



## Timings

DELHI
RISE 05:29 SET 19:08
RISE 03:37 SET 16:09
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 20
RISE 05:28 SET 19:08
RISE 04:07 SET 17:02
THURSDAY, MAY. 21
RISE 05:28 SET 19:09
RISE 04:38 SET 17:56

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	41	23
Safdarjung	41	23
Palam	41	24

**Delhi Palam Today**  
**42°C** The weather will be hot and dry with warm strong winds to prevail during the day. Night will be comfortable.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
**44°C** Rise in temperature. Dry and hot weather with clear sky to continue. Heat wave like condition may occur.

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**THE HINDU**  
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Air quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi	206	Gurugram 146
Ghaziabad	237	Faridabad -
Noida	184	Greater Noida 168
Good	50	Satisfactory
51-100	101-200	Moderate
Poor	201-300	Very poor 301-400 Severe >401
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) [SOURCE: CPCB]		

## IN BRIEF

## DSGMC starts 'mobile langar' for migrants

**NEW DELHI**  
The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) on Monday said they have started a "Langar on Wheels" facility in 10 locations across the National Capital Region to provide food and water to migrant workers, who are walking back to their hometowns.

**e-TENDER NOTICE**  
SE, South Circle, H. Dte., P- 7 & 8, C.I.T. Road (1st floor), invites e-tender (online) for the work vide Tender ref. no. WBHOUSING/SE/SC/HD/e-NIT-27/2nd Call/2019-2020 & Tender ID No. 2020\_HSD\_283108\_1, Name of Work :- Replacement & Renovation work of hanging balcony with weather board in RHE flats at ODRC Behala, 30, Diamond Harbour Road, Kolkata, Estimated Amount put to Tender Rs. 49,62,461/- Date of submission start date (Online) is 22/05/2020 after 2.00 PM & Date of submission closing (online) is 08/06/2020 upto 2.00 pm. Detail inf./download/upload will be available from the website <http://www.wbtenders.gov.in>.

Sd/-

Superintending Engineer  
South Circle, Housing Directorate

ICA-T1887(4)/2020



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REGIONAL OFFICE (U.P.)  
TC-3V, VIBHUTI KHAND,  
GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW-226010

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
Online bids for tender under two bid system at <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> are invited from reputed firms for work of House Keeping under Food Corporation of India, Regional Office, TC-3V, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow (U.P.) for the period of two years. The terms and conditions and other details are available at <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> and FCI website <http://fci.gov.in>. Document download/Bid submission etc. will start from 18.05.2020.  
General Manager (U.P.)

**TENDER NOTICE**  
The Delhi High Court on Monday directed the police to expeditiously conduct its investigation into the incident of 'Bois Locker Room', an Instagram group, in which obscene messages and morphed pictures of underaged girls were shared.

## Expeditedly conduct probe into Bois Locker Room case'

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday directed the police to expeditiously conduct its investigation into the incident of 'Bois Locker Room', an Instagram group, in which obscene messages and morphed pictures of underaged girls were shared.

A Bench of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice Talwant Singh, which conduct-

ed the hearing through videoconferencing, took note that an FIR has already been lodged by the Delhi Police Cyber Crime Cell and the probe is going on. The court directed the police to file the final report after investigation before the trial court concerned. With the direction, the court disposed of the petition seeking SIT or CBI probe in the incident and to arrest the offenders.

## Police personnel help man carry wife's body to cremation ground

Neighbours were unwilling to assist due to COVID-19 fears

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Four Delhi Police Constables lent their shoulders and helped a 66-year-old man with his wife's last rites in south-east Delhi's Jaitpur on Saturday, as neighbours kept away due to COVID-19 fears.



Police personnel carrying the body on Monday.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

dinner and went to bed. In the morning, when Mr. Singh went to check on her, he found she had passed away.

Unable to get any assistance from neighbours, Mr. Singh went to the police station where Constables Sunil, Parveen, Dharmendra, and Rahul volunteered to help.

They made all the arrangements for the last

## Allow advocates to move in and out of city: plea

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

H

Delhi High Court on Monday sought response of the Centre, Delhi, U.P. and Haryana governments on a lawyers' body plea to allow advocates to move in and out of the Capital for their work. The plea by the Delhi High Court Bar Association has been posted for hearing on May 20. The HC also took note of the Haryana government's stand that it has included 'advocates' as a category to whom weekly movement passes would be issued online.

staff advised the lawyers to use plastic sponge damper pad while inspecting the judicial file.

The functioning of the Delhi High Court and its subordinate courts in the capital has been suspended since March 23, while restricting the hearing to urgent matters only in view of the extension of nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19.

On Saturday, the High Court extended the suspension of the functioning of the subordinate courts till May 23.

## Pregnant women priority in repatriating Indians: Centre

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday assured the Delhi High Court that it will follow Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), including giving priority to pregnant women, while repatriating Indians stranded in Saudi Arabia due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional Solicitor General Maninder Acharya, ap-

pearing for the Centre, said the government will prioritise repatriation of pregnant women, as per the condition and stage of pregnancy.

The Centre's submission came on a plea filed by the United Nurses Association seeking direction to bring back 55 pregnant nurses stranded in Saudi Arabia and one in Kuwait. The HC has now disposed of the case.

The arrest was made after Ms. Singh took to Twitter on Sunday to express her disappointment over police inaction on her complaint lodged on March 19.

Man arrested for morphed photos

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A man has been arrested for allegedly sharing "morphed and offensive" image of Delhi BJP IT cell co-convenor Apurva Singh on social media, the police said on Monday.

The arrest was made af-

ter Ms. Singh took to Twi-

ter on Sunday to express

her disappointment over

police inaction on her com-

plaint lodged on March 19.

## Out-of-work labourers launch unique cleaning service

They offer to sanitise cars for ₹50, two-wheelers for ₹20



Rahul in a PPE suit in Delhi on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

[We have to eat. We thought we would be able to earn some money through this," said Bharat, one of the four partners who resides in a rented accommodation in Rajouri Garden.

Rahul, Bharat and Mukesh got together about a year ago and started their business of cleaning cars, sofas, toilets, and kitchen. They registered themselves on an online service-providing application and got clients through that. "But for the last two months, we have hardly received any assignment," he said.

"People are scared of availing services right now. But they are enquiring and might start using it in a day or two," said Rahul.

A group of four youth, all from economically weaker section, started the business after being out of work for over two months.

"Roti to khanni hai. Socha do paise kama lenge isse

tising services on the roadside. "This gave us an idea that we could also do this in west Delhi. We already had the sanitisation machine as we wanted to start a pest-control service but that did not work out," said Bharat.

Rahul (23), who is from West Bengal and lives with his wife in a rented accommodation in Rajghat Nagar, said that people are not availing services at the moment. "I am wearing the PPE kit so that people feel safe and so do I. But right now, people are not getting their cars sanitised here. However, around 10 of our old clients have called us to their residences for sanitisation," he added.

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

Samvad-00915

Published by N. Ravik at Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600022 and Printed by S. Ramanujam at HT Media Ltd. Plot No. 8, Udyog Vihar, Greater Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201306, on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600022. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).

Regd. DL(ND)-11/6110/2006-07-08 - RNI No. UPENG/2012/4940 - ISSN 0971-751X - Vol. 10 - No. 119

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CM YK

**IN BRIEF**

**SIT set up to probe JNU violence: police to court**

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi police on Monday told a court here that a Special Investigating Team has been constituted to investigate all the incidents of violence which took place at JNU in January this year in which students and teachers were injured. The incidents of violence had taken place on January 3, 4 and 5. Metropolitan Magistrate Vipul Sandwar was hearing a plea filed by Professor Sucharita Sen, who suffered head injuries during the attack on January 5, seeking registration of an FIR. PTI

**DU to establish Delhi School of Public Health**

NEW DELHI  
Under the Institute of Eminence scheme, DU recently announced that it would be establishing Delhi School of Public Health (DSPH) as well as launching a research initiative "Research Without Borders". DU said that the establishment of the DSPH was in response to the spread of COVID-19 and in order to help push research into the area of study. Public health expert R.N.K. Benmezai will be leading the new institution along with an advisory panel.

# COVID-19 cases in city cross 10,000 mark

A total of 299 cases reported in 24 hours; govt. orders hospitals to not test deceased for the virus

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A total of 299 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours taking the tally to 10,054, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Monday.

No deaths were reported in the past 24 hours but the toll was increased by 12 to 160 based on reports by the government's audit committee. Of the 10,054 cases, 6,539 cases – or 65.03% – have been reported in the first 18 days of May, though the first case was reported on March 2. It took 13 days for the cases to increase from 5,000 (May 5) to 10,000.

Of the total 10,054 cases, 4,485 people have recovered and there are 5,409 active cases. A total of 1,39,727 tests have been carried out so far and 2,250 COVID-19 patients are currently under home isolation.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government has ordered hospitals not to take samples of the deceased to test for COVID-19.

"No sample for COVID-19

Virus spread	
Total number of COVID-19 cases	10,054
Total deaths	160*
New cases in the past 24 hours	299
New deaths in the past 24 hours	0
*12 added to toll based on reports by audit panel SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN	

test will be taken of dead body. However, if doctors are satisfied from clinical examination that the cause of death may be COVID-19, the dead body may be released as suspect COVID-19 infected dead body," read a "revised order" issued on Sunday by Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Department Padmima Singla.

"Standard Operating Procedures will be followed for disposal of the dead bodies of COVID-19 patient/COVID-19 suspect person," read the revised order.

The Delhi government spokesperson said that other States were also not testing the deceased for the virus. "Many families were insisting



Two men seen riding a bicycle with their faces covered in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

HELPLINE NUMBERS	
COMMON HELPLINE	+91-11-23978046
DELHI	- 011-22307145
GAZIABAD	- 0120 4186453
NOIDA	- 8076623612/6396776904
GURUGRAM	- 108/ 0124-2322412/ 9911519296/ 7015523417/ 9654231756

for COVID-19 testing of dead bodies before cremation even if a person died at home, as they were scared. Now, if doctors say that the dead person could be a suspect case, following clinical examination, then the body will be treated as a COVID-19 case as per protocol for disposal," the spokesperson said.

A Delhi Jal Board (DJB) em-

ployee working at a zonal office in west Delhi's Tagore Garden has tested positive for COVID-19, officials said on Monday.

"The worker, who fixes blocked sewers and water lines, tested positive on Sunday and is under home quarantine," a DJB official said.

Ten people who worked at the office have been directed to undergo quarantine and the Tagore Garden office has been shut for 14 days, read an official order.

Meanwhile, up to nine employees of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation deputed at a dry ration distribution centre were ordered to be placed under home quarantine on Monday after one of their colleagues was found COVID-19 positive.

All nine staffers will be tested, the distribution centre will be sanitised, and distribution will be temporarily suspended, read an order from the Education Department. Staffers from a nearby school have been directed to send their teachers to Adarsh Nagar to carry out dry ration distribution.

## Former Union Minister, AAP leaders detained

They were protesting at Rajghat

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha and Aam Aadmi Party leaders Sanjay Singh and Dilip Pandey were detained on Monday during a protest at Rajghat demanding migrant labourers be sent back to their States "with respect". The leaders were taken to Rajinder Nagar police station and later released, said Sanjay Bhatia, DCP (Central).



Yashwant Sinha and his supporters during the protest on Monday. ■ PTI

completely failed to solve the problems of migrant workers. For more than 50 days they have been walking.

Armed forces and paramilitary should be given charge of the situation and these workers should be sent back to their homes in 48 hours," Mr. Sinha told *The Hindu*. "These workers have been compelled to walk on the roads and they should be sent home with dignity," he added.

Mr. Singh alleged that the Centre had left the poor to die on the roads. "When the Railways have the capacity to carry more than two crore people a day, why not take the migrant workers back to their States?" he said.

## BJP blames city govt. for workers' plight

Govt. could not ensure that ration reached poor: Bidhuri

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday blamed the AAP-led Delhi government for the plight of labourers migrating from the Capital every day.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, in a statement, argued that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government at the Centre had given 8 kg of wheat, 2 kg of rice and 1 kg of pulses for free to 72 lakh people in the

city, but the Delhi government could not ensure that this reached the poor.

"Only ₹6.5 crore were spent by the Delhi government on this ration. Union Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan himself said that only 1% of the ration issued by the Centre for the month of April was given by the Delhi government to the poor people," Mr. Bidhuri stated.

"The Centre is providing free ration to 72 lakh people of Delhi for three months,"

he said.

Mr. Bidhuri also said that the Union Railway Minister has announced the running of trains to send migrant labourers to their home States for which the Centre is paying 85% of the cost for operating trains, while the rest 15% is being given by the State governments where the workers are going on these trains.

The Delhi government, he said, was not spending a single penny on this.

## Migrants being herded like cattle: Delhi Cong. chief

Anil Kumar visits isolation centres in Patparganj Assembly Constituency

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar, a day after an FIR was filed against him for not following lockdown order in east Delhi, said that his resolve to serve poor migrant workers cannot be broken by the police.

Mr. Kumar on Monday visited isolation centres at West and East Vinod Nagar in Patparganj Assembly constituency and said that migrant workers were herded

like cattle without adhering to the lockdown rules like social distancing, personal hygiene and sanitised living

conditions.

### 'Govt. hiding failures'

"The Delhi government wants to keep migrant workers out of sight to cover up its utter failures in addressing the plight of these poor people," Mr. Kumar alleged. He said that due to over-crowding the workers have spilled over from the isolation centres on to the streets, with pregnant women lying near overflowing muck from dirty toilets,

which was a serious threat to their lives. "The road from Press Apartments to Mangalam Hospital has been blocked by the Delhi government so that the pitiable condition of the migrant workers at the isolation centres could be hidden from the people and the media," Mr. Kumar alleged.

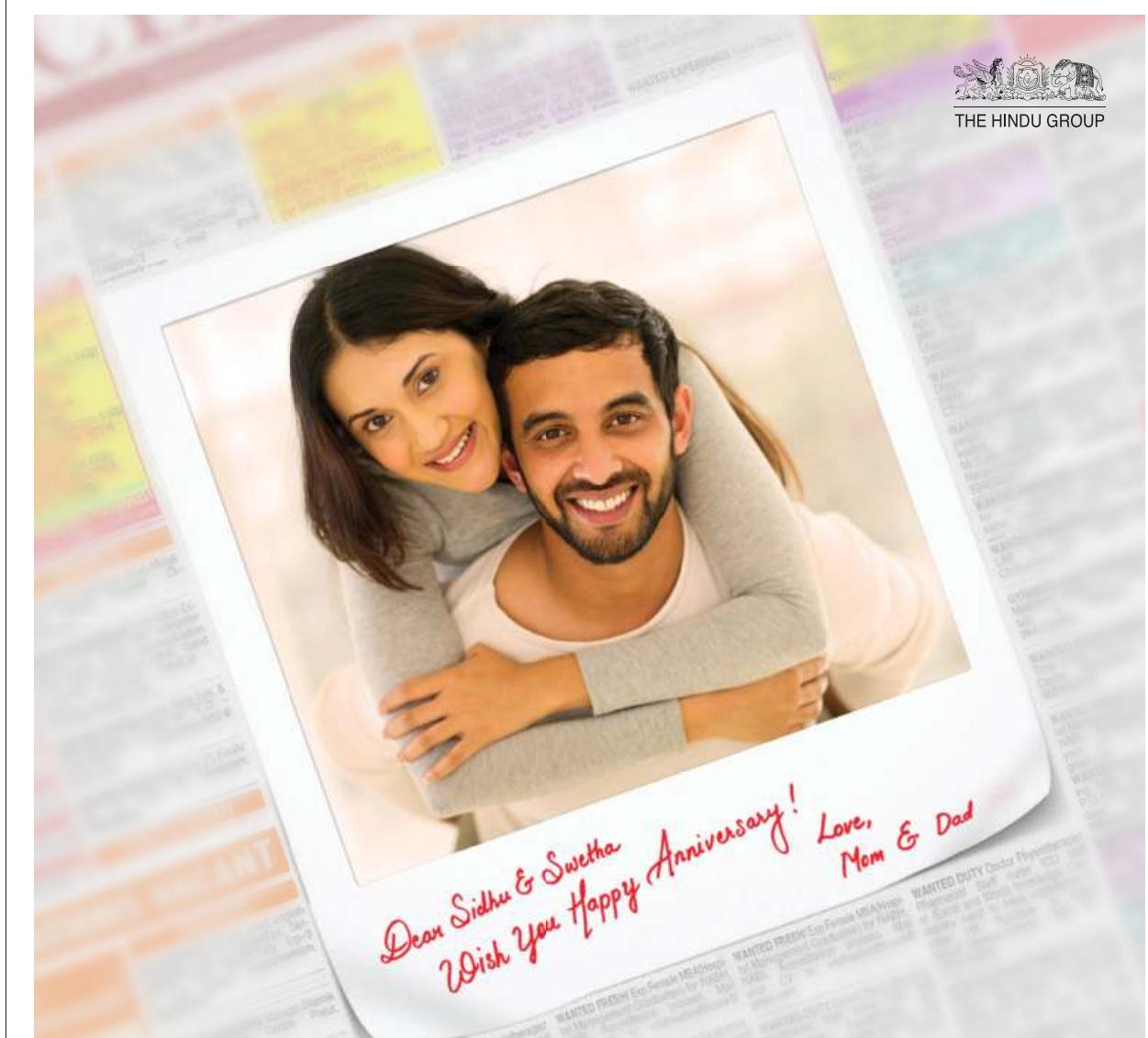
The Delhi Congress chief was visiting the area to offer food and refreshments to migrant workers, he said.

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## + Auto drivers seeking financial help face govt. silence

Not able to make both ends meet, some of them have left for their hometowns

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

Jagdev, an autorickshaw driver from Rajasthan, filled forms for distress ration card, seeking financial help for daily-wagers under the Haryana government schemes during the lockdown, but no help has come his way so far. He had to borrow ₹20,000 over the past two months to meet his expenses and things are getting difficult for him with each passing day.

Staying in Indira Colony in Sector 52, Gurugram has been home for Jagdev, who hails from Jaipur, for the past 13 years. But the past two months have been the most difficult. "I applied for both schemes of the government promising free ration and monthly assistance of ₹4,500, but there has been no reply. I borrowed ₹10,000 from my family back home a month ago. I again borrowed



The autorickshaw drivers have borrowed money and applied for distress ration cards. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

₹10,000 from a relative recently to pay my son's college dues and online examination fee," said Jagdev.

The 46-year-old said he went out looking for passengers after the relaxations on May 4, but there was hardly anybody on the roads with metro, trains and buses not plying. Finding it difficult to make both ends meet, Jagdev wanted to go to his hometown, but decided to stay

back since his son has to take exams online.

Struggling to earn enough for two square meals a day, Manjur Alam, who hails from West Bengal, said his form for monthly financial assistance by Haryana government was rejected since he did not have a local identity proof. He also applied for distress ration card, but is still waiting to hear on it. "The migrant autorickshaw drivers are worst

hit since they are neither eligible for Haryana government schemes nor can claim wages like those working with companies," said Alam.

Haryana Auto Chalak Sangh president Mahavir Singh demanded that Haryana government pay ₹5,000 per month to the autorickshaw drivers on the pattern of Delhi government.

He said he had written to Gurugram Deputy Commissioner in this regard, but there was no reply.

"A majority of the autorickshaw drivers in Gurugram, Faridabad and Panchkula are migrants. Not able to make both ends meet, a few of them even left for their hometowns in their autorickshaws. While those belonging to Haryana have received help from the government, the migrant drivers have suffered the most," said Mr. Singh.

## Workers of automobile firm walk to work

Company says it is unable to pay for buses, later agrees to pay conveyance charges

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

Around a hundred workers of Shivam Autotech Ltd., an automobile firm in Binola village, had to walk nearly 30 km to work on Monday after the company refused to provide them transport citing financial constraints.

More than a week after the company resumed operations with a limited workforce on May 11, the management directed all workers, including the contractual staff, to report to work on May 18, but withdrew the transport facility.

The firm's human resources deputy general manager, Anshuman Sharma, said that in order to adhere to social distancing norms, four times the normal number of buses were required to ferry the staff, and that the



Around 100 workers of Shivam Autotech Ltd. walked nearly 30 km to reach office on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

company could not afford it. He said the firm had been incurring losses for the past four years.

Mukesh Kumar Yadav, the former general secretary of SATL Employees' Union in the company, said those staying in nearby areas had been going to office for over a week now, but the company directed all employees to report to work on Monday.

He said the company used

understanding was reached between the company and the union late in the evening. He said the company had agreed to run the usual number of buses to ferry the workers and pay conveyance charges to the rest. Besides, the company also agreed to pay 60% wages to regular staff for the lockdown period and full wages to the contractual workers present in the city.

However, the management decided on 20% cut in salary till the time the conditions improved. Mr. Sharma said the company had lost 60% of orders post resumption of operations and suffered a loss of ₹30 crore over the past two months, but its priority was to "survive" this phase. He also appreciated the workers' union for their cooperation during this difficult time.

## Punjab rules out inter-State buses till May 31

Local bus services to start in non-containment zones soon, says Chief Minister Amarinder Singh

VIKAS VASUDEVA  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday directed the transport department to draft standard operating procedures for resumption of local bus movement in all but the containment zones, but ruled out inter-State bus services till May 31.

Terming the danger of COVID-19 spread due to mixing of people with the start of the relaxations as the real test, the Chief Minister directed all departments to ensure close monitoring and strict adherence to all advisories. He asked the police department to be tough in ensuring social distancing and other necessary COVID-19 prevention protocols and to fine those stepping out without masks.

### Stringent protocol

At a videoconference to review the novel coronavirus and lockdown situation in the State, the Chief Minister instructed the transport de-



Migrant workers in Amritsar on Monday queue up for medical screening before going to the railway station to board a special train to Raebareli. ■ AFP

partment to put in place stringent protocols for handling daily passengers taking point-to-point inter-State buses that will start plying after May 31.

While making it clear that inter-State movement will be allowed only on special and Shramik trains at least till May 31, Capt. Amarinder said intra-State buses will start plying in a phased

manner.

Referring to the continued entry of migrants, NRIs and others via special trains and flights, the Chief Minister reiterated his earlier directions for strict adherence to quarantine rules. So far, 60,000 Punjabis had registered for return to the State, he said, adding that 20,000 NRIs were also expected to return.

Capt. Amarinder said while Punjab was willingly sending back people, including migrants, from other States, spending ₹7.5 lakh per train, other States were not responding likewise and asking his government instead to arrange for ferrying Punjabis back from there.

More than 2 lakh migrants out of the 11 lakh who had registered on the special por-

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday said restrictions under Lockdown 4.0 will be limited to containment zones across the State and inter-State and intra-State movement of buses will resume from May 19.

He said in line with Union Ministry of Home Affairs gui-

elines, the State government has decided to ease restrictions, which will now be limited to only containment zones. "The scope of relaxations has further been widened. While restrictions will continue in the containment zones, other areas will be considered as orange zone and all non-restricted activities will resume there," he said.

tal created by the government have left the State, the Chief Minister said, and as many as 20 trains are departing from Punjab every day, with 15 scheduled for Uttar Pradesh and 6 for Bihar on May 18. He said while more trains were needed for Bihar, the State was not willing to take in people at this stage as their quarantine facilities were full.

In the guidelines for lockdown 4.0 issued here, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Rajeev Swarup said government and private offices would open with the strength of 50% staff in the red zone and two-third in the orange zone districts. Taxis and cabs will carry two passengers each and auto rickshaws one passenger in the orange and green zones.

As many as 15 districts, including Jaipur, Bhilwara, Ajmer, Udaipur, Kota and Bikaner, are in the red zone. The Centre had also left it to the States to demarcate

areas in different zones for resumption of activities.

A large number of panchayat samiti areas across the State were classified as red zones with their migrant population testing COVID-19 positive after the influx of workers from other States.

### Parks to remain closed

The guidelines stated that public and community parks in the red zones would remain closed and no passenger transport, unless specifically permitted, would be allowed there.

Work from home will be encouraged in service establishments.

While inter-State movement of passenger vehicles will be allowed with the mutual consent of other States, the movement of buses within the State will be permitted on routes identified by the Home Department.

Failure to observe the social distancing norms will also be punishable and the consumption of liquor, paan, gutka and tobacco at public places will be strictly prohibited, according to the guidelines.

Wearing of face cover will be compulsory at all public and work places, while spitting in public will be punishable with fine.

The Additional Chief Secretary said a maximum of 50 guests would be allowed in marriage-related gatherings and 20 persons at funerals. Persons above 65 years and children below 10 years, pregnant women and persons with comorbidities will stay at home, except for essential and healthcare purposes.

While inter-State movement of passenger vehicles will be allowed with the mutual consent of other States, the movement of buses within the State will be permitted on routes identified by the Home Department.

As many as 15 districts, including Jaipur, Bhilwara, Ajmer, Udaipur, Kota and Bikaner, are in the red zone. The Centre had also left it to the States to demarcate

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## Rajasthan to reopen shops

The govt's new guidelines will remain in force till May 31

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government on Monday allowed reopening of shops, including those of barbers, salons, beauty parlours and sweetmeats, besides offices, factories and commercial establishments and plying of taxis, cabs and auto rickshaws, except in the containment zones, as well as inter-city bus services on routes permitted by the Home Department.

In the guidelines for lock-down 4.0 issued here, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Rajeev Swarup said government and private offices would open with the strength of 50% staff in the red zone and two-third in the orange zone districts.

Taxis and cabs will carry two passengers each and auto rickshaws one passenger in the orange and green zones.

As many as 15 districts, including Jaipur, Bhilwara, Ajmer, Udaipur, Kota and Bikaner, are in the red zone. The Centre had also left it to the States to demarcate

## Rapid test kit results not satisfactory: Vij

"Trying to talk to South Korean manufacturer to find out about shortcomings"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij on Monday said the COVID-19 tests being conducted by rapid testing kits of a South Korea-based company were not delivering satisfactory results.

"This may be on account of malfunctioning of the kit or there may be a difference in the way we conduct the test. We are trying to talk to the company to find out what could be the shortcoming so that it could be resolved," he said.

**Increased testing'**  
"Rapid testing kits can certainly be very useful. We have increased our testing through the Rapid Test Polymerase Chain Reaction

and around 3,000 per million tests are being conducted daily in the State. If Rapid Testing Kits start delivering correct results then the number of tests could be escalated further," he said.

Mr. Vij said the State has a recovery rate of over 62%, which is far higher than 15% of the all-India rate, he said at a meeting with officials of the health department and members of the medical association.

Speaking on the migrant labour issue, Mr. Vij that if the States concerned issue

NOCs for receiving their people, Haryana can send the migrants to their homes within four days.

### Coming from Punjab'

"Migrants are coming to Haryana from Punjab and it is the responsibility of Punjab to stop them and facilitate them. We have increased the number of police personnel on roads bordering Punjab," he said.

Mr. Vij, added that he has, however, directed the Director General of Police to ensure that no force was used on migrants.

## Kolkata grapples with nurse exodus

Manipur govt. offering better pay, claims Association of Hospitals of Eastern India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

At a time when the entire health apparatus of West Bengal is trying to contain COVID-19, hospitals in Kolkata and adjoining suburbs are facing a fresh challenge with the mass resignation of about 300 nurses. The nurses have reportedly given up their jobs to return to their homes, particularly in the Northeastern States.

A few days ago, the Association of Hospitals of Eastern India, an association of 17 private hospitals in the city wrote to State Chief Secre-

tary Rajiva Sinha, saying that the flight of nurses will not severely disrupt our services but "could lead to collapse of the private healthcare delivery machinery in Kolkata". The letter dated May 16 states that on May 14, 2020, around 185 nurses from different private hospitals left Kolkata and 169 more nurses were planning to leave the city.

"Although the exact reason behind this is not known, we have gathered from other nurses still on duty that the State government of Manipur is offering them lucrative stipend to return

home. We have also come to know that more nurses from States like Tripura, Odisha and Kerala are also planning to go back home," the letter said.

On Monday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee raised the issue and said that she had directed the Chief Secretary to look into the matter. Ms. Banerjee said the State government is open to the private hospital appointing staff with a short training who can do basic duties. "The private hospitals are helping us in this time. We are taking over a number of them and pro-

viding them money for their services," she said.

Meanwhile, the State recorded six COVID-19 deaths and 148 new cases in the past 24 hours.

Five deaths were recorded in Kolkata and one in South 24 Parganas district. The total number of deaths increased to 250, of which 72 are due to comorbidities. The total number of cases increased to 2,825 and active infections stood at 1,575. The discharge rate of the State stood at 35.61% and the samples tested in the past 24 hours was 7,614.

## No grains, matchmaking for Saharias in Madhya Pradesh during lockdown

Migration in April-May opens up the prospect of finding partners for the particularly vulnerable tribal group

SIDHARTH YADAV  
POHRI (SHIVPURI DISTRICT)

Surely, Neeraj Adivasi's family lost out on wages and grains as the lockdown gnawed away at the harvest season. But the 16-year-old is unnerved for another reason, insoluble even if enough jobs are provided locally.

"Now, I will have to wait until the next year to marry," he said.

Each spell of migration in April-May to closer districts of Morena and Bhind in Madhya Pradesh and Kota in Rajasthan opens up the prospect of match-making for Saharias, a particularly vul-

nerable tribal group which marries outside the village. The enduring restriction on movement has denied them three-four months worth wheat they earn from the migration and frayed familial bonds, breaking in on a pivotal social function performed during the yearly sowing.

**Ready for marriage**  
At Dangar village, around 22 boys and girls are ready for marriage. But for the lockdown, clutches of workers, with only the old, infirm and toddlers left behind, would have set out for the fields hav-

ing a high labour demand – but offering low wages – and where Saharias from other districts and States would also arrive. "Neeraj ka rang aa gaya tha shaadi ke liye (Neeraj was ready for marriage). Putting it off will only dampen his prospects," said Surendra Adivasi, 25, whose marriage was decided on a similar trip in 2014.

Usually, a common connect, most likely a relative, takes up the matchmaking. "They tell us if a boy or girl is good enough, match heights and maturity based on their appearance. And we trust them, and marry our children off upon return," explained Mr. Surendra, idling with other men at the village square.

"I want to marry off my

daughter as early as possible so that she doesn't have an affair or does anything stupid," said Parvati Adivasi, mother of Kavita, 15, who she believes is ready for marriage.

Barely anyone is sure of their date of birth, not even a factor during the matchmaking. Most within the tribe – beset by alarming malnutrition levels – are married off,

not make his wife do labour. A marriageable girl must be able to take care of the family's needs," said Sukhsingh Adivasi.

During the trip, a group of workers earn a quintal of wheat for each bigha they harvest, besides a nominal wage, which sustains families back home for months. "Not being able to go this year has caused a food security crisis. So, workers are living on wheat procured from the public distribution system and taking loans from moneylenders at an interest of 3-5%. In case of non-payment, moneylenders make them work on fields locally as payback."

At Ahera hamlet of Eswaya village, 12 boys and girls are ready for marriage. "The boy must have land and should

turned during the lockdown which has created a labour supply beyond the demand locally. Rajesh Adivasi, of Ahera hamlet, was paid ₹250 a day in Morena district before he returned.

"Here, we are paid ₹100 a day and there are no industries and alternative livelihoods. So, we have to work for any wage to feed families," said Mr. Rajesh.

According to a survey of 50 returned migrant workers in seven villages, including the two, in Pohri block, 35 said they would not step outside their village for work any time soon.

"Most said they battled hunger there and are left with no money," said Mr. Yadav, who conducted the survey.

## New technique for lung treatment of newborns launched in Jaipur

The LISA procedure has yielded encouraging results



A premature baby being treated with LISA in Jaipur.  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

gradually weaned and babies were put on non-invasive ventilation like continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) after maturation of lungs.

"We have been giving the directly administered medication in windpipe for treating breathing problems, but this has its own side effects," Dr. Gupta said. LISA technique had been found to be very helpful in minimising the side effects, he added.

Hospital's Medical Superintendent Ashok Gupta told *The Hindu* on Monday that the ventilatory support was

removed after the procedure, while the baby is on the CPAP machine. Dr. Gupta said the new technique's main objective was to minimise damage to the fragile premature lungs.

LISA has been developed as a lung protective strategy for respiratory management and ventilation in view of the mechanical ventilation causing damage to the preterm lungs of newborns. Infants considered suitable for LISA are those being managed with primary CPAP or high flow with the evidence of increasing respiratory distress and with a rising oxygen requirement.

The procedure was applied to a preemie by resident doctor Vijay Jhajharia under the supervision of Assistant Professor Vishnu Panesar at the hospital. Dr. Gupta said the regular application of LISA would turn out to be very useful and help save the lives of premature babies.

## Forest biodiversity being destroyed, allege tribals

'Commercial plantation being forced upon us'

SIB KUMAR DAS  
BERHAMPUR

Tribals of Pidamatha village in Daringbadi block of Odisha's Kandhamal district have alleged that without the consent of their gram sabha, Forest Department officials were trying to destroy the biodiversity of traditional community forest near their village.

About 90 tribal families living in Pidamatha protect the community forest near their village. The forest has been providing livelihood to these tribals as it contains fruit-bearing trees as well as several other forest produce. According to 'Jungle Adhikar Committee' of the village, in the recent past officials from the Brahmanigao forest range arrived in their village to press them to support commercial plantation in the community forest.

the officials had also threatened to use police force.

Inhabitants of Pidamatha alleged that the Forest Department has not taken permission of the local gram sabha for the same. They have written to the authorities concerned in Kandhamal district on the issue. According to them, the department is planning to plant trees that will destroy the biodiversity of the forest near their village, affecting their livelihood.

Green Nobel Prize winner and environmental activist Prafulla Samanta has taken up the issue. Mr. Samanta has written to the Governor seeking his intervention. Mr. Samanta said as per his information, the officials have already cut several trees in the forest affecting its biodiversity. "Forceful commercial plantation without approval of the local gram sabha is against the Forest Rights Act, 2006. It is undemocratic unconstitutional action in a scheduled area," he said.

## Zero FIR filed in migrant's death case

STAFF REPORTER  
BERHAMPUR

A zero FIR regarding death of an Odia migrant worker, Satyaban Swain, due to alleged assault by personnel of Amroli police station in Gujarat's Surat was filed at Bhanjanagar police station in Odisha's Ganjam district.

The FIR was lodged on Sunday by Santosh Swain, the brother of the deceased. According to Bhanjanagar police station inspector in-charge Sudipta Sahu, this FIR will be sent to Amroli police station in Gujarat for investigation. As per Mr. Santosh, his brother used to stay at Anjani Industrial Estate area in Surat. On May 14, Satyaban and two others went to collect train ticket, where they were allegedly lathi-charged by police. Later, a police team reached Satyaban's room and beat him up. Satyaban was shifted to a local hospital, where he was declared dead.

In memory of your loved ones  
To dedicate a space in this section,<br

# Highest single-day spike of cases in Karnataka

Of A.P.'s 52 new cases, 19 linked to Koyambedu market; expats add to Kerala numbers; 41 more test positive in Telangana

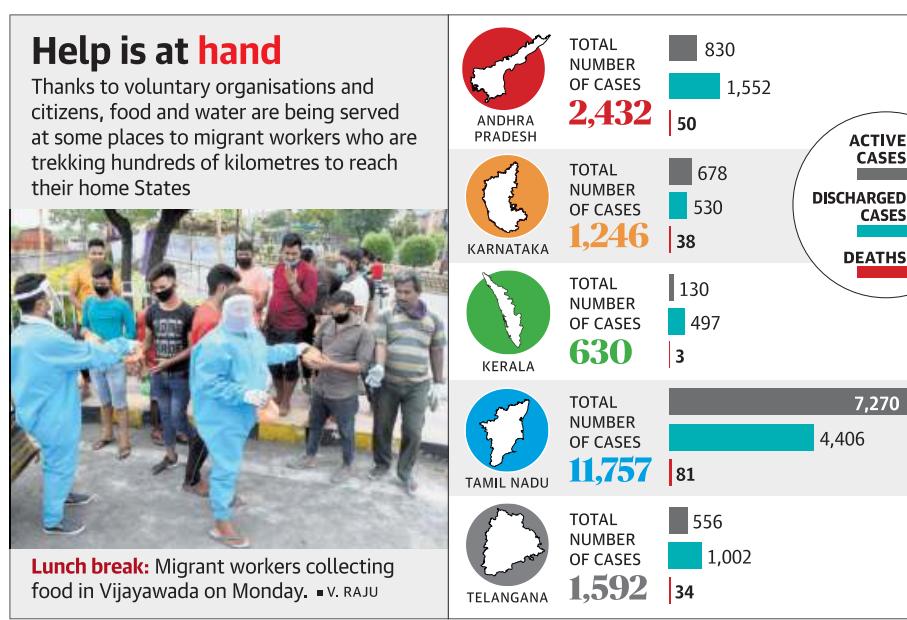
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Karnataka reported the highest number of new COVID-19 cases in a single day on Monday at 99. Andhra Pradesh registered 52 new cases, while Kerala recorded 29 cases, mostly from expatriates and non-resident Keralites.

In Telangana, the total number of cases touched 1,592 as 41 more tested positive. Tamil Nadu added another 536 cases, taking its tally to 11,760.

The Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Department said on Monday that 68% of the 99 cases recorded had a travel history to other States, a majority of them to Maharashtra. A few others returned from Tamil Nadu.

According to the department's media bulletin, 64 patients had reported a travel history to Maharashtra. A majority of them were qua-



rantined in institutions after their return to the State and were later tested. A senior official in the Health Department, who acknowledged the rise in the number of cas-

es, attributed this to the State's decision to ramp up the tests.

A day after witnessing just 25 cases, one of the lowest daily tallies, Andhra Pradesh

registered 52 new cases on Monday, taking the overall tally to 2,432, including 150 migrant cases. The number of recoveries continues to increase with more patients

getting discharged in various districts. As many as 96 patients, have recovered. So far, 1,552 patients have recovered taking the recovery rate in the State to 63.8%, while 34.1% of the positive patients are currently undergoing treatment. No new deaths were reported.

Meanwhile, cases related to the Koyambedu wholesale market hotspot continue to come up in various districts. Of the 52 new cases, 19 are those who visited the market in Chennai and their contacts.

## 29 cases in Kerala

In Kerala, expatriates and non-resident Keralites from other States made up almost all of 29 cases reported on Monday, as it has been since May 7 when NoRks began returning home. While 21 of the new cases were people who had returned from the UAE and other Gulf nations

and the Maldives, seven were who had come from Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. One lone case of infection was picked up from the community by a health care worker in Kannur.

Of the 41 new cases in Telangana on Monday, 26 are from the GHMC area, three from Medchal, and 12 migrants. Besides, 10 people were discharged. Of the total 1,592 cases, 556 are active cases, 1,002 were discharged and 34 have died.

Tamil Nadu added another 536 cases on Monday, taking its tally to 11,760. Of the new cases, 46 persons had returned to the State from Maharashtra.

Three women who tested positive for COVID-19 died in Chennai. With this, a total of 81 persons have died in Tamil Nadu of COVID-19.

(With inputs from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Telangana and Tamil Nadu Bureaus)

# Public transport back in Karnataka today

More shops to be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Buses, autorickshaws and cabs are set to return to roads in Karnataka from Tuesday, after a gap of nearly two months, with some conditions in place. More commercial establishments will also reopen.

The State government has further eased lockdown restrictions in many areas by allowing Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) and Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) buses to provide services by fixing the passenger strength at 30 from Tues-



**Ready for work:** Transport corporation employees relaxing at the Majestic Bus Stop in Bengaluru on Monday. ■ PTI

day. Wearing masks will be mandatory for all passengers.

All activities, businesses and buses will be allowed only between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. till May 31. However, Sundays

rations and private operators will provide bus services. Though the government has announced that trains will ply within the State, the nod of the Railways is awaited.

"The condition on resumption of bus services is that only 30 passengers will be allowed to travel in one bus to ensure social distancing," Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said after discussing the Centre's lockdown 4.0 guidelines for nearly two hours with his Cabinet colleagues and officials.

While auto rickshaws and taxis will be allowed to operate from a driver and two passengers, maxi-cabs (six passengers) will have a driver and three passengers. Wearing of masks is mandatory for drivers and public.

# Yellow alert in 9 districts of Kerala

Thunderstorms likely till Thursday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued yellow alerts in nine districts for Tuesday, indicating that the pre-monsoon showers would continue to be active over Kerala.

Yellow alerts signal the possibility of isolated heavy rainfall (6.4 cm to 11.5 cm in a 24-hour period). The alerts have been issued for Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad, and Malappuram. The other districts can expect light to medium rainfall, according to a Monday evening update by the IMD.

The IMD has reiterated its warning that thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely in the State till May 21. Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea as there is a likelihood of strong winds blowing from the northwesterly direction along and off the Kerala coast and Lakshadweep.

The IMD had forecast that the pre-monsoon showers



Heavy rain lashed Kochi on Monday. ■ H. VIBHU

are likely to last till May end in Kerala. From March 1 to May 14, Kerala has received its normal quota of summer showers.

For Monday, the national weather agency had issued yellow alerts in 13 districts except Thiruvananthapuram.

By evening, Thiruvananthapuram, which too had received copious showers, was added to Monday's list.

# Centre notifies Karnataka judge's appointment

Krishna Bhat's appointment was delayed owing to a complaint

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Law and Justice on Monday notified the appointment P. Krishna Bhat as an additional judge of the Karnataka High Court, almost four years after his name was first recommended by the Supreme Court collegium.

A Law Ministry notification said Mr. Bhat has been appointed for two years. Additional judges are usually appointed two years before

being elevated as a permanent judge in the High Court. The Supreme Court collegium had first recommended Mr. Bhat, then a District and Session's Court judge, in 2016. However, the government did not act on the recommendation as a woman law officer gave a written complaint against him to the then Chief Justice of India (CJI), T.S. Thakur.

Justice Thakur got an inquiry done by the then-Karnataka High Court Chief Jus-

tice Subhro Kamal Mukherjee, who found the complaint to be 'without any basis.' The Law Ministry, however, again wrote back to the then CJI, Dipak Misra, for a 'fair and proper inquiry' after the woman law officer alleged she was being summoned to Mr. Bhat's residence at 'odd hours' on the pretext of official work.

In October 2019, the Collegium reiterated its recom-

mendation and the govern-

ment accepted it.

# Deportees from Bahrain quarantined

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

A total of 127 Indian deportees from Bahrain who were brought to the Cochin international airport at Nedumbassery by a special Gulf Air flight on Sunday have been shifted to the naval quarantine facility at the School for Naval Airmen, said a press release from the Press Information Bureau.

The deportees were transported from the airport to the facility by special KSRTC buses under the aegis of the Ernakulam district adminis-

tration. After the mandatory 14 days' quarantine period, the deportees would be handed over to State agencies for further transfer to their home stations.

As per the directives of the Government of India, deportees are to be quarantined initially at a military base – at Kochi Naval Base – where they would be monitored by trained naval health

professionals. After the mandatory 14 days' quarantine period, the deportees would be handed over to State agencies for further transfer to their home stations.

The Navy's 200-bed facil-

ity here was set up in March, 2020, and has been serving as a transit quarantine camp for naval personnel returning to Kochi for duty after leave.

# Search continues for the elusive tigress

110 men comb plantations in Pathanamthitta

K.S. SUDHI  
KOCHE

Armed with tranquilliser guns and rifles, an army of 110 men sifted through plantations and vegetation at Vadasserikkara in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district from 8 a.m. on Monday for a stray tigress, only to return empty-handed in the afternoon following downpour. It was the 12th day of search and for the last six days there has been no sign of the big cat.

The tigress, which killed a



man at Vadasserikkara and made a cattle kill, gave the slip to the team. Yet, the team has been denied from the area where it killed a rubber tapper a few days ago to the place where it was reportedly last found.

"There is the possibility of the tiger returning to the interior forest. Camera traps will be set up on the forest border and surveillance stepped up," said Arun Zacharia, forest veterinarian leading the team.

A group of tribespeople familiar with the terrain form the front-line of the search team followed by a few rifle-wielding men. They have prop guns too to scare animals away. Veterinarians Zacharia, K. J. Kishore Kumar, Shyam Chandran, who have tranquilliser guns with them, form the next layer, followed by a support group. On an average, the team

covers around 15 km by foot. The pug marks and other information indicate that it is a female, aged around 5 years.

## Photo shot by drone

"The plan is to tranquillise the animal. The protocol set by the National Tiger Conservation Authority in dealing with such animals in such situations will be strictly followed," explained Dr. Kumar. "It's unjust to call it a man-eater. It could be a stray animal which accidentally entered human habitations. All that we have is her drone picture captured from a height of 500 metres," an official said.

# Woman 'harassed' in Dubai returns

Police book agent on her complaint

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

A 25-year-old woman who had gone to Dubai after being promised the job of a baby sitter was forced to leave the country, unable to bear the alleged harassment of her employer.

The victim said that her ordeal only continued as her employer also started harassing her. She then escaped and reached the Indian embassy seeking help. The embassy got her an emergency passport and a flight ticket to Bengaluru.

After reaching Bengaluru on Sunday, she approached the Shivajinagar police with a letter issued by the Protector of Emigrants seeking action against Kumar.

The Shivajinagar police have charged Kumar under the Immigration Act and with criminal intimidation and outraging the modesty of a woman.

and sexually assaulted her, threatening not to get her the job if she did not cooperate. She went to Dubai in January this year and met Kumar's contact there, who took her to a family.

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# Kerala set to allow public transport, outdoor activity

Public parks, gyms, beaches to remain shut

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala appeared poised to gradually reverse COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on Monday with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan permitting the limited resumption of outdoor activity, public transport, retail trade, and sale of alcohol.

Mr. Vijayan said a surge in persons eager to savour the long-denied outdoors would not augur well for the State's containment strategy.

Kerala feared new flare-ups as more people from the State arrived from abroad and other regions in the country. Hence, it would impose the lockdown restrictions mandated by the Union government strictly, he said.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Bihar; with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places over Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, coastal Andhra Pradesh, south interior Karnataka, Lakshadweep and Kerala and with lightning at isolated places over Jharkhand, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, coastal Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 31.1...	27.0	22.5...	Kozhikode	... 22.5...	36.2...	25.4
Ahmedabad	... 41.5...	28.6	24.0...	Kurnool	... 41.9...	40.4...	28.2
Aizawl	... 31.2...	19.2	15.8...	Lucknow	... 31.0...	40.8...	25.8
Altahabad	... 43.5...	26.4	21.8...	Madurai	... 2.2...	38.6...	27.4
Bengaluru	... 31.4...	26.0	23.8...	Mangaluru	... 55.4...	28.3...	23.6
Bhopal	0.2...	40.5...	24.8	Mumbai	... 33.7...	38.6...	27.8
Bhubaneswar	... 38.7...	29.0	25.2...	Mysuru			



## A matter of relief

Strategy of promoting supply without helping boost demand may force a relook later

**W**ith the announcement of the final tranche of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, the COVID-19 relief package, a pattern to the government's approach is visible. And that is to give a strong supply-side push by boosting availability of capital on easy terms, keep income and wage support schemes to the minimum, empower constituencies ranging from farmers and workers to businesses, and finally, the most important, keep the damage to the fisc as low as possible. The fiscal impact of the ₹20-lakh crore package is estimated by economists at between 2-3% of GDP and that includes drawals from provisions already made in the Budget for this fiscal. The pillar on which the package rests is liquidity support so that businesses can crank up again and set the economic cycle back in motion. The option of a demand-side stimulus through a resort to deficit financing seems to be reserved for a future date if the infection does not subside or a second wave begins prompting another lockdown. The problem with this approach is that there is a desperate need for demand stimulus now. A strategy to drive consumption by, say, suspending GST for a couple of months or at least cutting rates temporarily, combined with a liquidity boost may have worked better under prevailing conditions. The Centre's problem is that its revenues are a fraction of what it would have been in normal situation but even given this handicap, a fiscal stimulus could have been fitted into the overall package. After all, there is something to be said for the strategy of cutting taxes and riding on the ensuing consumption boost that could bring in revenues to compensate for the cut.

The government has done well in increasing the budget for MGNREGA by two-thirds, adding another ₹40,000 crore. With migrants now returning to their villages, MGNREGA can be leveraged to keep them occupied with meaningful work. The demand of States for higher borrowings limit has been granted but with clear reform milestones that they have to meet. It remains to be seen if States are enthused to fall in line. The government has also used the opportunity to unleash some much-needed reforms in agriculture marketing, open up more sectors for private participation, enhance foreign direct investment in defence, corporatise the monolithic Ordnance Factory Board and so on. How much of these announcements of intent are followed through seriously will have to be watched. In sum, the package has several notable features not all of which are COVID-19 relief. While it is impossible to satisfy all sections of society, especially in a pandemic situation, it has to be said that the government has taken a huge gamble by refusing to borrow and spend more on boosting demand. If the strategy of boosting supply works, it is fine. But if it does not, the government will be faced with a bigger problem down the line.

## Faking danger

Use of sedition law to fight fake news is an attempt to suppress inconvenient reports

**T**he frequency with which journalists have been arrested since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic is quite disturbing. The reasons given by the police across India for arresting reporters and editors of news portals indicate that special provisions enacted to prevent the spread of rumour during disasters are being used to suppress reporting on political developments and possible governmental corruption. The most egregious case involves a criminal provision that governments invariably fall back upon to suppress dissent. The arrest of Dhaval Patel, editor of a news portal in Gujarat, on the serious charge of sedition, is a shocking instance of misuse of criminal laws to intimidate journalists. The case concerned an article speculating that State Chief Minister Vijay Rupani may be replaced by the BJP for his alleged inept handling of efforts to combat the pandemic. The report had even named a possible successor. It is befuddling how such a report could amount to sedition, regardless of whether the speculation is true. Oftentimes, the source of such speculation is a disgruntled section of the ruling party itself, and it is excessive to punish reportage with inadequate verification with arrest and prosecution for sedition. Mr. Patel has also been charged under Section 54 of the Disaster Management Act for allegedly spreading panic through a false alarm concerning a disaster.

The Editors Guild of India has seen a "growing pattern" in the misuse of criminal laws to intimidate journalists. The concern is not misplaced. In the Andamans, a reporter was arrested for a social media post claiming people who had contacted a COVID-19 positive patient over phone were also being quarantined. In Coimbatore, police arrested a news portal founder following a report on alleged corruption in food distribution as part of the local administration's efforts to handle the fallout of the pandemic. In Delhi, a reporter was summoned in response to a report that claimed that an audio clip purportedly containing a speech by the head of the Tablighi Jamaat was doctored. While asking a journalist to join the investigation may not by itself be illegal, the police should not use the power of summons to intimidate reporters or extract details of the source. There ought to be greater restraint while invoking special provisions relating to handling disasters and epidemics. Section 54 only penalises the spreading of panic relating to the severity or magnitude of a disaster – claiming falsely, for instance, that a dam had breached – and does not extend to mere incorrect reporting. In normal circumstances, the authorities ought to be content with getting their version or response to be carried by the news outlets concerned, and not seek to use the pandemic as an excuse to curb inconvenient reporting.

# Social distancing from the powerless

Judicial abnegation by the top court is not healthy for an institution trusted as being the protector and enforcer of rights



SANJAY HEGDE

**S**ome people who have had near-death experiences narrate how they could see everything happening around them but could not intervene in any manner. They tried shouting into the void but nobody heard and life went on around them, with people even talking about them as having recently passed over.

### An isolated court

Thanks to the registry of the Supreme Court of India and its infamous Vidyo, the video conferencing app, I had a similar experience last week. Waiting for my item, I could see and hear the virtual court, but with my microphone and video shut down, I was like my mythical namesake, Sanjaya, who could see and hear and narrate the Mahabharata war, but not participate in any manner. I write in the fond hope that an occasional Dhritarashtra might yet benefit from my narration. My entire online wait, from 10.30 a.m. to noon, was rendered fruitless, but for what I accidentally witnessed.

While waiting for my own matter to be called out, I happened to witness the Court's proceedings on the matter of migrant workers who are walking back home in the midst of the national lockdown – an issue which has now attracted universal disapproval on social media and other platforms. I testify that what happened in the hearing was not an unfeeling Court, as has been made out. It was simply an isolated Court, dealing with the matter in a routine way, a habit learned from a time before COVID-19.

It is obvious to me that the judges of the top court have not fully grasped both the threat and the opportunities posed by the new medium of virtual courts. A virtual court on a video app is as different

from an open court in physical space as a movie or a television series is from an actual event. A judicial hearing on a video needs different skill sets. It calls for visual performance art on the part of lawyers as well as judges.

Justice Gautam Patel of the Bombay High Court, in a recent webinar on the post-COVID-19 legal world, rightly pointed that judges would be required to have a great deal of patience. We are not going to be able to evolve an absolutely perfect system to replace or substitute the earlier system. In adapting video conferencing apps for virtual courts, we have taken something for corporate work and used it for a court's workflow, which it was not designed to handle.

As someone with some experience of visual media, it seems to me that in a virtual courtroom, judges and lawyers should not only do justice to the matters before them but also be seen to be doing justice after a measured consideration of the issues before them. They must bear in mind that their display of measured consideration is transmitted instantly to the world at large through three court reporters, who are allowed to cover the video feed from the journalists' lounge of the Supreme Court. The reporters' instant tweets amplify a routine dismissal or issuance of notice in a petition into an oracular pronouncement from the highest constitutional court to be debated at 9 p.m. in the cacophony on television every day.

**Home-bound migrant labour**  
In the case of the walking migrants, the petition was presented by an advocate who had even earlier during the novel coronavirus pandemic filed and presented public interest litigations (PILs). These petitions, on different issues had been dismissed and he had been threatened with the imposition of costs. According to the Solicitor General's submission, the lawyer appeared to be combating COVID-19 unemployment by creating work for himself.



While presenting the case, the lawyer referred to the fact that some days earlier, a petition by Prashant Bhushan raising similar issues had been declined by the Court. The dismissal was after a statement of the Solicitor General that there were no migrant workers walking home on the roads for hundreds of kilometres. He wanted that statement of the government to be enforced in a manner that the migrants would not be required to walk endlessly on the road.

It is against this backdrop that the judges asked what they could do in the matter. The petitioner advocate mentioned the case of migrants who had been run over by a train in Aurangabad, Maharashtra earlier this month while walking back home. The Bench responded that it could not prevent people from walking anywhere they wanted. That observation, when taken out of context, looks like a Marie Antoinette moment for the institution.

Thereafter, the advocate (of PIL fame) sought to persist and stood his ground. The Bench gave short shrift to the matter and imposed costs of ₹1 lakh to deter further arguments. I later overheard the presiding judge instruct the stenographer to delete the line imposing these costs. The microphone of the petitioner lawyer was muted and he was locked out of the hearing. Before the next matter was called, the Bench did ask the Solicitor General if anything could be done concerning the issue of the migrant workers. He indicated that not much seemed possible, according to his instructions.

This brief encounter may have

not caused comment in normal times as a physical hearing in an open court. It may then have been seen as yet another petition with publicity in mind, where the Court had preferred either not to be drawn into political thickets or to not take over administration in an area where it lacked expertise. However, these are no ordinary times.

On March 31, 2020, a different Bench had been persuaded by the Solicitor General's submission that migrants had ceased to walk home. At that time, the judges may have been ignorant of the fact that one of their brethren (on March 30, 2020) had stepped out on the roads of Delhi to deliver food packets to migrants walking home.

Over 40 days later, on May 15, when the second petition came up, the continuing exodus of an increasingly hungry, tired and desperate citizenry, walking like the living dead on an uncertain way homewards, is something that the top court ought not to have ignored.

The dismissal of the issue earlier was not a binding precedent. In social action litigation, procedure is but handmaiden to justice. Irrespective of the messenger or the form of the message, the issue deserved careful consideration.

**A retreat that is jarring**  
Former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao had once rationalised, "It is not that I do nothing, I think about it and decide that nothing can be done." The appearance of even thinking about doing something was given short shrift by the top court. This attitude of judicial abnegation, of being more executive-minded than the executive, is not healthy for an institution rooted in public trust derived from a constitutional mandate of being the protector and enforcer of the rights of all citizens.

Post the Emergency years, the Court had redeemed its earlier surrender to the executive by embarking on an expansion of social action litigation. In recent years, while the judiciary has retreated

from expansive jurisdiction, it has still played a significant role in nudging the executive, without necessarily ordering it around. But never has it hitherto socially distanced itself from the powerless.

### High Courts show the way

In contrast, on that very day, the same Court granted some modicum of relief to the real estate industry in respect of its loans. By another order, industries with unpaid wages during the pandemic were protected from prosecution. The contrast was only heightened when the High Court of Madras and the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, on the same day eloquently voiced their concern over migrant labour walking back. The High Court of Madras even sought responses and status reports on the issue from the central and State governments.

In our constitutional scheme, High Courts are on a par with the Supreme Court in the enforcement of the fundamental rights of the citizen. The Supreme Court does exercise an appellate jurisdiction but it is final not because it is infallible. It is infallible because it is final. During the Emergency, several High Courts ruled in favour of the citizen only to be overturned by the Supreme Court in *ADM Jabalpur*. It remains to be seen whether on the issue of the walking migrants, the Supreme Court will be now be moved against the orders of the High Court of Madras and the High Court of Andhra Pradesh.

If such a petition is indeed moved by the Solicitor General, I do hope that somewhere in the Court, there exists a person who remembers Bob Dylan singing: "Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have? Before he can hear people cry?/Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take 'till he knows? That too many people have died?/The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind/The answer is blowin' in the wind".

Sanjay Hegde is a senior advocate of the Supreme Court

## A jolt to national energy security

The amendments to the Electricity Bill will only burden States and erode the concurrent status given to electricity

SUDHA MAHALINGAM,  
TEJAL KANITKAR & R. SRIKANTH

**F**inance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's proposal for reform of power tariff policy – announced as part of the stimulus package following the pandemic – is of a piece with the recent comprehensive proposal to amend the Electricity Act 2003; put together, they erode the concurrent status accorded to electricity in the Constitution. If implemented, they will not only weaken the control of States over an industry supplying a basic human necessity such as electricity but also arm the Centre with a pincer-like weapon which could choke the distribution utilities/companies (DISCOMS) and jeopardise the country's energy security.

### DISCOM troubles

These proposals have to be seen in the context of a continuing centralisation of control over the sector whose main impact in the last 25 years has been to drive up the cost of power purchase to 80% of the total costs of State DISCOMS. At the core of DISCOM woes is the two-part tariff policy, mandated by the Ministry of Power in the 1990s at the behest of the World Bank. As more private developers came forward to invest in generation, DISCOMS were required to sign long-term power purchase agreements (PPA), committing to pay a fixed cost to the power generator, irrespective of whether the State draws the power or not, and a variable charge for fuel when it does.

The PPAs signed by DISCOMS were based on over-optimistic

projection of power demand estimated by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), a central agency. The 18th Electric Power Survey (EPS) overestimated peak electricity demand for 2019-2020 by 70 GW. The 19th EPS published in 2017, by 25 GW, both pre-Covid 19. In the event, DISCOMS locked into long-term contracts end up servicing perpetual fixed costs for power not drawn. NTPC Limited's Kudgi, in Karnataka, alone received ₹4,800 crore as idle fixed costs during 2018-19, operating at a plant load factor of only 22%. Due to the CEA's overestimates, the all-India plant load factor of coal power plants is at an abysmal 56% even before COVID-19.

**Factor of renewable energy**  
From 2010, solar and wind power plants were declared as "must-run", requiring DISCOMS to absorb all renewable power as long as there was sun or wind, in excess of mandatory renewable purchase obligations. This means backing down thermal generation to accommodate all available green power, entailing further idle fixed costs payable on account of two-part tariff PPAs.

Second, power demand peaks after sunset. In the absence of viable storage, every megawatt of renewable power requires twice as much spinning reserves to keep lights on after sunset. DISCOMS, especially in the southern region, have had to integrate large volumes of infirm power, mostly from solar and wind energy plants which enjoy must-run status irrespective of their high tariffs (₹5/kwh in Karnataka and ₹6/kwh in Tamil Nadu for solar power) even



as the demand growth envisaged in the 18th EPS failed to materialise.

Third, in 2015 the Centre announced an ambitious target of 175 gigawatts of renewable power by 2022, offering a slew of concessions to renewable energy developers, and aggravating the burden of DISCOMS. Incidentally, China benefited by as much as \$13 billion in the last five years from India's solar panel imports.

**The fine print**  
It is against this backdrop that we must examine the proposals in the Electricity Act 2020.

First, the amendment proposes sub-franchisees, presumably private, in an attempt to usher in markets through the back door. Going by past privatisation experiments, private sub-franchisees are likely to cherry-pick the more profitable segments of the DISCOM's jurisdiction. The Electricity Bill 2020 containing the proposed amendments is silent on whether a private sub-franchisee would be required to buy the expensive power (averaging out the idle fixed costs) from the DISCOM or procure cheaper power directly from power exchanges. If it is the first, the gains from the move are doubtful

since the room for efficiency improvements is rather restricted in the already profitable regions attractive to sub-franchisees. If it is the second, DISCOMS will then be saddled with costly power purchase from locked-in PPAs and fewer profitable areas from which to recover it.

Second, the amendment proposes even greater concessions to renewable power developers, with its cascading impact on idling fixed charges, impacting the viability of DISCOMS even more.

Third, and the most controversial amendment proposed, seeks to eliminate in one stroke, the cross-subsidies in retail power tariff. This means each consumer category would be charged what it costs to service that category. Rural consumers requiring long lines and numerous step-down transformers and the attendant higher line losses will pay the steepest tariffs. Disingenuously, the proposed amendments envisage that State governments will directly subsidise whichever category they want to, through direct benefit transfers. Cross-subsidy is a fact of life in even private industries, soap, newspapers, or even utilities such as telecom. There is undoubtedly a case for reducing the steep cross-subsidies in electricity. But eliminating them in one stroke when State governments are already struggling with direct power subsidies is bound to be ruinous to their finances, not to mention the myriad problems with Direct Benefit Transfer. Without going into the political arguments relating to subsidies, and the impact of COVID-19 which has not been factored in, this proposal is practical-

ly infeasible; if forcibly implemented, it will lead to chaos.

Fourth, State regulators will henceforth be appointed by a central selection committee, the composition of which inspires little confidence in its objectivity, jeopardising not only regulatory autonomy and independence but also the concurrent status of the electricity sector.

Finally, the last claw in this multi-pronged pincer is the establishment of a centralised Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority whose members and chairman will again be selected by the same selection committee referred to above. The power to adjudicate upon disputes relating to contracts will be taken away from State Electricity Regulatory Commissions and vested in this new authority, ostensibly to protect and foster the sanctity of contracts. This is to ensure that States saddled with high-priced PPAs and idling fixed costs, yet forced to keep increasing the share of renewables in their basket, have no room for manoeuvre.

When the country is reeling under the economic impact of the novel coronavirus crisis, the Electricity Bill 2020 is indeed a disingenuous document drafted to shift the burden imposed by the short-sighted policies of the Centre onto hapless States, with serious consequences for the nation's energy security.

Sudha Mahalingam, Tejal Kanitkar and R. Srikanth are, respectively, Raja Ramanna Chair Professor, Associate Professor and Dean in the Energy and Environment Program at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

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faiths and it is only politicians who want to drive a wedge between them to achieve their political goals. It is time that everyone thinks that despite the different faith one follows, it is the peaceful coexistence that we should try to achieve, as the two friends showed.

A JAINULABEEN,  
Chennai

## 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.

**Teaching medicine**  
I write to comment on some of the aspects of medical education and training of our medical graduates. As one who has had the privilege of being a medical teacher for nearly 30 years in government service and another 30 years later in private institutions, I am anxious that our medical graduates must get the best teaching. The recent proliferation of medical colleges is well

intended but good teachers, especially in the basic sciences, anatomy, physiology, etc., should be available to lay the foundation for medical knowledge. Recalling retired teachers may be considered if need be. Good teachers can inspire and bring out good students and medical graduates. In some countries, student evaluation of teachers is in vogue. This is not entirely

satisfactory for an evaluation of competence of teachers. The acid test of good teaching is the response and performance of students and achievements thereafter. Recent introduction of modern electronic devices in diagnosis and treatment is impressive. Telemedicine in diagnosis and advising management have come to stay. But still, the time-honoured method of Hippocrates with suitable

adaptations for our conditions must be followed. Medical practice is a person-to-person interaction – two humans in flesh and blood – the physical suffering as also mental agony of one requiring the "balm" of the medical person.  
D. K. V. THIRUVENGADAM,  
Chennai

### True friend

The tale of two friends who were heading from Surat,

Gujarat, to their village in Uttar Pradesh (Inside pages, "On unforgiving road, till death did them part", May 18) was moving. The care and comfort the friend gave to his sick roommate is unparalleled and reminds me of many scenes in films in which a mother would care for her son. The story reiterates that down at the ground level there is a humanitarian approach among people of various



# Accountability can't be placed under lockdown

The BJP government at the Centre owes the country many answers on its handling of the pandemic



DEREK O'BRIEN

As it moves from a stringent nationwide lockdown to disaggregated and differentiated lockdowns, India has much to think about. It is coming out of a gruelling, bruising two months. This experience holds lessons for the rest of the long battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. It also reveals a lot about governance and planning, Centre-State relations, and the care and dignity that government policies accord citizens.

The hardest questions will, of course, be for the Bharatiya Janata Party government in New Delhi. It declared a total lockdown giving just a four-hour notice to the citizens, without consulting State governments. How should we judge it?

Language provides a clue. Any institution – a company, a cultural organisation, a political party or a government – is identifiable by its trademark vocabulary, by the words and phrases it uses most often. For the BJP government, these are “masterstroke”, “surgical strike”, “shock treatment” and “secrecy”. It thrives on sudden, dramatic moves – never mind the absence of planning.

A little over a decade ago, the author-activist Naomi Klein wrote a book called *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. It was a warning against ill-conceived shock actions for restructuring society, and how these could lead to disaster. Those promoting the “shock doctrine” take advantage of a crisis situation and of a benumbed population desperate for answers and trusting of those in charge. Yet the trust is never really repaid. Ever since that 8 p.m. lockdown announcement on March 23, I have thought so often of Ms. Klein and her book.

#### Delayed response

And it need not have been this way. The first three weeks of March were wasted by the Central government. On March 5, the Trinamool Congress wrote and urged that parliamentary committees be convened for emergency meetings to plan for COVID-19. On the same day the West Bengal go-



“The Centre has been oblivious to the suffering of migrant workers.” Children of migrant workers rest in Ghaziabad as they wait to board buses to Bihar.

• REUTERS

vernment began creating isolation wards for future COVID-19 patients. The following day, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee set up quick response teams.

The Centre did nothing. It spoke perfunctorily about social distancing but ignored its own warnings. Repeated appeals to adjourn Parliament were ignored. After two weeks of trying, an exasperated Trinamool Congress finally withdrew its MPs from both Houses. In West Bengal, Ms. Banerjee had already initiated a partial lockdown when the Central announcement came.

#### The issue of guest workers

Since the BJP government acted so late in the day, it was expected that a detailed blueprint was in place. The issue of guest workers, for example, was an obvious one. In fact, on March 26 itself, Ms. Banerjee wrote to counterparts in other States requesting that they take care of stranded guest workers from West Bengal and promised reciprocal treatment for workers living in the State. In the following days, West Bengal sent ₹1,000 to each of the 4,00,000 stranded workers across the country, without noise.

What did the Centre do? On guest workers, it remained in denial. It used the National Disaster Management Act of 2005 to override State governments but ignored key provisions of the National Disaster Management Plan. The Plan clearly emphasises the critical importance of social inclusion during a disaster, to ensure the well-being of vulnerable

groups such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the differently abled, the elderly, women and children, and of course migrant workers (many of whom are covered by the other categories).

The Union Finance Ministry held three press conferences displaying insensitivity to human dignity. The Supreme Court has held that the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution is not merely a physical right; it includes the right to live with human dignity. The treatment extended to many underprivileged citizens, especially guest workers, was in complete violation of human dignity. The Central government told the Supreme Court that there were no guest workers on the roads and highways. This was at the very time that social media (and only one or two brave television channels) were full of visuals of workers trudging miles and miles. Guidelines for inter-State travel of guest workers were issued almost a month into the lockdown. It was all very callous.

We all know of the tragic Aurangabad incident that saw a goods train mow down 16 migrant workers. They, like millions of others on highways, were walking to their villages and collapsed in exhaustion on the railway tracks – too exhausted to hear the train coming. The Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Railways Minister have been all but absent during this monumental crisis during which millions of poor guest workers have been abandoned. All this while the Minister was presiding over the Indian Railways with its

daily ferrying capacity of 23 million people.

On May 1, the migrant worker trains began with much fanfare. Here too the Centre showed a cold heart. It sought to charge migrant workers, passing on the responsibility of collecting the fares to State governments. The State governments showed greater responsibility. West Bengal paid to bring home those stranded in Kota, Vellore, Chennai, and other parts of India. We welcomed back 1,50,000 of our people and did so ungrudgingly. All along the Railway Ministry was quibbling and haggling over money, blaming the State governments and sanctimoniously declaring that matters should not be politicised. It was surreal.

One would have thought the Centre was short of funds and State governments were awash with money. That is far from true. The sudden lockdown didn’t give the States a chance to prepare, and their revenues collapsed. In addition, the Centre, which already owes the States money, has been unwilling to help. The Central government owes West Bengal ₹61,000 crore, ₹36,000 crore of which is backlog dues. There is no sign of any money coming; only empty press conferences. How are States expected to pay for the reopening and repair of their devastated economies?

The examples I have cited have been focused: the Centre showed delay in waking up to the COVID-19 situation and preparing for it; remained oblivious to the suffering of migrant workers; valued money over lives; did not support the States for even basic and essential welfare programmes; and ignored the dignity of ordinary, decent, hard-working and troubled people. The Centre has also not procured equipment such as test kits and not allowed States to do so. It finally sent test kits that didn’t work and needed to be withdrawn; bullied States and mangled federalism; and introduced a contact-tracing app without explaining it, without wider consultation, and without an ordinance or enabling legal provision. On all of these the Central government has to provide answers and has to be held to account. After all, in a democracy, accountability cannot be placed under a lockdown.

Derek O’Brien leads Trinamool Congress in the Rajya Sabha

# A post-pandemic world order

Dogma, ideology and notions of power could either impede or accelerate the recovery process of nations



ARJUN SUBRAMANIAM

As the world starts recovering from the debilitating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, nations will draw on all their reserves to ensure that their place in the global pecking order is largely maintained. Among many factors, dogma, ideology and notions of power merit serious attention as non-quantifiable national characteristics that could either impede or accelerate the recovery process.

#### Ideological and civilisational beliefs

Dogma has traditionally been linked to religious beliefs. Since World War II, however, it has incorporated several strains of ideological and enduring civilisational beliefs. Take the case of China, for example, which is attempting to upstage, or at least match, the U.S. as the principal global hegemon. Realising that mere ideology was not enough to propel it to that position, Mao Zedong’s successors have drawn on two civilisational markers from Chinese history that have troubled the Chinese people for centuries: the ‘Middle Kingdom’ syndrome and ‘the Century of Humiliation’. While the first marker builds on the glory of the Ming Dynasty (late 14th century to mid-17th century) and the centrality of the Han people in a world order that saw China as the most prosperous nation in the world, it also reminds the Chinese people of the dangers that lurk around its periphery. Chinese leaders often draw attention to the Mongol rule (late 13th century to mid-14th century) and over two centuries of misrule by the Manchus and the Qing Dynasty (mid-17th century to early 20th century) as examples of this. The second marker draws on the stripping of China of its honour and resources by multiple colonial powers during the ‘Century of Humiliation’ from the mid-19th century to the time of the emergence of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. These markers from Chinese history have gradually become dogma and seen as a blot on Chinese history that need resolution.

Realising in the 1980s that Maoist ideology no longer appealed to the Chinese people, Deng reintroduced Confucianism as a much-needed intellectual and ethical prop to China’s push for ‘great power’ status. Sun Tzu re-emerged as China’s answer to Clausewitz and for a few decades it appeared that these would soften traditional Chinese dogma. It also raised hopes that China would largely play by the existing rules and bide its time.

Jinping, however, has been a leader in a hurry. In the process, he has perpetuated the deepened hurt of the Chinese people to an extent that it has become embedded dogma. He has abandoned Confucianism and the ethical pursuit of power, and fallen back on hard-core communist ideology. Hard power and muscular nationalism coupled with a neo-colonial and mercantilist attitude towards vulnerable nations seems to be the new strategy to compete with the U.S. While this strategy seemed to be working at a time when the U.S. appeared to be looking inwards and showing signs of strategic fatigue, President Xi’s ambitious Belt and Road Initiative demonstrated an overreach that had the potential to backfire as it created a sense of fear, rather than respect for, China. Then came the pandemic and it is worth pondering over whether holding on to historical dogma, ideology and notions of power will hold the same potential in the accumulation of power, or whether nations which are willing to live in the moment and be sensitive to the global environment will fare better. China will be worse off should it prefer the former course. Its continued aggressive posture along the Line of Actual Control only confirms this rigid position.

The U.S.’s recovery will be impeded by embedded notions of power which have resulted in a strategic oversight and fatigue of sorts. The pandemic has tested the U.S. state’s capacity, capability and competency. However, the U.S.’s economic resilience, restless people, institutional robustness and intellectual reserves will help it pull through.

#### Demonstration of flexibility

India is neither afflicted by unreasonable expectations of power, ideological dogma, or haunted by accentuated perceptions of historical hurt. Despite its own centuries of conquest and exploitation by invaders and colonial powers, it has demonstrated resilience, learnt to let go and embraced the good that emerged from the centuries of darkness. That is a demonstration of flexibility, which is good in troubled times such as these. Yes, it does have societal fissures and serious issues of compliance, but those can be mendied with national resilience and improved public discipline and good leadership. If India weathers the entire pandemic cycle as it has coped with the initial storm, it should be better placed than the two leading powers to recover. It will be a fascinating global strategic landscape to observe as a post-COVID-19 world order emerges, and for sure, India could play an important role in its possible transformation.

Arjun Subramaniam is a strategic analyst and military historian

# Preparing for a syndemic

Innovations in population health surveillance are important as COVID-19 could become a syndemic

#### CHIRANTAN CHATTERJEE

The World Health Organization has announced that COVID-19 will likely never go away. Experts warn that there will be a second wave of infections.

Meanwhile, some people have also raised the alarm about diseases like dengue and malaria emerging with the upcoming monsoon season in tropical South Asia. Therefore, going forward, could COVID-19 become even more problematic by becoming a syndemic? A syndemic is a situation when two or more epidemics interact synergistically to produce an increased burden of disease in a population, a situation first described by medical anthropologist Merrill Singer in the mid-1990s. Stephanie Shau and co-authors published a peer-reviewed journal article last month documenting this as a distinct possibility in people living with HIV.

#### Increased burden of disease

The 1957 Asian influenza pandemic, for example, showed that deaths then could be not only due to the primary viral infection, but also due to secondary bacterial infections among influenza patients; in short, they were caused by a viral/bacterial syndemic. Meanwhile, researchers have shown that in Kisumu, Kenya, 5% of HIV infections are due to higher HIV infectiousness of malaria-infected HIV patients.

Some also say that we need to watch out for secondary bacterial infection in those with weakened immunity due to COVID-19. Given that antibiotics resistance across the world is already a problem, the medical community needs to be aware of co-morbidities, especially if COVID-19 deepens as a syndemic in populations with antibiotic resistance.

If that happens, along with large-scale population testing, societies around the world will also have to consider innovations in population health surveillance technology and develop creative business models at a scale potentially unheard of in recent times. MIT alumnus Inder Singh’s startup, Kinsa, makes smart thermometers that are already making waves in the U.S. Many argue that

Kinsa thermometers could be the key to constantly monitoring temperatures.

Another solution is to monitor oxygen levels in the brain daily through a pulse oximeter. It turns out that COVID-19 is causing happy hypoxia, where lack of oxygen in the brain is going undetected till things become too late. However, some say that this should not crowd out other important strategies like aggressive population-level PCR and antibody testing.

Overall, we can expect that this emerging market of technologies in population health surveillance will move towards similar discussions like global optimal pricing of Remdesivir, or faulty testing kits by Abbott or by Chinese firms. There will be the lure of speed of entry, quality concerns on the margin, and intellectual property battles.

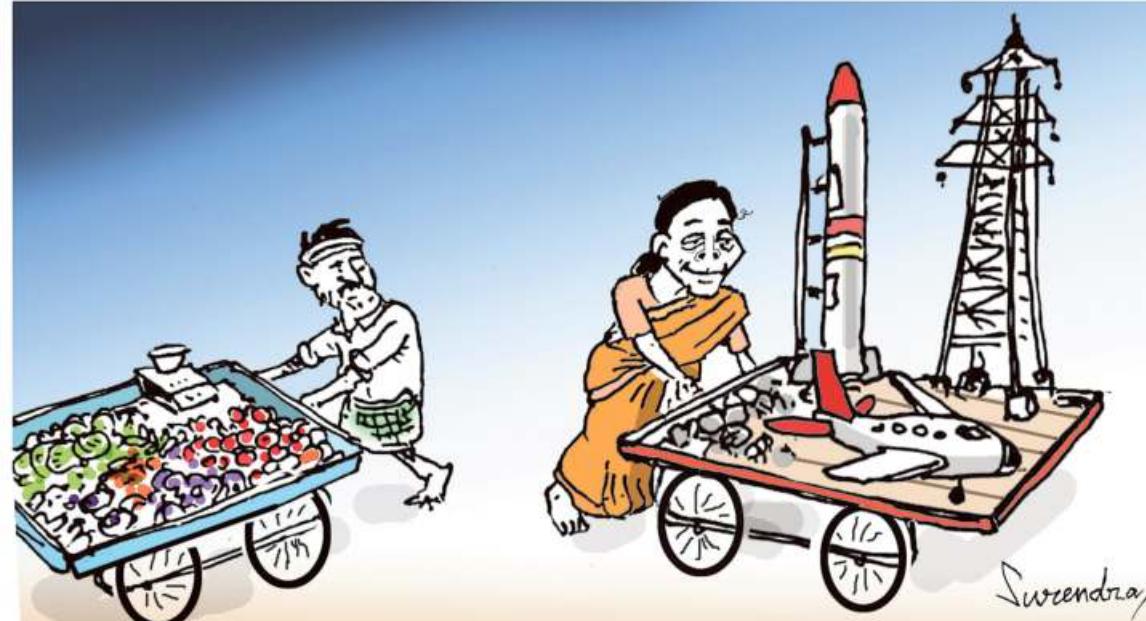
But broadly, societies with resource-constrained settings, where even an economical pooled testing strategy might be difficult to enforce due to financial reasons, should evaluate innovative population health surveillance technologies to complement testing. This is especially important as there is a rising likelihood of COVID-19 becoming endemic and also probably syndemic.

#### New ways of thinking

With India’s ongoing migrant crisis, we cannot rule out COVID-19 becoming syndemic given large-scale urban-to-rural chaotic migration. Added to this is the complexity of the upcoming dengue and malaria season. Closing State borders, discriminating against migrants returning to their home States, and quarantining them in public locations may not be a viable option going forward if India is peaking on the COVID-19 curve. India recorded the largest single day spike just a few days ago. The time has come to look at testing/tracing/isolating as well as ideas to deploy population health surveillance technologies like smart thermometers and oximeters.

Are the policymakers listening?

Chirantan Chatterjee is a faculty member at IIM Ahmedabad and Visiting Fellow at Hoover Institution, Stanford University



#### DATA POINT

## Unsafe mode

**HOW TO READ THE TABLE** | The table lists government-backed apps of 19 countries based on five technology principles and whether the app adheres to them. ‘Y’ indicates compliance while ‘N’ indicates non-compliance. ‘NA’ indicates that there were no data available

Country	Voluntary	Limited	Data destruction	Minimised	Transparent
China	N	N	N	N	N
Turkey	N	N	N	Y	N
India	N*	N	Y	Y	N
Mexico	Y	NA	N	N	N
Norway	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Australia	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
UK	Y	N	NA	Y	Y
Germany	Y	NA	NA	Y	N
Austria	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Czech	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Iceland	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Israel	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Italy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Singapore	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cyprus	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y
North Macedonia	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y
Poland	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y
Switzerland	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
Finland	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y

\*On Sunday, the Ministry of Home Affairs said all employers “should on best effort basis” ensure that the contact-tracing app is downloaded by all employees who have “compatible mobile phones”

According to a database maintained by MIT Technology Review, Aarogya Setu, India’s contact-tracing app to combat COVID-19, poses significant risks to the privacy of the user compared to similar apps in other countries. Though there is little clarity on the design and security of the app, it has been made mandatory in some places. The apps in China and Turkey pose greater risks for user privacy than Aarogya Setu

**Voluntary:** Whether the use is by choice or mandatory

**Limited:** Are there limitations on how the data get used?

**Data destruction:** Whether the data are deleted automatically after a certain amount of time

**Minimised:** Whether only necessary information is collected

**Transparent:** Whether the app is built on clear and publicly available policies and its design has an open source code

#### OBSERVATIONS FROM THE TABLE

- India is among the three countries to make the app mandatory

- India is among the four countries to not have limitations on the use of data

- Aarogya Setu’s code is not open sourced thus hampering transparency. Concerns surrounding the code have been highlighted in the public domain recently

#### The Hindu

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 19, 1970

Keep pace with the times, says PM

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi has initiated discussions – on a strictly personal basis – with the leading princes who are being called to Delhi one by one to meet her on the abolition of their purses and privileges. She has already met more than 20 top ranking princes and the Maharaja of Mysore will be seeing her to-morrow [May 19]. The Nizam also is expected to be summoned after she has done the necessary spade work for coming to grips with the question of compensation.

In her talks, Mrs. Gandhi has been taking the line that the princes should appreciate the compelling political circumstances that led to the decision to abolish their privy purses. She has also been trying to impress upon them that in their own interest they should fully co-operate with her in ensuring that there was a strong Government at the Centre which was capable of taking a generous attitude on the question of compensation in the face of political opposition.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 19, 1920

## FROM PAGE ONE

## India's COVID-19 case tally crosses 1 lakh

As per the latest guidelines States have been asked to categorise districts/municipal corporations, or if warranted subdivision/ward or any other administrative unit as red/orange/green zone as per field assessment.

"States have been told to ensure stringent implementation of the containment plans in these containment zones," the latest guidelines said.

In her letter to the States and Union Territories, Health Secretary Preeti Sudan said States could categorise areas using the broad guideline issued the Central Health Ministry.

Ms. Sudan's letter said the demarcation of the zones would be based on total active cases, cases per lakh population, doubling rate calculated over a seven-day period, case fatality rate, testing ratio (number of tests per lakh population)

and sample positivity rate. The Health Ministry, however, noted that the benchmarks or thresholds for critical and desirable levels are dynamic and may be revised by the Centre as per the evolving situation at the field level.

**Doctors' plea**  
Meanwhile, the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA), India has on Monday written to the Health Ministry stating that many doctors at the frontline, even after taking adequate precautions, are contracting the infection in different parts of the country.

In their letter the doctors note that the government should take a relook at its guideline for "Quarantine of Healthcare Workers" to ensure that adequate protection is available to this section.

## Vaccine fails to shield monkeys from virus

Unusual, in that human beings were unlikely to be ordinarily exposed those quantities of the virus.

The researchers, led by Sarah Gilbert of The Jenner Institute, University of Oxford and Vincent Munster of the National Institutes of Health, United States, argue that the presence of virus was significantly reduced in BAL fluid (collected from the lungs) and lung tissue of vaccinated animals than in the animals that were not vaccinated.

Moreover, virus specific neutralising antibodies were detected in those macaques vaccinated and no such antibodies were seen in those that didn't get the vaccine.

For their analysis they vaccinated six monkeys with the candidate vaccine and 3 were given a 'control' vaccine called ChAdOx1 GPF.

Based on these results 1,110 people are taking part in human trial, half receiving the vaccine and the other half (the control group) receiving a meningitis vaccine. The dose of the vaccine was half that of what is being used for humans right now.

This vaccine is among the eight that are ahead in terms of being tested in humans for efficacy.

## Odisha, West Bengal brace for Amphan

The evacuation process has been initiated in low-lying areas along coast.

District authorities have started evacuation from the low lying coastal areas in West Bengal as well. "We now have three types of crisis – COVID, the cyclone, and migrants returning home," Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said. She however, maintained that necessary precautions like social distancing will be maintained during the evacuation process.

Fishing had already been suspended because of lockdown. Police officials have started announcements in the low lying coastal areas of the State, particularly the low lying Sunderbans and areas closer to Digha in Pur-

ba Medinipur asking people to leave mud houses and move to safer places.

Ahead of the monsoon's arrival in Kerala, the month of May typically sees intense tropical storm activity in the Bay of Bengal.

From 1965 to 2017, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea collectively registered 46 'severe cyclonic storms'. More than half of them occurred between October and December. Seven of them occurred in May and only two (in 1966 and 1976) were recorded in April, according to data from the India Meteorological Department's cyclone statistics unit. Before Fani, only one of them (in 1966) had actually made landfall over India.

## 83 LCA-MK1A deal high priority, says IAF Chief

It would also boost the industry which had already been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, he said.

Similarly, the IAF is about to place orders for over 200 Astra indigenous Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missiles and emphasised on the need for adhering to time line and quality. "These are high risk decisions. We go indigenous and they fail to produce on time and we run out of missiles, it is very tricky. So we have to balance. They really have to meet deadlines in terms of time and quality," ACM Bhadauria said.

tronics, networking issues, some weapons and also the indigenous HTT-40 basic trainer under development.

"So for any trainer of this class, we will not go out," he added.

To mitigate budgetary constraints, the IAF is looking to prioritise its revenue and capital expenditure and some priority areas have been identified while some others would be deferred.

"Our initial focus is the revenue expenditure and target is to prioritise it so we save 20-25% there," ACM Bhadauria said.

In the capital component, the immediate attention was on some critical weapons and technologies such as BVR missiles, guided Air to Ground weapons, networking and data linking issues, he said. In addition, international exercises had been stopped till the year end as also all large-scale planned exercises.

## Cong. slams economic package

'Allocation hopelessly inadequate'; it is less than 1% of GDP, says Chidambaram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

We express our thorough disappointment and request the government to reconsider the stimulus package and announce a revised and comprehensive fiscal stimulus package of not less than ₹10 lakh crore of real additional expenditure equivalent to 10% of GDP

P. CHIDAMBARAM  
FORMER UNION FINANCE MINISTER



lent to 10% of GDP," he said.

Lashing out at the government for the migrant worker crisis, he said it had "completely mismanaged, misjudged the situation" resulting in a monumental error.

"I think the government is living in an echo chamber. They listen to their own voices, their own opinion," Mr. Chidambaram said.

**Parliament sidelined**  
The Congress leader said the government was being 'opportunistic' to use the COVID-19 pandemic to push for reforms, bypassing stakeholders and parliamentary institutions.

"The true value of the fiscal stimulus package will be known when we know what is the Additional Borrowing in 2020-21 to finance the Additional Expenditure over and above the Expenditure Budget of ₹30,42,230 crore. The truth cannot be hidden for long," Mr. Chidambaram said.

"We express our thorough disappointment and request the government to reconsider the stimulus package and announce a revised and comprehensive fiscal stimulus package of not less than ₹10 lakh crore of real additional expenditure equivalent to 10% of GDP," Mr. Chidambaram said.

Many of the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcements were just frontloading of previously budgeted expenditures, he

said. He said there could be no stimulus package without additional borrowing, but noted that Ms. Sitharaman had acknowledged "additional expenditure must be financed by additional borrowing".

"In our view, a fiscal stimulus of ₹1,86,650 crore amounting to barely 0.91% of the GDP will be totally inadequate given the gravity of the economic crisis and the dire situation in which people find themselves. Most analysts, rating agencies and banks have placed the size of the fiscal stimulus at between 0.8 to 1.5%," Mr. Chidambaram said.

"We express our thorough disappointment and request the government to reconsider the stimulus package and announce a revised and comprehensive fiscal stimulus package of not less than ₹10 lakh crore of real additional expenditure equivalent to 10% of GDP," Mr. Chidambaram said.

ANALYSTS PEG STIMULUS AT 1% OF GDP ■ BUSINESS PAGE

## J&amp;K notifies rules for domicile certificates

Eligible non-locals can also now apply

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR



The J&K administration on Monday notified the J&K Grant of Domicile Certificate Procedure Rules, 2020 and set a fast-track process in motion to issue the certificates within a stipulated time of 15 days.

Rohit Kansal

nalised ₹50,000. The amount would be recovered from his salary, Mr. Kansal said.

"All Permanent Resident Certificate holders and their children living outside J&K can apply for the certificates," he said. Kashmiri migrants living in or outside J&K can get domicile certificates by simply producing their Permanent Residence Certificate (PRC), ration card copy, voter card or any other valid document.

"Bonafide migrants can apply with the Relief and Rehabilitation department by providing documents like electoral rolls of 1988, proof of registration as a migrant in any State in the country or any other valid document," Mr. Kansal said.

He said applicants can apply electronically and get a certificate online too.

## Pawar calls out lack of provisions for farmers

'Standing crops lost due to lockdown'

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI



Sharad Pawar

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief and former Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar has said that the package announced by the Centre would not bring any immediate relief to the distressed farmers.

"The package does not make any provisions for compensating the crop losses incurred due to the lockdown conditions," Mr. Pawar said in an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 16.

The ₹20 lakh crore package would not bring any immediate relief to the distressed farmers. "Standing crops have perished due to lockdown causing great losses to the farmers. In turn, they are facing a cash crunch & need immediate support to undertake ensuing kharif season activities."

Mr. Pawar said the condition of the farming com-

munity was worsening by the day. On the threshold of the monsoon season, the farmer was not prepared to initiate agricultural activities.

"In terms of outlay, the agriculture aid and reforms announced by FM of ₹1.63 lakh crore is approximately 8% of the total package for a sector that provides the highest employment and ensures food security of the nation. Since these allocations are mainly supply-side oriented, it will take a long time for the ground level implementation of the same..." He said.

## Rival States targeting BJP party workers'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In a strongly worded series of tweets, BJP president J.P. Nadda on Monday accused the Opposition parties of 'unfairly' targeting his party's workers for criticising the handling of the COVID-19 crisis in States where they are in power.

"In the last few days, it has been observed that in the Opposition-ruled States, the state machinery has been unfairly targeted to target BJP workers. In a vibrant democracy, this is unacceptable," he said.

## Trespassing by India made China respond'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Chinese state media on Monday said that their border troops bolstered "border control measures and made necessary moves" in response to India's "illegal construction of defence facilities" in the Galwan Valley. Sources said after China mobilised troops and equipment, India too moved its troops.

## BJP gearing up for Bihar elections amid pandemic

Polls were originally scheduled to be held in Oct.-Nov.

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI



Sanjay Jaiswal

The BJP's Bihar unit is preparing to face the Assembly polls which, under the pre-COVID-19 calendar, were scheduled to be held in October-November.

Senior BJP office-bearers told *The Hindu* that "apart from the relief work" necessitated due to the pandemic, the party was slowly completing some of the organisational requirements to face polls.

"The most basic building block of the organisational work is by completing our booth-level network. We have a total of 72,727 booths and we are in the process of completing our exercise in constituting them," said a senior State-level office-bearer.

Party State chief Sanjay Jaiswal has been regularly holding video meetings on the issue.

The party, he said, was operating on the *saptarishi* principle, that is, a seven-member booth committee in each booth, with a chief, a deputy chief, compulsory representation of women, Scheduled Castes and Most Backward Community mem-

bers in the group.

"The exercise for completing the constitution of our mandal level committees, around 1099, is complete, and below that are our 'shakti kendras' [just above booth level], around 9547, which are also almost done," he said.

Office-bearers in charge of various Assembly seats have been registering their lists with names and numbers of those on the *saptarishi* and other committees.

**Poll prospects**  
When asked about the poll prospects, he said the party was, like others, in the dark about it.

There were still areas where it was difficult to form a full booth committee, but that the party was persisting.

He dismissed suggestions that the party was concentrating on poll preparedness while the country was facing a pandemic plus the humanitarian situation with regard to the movement of inter-State migrants.

## Relief work

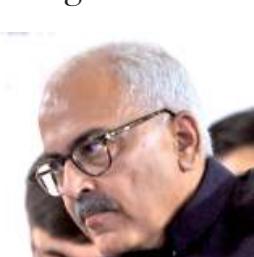
"At least 90% of our workers are involved in relief work, while the rest are engaged in organisational work. If you bother to get in touch with our MLAs, you will see that they and other workers have been actively involved in making sure quarantine centres etc are set up and are in good order. We have to report daily to party president J.P. Naddaji on the relief work that has been done, including photographs of quarantine centres etc. We have received over 20 lakh inter-State workers who belong to the party so far," he said.

While the dates of polls are uncertain, BJP seems to be the first off the block on preparedness.

## Centre drops order on wages during lockdown

Action taken after SC ruling on firms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



The Union Home Ministry has dropped a crucial order that required all employers – shops, industry and commercial establishments – to pay wages to workers for the period the units were shut during lockdown. The order that has now been dropped also called for action against landlords who forced students and migrant workers to vacate the premises during the lockdown.

Several companies had moved the Supreme Court against the order last week and the apex court asked the government to not take any coercive action against them.

"Save as otherwise provided in the guidelines annexed to this order, all order issued by the NEC under Section 10(2)(I) of the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005, shall cease to have effect from 18.05.2020," the May 17 order said.

Since the lockdown was first imposed on March 24, the Centre invoked provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, which is binding on all States.

District magistrates and Superintendents of Police are personally liable for the implementation of the order.

CM YK

AN-NDE

# A medley of emotions as uprooted workers gather at Ramleela Maidan

Chaos and confusion reigned in Ghaziabad as thousands gathered in the hope of finding transport home only to find a melee building up

**ANUJ KUMAR**  
GHAZIABAD

Migrant workers began reaching the Ramleela Maidan here on Sunday, hoping to find conveyance that would take them home to Bihar and the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh. Word had got around on the possibility of securing transport although the district administration was only using the sprawling ground as a designated stop for boarding buses to the railway station on the other side of the road in a densely populated area. By Monday, the crowd of anxious workers, many of whom had started on their long journey home by foot, had swollen to thousands.

**Meagre shelter**  
As the Ramleela Maidan turned into a stage for their struggle, the meagre shelter available at the Ashok Vatika, named after the mythical forest, was hardly enough for workers waiting

under the scorching sun. The food being prepared at the Ram Bhavan also did not hold appeal.

"We are here to go home, not eat meals," said Mohammad Salim, who worked as a cook at a restaurant in Ghaziabad. "I want to go to Kishanganj and have been asked to change lines for the third time since morning. Sometimes they say go here, sometimes there," he added. Under the media's gaze, the centre stage was held by administrative officials struggling to manage the sudden spurt in numbers with a common refrain: "What to do?"

As the workers rushed closer to the stage, officials could be heard talking down, "We will break your leg," followed by the request that they sit under the shade and wait for their turn. But the two available tents were hardly big enough to hold more than 25 persons in them.

Officials were polite and



**Push and shove:** Migrant workers at the Ramleela Maidan on Monday. ■ ANUJ KUMAR

There was no social distancing, and the police made no attempt to enforce it. "The situation is such that our constabulary might use force and it will create a scene," an official said, requesting anonymity. This meant that there were only a few policemen on the ground to point workers in the right direction.

Workers were encouraged to ask questions in the presence of the media. There were some feeble cries of "Murdabad", but as Additional District Magistrate (City) Shailendra Kumar Singh listened to their grievances, there followed shouts of "Zindabad". However, Mr. Singh had no answer when a worker asked him why they were being made to wait

without social distancing.

The announcements from the public address system were not always helpful. An official announced that people without passes for trains could board buses. This created confusion as lines formed in front of buses that were meant to take people with passes to the railway station. The official who made the announce-

ment was censured by his superiors and the public address system was switched off.

## Trains and buses

District Magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey told *The Hindu* that the administration was treating the workers as "bona fide passengers". "We have arranged three trains for Patna, Muzaffarpur and Raxaul in Bihar, and three for Varanasi, Azamgarh and Gorakhpur in eastern Uttar Pradesh. They will take around 9,000 workers daily to their homes. Those who are left will be sent by buses."

The rush, he said, arose because only 25% of those who had gathered were registered on the Jansunwai portal. "The rest are all those who were walking home and were picked by the U.P. police from different borders because the Chief Minister has said no worker should be found

walking. Word has spread in neighbouring States that, somehow, just reach Ghaziabad [to get conveyance for the onward journey]," Mr. Pandey said.

"We are trying to streamline the process. Those who left for Bihar by trains today will be sent by 50 buses [to the railway station]. No pass will be required to board the bus. A list will be prepared that will be sent to the district administration of the destination," he said. The way out, he said, was more trains and buses. "If all of them have to be sent, we should consider starting the regular service," he said.

The Ghaziabad police have also become more cautious about bringing people walking on highways to shelter homes after the Station House Officer of Indirapuram was suspended and an explanation was sought from the Circle Officer when it was found that 16 workers in the Auriyya accident had

boarded the vehicle from a place that fell under the jurisdiction of Indirapuram Police Station.

The phrase "their medical has been done" appeared loosely applicable. "It means their temperature has been taken and they have been asked about symptoms. But by now everybody comes after taking paracetamol," said Sudip Kumar, a member of the Health Department team.

The situation improved by evening with the National Disaster Response Force arriving at the Ramleela Maidan. But soon, migrants workers were seen queuing up for passes for the next morning.

Meanwhile, the district administration reiterated that only persons registered on the Jansunwai portal should turn up at the Ramleela Maidan. Otherwise, their presence would be considered a violation of the lockdown.

## IN BRIEF



**30 migrants injured in two U.P. accidents**

LUCKNOW At least 30 people were injured in two accidents of vehicles carrying migrant workers in Uttar Pradesh on Monday. In Ayodhya, 21 were injured after a pickup carrying them from Mumbai to Siddharthnagar collided with a truck on NH-28. In Hamirpur, a State bus carrying migrant workers from Noida to Mahoba overturned near Badanpur village, said police. Eleven persons sustained minor injuries, said Hamirpur SP Shlok Kumar. The bus was carrying 31 passengers.

## 35 deaths in Gujarat; State govt. eases curbs

AHMEDABAD Amid a spike in the mortality rate, with 35 deaths on Monday increasing the toll to 694, the Gujarat government has relaxed lockdown norms allowing the reopening of shops, State buses, autos and private cabs. Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Monday said that in non-containment zones, shops, private offices, buses, service stations and barber shops would be allowed to reopen from Tuesday. On Monday, 366 new cases and 35 deaths were reported, taking the case tally to 11,746 and 694 deaths.

## Odisha govt. turns TMCs into containment zones

Bhubaneswar The Odisha government on Monday said all temporary medical centres (TMCs), COVID-19 care centres and hospitals will be treated as containment zones apart from those that would be declared in the aftermath of the detection of new cases. Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy said the boundary area of the zones will be decided by local authorities and administered through the Panchayati Raj institutions during the fourth phase of the lockdown till May 31. Meanwhile, 48 new COVID-19 cases were detected in the State, taking the total to 876.

## 55 policemen, 5 doctors among fresh cases in J&K

SRINAGAR Fifty-five policemen and five doctors were among the 106 fresh cases of the COVID-19 infection in Jammu and Kashmir. Two more deaths have pushed the toll to 15. "Out of 106 new cases, 12 were detected in the Jammu division and 94 in the Kashmir division. The total number of positive cases in J&K is 1,289," said a government spokesperson. Out of the 1,289 positive cases, 665 were active and 609 have recovered. "Till date, 1,14,788 travellers and persons in contact with suspected cases have been identified for surveillance," the spokesperson added.

# Will extend lockdown, won't impose night curfew: Mamata

Bengal CM, however, urges people not to venture out between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said the State would extend the lockdown till May 31 following the notification of the Centre, but would not impose night curfew.

Speaking to prespersons at the State Secretariat here, she urged people not to venture out of their homes between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. and warned of police action. Curfews were imposed under extreme circumstances such as riots and her government would not impose night curfew as directed by the Centre, she said.

Ms. Banerjee announced that apart from the 105 trains requisitioned, her government would request the Railways for another 120 Shramik Special trains in the next few days to bring back migrant workers. "Already, 16 trains have arrived and about 2.5 to 3 lakh workers have returned by trains and buses. We are planning for



**Safety first:** Workers spraying disinfectant in an area where a patient had tested positive for COVID-19 in Siliguri. ■ AFP

10 trains to arrive every day, but it cannot be done at once. The State needs time for planning."

Containment areas, she said, would be further divided into three categories – affected, buffer and clean zones. Accordingly, relaxations would be allowed, she said. All shops, except in shopping malls, and district buses would be operational from May 21. A committee of civic and police officials would look into the resumption of roadside shops and those in markets. The com-

## First flight arrives

The Chief Minister said the first repatriation flight from Bangladesh arrived in Kolkata on Monday. The flight, with about 169 passengers, arrived from Dhaka at 12.30

p.m. The passengers, including students and stranded tourists, would have to go to institutional quarantine for a stipulated time.

While emphasising that there was muted celebration for 'Poila Boishak' (Bengali New Year) this year because of the lockdown, Ms. Banerjee urged the faithful to avoid any gatherings during Id-ul-Fitr.

Referring to the economic package by the Centre, the Chief Minister said that it had not been of any help to the State. On the Centre's decision to increase the borrowing limit of States from 3% to 5% of the gross State domestic product (GSDP) in 2020-21, she said that it came with a number of riders where the States had to "give up on its autonomy".

West Bengal would not give up its autonomy, the Chief Minister said.

"We have not got anything from the Centre to help us in the management of COVID-19," she added.



**Tight control:** The police detaining migrants after a clash with security personnel in Ahmedabad on Monday. ■ PTI

# Migrant workers and police clash in Gujarat

Workers gather at IIM's new campus

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AHMEDABAD

Gujarat continues to see clashes between restless migrant workers who want to return to their native places and the police.

The police said that they rushed to the spot following complaints about workers throwing stones on the road in front of the new campus of the prestigious business school. More than 50 workers have been detained.

On Sunday, violence broke near Rajkot in an industrial area where police and migrant workers clashed over the issue of being sent back to their native States. Ever since the lockdown was imposed, Gujarat has seen around a dozen incidents of violence between migrant workers and the police in Surat, Gandhidham, Rajkot and Ahmedabad.

Nearly 100 migrant workers gathered near the construction site and started demanding food, wages and that they be sent back to

**PARADIP PORT TRUST**

e-Tender-cum-e-Auction Notice

A e-Tender-cum-e-Auction Notice invites for "Allotment of Port land about 58 acres on 60 (sixty) years long term lease basis for setting up of Port based capital intensive industries including Tank Farms as a part of MMLIP under Paradip Smart Industrial Port City Plan." The date of availability of documents in the website is from 14.05.2020 to 24.06.2020. For details please log on the website : <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>

Dy. Secretary  
PPT/PR/17/20-21  
Dt : 14.05.20

**ONGC Petro additions Limited**

Reg. office: 4th Floor, 35, Nutan Bharat Co-operative Housing Society Limited, R.C. Dutta Road, Alkapuri, Vadodara - 390007, Gujarat, Ph.: 0265 6192600, CIN No.: U2320952J2006PLC060282

**TENDER NOTICE**

ONGC Petro additions Limited (OPAL) invites the sealed tender under Two Bid System for following: Tender Number : 2020C00213, Tender Description : Procurement of critical/single line L.T. motor for OPAL, Dahej complex. Tender sale period : 15.05.2020 to 09.06.2020 till 14.00 Hrs. Closing date and time for bid Submission : 09.06.2020 at 14:00 Hrs.

The tender document can be downloaded from [www.opalindia.in](http://www.opalindia.in). For other details of this tender including corrigendum if any, Bidders should regularly visit OPAL website ([www.opalindia.in](http://www.opalindia.in)) for the latest information in this regard. In case of exigencies OPAL at its option may decide to extend tender sale bid closing/ opening date/ time in future, which will be posted on the above referred website for information.

**idco** **ODISHA** **Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

No. IDCO/HO-MIS/A-10019/04/2019/V-1/ 7342 Date : 14.05.2020

IDCO invites Request For Proposal (RFP) from the eligible bidders to participate in the tendering process for rendering Consultancy Service for development of Online Land Management System and Automated Building Plan Approval System in IDCO. The interested bidders can download the RFP documents from IDCO website [www.idco.in](http://www.idco.in) from 20.05.2020 to 16.06.2020 up to 5.00 P.M. Response to RFP should be sent by Registered Post / Speed Post only so as to reach the Dy.General Manager (MIS), IDCO, IDCO Towers, Janpath, Bhubaneswar-22 on or before 18.06.2020 up to 5.00 P.M.

SI.	Name of the Work	Cost of Tender Paper	EMD
1	Consultancy Service for Online Land Management System and Automated Building Plan Approval System in IDCO	Rs.11,800/-	Rs.2,00,000/-

IDCO reserves the right to accept / cancel / reject any or all the Response to RFP without assigning any reason thereof.

Dy. General Manager (MIS)  
OIPR-14003/11/014/2021

**KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.**

(Department of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Kerala)

THYCAUD P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695014, Tel: 0471-2945646, 2945600 Fax: 2945647 website: [www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in](http://www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in), e-mail: [mj@kmscl.kerala.gov.in](mailto:mj@kmscl.kerala.gov.in) CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616

**QUOTATION NOTICE**

In view of the Covid - 19 pandemic Online Quotation are invited for the supply of Drugs per the quantity mentioned in Annexure -I on behalf of Karunya Community Pharmacy, Kerala Medical Services Corporation Limited.

Quotation documents and Annexures related to the bidding process can be downloaded from the website [www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in](http://www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in).

Last Date of Online Submission : 26.05.2020.

Sd/- Managing Director(Tender Inviting Authority)

**RAIL WHEEL FACTORY**

Yelahanka, Bangalore - 560 064  
Website: [www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in)

E-Auction Notice No. RWF/GSD/Sales Section/2020-21/01 Dated: 13-05-2020

On behalf of the PRESIDENT OF INDIA, Principal Materials Manager, RWF invites E-Auction for the sale of scrap items (Ferrous/Non-Ferrous/Miscellaneous and Others), online through the website <http://www.ideps.gov.in>. E-Auction dates are given below: 29.05.2020, 10.06.2020, 20.06.2020, 30.06.2020, 10.07.2020, 20.07.2020, 30.07.2020 E-auction catalogue can be viewed on our website [www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in) or [www.ideps.gov.in](http://www.ideps.gov.in), before 7 Days (Seven Days) from the date of E-auction. For detailed tender notice, please refer RWF website.

DY.CMM/DEPOT

**Government of Kerala**

Published Tenders from 11-05-2020 to 17-05-2020

Directorate of Medical Education

Tender ID: 2020 DME\_356745\_1 \* Principal, Government Medical College, Kollam \* Providing Facility Management Service For The Operation And \* Closing Date: 30-May-2020 \* PAC: Rs13107840

Visit <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in> for more details.

Ro.No:11-17/May/2020/PRD(N)11

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)/ REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)**

**KERALA STATE TRANSPORT PROJECT - II (KSTP - II)**

Consulting Services for Technical Assistance for Enhancing climate resilience of Kerala's road network

Ref-No: BMZ 201865266/KFW505312

Prequalification Ref: International, open Tender for Consulting Services for Climate-Resilient Reconstruction after Flooding in Kerala

**Project Measures:** The heavy monsoon of 2018 brought widespread flooding to several district of Kerala damaging about 2,000 km of state highways and 13,000 km of major district roads across 14 districts. PWD is considering developing a more sustainable and climate resilient asset stock in medium to long term. For that purpose, approximately 700 km of roads will be selected following prioritization study and Detailed Project Reports preparation. The "building back better" principles will be applied for the rehabilitation of these roads.

**Requested Services:** The services requested under this assignment concern the technical assistance including: Vulnerability Assessment of Kerala's Core Road Network, Climate Resilience Audit of Road Engineering Design, Integrating Road Maintenance Management System with Climate Data, Climate Resilience and Disaster Planning Strategy and Design Standards for Climate Works, Development of Guidelines for "Vulnerability Assessment and Work Program of Priority Measures" for Road Network & Training and Knowledge Dissemination.

The Project Director, KSTP now invites eligible Consultants to indicate their interest in providing services. The prequalification of experienced Consultants is subject to the regulations contained in the "Guidelines for the Assignment of Consultants in Financial Cooperation with Partner Countries" (see [www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de](http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de)). The contract will be awarded to an independent Consultancy Firm or association of independent Consultancy Firms with proven experience in similar assignment. The Consultant, or lead Consultant in case of association, must show a annual minimum turnover of 100 million INR (over the last 3 years). Each member shall have an average (over the last 3 years) current ratio above 1.03.

**The Application of prequalification must be delivered to the address below by 20th June 2020 – 16 00hr.**

The applications received by the above time will be opened on the same day at 16 30 hr in the office.

The Project Director, Kerala State Transport Project (KSTP), Project Management Team, T.C. 11/39, Sree Balaji Building, Keston Road, Nanthancode, Kowdiar P.O., Thiruvananthapuram – 695003 Tel: 0471-2318985/8946 Email: [pdkspt@gmail.com](mailto:pdkspt@gmail.com), [cepmtkstp@gmail.com](mailto:cepmtkstp@gmail.com)

The RFA/EoI documents will be available in our websites [www.keralapwd.gov.in](http://www.keralapwd.gov.in) or [www.kstp.org.in](http://www.kstp.org.in). For further information and to obtain the Prequalification documents, interested Consultants are invited to contact the PD, KSTP. Email: [pdkspt@gmail.com](mailto:pdkspt@gmail.com) & [cepmtkstp@gmail.com](mailto:cepmtkstp@gmail.com) with a copy to Mr Michael Nogues, Email: <a

INTERVIEW | PETER HOTEZ

## 'Moving into summer months, India could get hit very hard'

U.S. virologist expresses concern about India's crowded urban areas in low-income neighbourhoods where people are forced to live in proximity

NARAYAN LAKSHMAN

*As the world continues to grapple with the debilitating human toll and economic consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Peter Hotez, Dean for the National School of Tropical Medicine and a Professor at the Departments of Paediatrics and Molecular Virology and Microbiology at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, speaks about the state of play in the battle against the novel coronavirus.*

What is the current situation in the U.S., where President Donald Trump recently said fatalities could reach 1,00,000. Why did the numbers spin out of control this way and is there hope that the curve can be flattened?

■ There is quite a bit of concern here. It really took off because the virus probably entered the U.S. earlier than we suspected. A national emergency was not declared until the middle of March. It is likely that the virus en-

tered the U.S. in early February, back-tracing it. That means that transmission went on for about six weeks before any efforts for social distancing were implemented. We know from the models that it produces tragedy and makes the difference between having thousands of patients in your intensive care units and local hospitals, versus having just a handful.

What treatment options could have a scalable impact? We are hearing

hopeful accounts of Remdesivir...

■ Vaccines offer the greatest promise for protecting large populations at risk, like in India. The problem with vaccines is also that they are the highest bar to achieve because with a vaccine you are generally injecting healthy individuals to prevent them from getting sick. So, you have to be absolutely pristine, in not only showing that the vaccines work, but also your safety profile. That is what takes time. In the meantime, there are some new, promising treatments on the horizon.

I am very excited, for instance, about convalescent plasma. It is a relatively low-tech solution which involves identifying individuals who have recovered from their COVID-19 and have antibo-



Vaccines offer the greatest promise for protecting large populations at risk, like in India

dies. The problem is that it is hard to scale because it requires you having a base of patients with the illness.

In India, while the number of infections continue to rise, the government moved aggressively to impose a nationwide lockdown.

Could the fact that we are not seeing the sort of fatality numbers that you did in the U.S. be down to India facing a different coronavirus strain?

■ I do not think it is going to turn out to be a coronavirus strain issue. It is possible that this is a new virus pathogen. But I think it is most likely because India did implement some social distancing early on. So, India may have mitigated the worst aspects of this.

But I would say that we should not be complacent, because I am still worried for India. The reason for that is that you are moving into the summer months and we know that sometimes in tropical countries, the global south, or in places like South Asia, Africa, Australia and South America, sometimes

for influenza the seasonality is inverted. I think you have to assume the potential for things to get much worse as you head towards July and August. I am particularly worried about India's crowded urban areas in low-income neighbourhoods, where people are forced to live in proximity, including in Mumbai. I am holding my breath because I still do think India could get hit very hard.

Should we be worried about reports from New York about COVID-19-positive children succumbing to symptoms that resemble Kawasaki disease?

■ It caught us a bit off-guard because in China we did not hear much about paediatric syndromes. Our understanding was that children were mostly handling the virus

pretty well, not getting very sick, with the exception of about 10% of infants. These symptoms first came out of the United Kingdom and then we saw them in New York, a syndrome that looks like vasculitis, an inflammation of the blood vessels, linked to this virus, maybe later on in the course of the illness. This Kawasaki-disease-like syndrome is still not common – there have been about 100 cases in New York.

We are also seeing, unfortunately, a lot of cases in the U.S. among adults, of clotting defects, which we are trying to understand. We are seeing lots of different types of thromboses, or clotting of the blood, leading to blockage, which in turn lead to strokes, pulmonary emboli, and may be associated with coronary artery thrombosis, giving people heart attacks.

If there is one broad lesson of the COVID-19 pandemic for developing countries such as India, is it to be better prepared for future events of this sort in terms of creating a sufficient pandemic preparedness?

■ This is not unique to India. Every nation on the planet has to learn some lessons from this. But things will change after this pandemic. India has an enormous amount to offer. I continue to be impressed by the quality of some of the universities in India.

I am impressed with its capacity for innovation, especially around vaccines. India is an example of what a country can do even despite its levels of poverty, in terms of over-achieving and having an impact in terms of pandemic preparedness.

## Centre warns States against diluting curbs

Follow benchmarks in declaring infection zones: Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has asked the States not to dilute the restrictions imposed by the Ministry in fresh guidelines, asserting that certain other activities may be prohibited or other restrictions imposed as deemed necessary on the basis of a ground-level analysis of the situation.

In a letter to all States, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said despite widespread relaxations in lockdown restrictions under the revised guidelines, the States and Union Territories could not dilute the restrictions imposed in the Ministry's guidelines.

"They may prohibit certain other activities or impose restrictions, as deemed necessary on the basis of



Safety marks: Railway officials stamping a Delhi returnee for 'home quarantine' in Secunderabad. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

ground level analysis of the situation," it said.

Further, it was communicated that States must take into consideration the benchmarks and thresholds indicated in the revised guidelines issued by the Health Ministry, while delineating zones at local level.

Considerable relaxations were allowed in the MHA guidelines for Lockdown 4.0 that will be in force till May 31. Schools, malls, metro and air services remain suspended while special trains have been allowed.

Centre and respective State guidelines at local level for the convenience of the public.

Considerable relaxations were allowed in the MHA guidelines for Lockdown 4.0 that will be in force till May 31. Schools, malls, metro and air services remain suspended while special trains have been allowed.

## Call for WHO probe into virus origin

African group of nations extends support for India-backed resolution at the WHA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

An India-backed draft resolution at the 73rd session of the World Health Assembly received a big boost on Monday when the African group of nations extended support for the motion which seeks global investigation into the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The development came soon after the Assembly convened in Geneva where the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the global body will look into the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I will initiate an independent evaluation at the earliest appropriate moment to review experience gained and lessons learned to make recommendations to improve national and global pandemic preparedness and response," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO.

WHO D-G Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus addressing members at the opening of the World Health Assembly in Geneva. ■ AFP

The assurance, however, is at variance from the draft resolution, which was earlier backed by WHO's 62 countries and sought to identify scientific "events" that could have contributed to the spread of the novel coronavirus and the consequent COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendation is part of the text jointly conceived by Australia and the European Union. It aims to evaluate possible food and animal-re-

lated sources that could have led to the spread of the deadly pandemic. Informed sources said that given the growing number of co-sponsors, the likelihood of a vote on the motion was lessened. The language of the motion seeks to delve deep into the origin of the virus.

"The Seventy-third World Health Assembly requests the Director General to ... identify the zoonotic source of the virus and the route of

Central govt. offices to work at 50% strength

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Personnel Ministry has said in an order all Central government officers shall ensure 50% work strength and officers at the level of Deputy Secretary and above shall attend office on all working days.

The revised work guidelines were issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) on Monday.

"For regulating the attendance of officers and staff below the level of Deputy Secretary, all Heads of the Department shall prepare a roster to ensure that 50% of officers and staff attend office on every alternate day. Those officers/staff who are not required to attend office on a particular day shall work from home and should be available on telephone and electronic means of communications at all times," it said.

## ICMR revises viral testing strategy

All symptomatic, high-risk persons to be tested within five to 10 days

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Monday released a revised COVID-19 testing strategy, which includes testing of all individuals with symptomatic influenza-like illness (ILI) with a history of international travel in the past 14 days.

The other key groups that have been listed as high priority for testing include the frontline workers involved in containment and mitigation of COVID-19, all hospitalised patients who develop ILI symptoms and all returnee and migrants with such symptoms within seven days of illness.

The other group in the category includes asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of a confirmed case to be tested once between



Essential steps: A health professional collecting swab from a boy in a residential area in Kolkata, in this file photo. ■ REUTERS

day five and day 10 of coming into contact.

The new guidelines warn that no emergency procedure (including deliveries) should be delayed for lack of test, but samples can be sent

with acute respiratory infection with 38 degree Celsius fever or more than that and cough, while SARI was acute respiratory infection with 38 degree Celsius fever or more than that and the patient requiring hospitalisation.

PCR test only

The ICMR said all testing in the categories mentioned in the guidelines, was recommended by real-time RT-PCR test only.

In the previous set of guidelines issued on April 9, the ICMR cleared testing only for symptomatic health care workers. The changed strategy allows testing also for migrant labourers and those being brought back into India from abroad.

The ICMR said in a release that it had so far tested 23,02,792 samples.

## Fasting, feasting



No tasting: Bakers wearing protective gear prepare cookies ahead of Id celebrations in Srinagar on Monday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

## USAID to fund 200 ventilators for India

The devices will arrive in May and June, but the final delivery schedule will be notified next week

SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI

India will take delivery of 200 ventilators donated by the U.S. within the next month, government sources said on Monday.

The ventilators, which will be paid for by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), will arrive in May and June and the final delivery schedule notified next week, the sources said.

While the government has not commented on the value of the donation, it is likely to be funded by an additional grant of \$3 million that the



Timely aid: The ventilators were built for use in the U.S. but are now being repurposed to India. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

USAID made last month. In a statement on April 16, the U.S. government said the funds through USAID would help "mitigate the spread of COVID-19" and focus on financing healthcare access.

The ventilators, which were built for use in the U.S., are being "repurposed" for

donations to several countries, including India.

Modi thanks Trump

"India has been a great partner to us for quite some time, and I'm encouraged here about the ventilators to India. It's one of the several countries I noted that will be getting ventilators, because, you know, this President has done so well on ventilators – 100,000 [manufactured] in 100 days – that we are able to repurpose them and then send them around the world," White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said on Saturday.

(With inputs from Bindu Shajan Perappadan)

Thanking Mr. Trump, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, "More power to the India-US friendship. In such times, it's always important for nations to work together and do as much as possible to make our world healthier and free from COVID-19."

According to the Health Ministry, India has 18,855 ventilators for COVID-19 patients at present, while the government's Empower group tasked with COVID-19 response said about 60,000 more had been ordered.

(With inputs from Bindu Shajan Perappadan)

## U.P. accepts Priyanka's offer to ply 1,000 buses for migrants

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday accepted Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's offer of 1,000 buses to transport stranded migrant workers to their homes in the State.

In an order signed by Awanshi Awasthi, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, the government communicated to Ms. Vadra's personal secretary Sandeep Singh that her proposal had been accepted. The government's deci-

sion came two days after Ms. Vadra had written to CM Yogi Adityanath, requesting him to allow the Congress to run 500 buses each from the Ghaziabad border in Ghaziabad and the Noida border to

transport migrant workers to their native places.

"All costs will be borne by the All India Congress Committee," she wrote.

However, the government maintained silence and did not give her the required permission even as 500 buses from Bharatpur and Alwar in Rajasthan reached the Bahaj-Goverdhan border near Mathura.

Meanwhile, Mr. Singh wrote to Mr. Awasthi, informing him that the buses can start plying from Wednesday and that details of drivers have been provided.



Yogi Adityanath

## Uber unveils set of safety features

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

Uber on Monday announced a series of new safety features across their various product offerings in view of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

The key policy that the company announced for India would be the requirement to wear masks or face covers for both driver and riders. This would be implemented through features on the ride hailing app.

Among the new features is a photo-based verification of drivers every time they log in. Drivers will be required to click a photo wearing a mask and the new technology does not allow the photo to be clicked unless the camera detects the mask. Sachin Kansal, Global Senior Director, Product Management, Uber, said that they had recently developed this technology and it would help ensure that there is enforcement of their policy. "This will have to be done every time they log in and go online," he said.

The other notable feature is that rides can be cancelled by either the driver or the rider if the other is not wearing a mask. The option has been added among the reasons for cancelling a trip. Even while rating a driver or a rider, not wearing a mask or face cover has been listed among reasons for a poor rating, if either removes the mask during the journey.

UberPool will continue to remain suspended.

## CBSE exam timetable released

Class 12 exams were affected by lockdown and Class 10 tests by Delhi riots

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

**Testing time:** In this photo dated March 6, 2020, students waiting at a CBSE exam centre in New Delhi. •BIBEK CHETTRI

The Class 12 examinations of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) postponed nationwide because of COVID-19 and Class 10 exams in northeast Delhi affected by riots will be held from July 1 to 15.

Issuing safety instructions for the candidates, the CBSE said they should carry hand sanitiser in a transparent bottle, cover the mouth and nose with a mask or cloth and follow physical distancing norms.

Parents should guide their children about the precautions to be taken and also ensure they are not sick.

The Class 12 exams across the country will start with home economics on July 1, Hindi elective and Hindi core on July 2, informatics practices and computer science

(both old and new) and information technology on July 7, business studies on July 9, biotechnology on July 10, geography on July 11 and sociology on July 14. For north-

## Unknown sources funding parties'

ADR report says 54% of the income of 23 regional entities is from such donors

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Biju Janata Dal received 85% of its income from electoral bonds, the highest among regional parties. Only parties with an income of over ₹30 crore were considered

Party	Total income (₹ cr.)	Donations from electoral bonds (₹ cr.)	Donations from electoral bonds (%)
BJD	249.3	213.5	85.6
JD(S)	42.9	35.3	82.2
YSRCP	181.1	99.8	55.1
Shiv Sena	135.5	60.4	44.6
TDP	115.0	27.5	23.9

ports, the ADR said. The total income declared by the 23 parties was ₹885.956 crore, of which ₹257.14 crore or 29.02% came from known sources (donations declared

to the ECI and Rs.147.54 crore or 16.65% came from other known sources such as membership fees, bank interest etc. A total of ₹481.27 crore or

east Delhi district, the Class 12 physics exam will be held on July 3, accountancy on July 4, chemistry on July 6, English elective-a, English elective-c and English core on July 8, political science on July 14, and mathematics, economics, history and biology on July 15.

The Class 10 exams in northeast Delhi will start on July 1 with social science. The exams for science theory and science without practical will be held on July 2, Hindi course-a and Hindi course-b on July 10, and English communicative and English language and literature on July 15.

The cause of the fire in Inderganj, which broke out at 10 a.m., is yet to be ascertained. The paint shop and a godown inside the building had caught fire," said Sambra Singh Tomar, Additional Superintendent of Police, West Gwalior.

The fire also enveloped the main entrance to the building. "People were trapped as there were no other gates or windows," Mr. Tomar said.

Ten fire tenders, includ-

## 7 killed as fire breaks out in Gwalior apartment complex

Four women and three children were among the victims

STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

**Rescue mission:** Fire department personnel outside the gutted building in Gwalior on Monday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ing those from an Air Force station nearby, were moved to the spot. "It took more than a hour to tame the fire," he said. The condition of the injured children was stable.

Chief Minister Shivraj

Singh Chouhan wrote on Twitter, "I pray that God gives the departed souls a place at his holy feet and the family of the deceased gets the strength to bear the deep sorrow."

## Sanitation and health workers felicitated

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Health and sanitation workers were felicitated by a group of residents in south Kolkata for their untiring service during the lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phalgumi Mandal, an accredited social health activist (ASHA), said she has "never been so happy as [I] was never felicitated [before]."

Health activist Tapash Pramanik; Rekha Singh, who cleans roads, and Animesh Dey, who works for the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, were among those felicitated by the residents of Mandeville Gardens area.

"They are special as they did a special job," said Bharti Biswas, a resident. "While we are relaxing at home, they are working outside risking their lives," said Ms. Biswas.

The residents of ward number 68 gave sweets and red roses to the health and sanitation workers, and garlanded them.

Elriedy residents, who could not come out of their apartments, showered them with marigold petals from the balcony or rooftops.

"Everybody in Mandeville Gardens came out, participated in the felicitation one way or the other, acknowledging the relentless service of these women and men, who serve us throughout the year but particularly now when we all are in dire straits," said ward councillor Sudarsha Mukherjee.

## Venkaiah calls for change in attitude to survive pandemic

Vice-President says adopting a new normal is the answer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Welcoming the latest relaxations for lockdown 4.0 announced on Sunday, Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, in a long reflective note on his social media account, has said life can't be lived for long in confinement and just as people are living with HIV virus that has no vaccine by bringing in behavioural changes, we need to learn to live with coronavirus too by bringing in attitudinal changes.

"What if the present coronavirus is going to stay with us for longer than expected as is being suggested by some experts and senior officials of the World Health Organisation? Adopting a new normal is the answer. HIV virus has been around for a



Venkaiah Naidu

long time without a vaccine and people are coping with it by changing habits," Mr. Naidu wrote in a long piece on Facebook.

Mr. Naidu said the pandemic should be used as a course corrector: "Stacked with better tools to fight the epidemics than when the pestilence struck humanity earlier and empowered with gene editing, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data etc, man was seeking to play God."

This outbreak, he said, had shaken the fundamentals of living by oneself and highlighted the need for living in harmony with nature and fellow humans. He observed that "The invisible microbe once again proved that life can change very quickly. It brought into full play the uncertainty that can co-sail with life."

Mr. Naidu stressed that the corona challenge is more a civilisational issue than that of individual lives. He suggested a 12-point new normal of living during the "Corona Times," including behavioural changes such as wearing a mask and maintaining physical distance and hygiene.

He has also stressed on the need to avoid prejudices against fellow citizens.

## 'Govt. must pay up advertising dues'

INS tells SC that employers' plight could result in breakdown of media industry

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Newspaper Society (INS), the central organisation for the Press in the country, has told the Supreme Court that governments should pay up the hundreds of crores of rupees it owes in advertisement money to newspapers.

It also blamed the governments for issuing "hypocritical and discriminatory" advisories asking private establishments to pay full salaries to their employees during the COVID-19 lockdown, especially when the State – a "model employer" – had itself cut salaries at a time of calamity of global proportions.

As per various industry estimates, Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) owes between ₹1,500 crore and ₹1,800 crore to various media com-

panies. A large chunk of this, ₹800-900 crore is owed to the print industry alone.

Such amounts have been outstanding for several months and there is little prospect of realising the same any time soon," the INS said.

The newspaper industry organisation, which was replying to petitions from journalists' unions objecting to some media houses' introduction of salary and job cuts during the lockdown, blamed the government for the "drastically reduced advertising much prior to the crisis". In fact, the INS sub-

mitted there had been "calls by political parties to stop government advertising altogether in order to save money".

### Broadcasters' plea

"There have been no packages or measures announced for news broadcasters by the Government, even as their business has collapsed," the National Broadcasters Association (NBA) submitted to the apex court, in a separate affidavit.

Both the INS and the NBA were criticising advisories by the Union Ministries of Home and Labour and some

State governments that private employers should continue to pay full wages to their employees during the lockdown. The issue came up in the apex court when a joint petition was filed by the National Alliance of Journalists, Delhi Union of Journalists and Brihanmumbai Union of Journalists challenging salary cuts and even sacking of employees by some media organisations.

Observing that the advisories only cast a moral or humanitarian obligation and not a legal liability on media houses, the INS argued that through these advisories, the governments had overreached and unduly assumed authority not granted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

Disregarding the advisories could result in the breakdown of the media industry, the INS said.

## SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12938

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# A whole new norm

Is working from home, a familiar concept in the IT industry, sustainable for the long run during the COVID-19 pandemic for the rest of the working nation?

DHIRAJ SHETTY

As we begin preparing to take advantage of the relaxation in lockdown to resume work, revive our businesses, or resurrect our social lives, companies and employees are trying to visualise the future of the workplace.

The ongoing lockdowns to flatten the COVID-19 curve, changed the way people work, especially those in the organised sector. A majority of employees in the organised sector continued to work during the lockdown, but from home (WFH). While the IT sector is familiar with the concept, this is a first for employees in other sectors. Working from home is attractive to professionals, as they save time and money on the daily commute, eat home-cooked meals and stay close to their loved ones, but it has not really taken off in a big way in India.

Typically, when IT employees work from home, a significant number continue to operate from the office. Employees of a few companies did work entirely from home, but the number was not significant compared to the size of the organised sector. The lockdown changed all of this.

that the workplace is likely to change. *The Hindu* set out to understand what employers and employees learnt about their work and about working from home during the lockdowns.

#### Tech at the centre

Pratik Kumar\*, a veteran of the software sector, believes companies heavily leveraging the cost advantage will definitely look at the option of allowing more people to work from home to save on real estate expenses. However, he warns that while this concept sounds good in conversations, the reality is something else. For one, India lacks reliable power supply, which is not conducive for companies working on mission-critical projects. Second, data leaks are a distinct possibility, and hence, a deterrent to allowing employees to work from home. Data security and client privacy issues are deal-breakers for companies in the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector.

The lockdown posed a huge challenge for companies operating in or catering to this sector.

Danske IT, a subsidiary of Denmark-headquartered Danske Bank, is among the

This has given companies an opportunity to evaluate the pros and cons of this concept from a relatively long-term perspective and sparked off speculation

## Beyond reality

Why a sneak peek at Unreal Engine 5 has gone viral, exciting gamers around the globe



Last week, Unreal Engine broke the gaming tech Internet with a first look at Unreal Engine 5. In a blog post on May 13 on the Unreal Engine website, it is stated, "One of our goals in this next generation is to achieve photorealism on par with movie CG and real life, and put it within practical reach of development teams of all sizes through highly productive tools and content libraries."

The video that has since gone viral is a real-time demo of Lumen in the Land of Nanite, running live on PlayStation 5. The blog post explains that two new technologies make up the upgraded look of the gaming experience, the first being Nanite in which "virtualised micropolygon geometry frees artists to create as much geometric detail as the eye can see. Nanite virtualised geometry means that film-quality source art comprising hundreds of millions or billions of polygons can be imported directly into Unreal Engine and it just works." Then there is Lumen, "a fully dynamic global illumination solution that immediately reacts to scene and light changes. The system renders diffuse interreflection with infinite bounces and indirect specular reflections in huge, detailed environments. Artists and designers can create more dynamic scenes using Lumen, for example, changing the sun angle for time of day, turning on a flashlight, or blowing a hole in the ceiling, and indirect lighting will adapt accordingly."

The blog post says that, in order to support vastly larger and more detailed scenes than previous generations, PlayStation 5 provides a vast increase in storage bandwidth. However, Unreal Engine 5 will be available in preview in early 2021, and in full release late in 2021, supporting next-generation consoles, current-generation consoles, PC, Mac, iOS, and Android.

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

CM YK



IMAGING M ARIVARASU

companies that claim to have passed this test with flying colours. Their 1,400-strong team, comprising technologists and people in support functions, began working from home. Deval Shah, managing director (India), Danske IT, says, "A crisis is a real test for how quickly companies can adapt to evolving situations. Even as we managed to make sure operations continued smoothly, the lockdown gave us an opportunity to relook the work-from-home option. We observed that productivity was not affected. Work-life balance improved for some colleagues, and the company contributed to reducing traffic congestion. We also successfully on-boarded new recruits."

Senior HR professional Paul Simon\* says, "Most tasks can be accomplished virtually using technology: hiring, on-boarding, training, etcetera."

While one would expect that such success stories and positive feedback would prompt more companies to consider offering the work-from-home option to employees, many are, on the contrary, wary of the concept. Kaushik Dasgupta, from Accenture India, explains, "WFH has always been a taboo in India. It is believed that employees working from home are not as committed to the organisation as the ones who are working in an office. As a result, WFH policies in most companies are often rigid. Often, you are allowed to work from home only if you have an urgent need to be at home at that time."

Another concern is of employees taking up a second job or freelance assignments, which could bring down their productivity. Paul\* says, "There is a feeling of isolation in teams where close collaboration is required. Office culture, the energy and the vibe when coming together in the office space, is missing. Plus, there is a possibility of meeting fatigue over video calls when compared to meeting in person, especially with larger teams."

Big picture: a company thrives on a shared goal, ideals and work culture. These are highly motivating factors for an employee. Large companies invest a lot of time and effort in creating a work culture that brings out the best in employees. This cannot be created, or sustained, when employees work from home.

Successful companies

can go to great lengths to perpetuate their work culture. One global software giant with operations in India is known for offering a fun and progressive workplace that is considered a benchmark in the IT sector. The company engages many vendors in India. To make sure that vendors do not compromise on the quality of the work place in their quest to squeeze the maximum revenue out of each contract, the company insists on one condition: all employees of the vendor working on the company's projects must be based in its campuses for the duration of the projects.

#### The right space

Rutwik Datta\*, a manager in a US-based insurance company, which has teams in various parts of India, shares, "Metrics show that people are more productive at home. At the same time, there are question marks over compliance requirements and privacy issues when it comes to employees working from shared apartments." He sees an opportunity to reduce a company's carbon footprint and possibilities of savings in real estate, which can be better used for employee engagement.

**Data leaks are a distinct possibility, and hence, a deterrent to allowing employees to work from home. Data security and client privacy issues are deal-breakers for companies in the BFSI sector**

He suggests why Indian youth may prefer to work from offices: "Young people in India, especially those outside metropolitan cities, want to work in offices. Possibly because they are not comfortable working with the family looking over their shoulder, they like the atmosphere in an office, the facilities and team activities are a novelty for them and they have AC all the time," he says.

So post-lockdown, one can expect some major overhauls, such as the framework of office spaces' design may evolve to suit physical distancing and easy disinfection routines, or even a change in the number of people on-site versus WFH. The IT industry paved the way for this shift, and it is best we remain vigilant of the nuances to keep the COVID-19 curve flat.

\*Names changed to protect identity

JULIAN ALMEIDA

#### GEARS TACTICS

**DEVELOPER:** Splash Damage, The Coalition  
**PUBLISHER:** Xbox Game Studios  
**PRICE:** ₹1299 on Steam, ₹3999 from Windows 10 store, available free to GamePass members on Xbox

When one thinks of turn-based tactics games, one may expect fond memories of X-Com, Nintendo's Fire Emblem series or The Banner Saga. Tactics-style battle systems have also invaded role-playing games like the Divinity: Original Sin series and Wasteland 2. While on the surface it may seem boring, playing a game where you have to wait a turn and you are limited to only a few action points per turn, this genre is engaging, with a chess-like strategy coupled with team management elements. It is a place you would least expect a fast-paced action game that practically invented the chainsaw gun execution mechanic... yet Gears of War feels at home as a Tactics game.

**Into the Gears-verse**  
Serving as a prequel to the original Gears of War, Gears Tactics is set around Emergence Day, years before we get to meet Marcus Fenix and his crew. The enemy Locust Horde has emerged from below the surface of the planet Sera, setting off a war that would carry on through several sequels. You play as war hero Sergeant Gabriel Diaz, a familiar name who, along with his team, has to take on an evil Locust mastermind, Ukkon. The plot is quintessential Gears of War, as your Coalition of Gears (COG) characters take on chunky Locust characters in impressive Unreal Engine-rendered cut scenes that are on par with Gears of War 5's incredible graphics.

While I love the 'perma-



## Well executed

The action-heavy Gears of War has stepped into the tactical strategy game arena, bringing their signature combat experience to Gears Tactics



death' feature – hallmark feature of all tactics games – I cannot stomach the death of a hero character or a created character into whom I have

put so much effort. Fortunately, Gears Tactics keeps that feature only for higher difficulties, and you can revive your fallen heroes or sol-



Battle-ready Screen shots from Gears Tactics ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

diers whenever you want, immediately making this game more accessible and fun.

The conflicts of Sera have been richly fleshed out in several games, which makes Gears Tactics easier to jump into; the premise is simple, you move your team across a battlefield stage, taking out your enemies. Once your turns are up, the enemy gets to act. Taking a page out of X-Com, players can use the overwatch ability to give you a free shot if the enemy moves into your line of sight. Though the enemy can use the same ability, which can be deadly if not careful.

#### Keep it moving

In true Gears fashion, you can send out your units to execute downed enemies for an extra turn, which could turn the tide of battle. The game does a great job of keeping that momentum going, to let you push forward in aggressive waves. The Locusts themselves are challenging and the game occasionally throws dif-

ferent enemy types at you, so forming strategies is key especially on gigantic bosses, where you have to figure out their weaknesses.

While it is not as deep as X-Com, it is a lot easier to get into for new players, with a lot of side missions you can do to get some loot. The interface could be a bit more friendly, as these games are heavily dependent on team management, balancing out equipment and soldier types. If done right, there is nothing like a well-equipped team, taking out baddies efficiently.

With high production value and excellent graphics – as expected – Gears Tactics is a fitting introduction to the genre. A stepping stone to the X-Coms and Fire Emblems, tactics veterans may be drawn to it for something a bit more aggressive. Newbies will appreciate the tone and style, but more so if you are a Gears fan.

*The writer is a tech and gaming enthusiast who hopes to one day finish his sci-fi novel*

**Straight talk**  
(Clockwise from right) New Zealand celebrate winning the semi-final match of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 between India and New Zealand; Lynn McConnell; the book jacket; Glenn Turner in 1972 and today, showcasing his batting skills  
• CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, THE HINDU ARCHIVES



#### Writer's take

Journalist and co-author Lynn McConnell's take on...

Lynn McConnell

"The appeal of Glenn Turner's cricket and his achievements rests on him maximising his abilities to the fullest in one of the toughest areas of the game — Lynn McConnell as an opening batsman. What made his success more impressive, and support his claims to be regarded among the greats, was doing it during an era of outstanding quality among opening bowlers both on the English county scene and in Test match play initially, and then in the burgeoning one-day game. He had more to contend with than others as well because he was a trailblazer in the New Zealand game. Certainly there had been NZ players in county cricket before, but with improved air travel he was able to commute between England and New Zealand's seasons."

That brought issues with New Zealand's amateur administrators and there were clashes that, with a less determined player than Glenn might well have seen them give up. The players of today will forever be indebted to Glenn for the path he walked, although I suspect many of them don't appreciate that. Throughout it all he continued to score runs and in retirement he has continued to serve a game in a way that few other former players have managed. The game remains the thing."

# 'Cricket is more a product than a game'

VIJAY LOKAPALLY

A stickler for discipline and a fierce promoter of the traditions of the game, Glenn Turner, the former New Zealand opener who began playing first-class cricket in 1964, has penned his thoughts on the state of international cricket with veteran journalist Lynn McConnell in a book titled *Cricket's Global Warming*.

There are sections in the book that are bound to trigger a debate among the players and fans as Turner wades into some absurdities that have come to play havoc with the reputation of the game. Cricket has undergone many changes, not all for the good of the game, and Turner does not mince words as he discusses them with the same vision that marked his career. In this interview, Turner shares his thoughts on cricket and the book.

You have discussed the 2019 World Cup final in detail. How differently would you have tackled the over-throw incident?

I hope I would have tackled the over-throw incident very differently. At the time, although there will have been some distractions in play, my attention wouldn't have been totally diverted away from (Ben) Stokes' actions. In particular his dive and where he ended up was especially telling. My background knowledge of how experienced batsmen react automatically

Glenn Turner, the New Zealand batsman who faced the best of fast bowlers fearlessly and established himself as one of the cricket's greats, on his new book and views on the game

cally by deliberately blocking throws when a run-out is threatened, would have inevitably led me to expressing my thoughts to the umpire/umpires. Hopefully, this would have prompted them to refer to the third umpire for a ruling. Frankly, I wouldn't have expected the decision to have gone New Zealand's way because of the history of these rulings. Examples of obstructing the field in these circumstances had largely been ignored, unless transparently obvious.

Deliberate obstruction has crept under the radar, probably because of the absence for so long of third umpires, TV replays and batsmen rarely taking advantage of any overthrows deflected from their person.



NZ cricketers have the best image in today's cricket world. How did they develop this kind of sportsmanship?

This should not be seen as given, because as with most things, it is not fixed. It only takes a couple of players in a team to undermine the reputation of the group. It is generally accepted that power corrupts. Access to power in the cricketing environment has significantly increased over time due largely to the expansion of the electronic media coverage of international games and excessive amounts of money. Current socie-

#### Cricket in post COVID-19

"Cricket is luckier than many sports in allowing social distancing to occur on the field. But the tricky area is in off-field arrangements, travelling, accommodation, coping with crowds and the like. Adaptation will be crucial to the return of play but it shouldn't happen without proper safeguards being put in place."

— Lynn McConnell



tal mores are also showing up in cricket whereby people/players are very conscious of presumed rights but less mindful of their responsibilities. What tends to follow is a strong sense of entitlement.

Do you believe cricket has become too commercial thanks to the CEOs who now run the game?

Yes, I think it has become too commercial to the point of becoming more of a product than a game. I'm not privy to what happens in other countries, although I suspect there are similarities between New Zealand and others. In NZ senior players and the Players' Association predominantly run the game. The presence of players' agents has also provoked cricket boards into abrogating some of their governance responsibilities, including appeasement to agents.

Do you think the international bowling



standards have declined over the years?

The approach to bowling has to some extent changed along with trends in society, which unsurprisingly affects some players more than others. The biggest trend influencing bowling today, is likely to be seeking instant gratification, which leads to impatience and a lack of perseverance. I believe successful bowling is more about persisting with the percentages that give you the best chance of realising success. This approach is less prevalent today than in the past.

#### The book

"In discussion with Glenn we realised that we had similar concerns with where cricket was headed, initially in the New Zealand situation, but the more we talked the more we realised issues here were similar to what was happening elsewhere. I had a long association with Glenn from my days as a provincial sports editor when he was the chief executive of the Otago Sports Trust which worked in the catchment area for students at the University of Otago. Latterly, during his time as NZ coach and my work in other centres we crossed paths again and had a level of contact which served us well in preparing this book."

— Lynn McConnell



Why is cricket marked by so much on-field acrimony, though not when New Zealand is playing?

There are numerous examples of umpires receiving unwarranted repercussions from enforcing some of the laws of the game associated with the spirit of the cricket. Presumably this has led to their lack of trust in the authorities to back them up and therefore umpires' reluctance to apply these laws when required. Furthermore, the conflicts of interest allowing player power to gain too much control has also compounded the problem. The question of entitlement, rights and responsibilities once again comes into focus.

Why is cricket, and no other sport, a reflection of society?

It's not a question of no other sport being a reflection of society,

The fact that cricket is played over such a long period of time (I'm not including T20 as Cricket) automatically exposes itself to more of the influences of what is happening in society.

Are we not watching lot of mediocre international cricket?

Greed has created the need to play as much unsustainable cricket as possible because of the perceived need to feed a few insatiable appetites. Cricket has followed an abusive form of capitalism where the gap between the first team players and the next group is unacceptably high, let alone the gap for those at the provincial level. The dominance of T20 cricket is and will continue to reduce the ability of players to play longer forms of the game and therefore create what you refer to as mediocre international cricket. Some will say who cares about longer forms of cricket? I do!

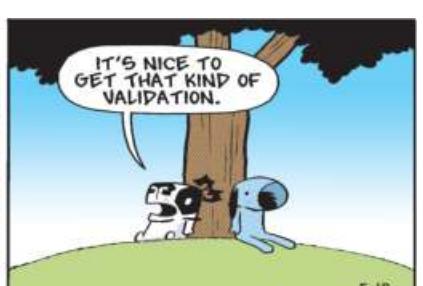
How do you view Indian cricket?

It's been interesting to follow the change that's taken place in Indian cricket over the decades. In particular, the emergence of strength in the seam/swing/fast bowling department. A marked contrast from the 1970s when spin prevailed. I first toured India in 1969, at a time when Indian cricket and New Zealand cricket were not seen as fitting into the top echelon of teams compared to England, Australia and the West Indies. How times have changed!

I don't like to start comparing the ability of teams and players from different eras because there are too many different factors that come into play.

The on-field demeanour between our two teams at that time was one of respect for your opponent. This was probably made easier by the fact that neither of us had the possible complications of dealing with power, and entitlement was not an issue because there wasn't much for us to be entitled to. Incidentally, I have probably been back to India about 35 times since 1969 and been privileged to observe some of the significant changes generally over that period.

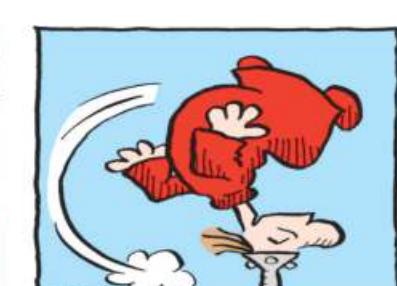
#### POOCH CAFE



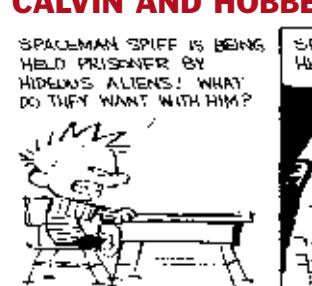
#### PEANUTS



#### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



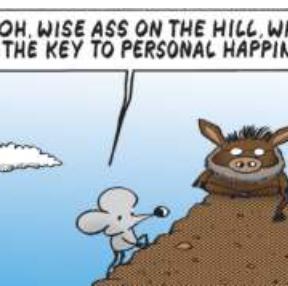
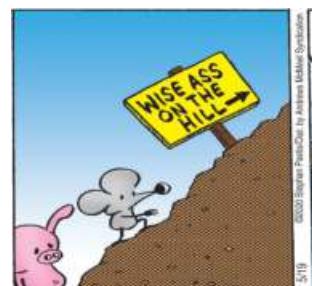
#### CALVIN AND HOBBES



#### TIGER



#### PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



# Xi defends China's 'open' virus response

President pledges to make any potential vaccine developed by the country a 'global public good'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GENEVA  
Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Monday that Beijing has been "transparent" throughout the COVID-19 crisis, and offered to share a vaccine as soon as one was available – as well as \$2 billion in aid.

Governments including the U.S. and Australia have called in recent weeks for an investigation into the origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which has become a flashpoint in deteriorating tensions between Washington and Beijing.

Both U.S. President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have accused China of a lack of transparency over the issue, and repeatedly pushed the theory that the virus leaked from a Chinese maximum-security laboratory.

## COVID-19

Addressing the first-ever virtual gathering of the WHO's annual assembly, Mr. Xi said China has "always had an open, transparent and responsible attitude", and had shared information on the virus in a timely manner. Chinese scientists have said the virus emerged from a market that sold wild animals in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December, though officials have more recently cast doubt about its origins. Authorities in Wuhan have come under fire for reprimanding and silencing doctors who raised the alarm about the virus late last year. China is also accused of having delayed confirmation that the virus was transmissible between humans.

China has strenuously denied accusations of a cover-

**WORST-HIT COUNTRIES** \*As of Monday evening

U.S. 14,86,742

### In the grip of virus

As the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading across the world, devastating economies and disrupting social lives, UN chief Antonio Guterres has said the outbreak should be seen as a "wake-up call" to the world which must be more united in responding to the crisis

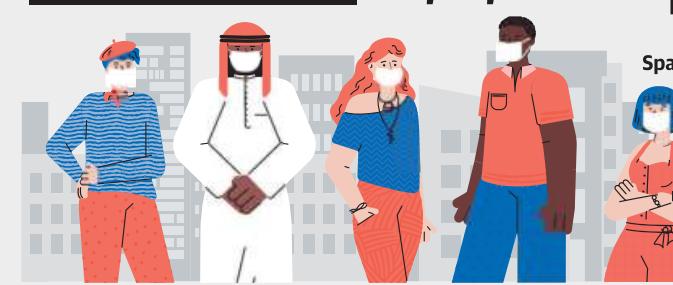
#### Around the world

■ Australia's Foreign Minister welcomed international support for an independent coronavirus pandemic investigation, which has been condemned by China

■ The EU has drafted a resolution, co-sponsored by dozens of countries, including Australia, which calls for an evaluation of the origin of the pandemic and responses to the virus

The SARS-CoV-2 virus has killed at least 315,620 people since the outbreak first emerged in China last December

Total number of infections\* 47,37,300



■ A week after a third of French schoolchildren went back to school in an easing of the lockdown, there's been a worrying flare-up of about 70 infections linked to schools

NO. OF CASES

89,564

Britain 2,44,995 34,716

Italy 2,25,435 31,908

France 1,79,693 28,111

Spain 2,30,698 27,563

Deaths  
3,15,620



by 0.9% in the first quarter

■ Russia, which has recorded the world's largest number of infections after the U.S., has stopped the growth of new coronavirus cases, claimed its Prime Minister

■ Hundreds of thousands of New Zealand children returned to school after two months of home education as part of the lockdown

■ The virus brought Belgium its deadliest April since Second World War with 14,790 deaths

■ Japan dived into its first recession since 2015, according to official data, with the world's third-largest economy shrinking

SOURCE: JOHNS HOPKINS CORONAVIRUS RESOURCE CENTER & AFP

up, insisting it has always shared information with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other countries in a timely manner.

The assembly was set to discuss a resolution tabled by the EU that calls for an "impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation" of the international response to the coronavirus crisis.

#### WHO-led probe

Speaking via videolink with a painting of the Great Wall in the background, Mr. Xi said China supports a "compre-

hensive evaluation" of the global response to the pandemic after it "has been brought under control" and that the probe should be led by the WHO.

The inquiry should "sum up experiences and improve shortcomings" and "adhere to the principles of objectivity and fairness", Mr. Xi told the World Health Assembly.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus pledged at the assembly to launch an independent probe to review the pandemic response "at the earliest appropriate mo-

ment". With the world racing to find a drug to stop the pandemic, Mr. Xi pledged to make any potential vaccine developed by China a "global public good" once it was put into use. This move would be China's contribution to achieving accessibility and affordability of a vaccine in developing countries as well, Mr. Xi said.

China says it has five potential vaccines in clinical trials. A top Chinese health official said last week that more vaccine candidates are in the pipeline and awaiting approval for human trials.

Experts say it will take at least 12 to 18 months to develop an effective vaccine, or even longer.

Mr. Xi also told the assembly that China will provide \$2 billion in international aid over two years to help with COVID-19 response and economic development in affected countries, especially in the developing world. "China will work with members of the Group of 20 nations to implement the debt relief initiative for the poorest countries," he said.

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#### Scrutiny of Bills

Mr. Lee's camp condemned the violence and pledged to push ahead with the anthem Bill. The house committee's role is to scrutinise Bills before a second reading in the Legislative Council and has built up a backlog after failing to elect a chairperson since late last year.

The backlog includes the anthem Bill, which is expected to be given a second reading on May 27.

guards from bench tops to take back the chairman's seat only to be forced back.

The Democrats chanted "foul play" and held a placard reading "CCP (China Communist Party) tramples HK legislature." Opposition

A pro-democracy lawmaker during a scuffle in Hong Kong on Monday. ■ AFP

guards from bench tops to take back the chairman's seat only to be forced back.

The Democrats chanted "foul play" and held a placard reading "CCP (China Communist Party) tramples HK legislature." Opposition

Some tried leaping over the

backs of security guards

and some tried to climb onto the back of the chairman's seat.

Lawmakers Ted Hui shouted at Mr. Chan that the meeting was "illegal." Even as the protests continued, Mr. Chan called a vote for a chairperson of the committee that was won by pro-Beijing lawmaker Starry Lee.

On Monday, relatives of many who were killed that day convened at Mullivaikkal in the northern Mullaitivu district, near the Nandikadal lagoon, wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing, as they lit lamps and offered flowers at the site that witnessed the gory final days of the battle.

The crowd was smaller this time. Some people may have preferred to stay indoors due to the risk of COVID-19. But everyone paid

tribute to their loved ones – lighting candles, reciting prayers in their homes and via video calls.

On this day in 2009, the state armed forces triumphantly declared crushing the rebel LTTE to defeat, after killing its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. It was also the day that several thousand civilians – the UN estimates 40,000 deaths in the final phase – died in incessant shelling, despite being assured they were in a no-fire zone. For over a decade now, Sri Lankans continue to mark the end of the civil war

with strikingly different narratives. For the Tamils, the day symbolises its brutal end that brought much grief and trauma to the community, while the Sri Lankan state has celebrated it as "victory day", hailing soldiers or "war heroes" for bringing a nearly three decade-long separatist war to an end.

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# Europe reopens widely, seeks to salvage summer vacations

Greece, Italy and Portugal see some business activity

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATHENS

Europe reopened more widely on Monday, allowing people into the Acropolis in Athens, shops in Italy, markets and museums in Belgium, golf courses in Ireland and beer gardens in Bavaria while its leaders discussed how to salvage Europe's hallowed summer vacations.

Greece reopened the Acropolis in Athens and other ancient sites, along with high schools, shopping malls and mainland travel. Paving stickers were used as markers to keep visitors apart outside the Acropolis. Tourists were local, for the country still has a 14-day quarantine for arrivals, and travel to the Greek islands remains broadly restricted.

In Belgium, more students returned to school, hairdressers began clipping locks again and museums and zoos opened their doors, all with strict reservation systems to avoid over-



A tentative return: People walking at a park in central Rome on Sunday. ■ AFP

crowding. Hoping to make the most of the sunny weather, open-air markets started selling their plentiful spring fruit and vegetables.

#### Golf in Ireland

Golf courses and garden stores reopened in Ireland but Health Minister Simon Harris said he's still nervous because the virus hasn't gone away. He hoped that social distancing and other measures will make more normalcy possible.

Churches in Italy and at

the Vatican resumed public Masses. Guards in hazmat suits took the temperatures of the faithful entering St. Peter's Basilica, where Pope Francis celebrated an early morning Mass in a side chapel to commemorate the centenary of the birth of St. John Paul II. Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa took his morning coffee at a Lisbon cafe and was having lunch at a restaurant with the Speaker of Parliament as officials encouraged people to support local businesses.

## Survival at stake after U.S. move: Huawei

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SHENZHEN

Huawei on Monday assailed the latest U.S. move to cut it off from semiconductor suppliers as a "pernicious" attack that will put the Chinese technology giant in "survival" mode and sow chaos in the global technology sector.

The Commerce Department said on Friday it was tightening sanctions on Huawei – seen by Washington as a security risk – to include denying it access to semiconductor designs developed using U.S. software and technology. "The deci-

sion was arbitrary and pernicious and threatens to undermine the entire technology worldwide," Huawei said in a statement.

#### U.S. sanctions

Huawei has largely weathered an escalating 18-month campaign by the Trump administration to isolate it internationally. But it will inevitably be affected" by the new American salvo, rotating chairman Guo Ping said at an annual summit of technology analysts that Huawei organises at its headquarters in the southern Chinese city

of Shenzhen. "Survival is the key for us now," Mr. Guo said, issuing an appeal to Huawei's suppliers and customers worldwide to stand with it. He declined to give a detailed forecast of the impact. But the Huawei statement said the U.S. decision "will have a serious impact on a wide number of global industries" by creating uncertainty in the chip sector and supply chains. U.S. officials said Huawei had been circumventing sanctions by obtaining chips and components that are produced around the world based on American technology.

## After scuffles, Hong Kong MPs push ahead with China anthem Bill

Pro-democracy lawmakers evicted after they charge at guards



A pro-democracy lawmaker during a scuffle in Hong Kong on Monday. ■ AFP

## 11 years on, Tamils remember loved ones amid pandemic

Kin of those who were killed convene at a battle site in Mullivaikkal, light lamps and offer flowers

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

The COVID-19 pandemic may have deterred physical gatherings, but families of scores of Tamils who died in the final phase of Sri Lanka's civil war on Monday paid tribute to their loved ones – lighting candles, reciting prayers in their homes and via video calls.

On this day in 2009, the state armed forces triumphantly declared crushing the rebel LTTE to defeat, after killing its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. It was also the day that several thousand civilians – the UN estimates 40,000 deaths in the final phase – died in incessant shelling, despite being assured they were in a no-fire zone. For over a decade now, Sri Lankans continue to mark the end of the civil war

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The crowd was smaller this time. Some people may have preferred to stay indoors due to the risk of COVID-19. But everyone paid

tribute to their loved ones.

It respects in their own way, after all it's a way of dealing with their loss," said Shanthi Sriskantharajah, a former MP of the Tamil National Alliance, from Mullaitivu.

However, the former legislator herself didn't go to Mullivaikkal. "I have my personal reasons. Families go there to collectively acknowledge their grief, and to remember their loved ones. But it trou-

bles me that year after year, some politicians use this site of grief for their own propaganda. I don't have to go there and do politics," said Ms. Sriskantharajah, whose leg was severely injured in the last stages of shelling in 2009. "Like many other people, I too bear the scars of the war on my body every day," she told *The Hindu*.

**Day of grief**  
In neighbouring Kilinochchi district too, families lit lamps and candles at their homes, and offered prayers, according to Father S.K. Daniel, who has been involved post-war reconciliation efforts. "It's a day of immense grief for the people, no one can get it right."

Whether 11 years is enough time for healing will only be determined by what

the decade offered, by way of justice, accountability and peace, according to human rights activist Ruki Fernando. "Bringing perpetrators to justice is one aspect of it. But it's also about those who suffered the most having an environment where they can remember without fear or threat, about renewing their livelihoods as before, and their relationships with other communities," he said.

On Monday, the Tamil National People's Front, a political alliance headquartered in Jaffna, tweeted that its members were prevented by the police from holding commemorative events, despite observing health safety measures. Others who held special prayers and meetings were also questioned by the police in some areas, sources told *The Hindu*.

## Are the United States and China entering a new Cold War?

Relations have taken a hit after the COVID-19 outbreak; experts say tensions are unlikely to ease in near future as mutual mistrust is building up

STANLY JOHNY



Widening rift: U.S. President Donald Trump and China's President Xi Jinping in Osaka in June 2019. ■ AFP

#### NEWS ANALYSIS

VID-19 pandemic. In 2017, the Trump administration's National Security Strategy called China as "a revisionist power" seeking "to erode American security and prosperity".

In September 2019, while responding to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Ford's comment that the American government was formulating a strategy to ad-

dress potential "security challenges" by China, the Foreign Ministry in Beijing "urged" the U.S. "to abandon the Cold-War mentality"

**The 'Novikov telegram'**  
COVID-19 appears to have aggravated the crisis. "Record high temperatures have been recorded in Sino-U.S. relations in recent years and the pandemic is no exception to this. Competition rules the relationship, and flexibility and mature handling are in

## MARKET WATCH

	18-05-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	30,029	-3.44
US Dollar	75.91	-0.44
Brent oil	35.09	11.22

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	293.30	-15.95
Asian Paints	1501.10	-51.85
Axis Bank	358.80	-29.75
Bajaj Auto	2477.45	-186.15
Bajaj Finserv	4465.45	-257.80
Bajaj Finance	1938.60	-147.85
Bharti Airtel	538.05	-16.05
BPCL	294.05	-26.15
Britannia Ind	3109.55	-16.10
Cipla	600.45	30.15
Coal India	121.70	-7.90
Dr Reddys Lab	3679.15	-55.95
Eicher Motors	12988.20	-1111.40
GAIL (India)	81.00	-4.80
Grasim Ind	495.80	-22.05
HCL Tech.	510.75	-0.50
HDFC	1512.05	-121.75
HDFC Bank	836.65	-51.50
Hero MotoCorp	2070.55	-123.00
Hindalco	115.35	-3.90
Hind Unilever	2005.25	-26.85
ICICI Bank	298.50	-24.20
IndusInd Bank	376.75	-41.95
Bharti Infratel	207.10	-4.60
Infosys	663.90	-11.60
Indian Oil Corp.	71.55	-3.95
ITC	164.75	0.10
JSW Steel	163.25	-11.05
Kotak Bank	1113.65	-64.65
L&T	813.35	-51.05
M&M	377.20	-4.10
Maruti Suzuki	4720.95	-379.45
Nestle India Ltd.	16240.35	-203.45
NTPC	88.90	-1.95
ONGC	72.90	-3.25
PowerGrid Corp	154.50	-5.30
Reliance Ind	1440.75	-18.65
State Bank	155.30	-11.10
Shree Cement	18152.70	-1027.80
Sun Pharma	440.70	-7.90
Tata Motors	80.65	-3.70
Tata Steel	266.60	-6.85
TCS	1945.60	-52.70
Tech Mahindra	504.05	-6.50
Titan	817.30	-28.30
UltraTech Cement	3307.80	-275.35
UPL	375.80	-3.10
Vedanta	92.50	-0.45
Wipro	182.20	-1.60
Zee Entertainment	149.50	-14.70

## EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 18

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.71	76.03
Euro	81.79	82.13
British Pound	91.67	92.07
Japanese Yen (100)	70.58	70.87
Chinese Yuan	10.64	10.68
Swiss Franc	77.78	78.15
Singapore Dollar	53.06	53.30
Canadian Dollar	53.80	54.03
Malaysian Ringgit	17.32	17.41
Australian Dollar	48.79	49.04

Source: Indian Bank

# 'Stimulus to cost only about 1% of GDP'

Package may fall short of mitigating near-term existential crisis for businesses, workers: Nomura

MANOJ SAHA  
MUMBAI

The much-hyped ₹20-lakh crore economic package announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have a minimum impact on the fiscal cost, estimated at about 1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

According to estimates by several brokerages, the Centre's fiscal burden is seen ranging between 0.8% and 1.2% of the GDP.

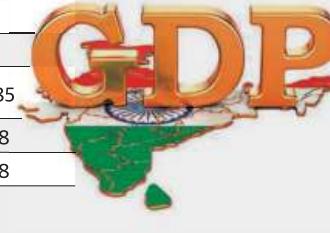
Mr. Modi had pegged the size of the economic package at 10% of the GDP.

## Regulatory in nature

"The government has aimed for the maximum bang [with] the minimum buck, with most of the relief either regulatory in nature or reflecting in its contingent liabilities rather than explicit budgetary support," Nomura said

## Big bang, small buck

Estimates by	Fiscal cost (as % of GDP)
UBS Securities	1.2
BofA Securities	1.1
SBI	1
HSBC	1
IIFL	1
Edelweiss Securities	0.85
Nomura	0.8
CLSA	0.8
Citi	1



in a report, while acknowledging that the pandemic had been used as a cover to plough through long-pending, politically-sensitive structural reforms.

"As a result, the package may fall short of mitigating the near-term existential crisis for businesses and work-

ers, but is better designed to improve India's medium-term growth potential and attract long-term risk capital," said Nomura, which had pegged India's GDP growth for 2020 at minus 5%.

The government has faced flak from the Opposition parties for not putting money in

the hands of the poor who face an existential crisis with the lockdown, which is now over 50 days, destroying their livelihoods.

## Guarantees, credit lines

"Within the fiscal constraints of government, extensive use of guarantees and credit lines to provide breathing space to MSMEs, economically weaker sections, farmers and NBFCs, as well as creating long-term changes in some other sectors, is an appreciable move but this may not be seen as enough to solve the immediate COVID-19 challenges (sic)," CLSA said in a report to its clients.

UBS Securities, which had pegged the fiscal cost at 1.2% of the GDP, said credit guarantees are unlikely to impact the budget balance of the current financial year as

the likely impact of the deficit could only emerge once the losses materialise.

"The headline stimulus number seemed impressive, at ₹20 trillion (\$267 billion), corresponding to roughly 10% of India's FY21 [estimates] of GDP, much higher than market expectations," said Tanvee Gupta Jain, economist, UBS Securities India, in a report.

"However, looking at the breakdown, the liquidity support and credit guarantee measures accounted for almost three-fourths of the economic support package, followed by monetary measures at 15% and fiscal support at only 10%."

"Notably, the upfront, direct fiscal cost this year from the COVID-19 support package announced so far is quite limited (1.2% of GDP)," Ms. Jain said.

# Auto industry left out of economic package: SIAM

'Measures could have helped demand'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The government's recently announced ₹20-lakh crore economic package has left the automobile sector out,

Rajan Wadhra, president of Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), said on Monday. He pointed out that the industry has been in dire need of an imme-

diate stimulus to boost demand and stop job losses.

He added that the sector, already facing a challenge with the 18% contraction last year, could see a further shrinkage in the range of 22-35% in various industry segments such as passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and commercial vehicles, in 2020-21, if India's GDP growth ends up at 0-1%.

The industry body said the package for the agri sector may indirectly benefit the auto industry. It said dealers needed urgent help with improving liquidity and that they ought to be included under the MSME Act by changing its definition.

# Markets find little to cheer

Indices shed 3.4% in reaction to Centre's economic package

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Indian benchmark equity indices lost more than 3% each on Monday with the Sensex shedding more than 1,000 points as the stimulus package announced by the Finance Minister failed to cheer the markets, with a further extension of the nationwide lockdown till May 31 acting as a catalyst in dampening sentiments.

The 30-share Sensex lost over 10% on Monday, stocks such as ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC and Bajaj Finance, all lost over 7% each.

The overall market breadth was extremely weak with more than 1,700 stocks in the red against less than 600 gainers. As many as 272 stocks hit their lower circuit.

Meanwhile, the broader Nifty settled the day at 8,823.25, down 313.60 points, or 3.43%. The India VIX index surged a little over 7.5% on Monday after laying low for the past few days.

Further, the Nifty Bank and Nifty Private Bank were the biggest losers among sectoral indices, shedding almost 7% each. Incidentally, the fall was largely on account of domestic factors as most of the Asian markets gained ground on Monday.

"Indian indices ended lower as details of the ₹20 lakh crore stimulus package announced by the Finance Minister over Wednesday and Sunday disappointed listed corporates and market participants," said Deepak Jasani, head, retail research, HDFC Securities.

Meanwhile, the broader

# Reliance Industries to repay debt worth ₹40,000 cr. from proceeds of rights issue

Issue size is ₹53,125 crore; investors may pay 25% at the time of subscription

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) intends to repay loans worth about ₹40,000 crore from the money raised through its proposed rights issue worth ₹53,125 crore. India's biggest-ever equity fund raise.

"The company plans to use around ₹40,000 crore for repayment/prepayment of all or a portion of certain borrowings and the remaining ₹13,000 crore for general corporate purposes," according to the objects of the issue.

The company had issued commercial papers worth ₹16,350 crore to finance op-

erating expenditure and short-term funding gaps.

RIL had also issued non-convertible debentures worth ₹36,213 crore for general corporate purpose, refi-

nancing of existing borrowings and any other purpose in the ordinary course of bu-

ness and capital expenditure.

"The amount utilised for general corporate purposes shall not exceed 25% of the gross proceeds. Our company proposes to repay/prepay either fully or partly any of the borrowings including combination thereof, subject to terms and conditions," RIL said in a communiqué to shareholders.

RIL shareholders will be able to apply for one share in the rights issue for every 15 shares held as on May 14, at ₹1,257 each.

The rights issue will be open for subscription on May 20 and close on June 3.

At the end of the March quarter, RIL's net debt stood at ₹1,61,035 crore.

# Bharti clocks ₹5,237 crore loss

Average revenue per user for Q4 rises to ₹154 from ₹123

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Monday posted a net loss of ₹5,237 crore after exceptional items for the January-March 2020 period on account of an exceptional charge of ₹7,004 crore.

In a regulatory filing the company said, "... the net exceptional charge of ₹7,004 crore comprises a charge on account of reassessment of regulatory cost based on a recent judgment on OTSC [one-time spectrum payment] related matter..."

The company, which had posted a profit of ₹107 crore in the January-March 2019 period, said the numbers are not comparable as the latest quarter results include the impact of Ind AS 16.

In the previous October-December 2019 quarter, the company had posted a net

loss of ₹1,035 crore.

dented times for everyone across the world as we battle the impact of COVID-19."

ARPU for the quarter stood at ₹154 compared with ₹123 in Q4 2019. "India mobile data traffic increased by 74.2% to 6,010 PBs (petabytes) in the quarter compared with 3,451 PBs in the corresponding quarter last year," the company said.

The biggest impact here is on the cloud kitchens business, with many unknowns about volumes through the year.

## IN BRIEF



## Michael Jordan sneakers sell for \$560,000

A pair of Air Jordan sneakers worn in a game by Michael Jordan sold for \$560,000 at Sotheby's auction house, an all-time record for basketball shoes. The white, black and red shoes, made for Jordan in 1985 and autographed by the NBA legend, dethroned the reigning "Mooch Shoe," one of Nike's first sneakers, a pair of which sold in July 2019 for \$437,000. AFP



## 'Singapore F1 behind closed doors impossible'

SINGAPORE Singapore F1 organisers on Monday said it was "not feasible" to hold the race behind closed doors, threatening further problems for the coronavirus-ravaged season. The Singapore Grand Prix, scheduled in September, is a night-time street race around the city-state's waterfront. AFP



## Time right for Mortaza to retire: Gibson

DHAKA Bangladesh bowling coach Ottis Gibson doesn't see a role for Mashrafe Mortaza (in pic) in the 2023 ODI World Cup and feels now is the time for the former skipper to bid adieu to international cricket. The 36-year-old Mortaza, who claimed just one wicket in eight matches in last year's World Cup, has in the recent past often faced questions on his retirement. PTI

## Rugby India's TRY Series quarterfinalists spotted

MUMBAI Delhi Lions, Jaipur Bulls, Chhattisgarh Bulls, Black Archers Hyderabad, Kerala Rugby Warriors, Ace Foundation, Young Rugby Club and Black Dot have entered the quarterfinals of Rugby India's TRY Series online tournament.

## Irfan Pathan live!

Catch T20 World Cup winner and former India allrounder Irfan Pathan in a live chat on Sportstar's Instagram handle (@sportstarweb) on May 19 (Tuesday) at 8 p.m. IST.

## Gorkhas demand Amazon's Paatal Lok drop sexist slur

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Members of the Gorkha community in India have taken strong offence at the use of a sexist slur in the second episode of Amazon's *Paatal Lok* original series that dropped on Amazon Prime Video on May 15.

An online petition, initiated by the community on Monday and addressed to the Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry, the Minister Prakash Javadekar, Amazon Prime Video and series producer Anushka Sharma, asserted that the slur portrayed the community's women in poor light and demanded that Amazon should mute the slur, blur the subtitles and upload edited video along with an unconditional apology and a disclaimer.

The Bhartiya Gorkha Yuva Parisangh contended in its petition that the second episode of *Paatal Lok* had certain scenes, particularly the one that slips in at 3:41,

## Sports ministry approves opening of stadia

Many NSFs, however, have preferred to adopt a cautious wait-and-watch mode

UTHRA GANESAN  
NEW DELHI

A day after the Home Ministry advised restricted opening of sports complexes and stadia, the sports ministry has given its go-ahead to the proposal.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, on Monday, confirmed the resumption of sporting activities and training, subject to the central and State-specific guidelines.

## Follow guidelines

"I'm happy to inform sportspersons and all concerned that sports activities will be conducted in sports complexes and stadia strictly in accordance with MHA guidelines and that of the States in which they are situated. However, the use of gyms & swimming pools are still prohibited," Rijiju tweeted.

The ministry's approval would help Sports Authority of India centres to resume training of athletes, following



**Wait ends:** With sporting complexes opened up, the Indian women's hockey team would like to get back to serious training. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) designed by the SAI and individual federations.

Most NSFs, however, have preferred to adopt a cautious wait-and-watch mode, waiting for detailed instructions and clarifications before kick-starting their training and

competition schedules.

While Hockey India is awaiting further suitable guidelines and approvals on restarting the national camps for men and women — who have been restricted to SAI Centre, Bengaluru for the past two months — the AFI is unsure how the order im-

pacts the premier NIS in Patiala, where the athletes and weightlifters are.

"Hockey India today submitted the pitch training requests for the men and women core probables and are awaiting approval and confirmation on the same," the federation said, having submit-

ted its hockey-specific SOP to the ministry on April 11.

## Better safe than sorry

AFI president Adille Sumariwalla too has been waiting for government approval for a month. "We submitted our plan way back and are waiting for a go-ahead. Also, as per my understanding, the NIS in Patiala is an educational institution and so remains closed even in the new order.

"We have asked for clarification but honestly, given the situation, I think it's better to be safe than sorry.

"A couple of days delay in training is better than putting the athletes' health to any risk," Sumariwalla told *The Hindu*.

The NRAI too has decided to proceed slowly, with president Raninder Singh assuring that a firm plan for training and competitions would be drawn up soon once protocols for opening up shooting ranges are finalised.

## Saliva ban recommended

ICC panel does not bar use of sweat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The ICC's Cricket Committee has recommended the prohibition of the use of saliva to shine the ball to mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19 when the sport resumes.

However, the committee has not barred the use of sweat. It has not allowed any external polishing material.

The committee, chaired by former India captain and coach Anil Kumble, has also proposed that local umpires be appointed for matches in the short term to deal with international travel restrictions during the pandemic. It has also recommended an increase in reviews per innings through DRS for this.

The proposals are set to be formalised during the Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) meeting next month. The possibility of preventing the use of saliva had been discussed during



Anil Kumble. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

last month's CEC, but since the matter had to be brought up and discussed by the Cricket Committee, Monday's meeting was convened via a video-conference call.

"We are living through extraordinary times and the recommendations made today are interim measures to enable us to safely resume cricket in a way that preserves the essence of our game whilst protecting everyone involved," Kumble said in an ICC statement.

## Carlsen, Lagno take honours

P.K. AJITH KUMAR  
KOZHIKODE

Magnus Carlsen romped home with a round to spare, while Kateryna Lagno had to play 152 moves in her final game as they emerged the champions at the Steinitz Memorial online blitz tournament.

The tournament was organised by FIDE, in association with chess24.com, as a tribute to the first official World chess champion Wilhelm Steinitz of Austria, whose 184th birth anniversary fell on May 17. The men's and women's events featured 10 players each.

**Final standngs:** Men: 1. Magnus Carlsen (Nor) 12; 2. Daniil Dubov (Rus) 10; 3. Peter Svidler (Rus) 9.5; 4. Shahriyar Mamedyarov (Aze), Jeffery Xiong (US) & Quang Liem (Chn) 9; 7-8. Bu Xiangzhi (Chn) & Anton Korobov (Ukr) 8.5; 9. David Anton Guijarro (Esp) 7.5; 10. Alexander Grischuk (Rus) 7.

**Women:** 1. Kateryna Lagno (Ukr) & Lei Tingjie (Chn) 12; 3. Zhanaya Abdumalik (Kaz) 11.5; 4. Alexandra Kosteniuk (Rus) 10.5; 5. Tan Zhongyi (Chn) 10; 6-7. Sarasadat Khalidmalsharieh (IRI) & Antoaneta Stefanova (Bul) 9; 8. Marie Sebag (Fra) 8.5; 9. Elizabeth Paethz (Ger) 4.5; 10. Deysi Cori (Per) 3.

## Manish adding power to his punches

The young pugilist focused on winning a medal at Tokyo

## BOXING

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

World boxing championship medallist Manish Kaushik is focusing on adding power to his punches during the lockdown.

Manish, who bagged a bronze in 63kg category at the Worlds last year, is giving his best to gain strength. "Right now, my focus is on gaining power. My morning sessions are devoted towards that, while I work on my technique in the evenings.



in March to book a quota place for the Tokyo Games, wants to make the best use of the time.

"Time flies. Before we realise, the 2020 Olympics will be upon us. We have to utilise each day to get better.

"I am very proud to be the third World championship medallist from Bhawani district after Vijender Singh and Vikas Krishan. Now, I want to replicate Vijender's Olympic medal-winning feat."

Manish, who has been enjoying a longer stay at home after eight years, is excited about the relaxation in the lockdown.

"It's good to spend some time at home but the camp is the best place to train, though. Coaches are there to analyse and tell where you are going wrong. I hope our camp resumes soon," said Manish.



Kateryna Lagno.

## Balbir remains critical

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Hockey legend Balbir Singh Sr's condition continues to be critical, with the Padma Shri awardee remaining on ventilator support.

The 95-year-old has been hospitalised in Mohali for the past 10 days after complaining of high fever and breathing problems.

Doctors continue to assess and monitor his condition and attempt treatment for the new complications, he added.

Three-time Olympic gold medallist Balbir (1948-1956) is considered one of the best centre-forwards of all times and was also the manager of the only World Cup-winning Indian side in 1975.

While he remains 'hemodynamically near stable' and has not suffered another cardiac arrest since the last one on May 13, fresh clot has been detected in his brain.

"MRI brain report shows a small fresh blood clot in the brain which is insufficient



Somdev Devvarman. ■ PTI

Bhupathi then put the potential of Karman Thandi as No. 75 in terms of rank.

"One last roar together," said Bhupathi on his love-hate relationship with Leander Paes for more than 20 years, and qualified it further saying, "digitally".

Asked about the future of

the chat show by August, Bhupathi said "prime time TV", as Raja has managed to host it with considerable professionalism, poise and lively tempo.

Bopanna gave two out of 10 for AITA's financial transparency. He also named Devvarman as a future Davis Cup team captain. Bopanna himself thought would opt for physio if there was a toss up between captain and physio for the team.

Bopanna also chose M.S. Dhoni as company for star-ters, the Prime Minister for lunch and Amitabh Bachchan for dessert, saying that he could then discuss sport, politics and entertainment with them.

## Rare palm from Andamans gets second home

The critically endangered species started flowering at Thiruvananthapuram-based JNTBGRI

TIKI RAJWI  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A rare palm endemic to the South Andaman Island is finding a second home at Palode here, courtesy the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI). An earlier JNTBGRI effort in this direction had been thwarted by mischievous wild elephants that ate up all the specimens!

At first glance, *Pinanga andamanensis* — which at one point was written off as extinct — resembles the areca palm to which it is closely related. But its entire population of some 600 specimens naturally occurs only in a tiny, evergreen forest pocket in South Andaman's Mount Harriet National Park.

By conserving the germplasm on the Indian mainland, JNTBGRI can ensure its continued survival in the event of its minuscule original home getting wiped out by, say, a natural calamity, JNTBGRI Director R. Pra-

kashkumar told *The Hindu*. "Such conservation efforts assume special significance in the era of climate change," he said.

JNTBGRI scientists termed the *Pinanga andamanensis* "a critically endangered species and one of the least known among the endemic palms of the Andaman Islands".

While its uses are yet to be understood fully, this elegant

palm holds promise as an avenue tree for gardens, pavements and homesteads, said Sam Mathew, Senior Scientist, Plant Genetic Resource Division, JNTBGRI.

um specimen collected by E.H. Man, a late-19th century assistant superintendent in the Andaman administration. After that first identification, it was thought to be extinct till 1992.

In 1992, Mr. Mathew, who was with the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) at the time, and his BSI colleague, the late K.C. Mallick, encountered a few specimens at the Mount Harriet National Park.

## Colourful history

*Pinanga andamanensis* has a colourful history. It was originally described by the Italian botanist Odardo Beccari in 1934. His description was based on an old herbarium

specimen collected by Tiki Rajwi, President of the Bhartiya Gorkha Yuva Parishad, in 1912. The species was first identified by the British botanist George Arnott Walker Arnott in 1832, based on a specimen collected by E.H. Man, a late-19th century assistant superintendent in the Andaman administration.

After that first identification, it was thought to be extinct till 1992.

In 1992, Mr. Mathew, who was with the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) at the time, and his BSI colleague, the late K.C. Mallick, encountered a few specimens at the Mount Harriet National Park.



**Green gift:** *Pinanga andamanensis* at Mount Harriet National Park in the Andamans and, right, the seedling in Kerala. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Such a small gene pool means the species is vulnerable to natural calamities such as cyclones, earthquakes, Mr. Mathew said.

After he moved to the JNTBGRI, five or six specimens were introduced at the Field Gene Bank at Palode in 1994. Unfortunately, rampaging wild elephants ate them all up in 2012.

"The pith of the trunks of these palms is sweet," he said. In 2014, a few more seedlings were introduced, which has started flowering.

"On fruit setting, JNTBGRI will resume seed germination experiments for mass multiplication as part of the conservation strategy."

So why is this palm called *Pinanga*? Well, it has something to do with areca nuts, after all. The name is derived from 'Pinang', the modern-day Malaysian state. "Pinang" itself has its origins in 'Pulau Pinang', which means 'Island of the Areca Nut Palm,' says Mr. Mathew.

■ CM YK

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