work

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

CPI (M) Polit Bureau member Brinda Karat, in a letter to Union Minister for Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan, said the government should distribute its stock of foodgrains free of cost, with starvation haunting crores of families who are without any income or work due to the lockdown.

Flagging the government order allowing NGOs to buy directly from Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns for relief work, Ms. Karat said the prices fixed by the government - ₹21.50 per kg for wheat and ₹22.50 per kg for rice - were "extremely high".

Pay cuts for PM-CARES leave staff uneasy

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

salary will be deducted from all staff every month till March 2021, one joint secretary level official, who did not want to be named, said. "No one actually asks. And one day per month for a year is 12 days. That is 40% of a monthly salary... An average employee of the Government of India gets between ₹50,000 and ₹80,000 per month. That's one salary and maybe three dependents. So it's tough on them," the official said.

Earlier in the month, resident doctors from four government hospitals in the capital objected to the automatic deduction from their salary of the donation, demanding that it be made an opt-in system, so that only those who wished could choose to donate. Last week, both AIIMS and Safdarjung hospitals agreed to the demand.

(With inputs from Manojit Saha)

Pradhan held for beating Dalit youth in Meerut

The video of the incident went viral

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Avinash Pandey, Superintendent of Police (Rural), Meerut, told *The Hindu* the incident happened on April 16 near the Kaili railway station, which falls under the Kharkhanda police station. The police said that the 'pradhan' of Kaili village has since been arrested.

In the video, he was seen hitting the youth, making them squat and loop their arms behind the knees to grip the ears, and beating them with a stick. Some people were also seen standing alongside the pradhan.

The audio suggests that the 'pradhan' was telling the youth that he was reprimanding them for catching chicken, which were also seen in the video, during the lockdown.

Avinash Pandey, Superintendent of Police (Rural), Meerut, told *The Hindu* the incident happened on April 16 near the Kaili railway station, which falls under the Kharkhanda police station. The police said that the 'pradhan' of Kaili village has since been arrested.

In the video, he was seen hitting the youth, making them squat and loop their arms behind the knees to grip the ears, and beating them with a stick. Some people were also seen standing alongside the pradhan.

The audio suggests that the 'pradhan' was telling the youth that he was reprimanding them for catching chicken, which were also seen in the video, during the lockdown.

Dipankar Datta named Bombay CJ

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium, led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, has recommended that Calcutta High Court judge Dipankar Datta be appointed as the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court.

Justice Datta is the brother-in-law of former Supreme Court judge Amitava Roy. Justice (retired) Roy was the *puisne* judge on the Bench that held former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa and her aide Sasikala Natarajan guilty in a disproportionate assets case. His father was also a former judge of the Calcutta High Court. Justice Datta was elevated to the Bench of the Calcutta High Court as a permanent judge on June 22, 2006.

COVID-19 may change election scene forever

Digital campaigning may replace big rallies; handbills and pamphlets are likely to return



Ram Madhav

Sabha was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak by the Election Commission of India when only polling remained.

Away from political parties, pollster Pradeep Gupta, who heads AXIS-My India, located the whole issue in two spheres: one is of campaign, which he said is not a huge issue as there are many ways of reaching out to the people, and the second is to devise technology to ensure that proximity is not a factor in polling.

"Our voters list is not updated, we were hoping that the new census exercise with its extensive use of technology would lead to a better set of data. I feel that to a large extent the connection between the voters list, Aadhaar number and mobile phones should be attempted. It

stands at barely 30% now and needs to be extended," he said.

New trends in elections
Mr. Gupta also sees the acceleration of certain trends, which he has observed over the past few elections.

"It is no longer enough to play the identity card, it is a trend for many elections now that delivery on welfare and development matters a lot. After the COVID-19 outbreak and the role of governments being assessed so closely, this trend will completely overshadow identity politics," he said.

The next big election in India is the Assembly election in Bihar due in October-November. If it takes place on time, it will be the precursor to just how a pandemic affects electoral democracy.

Spare monkeys the virus, say biologists

"In States like Tamil Nadu, primate populations having negative interactions with humans are relocated to forests, causing other problems like spread of diseases and parasites to forest-dwelling monkey populations. When we relocate a population of monkeys, there is no screening done to identify the diseases or the parasites they carry," said Dr. Kumara.

Citing a 2019 study on the "Prevalence of gastrointestinal parasites in Lion-tailed macaques in the Central Western Ghats," which he

INTERVIEW | SHASHI THAROOR

'If WHO has limitations, these have been imposed on it by nations'

The principal fault is with Beijing and not WHO, which is still a body dependent on member states, says Shashi Tharoor, former Under Secretary General of the UN

ANANTH KRISHNAN

As the World Health Organization (WHO) grapples with its greatest crisis, facing criticism over its initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a funding cut from the United States, Shashi Tharoor, a former Under Secretary General of the United Nations, says the situation is an indictment, not so much of the agency alone but of the member states that demand it remain beholden to them.

How unprecedented is the current challenge facing the WHO?

■ The WHO was established in 1948 and there hasn't been a worldwide pandemic with this kind of devastation that has come across its path. Something like this is calamitously challenging for the WHO. And then you have the decision of the United States [on April 15] to withhold

funding at this peak time. The U.S. contributes something like 15% of the WHO budget. That is a pretty substantial sum of money that is going to disappear from the WHO's kitty. All of that adds to the challenges it is facing.

Is the U.S. criticism valid?

■ I really think Mr. Trump is honestly trying to find a scapegoat for his own adminis-

tration failing in preparing the U.S. sooner for what has turned out to be the biggest public health emergency they have ever had. The fact is, if you look at what the WHO did or didn't do, one can certainly accept the charge that they were willing to give China a free pass at the beginning of the crisis. I don't think it's easy to blame the WHO for it.

One of the institutional challenges for any UN body is that it tends to be beholden to its most powerful member states. I am afraid the problem is that if this was something that started in the U.S., they would have probably been deferential to the U.S. also. The difference is



We actually need institutions of greater independence in all our collective interest

on the information they receive from member states?

■ We have a constitutional problem with all UN agencies that the head of the agency who is elected after all with support of powerful member states, does not enjoy the independence and autonomy that should come with a position of that stature. If we were, for example, to adopt a policy of a single, non-re-

newable term for maybe six or seven years, rather than two terms of five which is normal practice, then you might actually give a leader authority to take certain independent actions. Nonetheless, don't forget the UN is not larger or more powerful than its member states.

The principal fault is with Beijing and not the WHO, which is still a body that is dependent on member states. India is a member of every UN body and every country knows how these bodies work. The governments of the world actually want UN agencies to be beholden to governments, for the most part. When they fail to assert enough indepen-

dence and autonomy, the same governments start making these agencies a scapegoat. When I was at the UN, my then boss [Secretary General] Kofi Annan would often jokingly say about the initials SG by which we used to call him, 'I know what that stands for - scapegoat.'

On one hand, we are seeing countries turning inward. On the other, the pandemic is bringing an awareness of the limitations of global institutions. Faced with two somewhat opposing impulses, which way will we go?

■ The signs are indeed for a resurgence of national sove-

reignty. This suggests we will actually go in the wrong direction and likely throw up more barriers. I believe that is the wrong way to go. India must play a role in defying this impulse of closing countries off to the international community.

We have to recognise if the WHO had limitations, these are limitations that governments have imposed upon it. If the world has to draw from this a conclusion that we actually need institutions of greater independence in all our collective interest, then maybe we can reform these institutions, to give them that independence. I hope a country like India will be a sane voice for this.

IN BRIEF



10 new cases in Punjab take tally to 244

CHANDIGARH

Ten fresh cases of COVID-19 were reported in Punjab on Sunday, taking the total tally to 244. The State Health department said that out of the 10 cases, four are from SAS Nagar and six from Jalandhar. Till now, Punjab has seen 16 COVID-19 deaths, while 37 cures. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, meanwhile, ruled out any relaxation in the curfew till May 3. He ordered strict enforcement of the curfew in all districts, with no relaxation or concessions whatsoever even during the Ramzan period beginning this week.

Allow migrant workers to return home: plea in SC

NEW DELHI

Stranded migrant workers, who have forcibly been kept in relief camps and who have tested negative for COVID-19, should be allowed to return to their native places. The authorities should not stop them from going home to their loved ones, a petition in the Supreme Court has said. The petition was jointly filed by Jagdeep S. Chhokar, an ex-faculty member of the IIM (Ahmedabad), and Gaurav Jain, a Delhi-based advocate. The plea said the extension of lockdown is casting "unreasonable and heavier burden on the migrant workers stranded in cities."

Police inspector dies of COVID-19 in Indore

BHOPAL

A police inspector in Indore died on Sunday morning while undergoing treatment for COVID-19. The official, who was admitted to a hospital on March 31 with complaints of breathlessness, was about to be discharged, after his condition improved in the past few days. But he succumbed to the disease on Sunday. Offering his condolences, the Chief Minister said on Twitter, "I pay tribute at his feet. In this moment of crisis, the entire State stands by him." "We give ₹50 lakh as support to the family. His wife is being appointed as a sub-inspector in the department," he said.

Goa is first to turn virus-free

All seven cases test negative, but no time for complacency, says Chief Minister



Positive milestone: Goa on Sunday became the first green State in the country with no cases. ■ AFP

that this was no time for complacency.

The Chief Minister said that from April 20, the government would scrutinise reports of its three-day door-to-door citizens survey done last week and decide on testing people for COVID-19 wherever felt necessary.

"We have to ensure that we remain a zero COVID-19 State. The lockdown will continue till the Central government decides. Our borders with Maharashtra and Karnataka will continue to

remain sealed. Anyone entering the State under special circumstances will have to stay in a government quarantine centre," he said.

The Chief Minister said government offices would resume 100% work from Monday. "To ensure that we continue to remain a green zone State, social distancing will have to be maintained. State transport buses will ensure this while shifting government staff. Two-wheelers will have a single occupant and 1,000 thermal

guns will be positioned at various places," he said.

Dr. Sawant announced that subject to permissions from designated officers, industrial units and private businesses would be allowed to start functioning.

Seafarers issue

On the issue of seafarers, the Chief Minister said the Centre would be announcing the repatriation mechanism any time. "Once the government makes the mechanism official, it will take about 3-4 days for the first lot of seafarers to return. Those already at Indian ports or closest to the coast will return first. For the rest, discussions are on whether it would be the sea route or air route that would be taken to get them back," Dr. Sawant said.

All these seafarers would be subjected to quarantine followed by home quarantine, he said. Goa has made available 8,000 rooms for Goan seafarers.

increased substantially, covering a large part of the State. There are 127 clusters that have been declared containment zones, with a total of 1,79,778 houses and a total population of 8,50,672.

The pandemic has spread to 25 districts, but the worst affected is Ahmedabad, with 1,101 cases and 32 deaths. On Sunday, Ahmedabad reported 239 cases and 7 deaths. Another big cluster is Surat, according to the Health Department, testing has in-



Rising curve: Policemen patrolling the streets of Ahmedabad on Sunday. ■ PTI

where eight persons have died among 242 cases recorded so far.

Officials in the Health Department and the civic bodies and medical experts believe that the State has entered the stage of community transmission, with nearly 75% of the total cases being asymptomatic.

"With a higher percentage of asymptomatic cases, community transmission is occurring, which will make containment more difficult and challenging because you will never know the scale of the epidemic," an infectious disease expert told *The Hindu*.

According to him, the curve will continue to rise in the next week as aggressive testing has just started. "Ideally, there should be more than 5,000 tests a day, whereas the average as on Sunday is around 2,500-3,000," he said.

Community tests spot 186 cases in Delhi'

CM cites asymptomatic COVID-19 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday justified his decision to continue the lockdown imposed in the capital, pointing to the fact that all 186 patients who tested positive on Sunday were asymptomatic.

He said that of the 736 test results that came in on Saturday, 186 who tested positive showed no symptoms. This was 25% of the total test results. "They [the positive persons] didn't know they had the corona [virus] and were roaming here and there with the corona [virus]. This is very dangerous," he said.

Mr. Kejriwal, who on Saturday pointed to a clutch of cases in Jehangirpuri, said a volunteer who had been distributing food at a Delhi go-

vernment centre had also tested positive. The government, he added, would be testing everyone who might have come in contact with this volunteer. The issue of asymptomatic patients in the country also came up at the Union Health Ministry's media briefing. "A very small percentage of those who are asymptomatic are testing positive, as the historical data across the world is showing. However, we have to be aware of this challenge. Our strategy is to monitor those who are asymptomatic and high-risk and test them. Those who are contacts and asymptomatic are advised to be in home quarantine and those at high risk ought to be in facility quarantine," Minister spokesman Lav Agarwal said.

Adityanath wants jobs for migrants who returned

'Govt. will set up a panel for employment generation'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday instructed officials to form a committee to provide employment opportunities to 5 lakh migrant workers who have returned to the State in the past 45 days because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The committee's mandate will be to provide the migrant workers employment opportunities at the local level, which will strengthen rural economy, a government spokesperson said.

The committee will be headed by the Commissioner, Agricultural Production, and will include the Principal Secretaries of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise, Rural Development,



Yogi Adityanath

Panchayat Raj and Skill Development Departments.

The committee has been tasked with ensuring employment generation under the One District One Product Programme aimed at encouraging indigenous and specialised products and crafts, organise job fairs and help small entrepreneurs avail themselves of loans on

easy conditions, the government said.

The committee will explore employment opportunities in micro, small and medium enterprises.

Mr. Adityanath also instructed the district magistrates to ensure home quarantine of the 8,000 students who were brought back from Kota after they were stranded in the Rajasthan city.

He asked the district magistrates to go by the local circumstances and decide on the relaxation of the curbs for business activities from April 20. The 19 most-sensitive districts with 10 or more cases have been asked to be more vigilant. But the relaxations won't apply to hotspots.

SC switches to video mode

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

heard through video-conferencing, if parties consent.

The SC said that such cases will be heard "subject to the availability of the Bench and with the prior approval of the Chief Justice of India."

Amid a lockdown till May 3, the Supreme Court has informed that short category matters, death penalty and family law cases will be

E-Tenders in Two Bid (Technical & Price) System for supply of CLTF (CROSS LAMINATED THERMOPLASTIC FUMIGATION) covers with heavy duty to TSWC are invited.

For any Information, Interested Bidders may contact at our Head Office on phone No. 9441093551 or on our Website: <http://tswhc.co.in/> & <https://www.tender.telangana.gov.in>

Sd/- Managing Director

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH COMMISSIONER & DIRECTOR OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

5th Floor, Krishna Enclave, Gorantla, Guntur.

Under the Present Emergency for Control and prevention of Covid-19 - Corona Virus the Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration, A.P Guntur invites bids for Personal Protective Equipment. Full details are available at <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in/>.

Tender Document Download Starting Date and time in <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in/> is 20-04-2020, 11.00 AM.

Last date & time of submission of Tenders is 24-04-2020, 3.00 PM and Bid Opening date is 24-04-2020, 4.00 PM.

Full details are available at [www.cdma.ap.gov.in](http://cdma.ap.gov.in). Email - msection@cdma.gov.in, Ph: 7993317003.

Sd/- Vijay Kumar G, Srkr, IAS Commissioner & Director

DIPR 12PP/CL, Dt.19.04.2020

Over 550 new cases in Maharashtra in a day

Infections soar to 4,200, with Mumbai recording 456 cases; State's death toll rises to 12

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUNE

Maharashtra reported a staggering surge of 552 new COVID-19 positive cases on Sunday – the State's highest single-day surge yet – as its cumulative tally rose to 4,200 cases, while 12 more deaths were reported across the State, taking the death toll to 223.

Six of these deaths were reported from Mumbai city, while four fatalities were reported from Malegaon in Nashik, which is fast emerging as north Maharashtra's virus hotspot. One death each was reported from Solapur



Grim task: Staff of Dadar crematorium in Mumbai leave after performing a victim's last rites. ■ PRASHANT NAKWANI

20 new cases in Dharavi

STAFF REPORTER

MUMBAI

Dharavi reported 20 new cases on Sunday, taking the total to 138 cases, including 11 deaths. A majority are from areas that had earlier reported cases while a few are from new parts of

had any comorbidities. Of six of the remaining eight deaths, 75% had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma and heart disease," informed State Sur-

Dharavi. As the BMC intensified screening in Dharavi, more and more cases are being reported from containment zones. More than 37,000 residents have been screened for symptoms. Of this, about 210 were referred for testing.

veillance Officer Dr. Pra-deep Awate.

Mumbai city again reported the majority of new cases – as many as 456 – taking the city's tally to 2,724 with 132 deaths.

U.P. police say youth didn't die of beating

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh police on Sunday termed "false and baseless" the charge that a 22-year-old daily wager died after he was thrashed by the police when he stepped out to buy food in Ambedkar Nagar district.

Rizwan Ahmed's family on Saturday said he died in a hospital three days after the police beat him up.

Ambedkar Nagar SP Alok Priyadarshi said that going by the evidence collected so far, there was nothing to show that Rizwan was assaulted by the police with batons.

HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT

TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II

INTERVIEW | HANS TIMMER

'Preventing food shortages is high priority for South Asia'

Disruptions in the supply chain and panic buying can lead to price spikes and loss of income can affect the most vulnerable, says World Bank economist

SUHASINI HAIDAR

In a report released this month, the World Bank predicted a 'dire' situation for South Asia due to the economic impact of measures to counter the novel coronavirus pandemic, suggesting that the eight SAARC countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka) will experience their worst economic performance in 40 years, with at least half of them falling into a deep recession. Hans Timmer, author of the report and the Bank's Chief Economist for South Asia, says managing migrant returns, service sector revenue losses and ensuring food security for the poorest are major priorities for the region.

The forecast for the South Asian economy in the WB report, with an expected drop from 6.3% growth to 1.8% - 2.8%, is quite significant. Could the drop be even bigger, given that we don't yet know when economic activity will be fully reopened?

■ This forecast already includes many adverse impacts. The upper and lower bounds are based on two scenarios for advanced economies: one with a two-

month lockdown of advanced economies, the other with a four-month lockdown of these economies. These scenarios translate for South Asia into sharp declines in exports, disruptions in global value chains, deterioration of investment sentiment, reversal of capital flows, and reduced remittances. Our upper and lower bound forecasts also assume sharp declines in domestic hospitality services. But the drop in growth can indeed be bigger. In the report we

mention that we calculated what we call a "worst case scenario", in which we assume a prolonged lockdown of South Asian economies: an extended lockdown for three months and a more partial lockdown in subsequent quarters. In that case, we ended up with negative growth for the region, a contraction of 1%.

The World Bank has endorsed India's strict 40-day lockdown, which other South Asian countries have followed in varying degrees. How well do you think this will work if extended, especially given the economic impact?

■ I have been impressed by the reaction of the Indian government and other governments in South Asia. With limited health-care capacity, it is important to contain, or at least mitigate, the spread of COVID-19. But, with a high



Government should create conditions under which the economy can be reopened and play an active role in job creation

population density, this is a difficult task. Containment of the pandemic is especially challenging among slum dwellers, domestic migrant workers and refugees. An additional complication is that the lockdown deprives the most vulnerable people of their income. The conclusion is that the lockdown is necessary, but not sufficient. It has to be complemented

with food distribution, temporary work programmes and a system of testing and tracing, which is needed to reopen the economy. The temporary work programme could focus on food delivery, production of protective equipment, disinfection of public spaces and on the testing and tracing system. It is commendable that the Indian government is rolling out a tracing system now.

Most South Asian nations depend on migrant remittances. How much do you think layoffs abroad added to the domestic migrant labour crisis (in India, in particular), will change the labour market, and how should countries prepare for this?

■ It is likely that migrant workers, especially in the Gulf countries, will return home, even if many are still stuck abroad at the moment.

It is the consequence of the global recession and the sharp drop in oil prices. They will need to find work at home and will indeed compete with domestic migrant workers. That is why the government should create conditions under which the economy can be reopened and should play an active role in job creation.

increase in testing will help guide future actions.

How important is food security and releasing strategic food reserves at this point? How would you rate different countries in the region on their ability to ensure distribution to the most vulnerable? We have seen massive food lines, shortages in both India and Pakistan.

■ Probably both. Tourism will not return to normal till effective vaccines become widely available. There will be demand for safe tourism. That might be an opportunity for the Maldives that with its many atolls and high-end tourism has an opportunity to test tourists and keep them away from large crowds.

There might be also more demand for digital services like remote learning or other remote services and for delivery of e-commerce sales. It is likely that more jobs outside the tourism industry can be created.

The WB report identifies the service sector as worst hit and tourism, for example in the Maldives as one of the biggest revenue losses. Can South Asia consider new ways to regenerate employment in these sectors, or will it have to look at other sectors?

■ This is one of the big concerns. Disruptions in the supply chain and panic buying can lead to price spikes. That, together with loss of income of many informal workers, can lead to food shortages for the most vulnerable. This is high priority.

Releasing strategic reserves is one tool in the toolbox. Work programmes and food deliveries are other tools. Export bans will backfire as they will disrupt food supply chains in the region further.

Rain may hit wheat quality, say farmers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Untimely rain accompanied with hailstorms in a few parts in Punjab in the past 48 hours has triggered fear among farmers that the standing wheat crop's quality will be affected and it will delay harvesting further causing heavy losses.

Many parts of Punjab experienced light moderate rain accompanied with hailstorms during the past 48 hours, according to the meteorological department. Besides, it has forecast another spell of rain in the coming week in the region that has left farmers worried.

Punjab Agriculture department director Sutantra Kumar Airo on Sunday told *The Hindu* that fields in over half a dozen villages in Muktsar district were hit by hailstorm. "Wheat is at ripening stage now and hence rain spell could delay the harvesting by a few days," he said.

Harvesting has already started in Punjab, but it is yet to gain momentum. Punjab is expecting a bumper wheat production that could cross 182 lakh tonnes this year, according to the State Agriculture department.

Bharatiya Kisan Union's general secretary in Punjab, Jagmohan Singh, said, "The moisture content in the harvested produce will also increase due to overcast conditions." He added that hailstorms and rain would also impact the quality (shine) of the crop.

Islamophobia is rising in India: OIC

Protect rights of Muslims, govt. told

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Calling on the Indian government to take steps to protect Muslim minorities who are being "negatively profiled," facing "discrimination and violence" amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has criticised what it called "growing Islamophobia" in India.

"[We] urge the Indian Govt to take urgent steps to stop the growing tide of Islamophobia in India and protect the rights of its persecuted Muslim minority as per its obligations under international Human Rights law," said a tweet issued by OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (OIC-IPHRC) on Sunday.

PM's call for unity
The statement came on the same day Prime Minister Narendra Modi had clearly said that "unity and brotherhood" must be the response to the coronavirus, which does not see "race, religion, colour, caste, creed, language or borders before striking."

The Ministry of External Affairs declined to comment on the statement.

Last week it had reacted sharply to two similar statements on religious "stigmatisation" of minorities in India by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

In one statement, the U.S.

Centre stops airline bookings

No decision has been taken to commence operation of flights from May 4

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Spraying of disinfectants harmful: Health Ministry
NEW DELHI
The Health Ministry has issued an advisory against spraying of disinfectants on people for COVID-19 management, saying it was physically and psychologically harmful. Spraying of chlorine can lead to irritation of eyes and skin and may cause nausea and vomiting. Sodium hypochlorite can cause irritation to respiratory tract, the advisory said. PTI

Wildlife hunting goes up in northeast

GUWAHATI

The lockdown has led to a spike in wildlife hunting and bushmeat consumption in parts of the northeast, officials said on the basis of videos on the social media. Villagers in Arunachal Pradesh, caught on camera with a dead king cobra, said they had been hunting as vegetables had become scarce. Officials are also probing a video that showed a few persons in Nagaland displaying carcasses.

Hydroxychloroquine tablets sent to UAE

DUBAI

India has agreed to send hydroxychloroquine tablets to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to be used for treating COVID-19 patients, the Gulf Arab state's embassy in New Delhi said. "The first shipment of the medicine, currently on its way to the UAE, includes 5.5 million pills for treatment of patients with COVID-19," it tweeted late on Saturday. REUTERS



Trolleys being disinfected at the Amritsar airport. ■ AFP

refrain from booking tickets," the Civil Aviation Ministry told domestic and foreign

airlines. It said the airlines would be given sufficient notice for restarting flights.

The order provides much-needed clarity to both airlines and passengers and follows an outcry over the manner in which airlines continued to amass passengers' money, only to issue credit notes later when flights would be cancelled due to an extended lockdown.

Air India immediately reversed its earlier decision. "The airline is currently not taking bookings."

Several other airlines like IndiGo and Vistara, which had announced their decision to open bookings post-May 3, are expected to fall in line.

Following the Group of Ministers' meeting on Saturday, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri said on Twitter: "So far no decision has been taken to open domestic or international operations. Airlines are advised to open their bookings only after a decision has been taken by the government."

He set the wheels of kindness in motion

Auto driver, who donated his meagre earnings, has now joined police relief work



Ganesh Das with Lower Dibang Valley SP Sanjay Kumar Sain, right, and Deputy SP Ringu Ngupok. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI
An autorickshaw driver who donated all his cash despite not having enough to eat has helped the police in an Arunachal Pradesh district add wheels to a community kitchen concept that has become the template for others to follow.

Sanjay Kumar Sain, the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Lower Dibang Valley, was touched when the elderly Ganesh Das stepped into his office on April 16 to hand over a bunch of notes totalling ₹1,000 for an initiative the district police had launched to feed the elderly, migrant labourers and other daily wagers. "He said it was his responsibility to give back to Roing for giving him

so much all these years. He was apologetic for not being able to donate more," Mr. Sain told *The Hindu*.

Moved, the SP dropped him home along with 20 kg of rice and other essentials.

Mr. Das is one of some 70 autorickshaw operators in Roing town. He came from

ice's community kitchen and ration delivery service.

Praise from CM
Chief Minister Pema Khandu had lauded the service and termed it a model worth replicating in other parts.

Sushant Saurabh Jha, the nodal officer of the District Police COVID-19 Control Room, said the SP and some 300 police personnel, local MLAs and community leaders pooled in resources to start the community kitchen.

A few of the SP's batches too contributed. "We have been feeding some 870 people daily," Mr. Jha said.

"From Monday, we will be using eight autos, including Mr. Das's for the service," he said. Each driver would be given a stipend, besides fuel.

PM's call for unity
The statement came on the same day Prime Minister Narendra Modi had clearly said that "unity and brotherhood" must be the response to the coronavirus, which does not see "race, religion, colour, caste, creed, language or borders before striking."

The Ministry of External Affairs declined to comment on the statement.

Last week it had reacted sharply to two similar statements on religious "stigmatisation" of minorities in India by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

In one statement, the U.S.

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12913

A	H	E	S	D	S	E	M
C	H	A	T	O	L	O	T
I	L	G	A	O	L	O	T
D	E	F	I	R	E	V	E
E	F	I	R	E	V	E	N
W	E	L	S	P	E	N	C
E	W	L	S	P	E	N	C
S	E	M	I	R	E	V	E

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

No. SS69 Distribution: www.mingfeatures.com

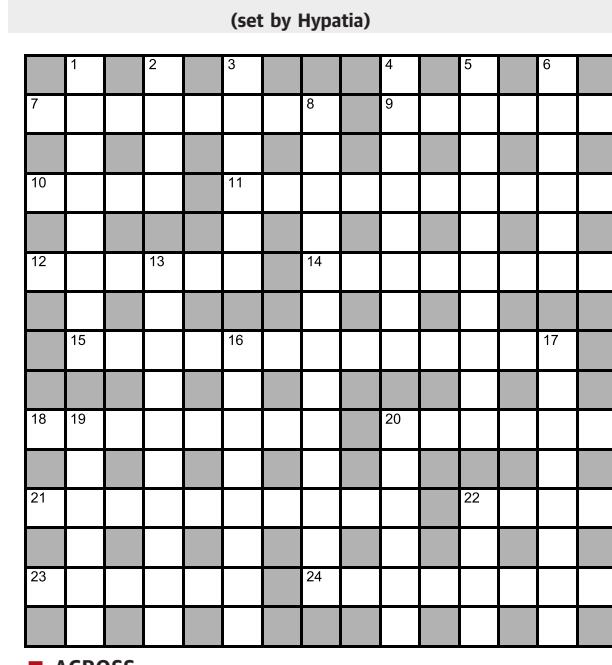
FAITH

Humility enlightens

Spiritual sadana is firmly rooted in true humility when there is no trace of ego in the sadana. This kind of spiritual maturity is difficult to attain even by those well steeped in sadana, pointed out Swami Sashishikananda in a discourse. The Keonpanishad tells a story about how even the gods headed by Indra had failed to realise that Brahman is all.

Once, they were rejoicing in their triumph over the demons, believing that it was owing to their own effort and prowess that they had won. They did not realise that it was Brahman who has enabled this victory. Brahman appeared before them as a yaksha. Indra sent Agni, followed by Vayu to find out who the yaksha was. The yaksha gave them a simple assignment to test their respective powers. He placed a blade of grass and asked Agni to burn it but Agni was unable to do that. Similarly Vayu failed to blow away the blade of grass. Then Indra came to face the yaksha but did not find him. Instead Goddess Uma appeared before him and explained that Brahman had appeared as the yaksha and that He alone is the source of all grace and glory in the universe including individual and collective attainments and achievements. An incident that happened in the life of Namadev is often quoted to show that it is imperative to remove one's ego sense as it is the greatest hurdle in path to realisation.

It is held that once, in an assembly of saints, another contemporary devotee, one Muktabai, wishing well for Namadev, asked a potter to test their level of maturity. Using the testing rod on the heads of all present, the potter claimed that all were fully baked except Namadev. Though hurt by this comment, through God's grace Namadev gained enlightenment and was able to win over his own ego and pride.



■ ACROSS

- 7 So, a rebel partied where studs hang out? (3,5)
 - 9 Fresh deli sandwiches, black coffee finally fit for consumption (6)
 - 10 Extended wish (4)
 - 11 Cheapest to let around student term (3-4,3)
 - 12 Pretty tidy and mostly organised (6)
 - 14 Make mechanic co-passenger in a tuk tuk (8)
- </div

■ ALBERT P'RAYAN

The coronavirus pandemic has shuttered educational institutions across the globe. Closure of schools, colleges and universities, shutdown of routine life of students and teachers, disruptions in education and the education ministry remaining incommunicado, have created an unprecedented situation and thrown many unexpected challenges to administrators, educators, teachers, parents and students. The situation has created the new normal. How to cope with the new normal is the question that everyone is now asking.

It is good to carry out a SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – analysis of the COVID-19 situation and its impact on education. This exercise can help us set new goals and objectives and move forward.

Strengths

As educational institutions across India have remained closed for weeks, parents are worried about their children's education. Some parents have forced their children to take up some online courses, but students do not seem to show interest in learning online. Some educational institutions have asked teachers to prepare online material, but most teachers do not have the experience of preparing e-material. Some universities and colleges want to move classes/courses online in order to engage students, but do not know how to go about.

The situation described above may present a gloomy picture, but it shouldn't. Why? Looking at it positively, for the first time many teachers, parents and students have thought about the purpose of education and asked some useful and relevant questions. The unprecedented situation has made

SWOTing the situation

With the pandemic forcing everyone to seriously consider e-learning tools and resources, now is a good time to assess its strengths and opportunities, and adapt to the new normal

them look at things critically. Here are some such interesting questions: Will 'education' be defined in a different way, in the future? Is there a need to learn differently? Will the transition have a positive or negative impact on students and their learning? How should students' knowledge and skills be assessed? Will online education be successful in our country where millions of students do not own computers and have access to the Internet? How important is home learning? How important is learner autonomy? Is it good to depend on teachers and cling to the traditional way of learning? Many more questions...

The pandemic should have a positive impact on our education system. It should not be the same after the situation eases. There should be some positive changes.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses in our system include lack of innovative thinking, inadequate infrastructure, untrained teachers, unequal accessibility, exam-

centric assessment, and lack of learner autonomy. How do these weaknesses act as hurdles now at the time of the pandemic and lockdown?

Remote learning, distance learning, home learning, online learning, e-learning, and webinar are the buzz-words that we hear today. Recently, the Delhi government announced that it would conduct online classes for class XII students, but school teachers say that it is impractical since most students do not have access to the required facilities. Yes, we are challenged by these questions: Can everyone in the country afford e-learning? Is online education an elite concept in India?

ISTOCKPHOTO/GETTYIMAGES

Can everyone in the country afford e-learning? Is online education an elite concept in India?

SWOT



Will the digital divide further cement inequality and create an academic divide in the country?

Teachers working in elite schools in cities and big towns proudly state that they conduct classes online using and help students make use of the lockdown period in a useful manner. What about teachers working in government-aided and government schools in cities and towns and private schools in rural areas?

Neither teachers nor students have access to computers and the Internet.

They may neither have the awareness of online tools such as Google

Classroom available for such purposes, nor have the expertise to use them. Is it possible for such teachers to even think of conducting classes online?

Since our education system has not trained our teachers and students to think creatively and manage in a crisis situation, and has underplayed the importance of e-learning, they are unprepared for the transition from the classroom to online.

Opportunities

All systems have strengths and weaknesses. Maximising strengths and minimising weaknesses in order not to miss the opportunity to move forward should be the goal. The three main opportunities that we have are: i) our students who belong to Gen Z, ii) numerous web resources, and iii) enthusiastic teachers.

Gen Z learners (born between 1997 and 2010) are true digital natives. They are born in the digital era and are familiar with computers, multimedia content and Internet-based activities from an early age. As they live in the online environment, enjoy watching YouTube videos, love connecting with people through social media and speak the language of technology, they need to be taught differently. Now is the right time to move our classes to a different platform, introduce e-learning and develop learner autonomy.

The COVID-19 lockdown has enabled teachers to become creative. They can now create e-material such as YouTube videos and PPTs and share the links with their students and engage them during the lockdown period. Some

teachers are using video conferencing facilities such as Zoom and BlueJeans Meetings for online teaching. These video conference facilities have features such as one-click scheduling, screen sharing and collaboration, Cloud streaming and recording, and so on. Some educators use Google Meet.

Look up more Google resources available for distance learning at Google for Education's Teacher Center online.

Threats

India is far behind some developing countries where digital education is getting increased attention. In countries where e-learning is popular, students have access to various online resources such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) which help students, teachers and professionals upgrade their skills. E-learning promotes learner autonomy and enables students to acquire knowledge and skills without depending on teachers. India needs to take the threat of many developed and developing countries leading the way in online education seriously and promote it earnestly.

To summarise, education must continue. Students should keep learning. The lockdown period should be productive. Educators should think creatively and introduce innovative ways of learning. In a country where access to the Internet and high-speed connectivity is a problem, and the digital divide is an issue, it is important to address the challenges. Those who are involved in education planning and administration should give a serious thought to reducing the digital divide in the country and popularise digital learning.

The writer is an academic, columnist and freelance trainer and writer.
rayanal@yahoo.co.uk

TALKING POINT

Quality time in quarantine

+ Lockdown can get a little overwhelming with the family staying together indoors for long periods. How can you make the most of your time in a healthy manner?

■ NANDINI RAMAN

Many parents are having a hard time navigating our "new normal" of working from home in the current times. Being a mother of two teens, I have attempted to put together some useful tips for teens and adolescents to step up and take responsibility during such trying times.

Discipline, discipline, discipline

"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

At the cost of not sounding regimental and old school, ensure that you are able to manage a timely schedule and follow basic activities of daily living (ADLs) in a reasonable time frame. Waking up in the morning and having a fresh start is not only important but also essential as it sets the tone for the day that follows.

While keeping awake all night, watching movies, binging on Netflix, gaming or socialising with your cliques is thrilling at this point, there can be a tendency to stay awake till the wee hours of morning. However, not being able to have a good night's rest and lack of adequate sleep (seven to eight relaxed hours) is enough to create sleep deprivation and cause laziness, irritability, moodiness, fatigue, forgetfulness, a lack of appetite, and a depressed mood.

Cut down the entitlement

"There ain't no such thing like a free lunch."

Given the fact the current support system in the form of paid help – maids, cooks, baby sitters (for smaller siblings), caretakers for the elderly at home is missing – we need to help out. Everybody at home, most certainty needs to chip in.

You are an integral part of the family and it is crucial that you contribute and showcase some responsible behaviour. Mum and dad really can't do much without your timely help and support.

Choose chores that you like (even when you really-really don't like them) and pitch in. Cooking, chopping, washing dishes, cleaning the home, drying and folding clothes, taking care of pets, – the list is rather exhaustive and endless. So, grab your pick.

Technology / Internet / Gadget abuse

"The difference between technology and slavery is that slaves are fully aware that they are not free!"

India has the second largest internet users after China. Teens' continuous, incessant and relentless gadget and screen usage bordering on addiction is a huge problem today for parents and teens themselves.

Given the current quarantine and lockdown, we need to cut ourselves a little slack – given these extenuating circumstances, but beware of the time that you tend to spend on your gadgets and gizmos and the sites and activities that you are engaging in online. It is not always a safe place. It is better to be safe than sorry.

There is excessive information on social media, most of which is untrue can be harmful for your consumption. FaceTime, Zoom, Facebook video calls, Skype are all virtual tools for you to chat and catch up with your friends and extended family. TikTok, online games and many other interactive apps increase your vulnerabilities to share plenty of information that might not be necessary and warranted.

Use caution. Be mindful of your language and aggression levels as, many a times, you tend to lose grounding in a virtual world. Rating screen time is well worth it.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer.



FREEPICK

ETCETERA

LSAT postponed

The LSAT-India™, a standardised test adopted as an admission criterion by multiple law colleges across India, has been rescheduled in light of the nationwide lockdown announced by the Government of India. Instead of the earlier announced date of May 17, the test has been rescheduled for June 7. The registration date is extended to May 22 to allow more time for applicants to register.

Applicants can prepare for the test using the material that is free to download from the Discover Law website (discoverlaw.in/prepare-for-the-test).

<https://www.discoverlaw.in/prepare-for-the-test>

Sastra University-TCS iON tie-up

Sastra University, in Tamil Nadu, has decided to adopt technology to ensure that learning does not stop even though classrooms are shut, due to the COVID-19 lockdown. The university has tied up with TCS iON's 'digital classroom' and is among the first three educational institutions to sign up for it. The TCS iON Digital Glass Room is a mobile and web education platform for schools and colleges that empowers educators to engage with students in real time by sharing lessons, videos, worksheets, assignments and assessments, using interactive methods such as polls, debates, quiz, surveys and many more tools. As an add-on, the platform also provides an embedded live classroom, which simulates live classroom teaching.

It is available to educational institutes of all types, irrespective of the medium of instruction, Board/university affiliation, or size. Interested schools and higher education organisations can register for the platform by visiting learning.tcsionhub.in/hub/glass-room/

Beyond the classroom

Ashoka University recently launched 'Beyond The Classroom', an interactive virtual seminar series which aims to bring the best learning from the university online. A curated series, it will go live with its 45 minutes to hour-long episodes using Zoom twice a week on Wednesday and Saturday at 8:30 p.m. The episode will be broadcast simultaneously on Facebook and YouTube. In an episode, a faculty member can deliver a lecture, or participate in an interview or discussion with another panellist about a topic of his/her choice. Participants who have tuned in to watch the live episode will get the opportunity to send in questions or comments, which may be answered by the faculty member, with the help of a moderator. The sessions will be hosted by an Ashoka University student, alumni, or faculty. The faculty will cover topics from the humanities, the social sciences, to pure sciences. The live sessions are free and open for everyone to attend.

IN CONVERSATION

The way forward

Online classes and remote teaching have become the key to making education accessible to more than 8,000 students across the globe. Patrice Houdayer, from SKEMA Business School, sheds some light

■ MADHUVANTI S. KRISHNAN

The COVID-19 pandemic has been wreaking havoc across the globe, and has brought every sector in the world to a screeching halt. It has forced companies and organisations to rethink their way of working, especially educational institutions. At a time when classes have been unceremoniously suspended, and exams postponed, the onus of implementing innovative solutions, and going digital to combat the situation, falls on educational institutions.

SKEMA Business School, Lille, France, which has seven campuses across five continents, promptly stepped up to the situation to ensure the continuity of studies for its 8,000-plus students across the world. It is among some of the first business schools in the world to offer all its courses online to its students. As one of its campuses is in China, the country which was the epicentre of the pandemic, authorities went all out in setting up a comprehensive distance learning system for students there. Excerpts from an interview with Patrice Houdayer, SKEMA's vice-dean of programmes, who sheds light on how the institution is handling the pandemic and ensuring continued education to students.

From-home campaign

"Since the temporary closure of our Suzhou campus in China, mid-January, we had already prepared and set up a comprehensive distance learning system for our seven campuses. Thanks to this, we were quickly able to switch to a 100% remote teaching mode," explains Houdayer. "Many B-schools are now following the same approach. Besides this, we are organising online well-being and fitness activities for students as they are essential to help them stay positive. We are also running the #SKEMAFromHome campaign, on different social media platforms, to showcase the efforts of the business school's students and faculty, and answer the queries of students."

Going digital

He elaborates on how the institution is conducting online classes for around 70 different programmes, including BBA, M.Sc, double M.Sc, PhD and executive MBA, at its campuses in the U.S., France, Brazil, South Africa, and China. In total, an average of 250 different courses are being delivered every day. By the end of the semester, more than 6,000 sessions will be delivered to nearly 7,000 students. All of this is managed by the institution's Innovation Department and the Knowledge Centre.



been able to utilise various Office 365 applications such as Teams (collaborative platform for teamwork) and Stream (video streaming service), depending on teachers' needs, on a large scale. For external speakers and experts, specific online support (tutorials, webinars) and a dedicated hotline have been deployed," he explicates.

"It was essential for us to alternate synchronous (live sessions on Teams, Skype, Google Meet, and so on), and asynchronous activities. Marcos Lima, director of SKEMA's MSc International Marketing and Business Development programme, suggested the use of a little-known, but useful PowerPoint function for distance learning – the possibility to record a 'screencast'. This makes it possible to create interactive presentations that professors can send to students prior to the live session, which is used for discussing the content, case studies and project presentations," adds Houdayer.

He elaborates on how the institution is conducting online classes for around 70 different programmes, including BBA, M.Sc, double M.Sc, PhD and executive MBA, at its campuses in the U.S., France, Brazil, South Africa, and China. In total, an average of 250 different courses are being delivered every day. By the end of the semester, more than 6,000 sessions will be delivered to nearly 7,000 students. All of this is managed by the institution's Innovation Department and the Knowledge Centre.

Tools to facilitate online courses

"We are making optimum use of the Microsoft Office resources. We have

Coronavirus did not come from us: Wuhan lab

Virology institute official dismisses conspiracy theories; Orthodox Christians mark Easter at home amidst COVID-19 fears

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

A laboratory in the Chinese city at ground zero of the global COVID-19 outbreak has rejected U.S. theories that it spawned the pandemic.

The denial came as world governments were debating how and when to ease lockdowns that have kept more than half of humanity – 4.5 billion people – confined to their homes and crippled the global economy.

Many of the world's 260 million Orthodox Christians were forced to mark Easter at home on Sunday, with

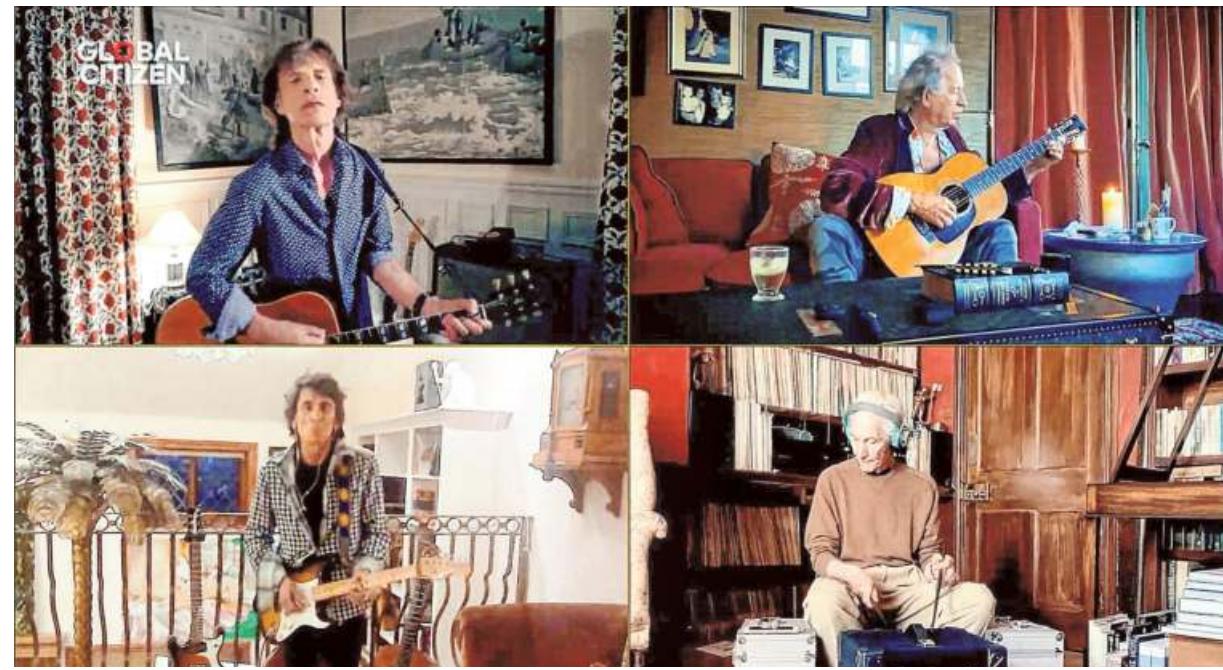
COVID-19

church leaders telling worshippers to stay indoors and conducting services online or on television. But in Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko, who has cast doubt on the gravity of the pandemic and allowed events such as football matches to continue, defiantly visited a church without a face mask.

Virtual concert

Hoping to spread cheer to those under lockdown, the world's top musicians – from the Rolling Stones to Taylor Swift, Stevie Wonder and teen superstar Billie Eilish – joined forces for a virtual mega-concert on Saturday. The six-hour online event aimed to cultivate a sense of community during a pandemic that has killed at least 1,60,000 people worldwide, with more than 2.3 million confirmed infections.

The virus was probably first transmitted to humans at a Wuhan market where exotic animals were slaughtered, according to Chinese scientists. But conspiracy theories that the virus came



Chords and notes of solidarity: (Clockwise from top) Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Ronnie Wood and Charlie Watts performing during the 'One World: Together at Home' event on Saturday. ■ VIA REUTERS

from a maximum-security virology lab have been brought into the mainstream by U.S. government officials.

"There's no way this virus came from us," Yuan Zhiming, the head of the P4 laboratory at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which is equipped to handle dangerous viruses, said in an interview with state media. "I know it's impossible."

The U.S. has the highest caseload of any country, with more than 7,35,000 confirmed infections, and over 39,000 deaths.

But as Americans and others around the world chafe after weeks under stay-at-home orders, resentment is rising. Anti-lockdown protests on Saturday drew hundreds of people in states including Texas, Maryland, New Hampshire and Ohio.

The small but spreading movement drew encouragement from Mr. Trump, who tweeted that three States

should be "liberated" from the stay-home orders.

Shops reopened

Elsewhere, a patchwork of countries including Switzerland, Denmark and Finland began reopening shops and schools. Germany is set to follow suit on Monday with some shops back open after declaring the virus "under control", while Italy – at one time the European epicentre of the crisis – was tentatively mulling easing restrictions.

Iran allowed some businesses to reopen Saturday despite being home to West Asia's deadliest outbreak.

Back in Wuhan, there was an emotional return to the city for the Chinese Super League football team after more than three months stranded on the road. Wearing masks, the players had bouquets of flowers thrust into their hands as supporters held banners and sang to welcome them home.

REUTERS
SEOUL

South Korea extended its social distancing policy for another 16 days on Sunday but offered some relief for churches and sporting fixtures, as it reported just eight new coronavirus infections, the lowest in two months. The slightly relaxed guidelines mean high-risk venues like churches will face fewer restrictions, while sports matches such as the popular Korea Baseball Organization (KBO) League can resume without an audience.

"It is safest to maintain the intensive social distancing, but it isn't easy realistically. We need to find a middle ground," Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun told a meeting of government officials. "If we

can maintain a stable management at the current level, we will shift to 'routine social distancing' from May 6," Mr. Chung said. Health authorities have said this would allow a reopening of the economy, while maintaining guidelines on disinfection and preventing the spread of the virus in people's lives.

South Korea in March issued an administrative

Spain sees sharp drop in toll

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Spain registered a sharp drop in its daily death toll from the new coronavirus on Sunday, with the number falling to 410 from 565. The total number of fatalities in Spain, the third hardest-hit country in the world after the U.S. and Italy, has reached 20,453, the Health Ministry said. "It's a number that gives us hope," said Health Ministry Emergencies Coordinator Fernando Simon of the daily death toll, at its lowest in four weeks. Infections rose to 1,95,344, with 4,218 new cases in the past 24 hours.

China should face consequences: Trump

'Was it a mistake, or was it deliberate?'

have ratcheted up their rhetoric.

Mr. Trump said the U.S.-China relationship was good "until they did this," citing a recent first-phase agricultural deal aimed at quelling a trade war between the two countries.

He said the question now was whether what happened with the coronavirus was "a mistake that got out of control, or was it done deliberately?"

"There's a big difference between those two," he said.

Mr. Trump also raised questions about a Wuhan virology laboratory that Fox News this week reported had likely developed the coronavirus as part of China's effort to demonstrate its capacity to identify and combat viruses. Mr. Trump has said his government is seeking to determine whether the virus emanated from a Chinese lab.

Mr. Trump also again cast doubt on China's death toll, which was revised up on Friday. China said 1,300 people who died of the coronavirus in the central city of Wuhan – half the total – were not counted, but dismissed allegations of a cover-up.



In movement we trust: A protest in Austin, Texas, against the partial lockdown imposed by the State government. ■ REUTERS

S. Korea relaxes some norms



A voter gets her temperature taken during last week's election. ■ REUTERS

order that strongly recommended religious, indoor sports and entertainment facilities suspend operations. The language has now been softened, allowing facilities to restart operations as long as they comply with disinfection guidelines. "The government will evaluate the degree of risk every two weeks and readjust the level of social distancing when necessary," said Health Minister Park Neung-hoo.

South Korea has largely managed to bring the outbreak under control and has recently been reporting daily new cases hovering around 20. Health authorities called the trend good news, but issued a note of caution about overly optimistic predictions.

South Korea in March issued an administrative

Australia calls for probe into response

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SYDNEY

Australia on Sunday called for an independent investigation into the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the World Health Organization's handling of the crisis.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne said the country would "insist" on a review that would probe, in part, China's early response to the outbreak in Wuhan, the city where COVID-19 emerged late last year.

"We need to know the sorts of details that an independent review would identify for us about the genesis of the virus, about the approaches to dealing with it (and) addressing the openness with which information was shared," she told public broadcaster ABC.

Beijing prioritising arrests over pandemic: Hong Kong leader

Avery Ng was among the 15 protesters held on Saturday



Avery Ng in 2017. ■ AFP

ing and participating in unlawful assemblies on August 18 and October 1 and 20 last year. They are due to appear in court on May 18. Police said more arrests were possible. Avery Ng and some of the others arrested were released on bail late on Saturday.

The arrests prompted criticism from the United States and Britain, which both called for Hong Kong's rule of law to be maintained.

"The United States condemns the arrest of pro-democracy advocates in Hong Kong," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said.

In Britain, a Foreign Office representative said the government expected any arrests and court procedures to be "conducted in a fair and transparent manner".

Karzai welcomes India's involvement in talks

Khalilzad made a call to Jaishankar

SUHASINI HAIDAR
KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has welcomed the American gesture to bring in India into the ongoing negotiation for sustained peace in the war-torn country. The response followed hours after U.S. Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad discussed the state of the peace talks and the coronavirus crisis in South Asia with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

"I have said this since the process began... I do hope India will join the peace process in support of a sovereign and united Afghanistan with a strong government, in keeping with the traditional friendship between India and Afghanistan," Mr. Karzai, who met with Indian envoy to Af-

ghanistan Vinay Kumar on Saturday, told *The Hindu*.

During his visit to Delhi in January, Mr. Karzai had also pitched for India's support to the U.S.-Taliban and intra-Afghan process in meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

Mr. Khalilzad on Saturday made the move and said, "I reached out to Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar yesterday to discuss the latest on the Afghan peace process..." He said that both sides discussed the issue of release of prisoners. "We also spent some time covering the immediate and longer-term impact of the coronavirus."

The development is significant as it came days after six-nation talk on the Afghan scenario was held which had excluded India.

Now the video will play in Newspaper



ELSEWHERE



U.K. will not lift lockdown now: Gove

LONDON
Britain is not considering lifting the lockdown imposed almost four weeks ago given "deeply worrying" increases in the toll, Minister Michael Gove said on Sunday. "The facts... are clear at the moment that we should not be thinking of lifting of these restrictions yet," he said. ■ REUTERS

No letter sent to Trump, says North Korea

SEOUL
North Korea on Sunday denied a letter was sent to U.S. President Donald Trump, KCNA said, citing a Foreign Ministry press chief. The denial comes after Mr. Trump told reporters that he recently received a "nice note" from North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. ■ REUTERS

Afghan girls turn car parts into ventilators

The team hopes to build a prototype by May or June and submit it to the Health Ministry

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KABUL

On most mornings, Somaya Farooqi and four other teenage girls pile into her dad's car and head to a mechanic's workshop. They use back roads to skirt police checkpoints set up to enforce a lockdown in their city of Herat, one of Afghanistan's hot spots of the COVID-19 pandemic. The members of Afghanistan's prize-winning girls' robotics team say they're on a life-saving mission – to build a breathing machine from used car parts and help their war-stricken country battle the virus. "If we even save one life with our device, we will be proud," said Ms. Farooqi, 17.

Their pursuit is particularly remarkable in conservative Afghanistan. Only a generation ago, during the rule of the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban in the late 1990s, girls weren't allowed to go

to school. Ms. Farooqi's mother was pulled from school in third grade.

In Herat, residents are on



Quest to save lives: A group of Afghan girls developing two types of ventilator devices using car spare parts. ■ AP

ly permitted to leave their homes for urgent needs. The robotics team has a limited number of permits for cars.

So far, Ms. Farooqi's father hasn't been able to get one, but the girls are in a hurry. "We are concerned about security driving out of the city but there is no other option, we have to try to save people's lives," Ms. Farooqi said. At the workshop, the

professor at MIT, welcomed the team's initiative to develop the prototype. "It will be excellent to see it tested and locally produced," she said.

Getting funding

Tech entrepreneur Roya Mahboob, who founded the team and raises funds to empower girls, said she hopes Ms. Farooqi's group will finish building a prototype by May or June. In all, the team has 15 members who work on various projects. The ventilator model, once completed, would then be sent to the Health Ministry for testing, initially on animals, said spokesman Wahid Mayar.

Ms. Farooqi, who was just 14 when she participated in the first World Robot Olympiad in the U.S., in 2017, said she and her team members hope to make a contribution. "Afghans should be helping Afghanistan in this pandemic," she said.

With abusers and victims trapped together during the COVID-19 lockdown, #StayHomeStaySafe is an irony, as most caregivers are at a loss to know how to help

SOMA BASU

Mithu, 43, was all set to walk out of her marriage and shift into a working women's hostel on April 1. But the COVID-19 lockdown means she is now locked in with her husband and mother-in-law in a two-bedroom flat in Kolkata.

"Every day is a nightmare. My husband is short-tempered and foul-mouthed. Though I am doing the household work, he is constantly nitpicking and telling me I have ruined his life. I don't feel safe with him," Mithu said, over a distress call to the city's violence helpline number at Swayam last week.

"I called up the local police station and asked them to check on her and also told Mithu to keep herself confined to her room, hide things like kitchen knives and kerosene, and if need be, scream for help from her balcony," says Gargee Guha, Swayam's team coordinator. The organisation opened five new lines on April 13 and within 72 hours received 10 calls from distraught women.

A 34-year-old woman from South 24 Parganas called the same helpline to say how her husband, who had abandoned her for eight years for another woman, suddenly returned during lockdown as she continued to stay with his parents. "He is now sexually abusing me daily," she had sobbed over the phone.

The domestic abuse virus

Domestic violence haunts women across ages even more aggressively now, says Gargee. She talks of a 70-year-old woman tortured by both her husband and son over money and food. There are multiple layers of domestic abuse – physical, emotional, psychological – and some victims don't even recognise it, though their self-esteem and confidence are crushed through taunts, name calling, and beating, she says. It's a double burden of the fear of both COVID-19 and the family.

'Stay Home, Stay Safe' is the battle cry to protect everyone from the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the world.



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

While the global health emergency has posed an unprecedented threat to all, a shadow pandemic is ironically making homes, thought of as safe spaces, unsafe for many women. Countless women are now trapped with perpe-

tators: they cannot go out, are cut off from their friends, unable to make calls and complain, or move to a safe place like their parents' homes.

"Whom do I fight, the distant fear of the Coronavirus or the immediate fear of my husband who slaps me just because the dal was not cooked properly today," Archana recently confided, to her neighbour in an apartment block in Dwarka, Delhi.

Archana works in a local play school and lives with her aged parents-in-law, an unmarried sister-in-law and her two pre-teen children. Two weeks ago, her husband was told that he may be laid off and she became a target for his ire and insecurity. Her neighbour reports that he gets irritated and shouts at her

often, insulting her in front of other family members. Nobody stops him. Her children are fearful. He finds fault with what she cooks, what she wears at home, how she takes care of his parents.

She is not sure if she will get her salary next month. Her parents live in Kanpur, but she does not want to tell them her troubles. Her neighbour has tried explaining to her that mental and emotional abuse is also domestic abuse, but Archana is not yet ready to call a helpline number.

Lockdown loopholes

The police, healthcare providers, mental health counsellors, and social workers are overwhelmed by several constraints during the essential lockdown to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. With the exception of some States like Telangana that have declared helplines as essential services, in the rest of the country, immediate intervention as a rescue measure is found wanting.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) flagged the spike in complaints when it received 257 online complaints between March 23 and April 1 (when the country was under the first lockdown phase). The complaints more than doubled from the pre-lockdown week of March 1 to 8. But the lockdown imposition has also seen the complaints receding subsequently.

"Women are being subjected to physical, mental, and sexual assault but are failing to ask for help because they think all services are closed and there is nobody to listen to them," says Rekha Sharma, the NCW chairperson. The NCW has now opened different channels with a WhatsApp number (7217735372), emails (complaintcell-ncw@nic.in / ncw@nic.in / chairperson-ncw@nic.in), and more responsive social media platforms (Facebook.com/NCWIndia, https://Twitter.com/NCWIndia).

"At the moment, we are not interested in collating data or differentiating between old and new cases. We are taking cognizance of the complaints, and depending on the severity of each case, seeking police help to rescue women who are in distress," says Sharma. So far, 69 cases of physical violence have been reported and the respective area police have been apprised of the matter. "We have suggested the distressed women could be shifted to shelter homes under police protection," she adds.

Dr. Vijaya Rukmini Rao, Executive Director of Gramya Resource Centre for Women that runs one-stop crisis centres called Sakhi in 33 districts of Telangana says, "Women usually come to

SOME HELPLINE NUMBERS

Pan India: All India Women's Helpline 1091 / Emergency Response Support System 112 / Women's Helpline 181 / All India Women's Conference 10921 / iCALL-Initiating Concern for All 9372048501 and 9920241248 / Shakti Shalini 10920

Jagori (Delhi): 8800996640/011-26692700

Swayam (Kolkata): 9830772814/9830204393

Gramya (Hyderabad): 9440860271

Sneha (Mumbai): 9833052684/9167535765

Women Power Line (UP): 1090

Women in Governance (Assam): 6003214180

mother and even grandmother, because he was having alcohol withdrawals.

"There are many calls which we are not able to follow up on due to lockdown restraints," says Vaishnaruby. Men tend to vent their frustrations through violence on the most intimate member. She fears a surge in domestic problems once the lockdown is lifted. "With prolonged uncertainty of the pandemic, patience will give way soon and the full impact of the crisis will unfold," she says.

Though collective countrywide data is yet to emerge on domestic violence during the national lockdown, NGOs are finding it difficult to cope with the complaints received online. According to the National Family Health Survey-4, one in three women in India suffers physical and sexual violence at home. But these are unusual times, says Delhi-based Jagori's medical counsellor Sunita Thakur. "In the given situation where we cannot meet them in person, we are only able to help a distressed caller strategise her safety," she says. "With the support systems such as police and doctors totally occupied with Coronavirus patients now, it is difficult to coordinate help for domestic violence victims."

From helpline Sneha in Mumbai to Women in Governance in Assam, NGOs are only dealing with online calls that describe stress gone out of control.

"We are trying to do con calls or Zoom sessions involving the family. We encourage the vulnerable complainants to speak out instead of feeling isolated. We are asking them to call the national helpline numbers so that their repeated calls, even if unattended, get registered as emergency at least," says Gargee. "Apart from showing empathy, we are unable to do anything more at this moment," she adds.

Disclaimer: Names of victims changed to protect their identity



CONVERSATIONS WITH SELF



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

CAN'T STOP BINGEING?

If your anxiety is leading you to drink, snack, game like never before, here are signs you need to stop before it turns harmful

SWETA AKUNDI

Each time our screens refresh, the global COVID-19 mortality numbers add up. Instinctively, we turn to whatever gives us a brief sense of detachment from our current reality. We find solace in snacks, in wine, in reality TV show marathons – whatever our preferred brand of comfort may be. But when does solace turn into dependence?

"Anything that is in excess to the required amounts, and anything whose absence leads to craving, both physiologically and psychologically, amounts to dependence," says Dr Vasanth R, consultant psychiatrist at Fortis Malar, Chennai, who specialises in addiction treatment. A dependence can be on substances, such as alcohol and drugs; or on behavioural habits like excessive screen use and gaming.

Behavioural dependence may not result in the same physical signs as with substance dependence, notes a 2012 study, 'Behavioral Addiction versus Substance Addiction', published in the *International Journal of Preventive Medicine*. However, it goes on to say that from a neurobiological point of view, behavioural addictions indirectly affect the neurotransmitter systems of the brain.

Each time you have a drink or play a video game, for instance, substances like dopamine, also called the 'happy hormone' are released. The body, naturally, asks for the substance or behaviour to be repeated, in order to feel that sense of well-being.

"With the current lockdown, there are two types of people with a dependency problem: people who had a substance issue and are now going through withdrawal as they lack access to them. In this case, they need to take professional help from psychiatrists online," says Dr Vasanth. "And then there are people who have been diagnosed with an addiction in the past and quit, who may relapse now." So how do we catch our habits before they turn bad?

Time to take stock

Stranded in a city away from home, the writer embraces the uncertainty enveloping him



TT SRINATH

I have been waiting out 'forced internment' in Delhi, having landed there from overseas and serving time in quarantine for 14 days and thereafter being confined to a hotel room, waiting for the lockdown to be lifted for me to return home.

In these last few days, I have been consumed by anxiety and fear, not knowing what awaits me in the future, going forward, and worried about aged and close relatives who I cannot be with when they need me most. Despite this psychological downturn, I have been able to find solace within. For once 'acceptance' not 'resignation', two words I have used interchangeably so far, has become real for me.

I know I cannot do anything about what is happening around me, and

therefore I have the choice to either rant at or embrace the uncertainty that is enveloping me.

The conscious choice of wilfully embracing uncertainty has encouraged me to write, to telephone friends and acquaintances I have always wanted to yet never done. I eat my meals slowly and savour every morsel. Even my conversations with those I am reconnecting with, are about the happy times we have had. I have been able to apologise for my indiscretions and received forgiveness from them. Since none of us is in a hurry to disconnect, our conversation is now a dialogue, of sharing, not debate, or wanting to prove I am right.

For my life to now seem less anguished than it has been, I have had to, as many others, pass through 'dark nights'. The other side of darkness is dawn and I am discovering it.

The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at tt.srinath@gmail.com



Why are you indulging?

When you feel like bingeing on something, ask yourself why you are doing it. "Differentiate between a general sense of anxiety (which is natural, given the times) and boredom," advises Dr. Vasanth. "If so, look for other distraction techniques like meditation or falling

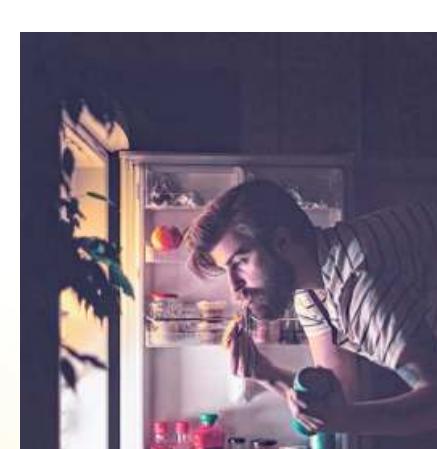
back to your hobbies of dancing, gardening, painting and so on. Get help from professionals online; they will advise you on how to bring your anxiety under control," he says. It is difficult to tell a person who is anxious by nature or who has been diagnosed with generalised anxiety disorder not to be anxious. The only thing we should be monitoring is how we try and soothe this anxiety.

What is the frequency?

What amounts to dependence? "One of the big indicators is frequency," he says. You could be a social drinker, who has been consuming alcohol on and off over the years, but now, you can monitor the change in weekly frequency since the lockdown. For instance, if you drank only over the weekend, but now find yourself drinking much more often, that's a red flag. "For behavioural dependencies, you could start by maintaining a daily log," he says.



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO



Can you say no?

Another clear indicator of a dependence is a test of willpower – the fact that you need to exercise it in itself is a clear indicator that you may be on your way to a dependence. So if you find yourself in the situation, use willpower to break the habit, until it stops being one. The inability to control the urge, or use distractions means you are starting to be dependent on this particular behaviour. It can get to a point where you start planning your whole day around it.

"Unavailability of these substances can then lead you to becoming irritable, impulsive or angry over petty things," he says.

Does it hamper your daily routine?

Often, we protect ourselves from the stress of our realities by finding other things to obsess over. "You can take a break by gaming or watching TV. The only question is, is it hampering your daily routine? Are you so invested in it, that you are not taking a bath, not cooking enough, not interacting with family members," he says. To break the cycle, "Fix a daily routine, and divide the day into small sessions; allot that activity for that time period."

But can we replace one obsession with another hobby, without that turning into another addiction? "Yes, as long as it is being replaced by something productive, that will do less harm to your body and help you as an individual."

The need to reach for something to keep ourselves calm or occupied may need to be dealt with professionally though. "But remember that the circumstances we are in are highly unusual. Nobody is used to being locked up at home for 45 days. Right now, we just need to tide over this period, and then if the problem persists, we can look into it."

Cinema smorgasbord
(Clockwise from right)
Stills from *Ghormua*, *Meal* and *Tungrus*; (below) the making of *Chuhedaani*
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

MovieSaints, an emerging platform for indie cinema, will drop a curated indie short film every alternate day



HOMING IN

Staying at home for a while? We have you covered. Your weekly **Live Gigs** list features indie bands from Mexico, Jazz pianists from the US, and more

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

13 shorts FOR QUARANTINE

KENNETH ROSARIO

It is possibly the last lunch together for a family in Abhiroop Basu's *Meal*, as sounds of communal violence, through chants and news flashes, engulf their home. The frustration, sadness, trauma and bruises are visible on actors, Adil Hussain, Ratnabali Bhattacharjee and Arun Mukhopadhyay, in the 11-minute short film, which brings out both the fear and safety of being at home, as the world outside collapses. A young bride, Meena, feels suffocated being in her marital home, because of a hostile and abusive husband in *Chuhedaani*, a 30-minute short film by Ravi Shankar Kaushik. As the abuse grows, so does her desire to break free. But the confinement of home is what an Indian classical singer yearns for in Shefali Bhushan's *Tambur*, hoping that she can do her *riyaaz* without any interruptions. But little does she know what awaits her is the cacophony of an urban neighbourhood, rife with loud bhajans and pop music. In Rishi Chandra's *Tungrus*, a rooster is kept in a cramped Mumbai apartment, creating a

ruckus and forcing the family to consider eating their pet.

These four short films, which explore solitude in different forms and emotions, speak to the times we are living in. They are among the 13 curated short films that will drop on MovieSaints every alternate day. "We believe short films are where indie filmmakers start getting a grip over how to tell a story, and with a limited budget," says Priyadarshi Rishiraj, founder of MovieSaints, who has been keen on highlighting the short format on their platform. The other films in the series are, Mukul Haloi's *Ghormua*, Prasanth Vijay's *Amguleechaalitham*, Devashish Makhija and Rajat Nagpal's

Rahim Murge Pe Mat Ro, Ankurjyoti Deka's *Fade In*, Saurav Kumar's *Autumn*, Pranav Bhasin's *Wolf Of Chawl Street*, Khanjan Kishore Nath's *Kachichinithu*, Chandradeep Das' *The Red Cap* and Ek Posha Rupkatha. Both *Ghormua* and *Tambur* are world premieres.

The series seeks to empower the filmmakers to find an audience, gain visibility and possibly make money. While some films will be available for free, others will be in the range of ₹10 to ₹75. "We have left the filmmakers to decide their own prices for the films, depending on their length and budget, but we help them arrive at an estimate," informs Rishiraj. The makers of *Chuhedaani* have



pledged to give their share of revenues to Rasoi on Wheels NGO, who are working towards distributing food to the needy during the lockdown.

New ways of seeing

MovieSaints works on a unique model, where viewers can choose to pay more if they like the film, or take a refund after submitting their critique. "But taking a refund has not happened as often," says Rishiraj, who has observed a spike in the viewership since the outbreak of COVID-19 globally. "It has doubled up in the last month," he shares. Riding on this momentum, the 13 films in the series will be the first among several batches of short films to be dropped on the site.

The effort is to generate a conversation around these films so they can have a longer shelf life. "With indie films and filmmakers, the chances of audience interaction is much higher," observes Anupama Bose, India Head of MovieSaints. While she has curated the line-up, Rishiraj brought in the technological support for filmmakers to interact with the viewers with chat features and live interactions.

Going forward, the plan is to enable film festivals to go digital. "Right now, some festivals just show their films online, but we want to take the flavour of a festival along with it, with elements like workshops," hopes Rishiraj. But for now, the duo is focusing on making the short film series, which will be available across 96 countries, a success, helping these films transcend borders.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Castle wanderings

How graves help you trace families



R SMITH

On a hillock on Fatehabad Road, Agra, is a castle that dominates the last growing complex of five star hotels. The castle, which is said to be haunted, is nearly 200 years old. It is in ruins now and several of the palatial rooms stand defiantly open to the skies. Complete with turrets and terraces, stable and outhouses, it retains its majesty. From the

ramparts you can see the cantonment *kothis*.

The wealthy tourist in his limousine is naturally struck by the grandeur of the site and stops to look around, cautiously wending his way up, apprehensive of his trespassing on the domain of old ghosts who

might be lurking in the turns and corners, until he stands facing the elegant, circular pavilion, beautifully done in ornate stone.

It shelters no king's statue, but looking closely one finds laid in it, a white marble panel inscribed with the words:

"Sacred to the memory of Major John Jacob, late of Scindia Army, son of the late Colonel Jacob Petrus of Gwalior, killed at Agra by the rebels on the 6th July, 1857, aged 43 years. This monument is respectfully erected by his disconsolate widow and daughter. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in men."

Major Jacob, who was an Armenian, is believed to have been killed by his own retainers. His only daughter married Debaneau, a Frenchman, who was related to General Ventura of Ranjit Singh's Army. Their son, James Debaneau, with his wife and children lived at Sardhana (Meerut) with their grandmother, Major Jacob's widow in not the best circumstances.

Major Jacob had two sons, Major David and Major John. The former, who led a 'care-free' life, surrounded by musicians and dancing girls and his stables of horses and tame tigers, died at Gwalior in 1848, aged 35 years. He had two daughters: Matrujan (who married Major S. Reghelini of Begam Samru's army) and Chatrujan (who married Sjafratz, warden of Agra). They both lived at Chhili-int, and died at Agra.

Matrujan Reghelini, had a son, John Michael Reghelini, who was Munserim of the Judges' court at Agra.

His house Rose Villa, near Wazirpura, is still there, in the possession of its present owner, his wife and children having sold it and left Agra soon after his death.

The writer is a veteran chronicler of Delhi

The former, who led a 'care-free' life, surrounded by musicians and dancing girls and his stables of horses and tame tigers, died at Gwalior in 1848, aged 35 years. He had two daughters: Matrujan (who married Major S. Reghelini of Begam Samru's army) and Chatrujan (who married Sjafratz, warden of Agra). They both lived at Chhili-int, and died at Agra.

Matrujan Reghelini, had a son, John Michael Reghelini, who was Munserim of the Judges' court at Agra.

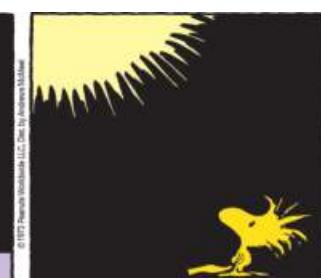
His house Rose Villa, near Wazirpura, is still there, in the possession of its present owner, his wife and children having sold it and left Agra soon after his death.

The writer is a veteran chronicler of Delhi

POOCH CAFE



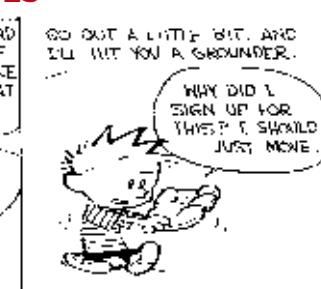
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



ASK US

ARATI KRISHNAN

Q. I am 27 years old, differently-abled, single and a government employee with a gross salary of ₹9 lakh per annum. I don't have any tax saving investments or health insurance. Please advise as to how and where to invest to maximise my returns and minimise the tax commitment. Is ELSS a good option? What are the tax saving avenues for a differently abled person?

SWARAJ S

A. Any person who is starting out on his or her career needs to put three essential components in place before making other investments - an emergency fund, term life insurance (if you have dependants) and health insurance. The emergency fund is meant to help you tide over short periods when your income may be interrupted due to illness or accident. To build this, you will need to save an amount equal to 6-9 months living expense in a bank deposit. A pure term life insurance plan, easily bought online, will ensure that any dependants you have will receive a lumpsum amount in the event of your unfortunate death. This is essential only if you are a breadwinner and have family members depending on your income.

The premium that you pay towards such term life plans is eligible for tax breaks under the overall limit of ₹1.5 lakh under Section 80C. Contributing to a health insurance plan is important to ensure that your finances do not take a big blow in case of illness or surgery requiring substantial payouts. Under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act, an individual is eligible to claim a tax deduction of ₹25,000 a year towards premiums paid on a health insurance cover for himself, his spouse and dependants. You can also claim an additional ₹25,000 towards premium paid for your parents if they are below 60 and ₹50,000 if they are above 60 years of age. In addition, you can claim ₹5,000 a year towards a preventive health check-up.

To open a Public Provident Fund account at a nearby post office for a tax-free annual return. An annual contribution of up to ₹1.5 lakh can earn you tax breaks under section 80C. The National Pension System (NPS) is another retirement vehicle which can earn you tax breaks totalling to ₹2 lakh a year. ELSS schemes are a good long term option to build wealth too.

This apart, tax laws allow a flat deduction of ₹75,000 from the total income of those with specific disabilities and ₹1.25 lakh for those with severe disabilities under section 80U, on producing a medical certificate, which you may already be aware of.

Q. I earn ₹30,000 per month. My monthly expenditure is ₹22,000. Right now, I want to park my savings of ₹8,000 into a liquid fund so that I can liquidate it any time. My focus right now is to generate money for my short-term needs, like a vacation. Kindly advise what would be the best way to invest.

VAISHALI GOYAL

A. Given that you are just making a start on investing, it would be good to map out your short term, medium term and long-term goals and then invest towards them using appropriate vehicles. Investing towards your short-term needs alone in the initial stages of your career, can leave you short of savings towards medium term (buying a home or funding higher education) or long term goals such as retirement.

Before investing, it is also good for you to first create an emergency fund and buy term and health insurance to cover you against uncertainties. If you are keen to save up money towards a short-term goal such as a vacation, both bank deposits and debt funds can fit the bill. Your choice between the two will depend on when you need the money and whether you are comfortable with volatile returns. If you have a short term need with a specific date, a deposit with a leading bank can be a good bet. If you can't specify the date but may need the money any time within a year, liquid and ultra-short debt funds will work.

However, the returns from debt funds can be quite volatile and you may even experience negative returns from them for short periods. Choosing the right short-term debt and liquid funds to invest in requires knowledge and homework, as you will need to look into fund portfolios to assess the quality of securities they own. This is best done with the help of a qualified advisor.

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

How to check the portfolio quality of DEBT FUNDS

Investors must carefully sieve MFs' websites to ensure safety of investments

JOYDEEP SEN

In troubled times, it is important to look at the quality of the portfolio of your debt funds. The risk of default is little more now since business cycles have been impacted. If you are not from a finance background but availing the services of a financial advisor, you can discuss the credit quality of the portfolio of your debt funds with him/her. If you are doing it yourself, you can at least form a perspective. We will tell you how.

The place to look for the portfolio is the website of the particular mutual fund (MF) or the asset management company (AMC). Every AMC declares its portfolios at least once a month, if not at a higher frequency. The month-end fact sheet is available as a download on the website.

In the fact sheet, go to the particular fund, technically called the Scheme, in which you are invested or looking to invest. The

Scheme fact sheet usually discloses the entire portfolio, except for one or two AMCs that disclose the top holdings only. Against every instrument in a debt portfolio, the credit rating is mentioned. To start with, go with the conventional approach of looking at the credit quality: AAA is the best, AA is good, A a little lower, etc. You may do the calculations yourself, or the pie chart may be given in the fact sheet, of the rating distribution of the portfolio. Obviously, the higher the extent of AAA and lower the extent of instruments rated lower than AAA, the better is the quality of the Scheme.

Now, some finer points about the credit rating. AAA, AA etc. are long-term ratings i.e. ratings for securities of remaining maturity of more than one year. The credit rating for papers with remaining maturity of less than one year is A1+ or A1 etc. However, most instruments of less than one year are

rated A1+ as it is relatively easier for the issuers to obtain highest rating for them rather than the long-term instruments. Against government securities, which are the safest, you will see "sovereign" as the credit rating. Though, technically G-Secs are not rated by a rating agency, these are the safest.

Top-rated component
To arrive at the top-rated component of the portfolio, add the percentage exposure to AAA, A1+ and G-Secs. Another part of the portfolio to be added to the top notch is the cash or cash-equivalent, which also does not have any credit risk. Hence, the total top-rated component of one fund is to be compared with top-rated part of another fund, to form a perspective on the credit quality.

Credit rating distribution is an objective gauge. As an example, if one fund has 80% of its portfolio in AAA/G-Secs/cash and

another fund has 60%, then 80% and 60% are comparable. There is another gauge to look at the credit quality, that is the category of issuer.

Within the same rating classification, there are shades. We have said G-Secs and AAA and A1+ are to be clubbed to form the top-rated component of the portfolio. Within this, G-Secs are better quality than AAA. If two funds have 80% top-notch exposure, the one with relatively higher exposure to G-Secs is better.

In the short term i.e. remaining maturity of less than one year, certificates of deposit (CDs) issued by banks rated A1+ are better quality than commercial papers (CPs) issued by NBFCs rated A1+. The point here is, even though apparently credit rating is the same, CDs are of better quality than CPs due to the in-

herent safety of a bank over an NBFC.

To summarise the rating quality aspect, look at the percentage exposure to the top-notch instruments in the fund, and the category of issuers e.g. government over AAA-rated companies and banks over the NBFCs.

The portfolio credit quality or credit rating distribution is a function of the fund category as well, apart from the decision of the fund manager. There are 16 debt fund categories, and in a few of them, the nature of instruments in the portfolio is defined by SEBI norms. In corporate bond funds, a minimum of 80% has to be invested in instruments rated AA+ or AAA. In credit risk

funds, a minimum of 65% has to be invested in papers rated less than AA+ i.e. AA and below.

In the category of funds called banking and PSUs, a minimum 80% has to be invested in instruments issued by banks and PSUs but the credit rating of the instruments is up to the AMC.

In short duration funds, it is entirely at the discretion of the AMC. When you are trying to gauge the portfolio quality, you can look from this perspective: in a banking and PSU fund, 80% exposure is anyways to banks and PSUs, on top of that, if it is a AAA-oriented portfolio, the quality is that much better.

Having looked at the portfolio credit quality, the action point is this: for existing portfolios, if there is a reasonably

high component of top-rated instruments and it is giving you comfort, stay invested. If it looks doubtful, may look to exit. Note, do not exit in a tearing hurry. Before exiting, consider the exit load of the fund, if any and the tax implications.

For fresh investments, invest only in those portfolios that give you comfort. Defaults have happened in the past, even in AAA-rated instruments of IL&FS and DHFL, but if you are buying into a better quality product, you are that much better off.

(The author is founder, wiseinvestor.in)

INSURANCE: AROGYA SANJEEVANI

Simple health policy for first-time buyers

An insurance plan that has the same features no matter whom you buy it from

AMIT CHHABRA

Insurance firms have come up with a standard health insurance plan – Arogya Sanjeevani – that caters to all quality healthcare needs of an individual and family. For first-time buyers of health insurance, the plan is a boon since the product is the same, regardless of the insurance company offering it.

The current health insurance products available in the market are different and quite complex, and it is difficult for the common man to understand various inclusions and exclusions of the plans. This is a major reason why many people face numerous difficulties while filing a claim and often, their claims get rejected.

The introduction of Arogya Sanjeevani is a revolutionary move as it will give access to quality and world-class healthcare services to everyone at highly affordable prices. The whole standardisation process helps in making the buying process much simpler.

What is covered

Arogya Sanjeevani is a standard health policy that comes with the same coverages and exclusions across all insurers. The plan is an indemnity-based health insurance policy that has to be renewed every year to ensure the benefit of the policy



Fine print

- The plan is an indemnity-based health insurance policy that has to be renewed every year to ensure the benefit of the policy continues
- It is available for a minimum sum insured of ₹1 lakh up to a maximum of ₹5 lakh

	ANNUAL PREMIUM* (in ₹)	
Insurer	1 Adult	2 Adults + 1 Child
Religare Health Insurance	5,096	10,466
Max Bupa Health Insurance	4,002	9,016
Star Health Insurance	4,170	8,255
Royal Sundaram General Insurance	3,214	7,175
Raheja QBE General Insurance	3,190	5,880

*Excluding GST.

continues.

You may buy the policy as an individual plan to just cover yourself or invest in a family floater plan to cover self along with spouse, parents/parents-in-law and dependent kids.

The plan is available for a minimum sum insured of ₹1 lakh up to a maximum of ₹5 lakh.

These procedures include robotic surgeries, uterine artery embolisation, high intensity focused ultrasound, oral chemotherapy and stem cell therapy. With respect to cumulative bonus, your total sum insured (excluding the bonus) will rise by 5% for each claim-free policy year.

To file a claim under the policy, the minimum waiting period is 30 days while the disease-specific waiting period is 24-48 months, depending on the diseases.

(The author is health business head, Policybazaar.com)

A grace period of 30 days is allowed on payment of premium if you choose to make yearly payment and a grace period of 15-days is permitted for all other payment modes.

Portability is also available after completion of 12 months of the policy. The policy also offers cashless facility, provided hospitalisation is at a network hospital.

Know the exclusions

The plan does not cover expenses incurred for maternity treatment, weight loss, unproven treatments, sterility and infertility, change of gender, hazardous adventure sports and conditions caused by breach of law or due to war and refractive error.

The plan does not provide coverage for out-patient department (OPD) expenses. It implements a sub-limit on room rent limited to 2% of the sum insured or up to a maximum of ₹5,000 per day whichever is lesser and ICU expenses are limited to 5% of sum insured or a maximum of ₹10,000 per day.

There are no deductibles allowed in the plan. There is a mandatory co-payment clause under which the policyholder has to pay 5% of the claim.

(The author is health business head, Policybazaar.com)

There are no deductibles allowed in the plan. There is a mandatory co-payment clause under which the policyholder has to pay 5% of the claim.

(The author is health business head, Policybazaar.com)

There are no deductibles allowed in the plan. There is a mandatory co-payment clause under which the policyholder has to pay 5% of the claim.

(The author is health business head, Policybazaar.com)

You should first aim for early financial freedom. Why? Retirement

THINK INVESTOR

Can you retire early?

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

Are you bored during this lockdown? If yes, use the time to think about how you would spend your time if you retire early! Here, we discuss why retirement readiness is important and why you should aim for early financial freedom and not early retirement.

Suppose you are 35, started working at 23, and intend to retire by 50. Your working life will be 27 years and you will enjoy 35 years of post-retirement living, assuming an average life expectancy of 85.

This means you have to save for 1.3 years of post-retirement living expenses for every year you work! Also, you have to meet your current consumption needs and save money to meet your intermediate goals such as buying a house and funding your child's college education.

Then, there are healthcare costs. Research has shown that you are likely to stay healthy when you are active. If you intend to have a not-so-active lifestyle after you retire, your health could deteriorate. And that could lead to increased healthcare costs. So, you will have to set aside a considerable amount during your working life to provide for post-retirement healthcare needs. This is in addition to providing for living expenses discussed above!

Meaningful planning

This does not mean early retirement is not good. It is just that you should be aware that there is more to retirement than just accumulating money in your retirement fund. You have to be retirement-ready. So, how can you become retirement-ready?

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage personal investments)

is when you stop earning active income and depend totally on your passive income to meet your lifestyle expenses. Financial freedom, on the other hand, refers to the state where your passive income is enough to meet your lifestyle expenses. Active income refers to the income you earn by working; passive income is that earned on your investment portfolio.

Whether you are aiming for early financial freedom or for early retirement, the fact remains that you have to save a significant amount during your working life to achieve this goal. When you achieve early financial freedom, you will most likely continue working. Why? You have an exit route from employment because of your comfortable finances. So, your stress levels are lower, and you might just as well enjoy working. This means you do not have to spend your passive income yet. Also, you can concentrate on becoming retirement-ready.

You have several alternatives to retirement after achieving early financial freedom.

For one, you can look for alternative avenues for work or, you could pursue phased retirement – work three days a week before you decide to retire. The objective is to find a balance between emotional state and financial health.

Working keeps you productively engaged and, therefore, happy. You have to find alternative avenues to maintain a good emotional state before you decide to retire early. Otherwise, you will significantly harm your financial well-being.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage personal investments)

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Daddy has simplified the groceries' list. Half-a-kilo each of whatever is available and five kilos each of whatever is not!"

Life insurance term plan premium

Male: 30 Years, Sum insured- Rs. 1 crore, Cover upto - 70 Years

Insurance company	Plan name	Maximum cover (Up to Years)	Annual premium (Rs.) (Male)
Aditya Birla Capital	Life Shield Plan	80	12,998
Aegon Life	iTerm Insurance Plan	100	9,114
Bajaj Allianz	Smart Protect Goal	99	8010
Canara HSBC OBC Life	iSelect+ Term Plan	99</	

IN BRIEF



Patrick McEnroe recovers from COVID-19

NEW YORK
Former US Davis Cup captain Patrick McEnroe announced on Sunday he had tested negative for coronavirus. McEnroe, who was quarantined at his home, said "Great news for me and my wife, Melissa, we both tested negative for COVID-19." IANS



Whatmore appointed Baroda Ranji coach

VADODARA
Sri Lanka's World Cup-winning Australian coach Dav Whatmore was on Sunday appointed Baroda's Ranji team coach as well as Director of Cricket for a period of two years, State body's secretary Ajit Lele confirmed. Whatmore, who was in charge of Kerala last season, was also in charge of India U-19 team that won the junior World Cup under Virat Kohli's captaincy in 2008. PTI

Veteran sports journalist Goswami passes away

KOLKATA
Veteran journalist Samir Goswami, a much-liked figure in the Kolkata sports journalism fraternity, passed away on Saturday after cardiac arrest. He was 65 and is survived by wife. Loved for his amiable nature, Goswami worked for more than two decades in popular Bengali newspaper *Bartaman*. PTI



LOS ANGELES
Vanessa Bryant celebrated the 19th anniversary of her wedding to her late husband Kobe Bryant on Saturday with a touching Instagram post. "My king, my heart, my best friend. Happy 19th wedding anniversary. I miss you so much. I wish you were here to hold me in your arms. I love you," she wrote, posting a picture of the couple. AFP

Mental training for boxers

KOLKATA
The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) on Sunday held a session on mental fitness and emotional well-being for boxers and coaches. Altogether 374 boxers and coaches attended the online programme conducted by Dr. Samir Parikh and sports psychologist Divya Jain. They discussed issues like match-day anxiety, training in absence of coach and how to maintain well-being during uncertain times.

Shutterbugs make the most of lockdown

Becker pleads for resumption

Vijay Amritraj not sure if closed-door matches would solve the problem

N. SUDARSHAN

German legend Boris Becker has urged tennis authorities to seriously consider playing tournaments, behind closed doors, in order to save the careers of lower-ranked players.

In an Instagram live session with Indian great Vijay Amritraj on Saturday, the six-time Grand Slam winner said it was time for the multiple governing bodies – ATP, WTA and ITF – to unite and come up with a relief plan.

Time for unity

"Most tennis players outside the top-50, male or female, need the weekly pay cheque," Becker said.

"For 30 years, the ATP, the WTA and the ITF have never agreed with each other and only worried about their own tournaments. But now everybody is in the same boat and struggling. It is an opportunity of a lifetime to bring everybody together."

"Tennis is one of the few



Divergent views: While Boris Becker believes TV revenue will tide things along, Vijay Amritraj stresses on the need to raise sponsorship. • INSTAGRAM/BORISBECKEROFFICIAL

sports that can be held without spectators. It is not ideal, but most tennis players need to make a living. If everything is cancelled for the next few months, half the players will have to look for other jobs," he said.

While Amritraj shared Becker's worries, he wasn't sure if closed-door matches would solve the problem.

"While in the US and Europe there are several events

where a majority of the revenue comes from television, in Asia and the Middle East that's not the case. Television is not as big a money-spinner in tennis," he stated.

"Sponsorships are more important. So it is quite hard to put on a tournament without spectators."

Becker, however, felt that a few exceptions had to be made.

"If there is a match on right now, the whole world will watch and television revenue will come in," the German said.

Income threatened

"If I were in charge, I would definitely try and have the US Open. I know the situation is not right in New York and I hope things get better."

"But if the US Open doesn't happen, the rest of the tennis season may well be cancelled. What are you going to do with those hundreds who need a living?" he asked.

Indians welcome Relief Fund

Djokovic-driven initiative aims to aid lower-ranked players

SPORTS REPORTER

BENGALURU

The Novak Djokovic-driven initiative to come up with a Player Relief Fund to help lower-ranked tennis players who are staring at months of zero income has come as a relief for a bunch of Indians.

Djokovic, who is also the ATP Player Council president, wrote to fellow players recently to arrange for a money pot that could potentially generate in excess of \$4 million through contributions from high earning stars.

The fund is proposed to help those singles players ranked in the 250-700 bracket. The ATP has set aside \$1 million for this fund and is planning to help those ranked from 150 to 250.

The overall goal is to provide \$10,000 to each player. India currently has six men's players ranked between 150 and 700. "It is a great thing for players like me," said Manish Sureshkumar, ranked 642. "\$10,000 is a significant amount."



Manish Sureshkumar. • FILE PHOTO



Ankita Raina. • FILE PHOTO

World No. 281 Sasi Kumar Mukund, while welcoming the move, felt that the criteria should be more flexible.

"It is a good start, but the ranking criteria seem arbitrary from 700 to 900. It is unfair to penalise someone ranked 249 and help the guy ranked 251."

"Also there is not much difference in the level of players who are ranked. The policy can always be improved upon," said Mukund.

The proposal may not benefit Niki Poonacha, ranked 823 in the world, but he

hoped that the governments and national tennis federations will take a cue.

While the women's tour is yet to come up with a comprehensive plan, Ankita Raina, ranked 163, felt that the ATP's move was an important message in ensuring that players still believed they could make a living out of playing tennis.

"The WTA is also doing its bit. They have refunded three years' registration fee and I received \$150.

"All of this is helping us cope at a mental level too."

Bhutia in FIFA's tribute video

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Former India captain Bhichung Bhutia has joined football greats Pele, Diego Maradona and Zinedine Zidane in applauding health-care workers and humanity's other "heroes" for

for

their efforts made by healthcare workers and other professionals.

Tips to overcome confinement

Sports psychologist Kirtika says most athletes are frustrated

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

NEW DELHI
Solitary confinement may be most inhumane as a punishment, but the coronavirus pandemic has reduced the whole world to a state of lockdown and confinement.

"Postponement of the Tokyo Olympics, along with the prospect of not being able to train for upcoming months has rattled the athletes. Adding to the stress is the ambiguity around their technical training due to the lockdown," said sports psychologist Kirtika Pandey, founder of Inner Focus Institute of Mental Strength.

She is more familiar as the person who works with elite shooters like World No.1 Elavenil Varalaru at the Gagan Narang Foundation.

Remodelled lifestyle

"The prolonged isolation has remodelled their lifestyle. Most of the athletes are in a state of shock, fear and frustration," she said.

Kirtika said that since there was no cure or prevent-



Kirtika Pandey. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tive treatment yet for COVID-19, "our brain is keeping us in a hyper-vigilant mode".

"The survival mechanism of the brain works by prioritising what is needed the most to protect us from the risk."

"Hence, there is no relaxation and there are increased cases of nervous breakdowns, change in sleep patterns and appetite, lack of motivation, disinterest and lack of energy," she said.

Kirtika said that since there was no cure or prevent-

the key is to develop

specific mental skills.

"List down your goals, both short-term and long-term. Make a weekly action plan and focus on sticking to the plan every day. Remember that maintaining discipline is more important than motivation," she said.

Monitoring the emotions is equally important. "If you notice any emotional distress, acknowledge it and try to find out the thought behind it," she said.

Stay in the present

Stress relates to the focus on events in the past or future. "Meditate and learn to stay in the present," she added.

It is time to learn "new skills, apart from your sports, and doing things that you enjoy," with a clear objective of doing at least one thing every day that "generates positive emotion".

Kirtika does not want athletes not to suffer in silence by allowing "the feeling to become overwhelming and intimidating," but seek professional help promptly.

Indian players above temptation'

ICC warns of online approaches by 'known corruptors'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
The threat of online corrupt approaches does not cause much anxiety to BCCI's head of Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) Ajit Singh, who says Indian players are well aware of the modus operandi of fixers and are quick to report anything suspect.

The ICC ACU head Alex Marshall, in an interview to *The Guardian*, had said

players using various social media platforms during the lockdown could lead to corrupt approaches being made and that people needed to treat carefully.

Ajit Singh said the BCCI ACU was in control of the situation. "We have made our players aware of the way people approach you and their modus operandi," the veteran IPS officer told PTI.

"They will try and be-

have like a fan and then try to meet you through someone who may be your acquaintance," he said.

"Most of them (India players), whenever it happens, they report to us," he said.

Most of the top players, with millions of followers, have been very active online.

"We track whatever can be tracked online," said Ajit.

"(They will) try and be-

roads, city skylines and landmarks have made people realise how beautiful these structures appear without anthropogenic pressure.

"Documenting tourist places with or without people is a continuous process for us," State Tourism Director Sachin R. Jadhav said, when asked if Odisha Tourism was making the best use of the lockdown.

Amiya Pani, a producer at the city-based documentary agency 'Light House', said, "the lockdown has brought an unprecedented tranquility in nature. This time may not come in future. We are tempted to capture everything – nature, people's struggles and cities – through our lens during this lockdown, but we are constrained by restrictions."

People with smartphones, however, have been endlessly clicking photographs and posting them on social media.

It is not only nature which soothes the eyes. Photographs of empty arterial



Scenic: Tourist boats anchored at the Chilika Lagoon's Balugaon jetty. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

with photographs showing how Ganjam's places of tourist interest look when humans are not around.

In fact, according to Keerthi Vasan, a young IAS officer posted in Ganjam, the district authorities have been documenting all tourist places during lockdown period.

Professional photographers, videographers and

amateur photography enthusiasts have been savouring every moment of the lockdown, capturing nature. Some even managed to sneak out from the cities while strict restrictions were in place and have captured images for posterity.

It is not only nature which soothes the eyes. Photographs of empty arterial

Ratra completes CA course

Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA

Former India wicketkeeper-batsman Ajay Ratra has used the lockdown period to complete an online course offered by Cricket Australia (CA).

For Ratra, who has done a Level 2 coaches' course at the National Cricket Academy and is aspiring to pursue the Level 3, the invite from CA was a fine opportunity to be updated about the trends Down Under.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India and CA had jointly conducted a course in 2017. I got a mail that it was about to expire. I took this up to enhance my knowledge," Ratra said on Sunday.

Ratra, employed with the



Ajay Ratra. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

had to give about two to three hours every day for about a week. There were technical points related to batting, bowling and fielding and discussions on injury management and diet," he said.

Thirty-eight-year-old Ratra – who played six Tests and 12 One-Day Internationals in 2002 – looks forward to completing the BCCI Level 3 course.

"I don't know whether the CA course is recognised, but that is not my concern. I just wanted to make the best use of the time and enhance my knowledge," said Ratra, who coached Punjab, Assam and Bihar under-23 apart from working with the Indian women's cricket team.

THE HINDU GROUP

THE HINDU GROUP

Ring around the Rosie

Ringa Ringa Roses

Possies - a small
bunch of flowers
Atishoo! Atishoo!
Hussla! Bussha!

we All Fall Down.

Put your child's English skills
on the right course!

After helping hundreds of students and winning generous appreciation from parents, STEP LIVE Junior is back!

Enrol now and gift your children an engaging English programme.

Focus on grammar & vocabulary

Syllabus that is never taught in school

Fun-filled 1-hour class per day

Entertaining exercises and tests

Child-friendly context

Exclusively designed for children in

Classes 4 - 7



New Batch starts on 20th April, Monday

Timing: 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Visit BIT.LY/JUNIORLIVE

**STEP
LIVE
Junior**

**For Download any newspaper in PDF at morning
Go to www.DailyEpaper.in OR  click here**

DailyEpaper.in

ENGLISH

The Hindu
The Indian Exp
Business Standard
Hindustan Times
The Telegraph
Deccan Chronicle
Business Line
The Pioneer
The Financial Exp
The Times Of India
The Economic Times
Mint

HINDI

Dainik Jagran
Dainik Bhaskar
Jansatta
Amar Ujala
Pioneer
Hindustan
Prabhat Khabar
Rajasthan Patrika
Business Standard

TELEGU

Eenadu
Sakshi
Nava Telangana

MARATHI

Loksatta
Sakal
Lokmat

Weekly News

Employment News
Karmasangsthan
Karmakshetra

GUJRATI

Sandesh

Daily Update All Indian Newspaper in PDF

रोजाना सुबह कोई भी न्यूज़ पेपर पीडीएफ़ में डाउनलोड करने के लिए www.DailyEpaper.in को विजिट करें या फिर आप यहाँ क्लिक करें  **click here**

OR

IF You Are Preparing For IAS, PCS, SSC Exam Then Just Download UPSC IAS All in One App From PlayStore. You will get here UPSC Complete Solution Free (All Study Material, Video Lecture, Magazines, Newspaper & The Hindu Analysis Video



UPSC IAS All in One - Mission 2020

Web360 Education

★★★★★ 98

3+

⚠ You don't have any devices.

Add to Wishlist



Click Here 

Download